

New Insights

In-Depth Analysis of Middle Eastern Security Issues

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IN THIS ISSUE:

LETTER FROM BAGHDAD

By James Lee..... 1

THE 2006 LEBANON WAR AND THE ISRAELI PEACE FORCES

By Joel Geinin 3

UNDERSTANDING SOMALI ISLAMISM

By Anouar Boukhars 6

ILLUSION AND REALITY

By Flynt Leveret 9

THE LONG HAUL IN MOROCCO

By Anouar Boukhars 14



Fuel tanks burn at the Beirut Airport after they were attacked by Israeli aircraft.

The Center for Defense and Security Policy offers this special supplement to the Wilberforce Quarterly and Disaster Preparedness journals in order to address the need for new fresh insights on the main strategic events touching on U.S. and international security issues. The journal's goal is to provide the best sourced information and analytical commentary on the conflict in Iraq, Iran's nuclear ambitions, and the war on terror. New Insights was founded by Anouar Boukhars, Director of Wilberforce Center for Defense and Security Policy, Marshall Mitchell, executive Vice President, and Reverend Dr. Floyd H. Flake, President of Wilberforce University and former member of Congress. The opinions expressed within are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect those of Wilberforce University.



Letter from Baghdad

By James Lee

Dear Dr. Boukhars,

I hope this correspondence finds you well teaching and mentoring our future generations of thinkers and leaders. I have been in Baghdad for ten months now and am doing well as the Director of Intelligence for Multi-National Division Baghdad (4th Infantry Division (Mechanized)). Far

from our days at ODU writing papers and reading books. I find this 4th Infantry Division to be outstanding in many respects but most importantly in its Soldiers that go out each day and close with and capture terrorists and insurgents, and keep the Iraqi sectarian murdering of one another to a minimum. These great Soldiers are working hard for all of us in keeping our homes safe from terrorist striking our homeland; if we don't fight them here, we will certainly fight them in our own streets someday.

My daily battle rhythm remains fairly constant which allows me time to synchronize all intelligence plans, collection, analysis, and targeting to achieve a synergy that leads to capturing or killing more terrorists and insurgents in a city of 7 million citizens. We work seven days a week, and each of us put in 16-18 hour days trying to stay a step ahead of the various adversaries we face. To date we have been highly successful but as in all

insurgencies, we find the enemy's ability to rejuvenate its ranks remains strong, consequently there is a never ending supply of bad guys here. We are dealing with several issues here on different levels that complicate our challenges on a daily basis; this is a dynamic environment that experiences change in the politics, economics, sectarianism, and our various (terrorist, foreigners, Sunni & Shia) adversaries. The culture has dynamics of its own having to deal with two sects that truly hate one another; Sunni and Shia (previously oppressed 65% of the population) have killed each other for so long here that vendettas and revenge rule the day and drive numerous sectarian murders/killings each day. Today, we have allowed the Shia majority to have their freedom from oppression and they are taking full advantage of the situation and are killing as many Sunni Baathists as possible. We are at point now, that Iraq not only has an insurgency with Terrorist and Sunni but has also added the challenging dimension of sectarianism and the struggle for power and control of Iraq's future. Consequently, we find ourselves in conflict with not only the Sunni rejectionist bloc, but also the Shia militias that are involved in murdering and killing civilians—highly challenging to produce Intel for commanders as our problem has become more complicated both militarily and politically as the Shia militia (Jaish al Mahdi/JAM) is aligned with Muqtada Al Sadr who is well connected in the majority run national government. We have now entered a true 4th Generation conflict where military and politics are intertwined with the insurgency. Needless to say, US Soldiers and Marines are caught in the middle of this complex situation as we attempt to reduce the sectarian killings and defeat the insurgency, and sadly Soldiers sacrifice life and limb as attacks continue against Coalition Forces.

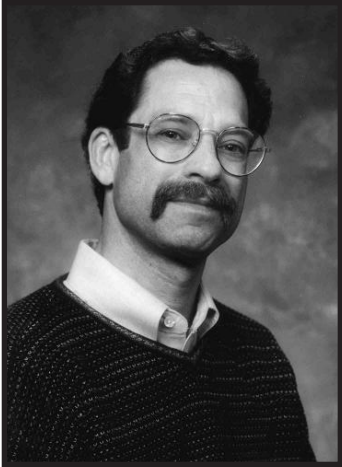
The days here are hot with temperatures reaching just over 120 degrees at times, but it's a dry heat . Recently the temperature has dropped into the low 100s which is an amazing difference as fall has arrived. We have interesting weather patterns as shmals and haboobs blow in and create major dust storms for limited periods of time. These weather conditions create various hardships for the Soldiers and equipment and impact operations. These conditions make it strenuous on my daily runs in the afternoon, but I have overcome the temperature and am doing well. They feed us well here as the variety of food is very good. I live in a small trailer shared with another colonel which is much more accommodating than the conditions I experienced in Afghanistan. I share an office with three other officers and we get along well in our daily activities.

We are doing well as we take this tour of duty one day at a time. The one year tour is going by quickly and I hope things here are stabilized sufficiently to redeploy on time. I look forward to my return to my family and continuing my work in the Pentagon and then attending the Senior Service College (Harvard JFK) next summer.

All my Best !
Your Friend,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Lee". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Director of Intelligence for Multi-National Division Baghdad



The 2006 Lebanon War and the Israeli Peace Forces

By Joel Beinin

Those who remember Israel's 1982 war against Lebanon will recall many similarities with the 2006 war: brutal attacks against civilians; widespread destruction of homes and civilian infrastructure; indiscriminate air bombardments; use of cluster bombs, etc. There was also an Israeli-Jewish opposition to both wars. In 1982 that opposition became massive and mainstream. But in 2006 the opposition, though persistent and militant, remained politically marginal.

On the first day of the 1982 invasion of Lebanon, about 200 protestors gathered to express their opposition. Within weeks their numbers reached 10,000. These early demonstrations were organized by radical Israelis, many of them non-Zionists. Following the Sabra and

Shatila massacre, on September 25, hundreds of thousands demonstrated in Tel Aviv demanding the resignations of Prime Minister Menachem Begin and Defense Minister Ariel Sharon and establishment of a judicial commission to investigate the massacre. Most of these demonstrators considered themselves Zionists. Many were supporters of Peace Now, the largest Zionist peace organization.

An investigative commission headed by Supreme Court President Yitzhak Kahan was appointed. It concluded that Sharon "disregarded the danger of acts of vengeance and bloodshed by the Phalangists against the population of the refugee camps" and recommended that he resign or that the prime minister should dismiss him. One peace activist, Emil Grunzweig, was murdered by a right wing extremist as he was leaving a demonstration that demanded implementation of the commission's report.

Similarly, 200 people protested in Tel Aviv against the bombing of Lebanon hours after it began on July 13, 2006. Four days later, 600-800 people marched through the streets of Tel Aviv opposing the war. On July 22, about 2,000 people, including many Palestinian Arab citizens of Israel organized by the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality and the National Democratic Alliance, demanded an end to the assault on Lebanon. This demonstration forthrightly repudiated George W. Bush's "Broader Middle East" policy. In addition to calling for the resignation of the prime minister and defense minister demonstrators chanted "We will not kill, we will not die in the name of Zionism" and "We will not die and will not kill in the service of the United States." On August 5, a coalition of several thousand Zionists and non-Zionists demonstrated in Tel Aviv, including former Knesset members of the liberal Zionist Meretz party, Mossi Raz, Naomi Hazan and Ya'el Dayan.

The Coalition of Women for Peace was a dynamic and prominent force against the war. In addition to organizing a demonstration of 1,000 people on July 29, Khulud Badawi, a Palestinian Arab citizen of Israel, and Yana Knopova, a Ukrainian Jewish immigrant, reported over a dozen anti-war demonstrations and vigils led by Israeli women. Their actions inspired international protests, many organized by Jewish groups, in nearly sixty cities around the world. At one such demonstration in San Francisco, Henri Piciotto, a Jew of Lebanese origin and chairman of the board of Jewish Voice for Peace, a national organization with 20,000 members and supporters (www.jewishvoiceforpeace.org), was arrested with sixteen others.

During the war one Israeli officer was jailed for refusing to deploy to Lebanon. Three more were jailed for refusing to serve in the West Bank. Others evaded service without being charged in military courts. Yonatan Shapiro, a helicopter pilot who was dismissed from the air force reserves after he refused to serve in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, told the London *Observer* that he spoke with several F-16 pilots who intentionally missed their assigned targets in Lebanon because they feared civilians were present.

However, unlike in 1982, the Israeli peace movement has not become a mass phenomenon in 2006. What explains this difference? One element of the explanation is that Israel's devastation of Lebanon was coordinated with and received unlimited support from the Bush administration, while Europe stood idly by. The other element is the nature of Israel's peace forces.

Some Israeli Jews have consistently criticized their government and sought peace and reconciliation with the Palestinians and their Arab neighbors. But criticism of Israeli militarism was politically marginal until 1982. The peace movement which emerged in response to the invasion of Lebanon gathered strength and peaked during the first Palestinian intifada of 1987-91. During this decade hundreds of soldiers and officers refused to serve in Lebanon or the occupied Palestinian territories. Some served repeated jail sentences. The many acts of solidarity with the Lebanese and Palestinian people included meetings with official representatives of the PLO, which were then illegal.

The peace movement became a mass phenomenon in the 1980s because many Israelis who considered themselves Zionists were shocked by their government's excesses in Lebanon and the occupied Palestinian territories. Because the first Lebanon war was conducted by a Likud government led by Menachem Begin, many Labor Zionists – kibbutz and trade union members, most of the intelligentsia, the women's movement, and others – believed that this was not "their" war. Consequently, they could oppose it without raising fundamental questions, even as radical acts like refusing military service challenged the central position of the army in Israeli society, culture, and politics.

Opposing the Lebanon war brought many Zionist peace activists to call for negotiations with the PLO and a Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, as well as withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon. They sought peace treaties that guaranteed recognition and security for Israel in exchange for an Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab territories. But they did not understand that the 1979 peace treaty with Egypt was unacceptable to the Arab world because it ignored the Palestine question and facilitated Israel's invasion of Lebanon. Disappointed with the Egyptian and Arab response to that treaty, they adopted a concept of peace in which Israel would live separately from its Arab neighbors in its own European world. "Us here, them there," as prime ministers Yitzhak Rabin and Ehud Barak said regarding the Palestinians.

The Zionist peace forces were overjoyed when Israel and the PLO signed the 1993 Oslo Declaration of Principles, even though the agreement did not guarantee creation of a Palestinian state or full Israeli withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967. They rarely noted that during the 1990s the number of Israeli settlers in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem increased by over 70 percent. Few except the women's Checkpoint Watch group monitored the many Israeli checkpoints established after 1991, which subjected Palestinians to daily humiliation and impeded economic activity. Largely because of the checkpoints, there was no "peace dividend" for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Instead, their standard of living deteriorated.

The Zionist peace camp did not think that leaving the extent of the Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the political nature of the Palestinian entity to be established in the evacuated territories, the future of Israeli settlements and settlers, the status of Jerusalem, and the refugee question to "final status" talks was problematic. Many believed that the PLO would eventually drop the refugee issue altogether, since Israel has never, except briefly at the 1949 Rhodes talks, agreed to the return of a significant number of refugees.

Consequently, the Zionist peace forces were surprised and even outraged that Yasser Arafat rejected Ehud Barak's terms for peace at the June 2000 Camp David summit. They uncritically embraced Israel's propaganda campaign depicting the Palestinians as responding to Barak's "generous offer" with violence. Ignoring all evidence to the contrary, they believed that Yasser Arafat never intended to sign a peace treaty with Israel and was "not a partner for peace." This was all the more so regarding Hamas. They forgot that Israel had refused to negotiate with Abu Mazen despite his being approved as Arafat's successor as president of the Palestinian Authority by both Israel and the United States.

Therefore, most of the Zionist elements of the Israeli peace movement arrived at the 2006 Lebanon war in a state of myopia and historical amnesia. Saddam Hussein's Scud missiles during the 1991 Gulf War, the second *intifada*, and the January 2006 electoral victory of Hamas frightened them into accepting tactics of the army that they would previously have denounced. Israel was more united during the first month of the 2006 Lebanon war than at any time since the 1973 Arab-Israeli War.

The prominent personalities and organizations of the Zionist peace movement supported the assault on Lebanon. At a Peace Now meeting on July 24 the movement's leaders rejected a proposal to demand a cease fire. They argued that Peace Now supporters would not understand such a position and that a cease fire might help Hezbollah. On August 6, when it was becoming obvious that Israel's war objectives could not easily be achieved, three leading Zionist novelists who had earlier supported the war – Amos Oz, A. B. Yehoshua, and David Grossman – called for a cease fire.

Ignoring their leaders, grass roots activists of Peace Now and Meretz called for a “Zionist demonstration” to demand a cease-fire on August 11. Only as the war was about to end did the “leaders” adopt this demand. Widespread reports of a large land offensive to reach the Litani River revived the Zionist peace forces. They rejected this as a maneuver by the army high command to give the false appearance of a victory.

Why did the leaders of the Zionist peace movement refuse to oppose a totally unnecessary war? It should have been easy to oppose such a vicious assault directed primarily at Lebanese civilians. It was planned months before Hezbollah captured two Israeli soldiers and killed three others on July 12, 2006. The two prisoners could have been retrieved through a prisoner exchange without firing a shot. The purpose of the war was purely militaristic – to restore Israeli deterrence.

The explanation is the unique character of Israel's peace movement. The non-Zionist elements share the common values of progressive movements around the world. The Zionist elements are constantly caught in the contradiction of proving that they are loyal and patriotic Israelis while their human consciences rebel against the acts of their government. They are proud of serving in the Israeli army, especially as officers in elite combat units. They have great difficulty believing that the army high command and the many retired officer-politicians and others who see the world through a gun sight have no regard at all for Arab lives and not much more for Jewish lives. They oppose wars in principle and may understand that force will not provide Israel with security or resolve the conflicts with its neighbors. But they lack the political and moral courage to oppose a war in progress.

Israel is experiencing a multi-faceted crisis. Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's popularity has plummeted. The army high command is in disrepute because of its military failures. The media have attacked Chief-of-Staff Dan Halutz for selling \$28,000 worth of stocks just three hours after the capture of the Israeli soldiers on July 12. He is under pressure to resign. Ehud Olmert's plan for a unilateral Israeli redeployment from the West Bank is dead. The days of his government are probably numbered, and his *Kadima* party will likely experience a sharp decline, since it has no other program.

The intimate link of the Zionist peace movement to the Israeli military gives some small hope that the war may lead to a positive political change in Israel. Israel's military failure in the 1973 Arab-Israeli War broke the taboo of criticizing the army, redrew the political map, and established the foundations for a mass peace movement a decade later. That movement failed to meet the challenges of the second Palestinian intifada and the 2006 Lebanon war. A quarter of a century of experience may produce a better outcome. Either way, this will offer little consolation to the Lebanese people. They have paid an enormous price in loss of human life, social ruin, and physical devastation for the possibility that Israel may learn a lesson.

Joel Beinin has taught Middle East history at Stanford University since 1983. He lived in Israel in 1965-66, 1970-73, 1987, 1988, 1993, and 1993 and Egypt in 1969, 1980-81, 1985, 1986, and 1993. In 2002 he served as President of the Middle East Studies Association of North America.



Understanding Somali Islamism

By Anouar Boukhars

The security situation in Somalia flared up dramatically in the past few weeks, following a number of acts of provocation between Mogadishu's newly-formed coalition of warlords, dubbed the Alliance for the Restoration of Peace and Counter-Terrorism, and gunmen allied to the Islamic Courts Union. As these provocations escalated into fierce clashes, hundreds of people have been wounded and some 120 people killed. There is widespread concern that Somalia is rapidly becoming a new proxy battleground between Washington—the warlords' alleged supporter and benefactor—and what the UN Security Council describes as “Islamic extremists.” The United Nations has warned of the rising influence of Islamic radicals as a “third force” in the country, competing with the transitional government and an alliance of warlord groups that constantly

violate the current arms embargo and enrich themselves from selling fishing licenses and exporting charcoal. Rumors abound that the fear of a rising and formidable Islamist threat has pushed Washington to side with the warlords, who have portrayed themselves as capable of defeating the Islamists and their alleged foreign al-Qaeda members.

The challenges ahead are formidable and the threat of jihadi Islamism is real (Terrorism Monitor, January 12). Jihadi Islamism in Somalia has a history and a character of its own. Attempts to lump all Islamic movements in Somalia together as an inherently violent monolith are reductive and fail to take account of the diversity of Islamist movements. There are major differences between Islamists like Jama'at al-Tabligh and the Salafiyya Jadiida, whose motives are non-political and missionary in character, and those that have religious political motives like Harakaat al-Islah and Majma' 'Ulimadda Islaamka ee Soomaaliya, whose goal is either the adoption of a Sharia-based system of government or the application of a certain interpretation of Islam within a modern, democratic framework of government. The third group of Islamists in Somalia are Salafi-Jihadists like al-Itihaad al-Islaami and the new al-Qaeda-linked jihadi network of terror led by Aden Hashi 'Ayro, a protégé of Sheikh Hassan Aweys, the once notorious leader of al-Itihaad's military wing. Somali Islamism is thus composed of three distinct types of activism: political, missionary and jihadi.

Rise of Somali Islamism

Somali Islamism can be traced to a common source, the Waxda al-Shabaab al-Islaami and the Jama'at al-Ahl al-Islaami (also known as the al-Ahli group). These Muslim Brotherhood-inspired groups developed in the 1960s and strove to be key players in aligning with the state and the setting of its mixed ideological agenda [1]. The rise to power of Mohamed Siad Barre in 1969, however, deprived the Islamists of their status. Al-Ahli was forced to disband and al-Wahdat and other Islamist groups went underground or fled to the oil-rich states of the Gulf to join the Somali diaspora.

By the 1980s, the Somali Islamist movement had grown considerably. Nevertheless, it was the ouster of the Barre dictatorship that gave a major boost to Islamic associations and organizations. This growth has been less linear and more of a hybrid product of multiple intellectual traditions. Artificial constructs of Somali Islamism as a linear descendant of one particular intellectual tradition ignore the internal and historical variations of the Islamic movement in Somalia. Even when looking at political Islam and not the religion, the differences between Islamists in religious views, political conceptions and social orientations should not be overshadowed by lumping all Islamic movements together as an organizing principle in the war on terrorism.

I. Political Islamism

A. Harakat al-Islah

Harakat al-Islah originated in the late 1970s as a loose network of affiliated underground groups [2]. Today, al-Islah publicly professes its commitment to the basic tenets of democracy and cultural pluralism. Its stated commitment to this philosophy of inclusion is enshrined in the organization's social make-up and mode of action. The organization's forward-looking views on religion and politics and attempts to reconcile the tenets of Islam with the modern notions of democracy are apparent in its internal structure, where members of its “High Council” are elected by the Majlis

al-Shura for a maximum of two terms. Al-Islah's leading members include the organization's chairman, Dr. Ali Sheikh, president of Mogadishu University [3]. Prior to the demise of the Barre regime, the organization operated as a clandestine integrated structure of clusters under the leadership of Sheikh Mohamed Garyare, Dr. Ali Sheikh and Dr. Ibrahim Dusuqi. With the overthrow of the Barre dictatorship and hence the elimination of the organization's main enemy, al-Islah came out of the shadows and was operated exclusively for the promotion of social and humanitarian activities. Al-Islah members play prominent roles in the state's educational apparatuses. Their domination of Mogadishu University and other educational institutions like the Formal Private Education Network in Somalia (FPENS) has prompted fears that the organization is laying the groundwork for the gradual Islamization of society by using education as a tool to propagate its worldview and recruit cadres [4].

Al-Islah has always been suspected by Somali and foreign security services of involvement in radicalism and association with al-Itihaad. There is much evidence, however, of a power struggle between and within al-Islah and al-Itihaad's competing ideological authorities about the relationship between religion and politics. There are also ideological differences and strong divergences on strategies, tactics and religious interpretations. Al-Islah's leaders, for example, condemn violence and takfir (declaring as an infidel) as un-Islamic and counterproductive. They have long called for building a shared future that transcends the extremism and bigotry embodied in al-Itihaad's and Takfir wal-Hijra's Salafi-Jihadist ideology [5].

B. Ahlu Sunna wal Jama'a

Ahlu Sunna wal Jama'a (ASWJ) is another modern Islamist group created in 1991 as an offshoot from Majma' to counter the influence of the most radical Islamist trends. The movement brings together politically motivated sheikhs whose primary goal is to unify the Sufi community under one unified leadership capable of consolidating the powers of the three primary Sufi Tariqas—the Qadiriyya, Salihyya and Ahmadiyya—into one front whose sole mission is the rejuvenation of the “traditionalist” interpretation of Islam and the de-legitimization of the beliefs and political views of al-Ittihad and other radical Islamic movements.

C. Majma' 'Ulimadda Islaamka ee Soomaaliya

Majma' 'Ulimadda Islaamka ee represents, as its name denotes, an assembly of Islamic scholars who follow the Shafi'i madhhab and whose main goal is the establishment of a Sharia-based government. The organization has been led by Sheikh Ahmed Abdi Dhi'isow since the death of its founding chairman, Sheikh Mohamed Ma'alim Hassan, in 2001 [6].

There are differences of views among Majma' 'Ulimadda Islaamka ee, Ahlu Sunna wal Jama'a and Harakat al-Islah about the nature of the state, but a general consensus seems to have developed among the different factions about the need to apply a certain interpretation of Islam within a modern framework of government.

II. Missionary Islamism

Missionary Islamists largely eschew political activism—even if their brand of activism has some political objectives and implications. The movement is represented by Salafiyya Jadiida (the new Salafis) and the most structured movement in Somalia, Jama'at al-Tabligh.

A. Salafiyya Jadiida

The Salafiyya Jadiida current is best exemplified by Sheikh Ali Wajis, an example of a prominent Salafi ideologue who has gone from supporting and briefly leading al-Itihaad to opposing its violent dogmatic theology. Wajis' qualified repudiation of the irrational jihadi ideology of Salafi-Jihadists and his re-examination of its theoretical position in light of a rational reassessment of Islamic rules of warfare and the prevailing realities on the ground exemplify the fractures rocking the jihadi and Islamist movements. It is also an encouraging sign of the debate occurring within the new Salafis and Salafi-Jihadist circles about the need for contextualized understanding of the issues of jihad and political violence.

B. Jama'at al-Tabligh

The Tabligh movement, launched in India in 1926 by the Jama'at al-Da'wa wal-Tabligh (Group for Preaching and Propagation), as an apolitical, quietist movement constitutes the largest group of religious proselytizers in Somalia. Tablighi missionaries' aggressive and dedicated peaceful and apolitical preaching tactics are part of the reason for the explosive growth of Tablighi sympathizers and supporters. This notable success in recruitment and significant increase in membership left the movement wide open to infiltration and manipulation by radical groups. Out of the 500 to 700 foreign sheikhs present in Somalia, many are from the Arab world but they also come from Afghanistan, Pakistan, Chechnya and other countries [7]. Given the size and heterogeneity of the movement, its infiltration by jihadi elements should come as no surprise. What is troubling, however, is the denial of the movement's leadership of any such infiltration despite mounting evidence of the group's involvement in murdering foreign aid workers in Somaliland. The movement, as the International Crisis Group reported, "lacks any system of screening its members for prior involvement in jihadism and so is poorly equipped to respond to allegations that some may be involved in fomenting extremism and violence" [8].

Jihadi Islamism

The jihadi tendency is the third type of Islamic activism. Unlike the political and missionary current, jihadi activists are committed to violence and armed resistance against what they perceive as the continuing onslaught of the enemies of Islam. This form of Islamic activism has very few sympathizers, although it is actively involved in trying to recruit or infiltrate missionary organizations like Salafiyya Jadiida and the Tabligh movement. The Jihadi movement has had its fortunes ebb and flow during the last decade [9].

Conclusion

Since the collapse of the government in 1991, the Islamic activist movement has expanded throughout Somalia. Islamic organizations like Harakat al-Islah are entrenched at both Somali universities and major educational centers; popular sympathy for the movements appears strong. It would be a grave oversimplification, however, to paint Islamism as a fixed ideological monolith and a dangerous and destabilizing force. There is still a disposition among some observers of Somali Islamism to identify Islamic activism with extremism or terrorism. This mistaken belief derives, in large part, from a failure to recognize the clear distinctions between different forms of Islamisms and appreciate not only the opposition of the majority of Somalis toward terrorism as a form of political action, but the fragmentation that plagues the jihadi and Islamist movements.

By far, the most dangerous militant groups are those composed of jihadi Islamists, such as the now-defunct al-Itihaad al-Islaami and the new, elusive independent jihadi network headed by Aden Hashi 'Ayro. Other Islamist entities like the Islamic Courts Union, whose gunmen are involved in the current fighting with the alliance of warlords, "have more complex agendas," and "appear to exist for chiefly pragmatic purposes." The danger remains, however, that as the courts grow in influence and strength, they may begin "to advocate an increasingly ideological agenda—one that jihadi Islamist elements in the court system will no doubt attempt to define" [10].

The best way for the United States to fight jihadi Islamism in the horn of Africa and sway the hearts and minds of Somalis is to recalibrate its approach. Without public support, the United States would fail to make more than a modest dent in jihadi forces. The threat of terrorism from Somalia remains a major concern for the United States and its East African allies. This danger, however, can only be effectively tackled through the establishment of a legitimate and functional government in Somalia. The temptation to empower one faction over another or deploy foreign troops in the country might only exacerbate the true source of the problem.

This article first appeared in Terrorism Monitor, Volume 4, Issue 10 (May 18, 2006). Anouar Boukhars is visiting Professor at Wilberforce University.

Notes

1. Roland Marchal, "Islamic political dynamics in the Somali civil war," in Alex de Waal (ed.), *Islamism and Its Enemies in the Horn of Africa* (Indiana University Press, 2004), p. 119.
2. Andre Le Sage, "Al-Islah in Somalia: An analysis of modern political Islam," unpublished manuscript, pp. 7-8.
3. Alain Charret, "Mouvements islamiques somaliens soupçonnés d'être liés au terrorisme international," *Les nouvelles d'Addis* 8ème année—bimestriel—n°51—January 15-March 15, 2006.
4. Mogadishu University "instructs several thousand students in seven faculties—four taught mainly in English and three in Arabic. A significant proportion of the student body is female." ICG Report "Somalia's Islamists," Africa Report N. 100—December 12, 2005, p. 16.
5. Abdurahman M. Abdullahi, "Recovering Somali state: The Islamist factor," unpublished draft.
6. Marc-Antoine Pérouse de Montclos, "Des ONG sans gouvernement: mouvements islamiques et vellétités de substitution à l'État dans la Somalie en guerre," Colloque organisé dans le cadre du programme MOST (UNESCO), en partenariat avec l'IRD, le CEDEJ, le CEPS d'Al Ahram. March 29-31, 2000 au Caire.
7. ICG Report "Somalia's Islamists," p. 19.



Illusion and Reality

By: Flynt Leverett

(Former Bush State department foreign policy advisor Flynt Leverett reviews the failures of the Bush experiment in the Middle East -- how and why it has gone wrong. Leverett also offers a recovery strategy for Bush or -- more likely -- his successor)

On the evening of September 11, 2001, I was one of a small group of State Department staffers called in to confer with Secretary of State Colin Powell and work through the night to produce a diplomatic strategy for assembling an international coalition to destroy Osama bin Laden's base in Afghanistan. Powell took this strategy to the White House on the morning of September

12, and it became the blueprint for marshaling international support for Operation Enduring Freedom, launched months later.

In the weeks following 9-11, my colleagues and I at State developed a comprehensive diplomatic strategy to support the war on terrorism. This strategy envisioned, beyond a military campaign in Afghanistan, a sustained global effort to "wrap up" bin Laden's operational networks and affiliates in the Middle East and elsewhere. Iraq would continue to be contained. As other state sponsors of terrorism like Iran and Syria came to the United States to offer assistance against al-Qaeda and the Taliban, that help would be accepted; this tactical cooperation would then be used as a platform for persuading these states to terminate their own involvement with anti-Israeli terrorist groups in return for a positive strategic relationship with Washington. The United States would also develop a credible plan for resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In March 2003, the invasion of Iraq clearly committed America to a very different strategy, aimed at creating what President Bush described as a "new Middle East." The main elements of this alternative strategy were diametrically opposed to the strategy my colleagues and I had outlined a year and a half earlier. Now:

* Beyond Afghanistan, "rogue" regimes were to be uprooted, either by military force (as in Iraq) or through diplomatic isolation and political pressure (as the administration has tried with Iran and Syria). The United States would not offer "carrots" to such states to induce positive changes; diplomatic engagement would be limited to "sticks."

* Traditional "allies" like Egypt and Saudi Arabia were also to be fundamentally changed, through U.S.-mandated political transformation. Such transformation would bring a wider range of elites into these countries' decision making; these elites would be more focused on internal reform and grateful to the United States for their empowerment, which would improve the regional security environment.

* In White House meetings, I heard President Bush say confidently that democratization would even facilitate a settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict by shaping a Palestinian leadership more focused on internal governance (i.e., providing services such as collecting garbage) and less “hung up” on final-status issues like territory, settlements, and Jerusalem.

Three and a half years after the invasion of Iraq and five years after 9-11, the outbreak of armed conflict between Israel and radical groups in the Palestinian territories and Lebanon has revealed how badly the president’s chosen Middle East strategy has damaged the interests of the United States and its allies in the region. The current conflict -- which comes alongside a growing likelihood of strategic failure in Iraq -- shows the negative consequences of the administration’s disdain for diplomatic engagement with problematic but pivotal players in the region. It is far from clear that the administration or, sadly, opposition Democrats will learn the right lessons from this episode. If they do not, the United States will likely suffer further damage to its position in the Middle East, with dangerous implications for America’s ability to protect its interests and ensure the long-term security of Israel

The Realist Legacy

The basic flaw in the Bush administration’s Middle East strategy is that it departs from the essential propositions of foreign-policy realism. In his days as the principal architect of American foreign policy under Presidents Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford, Henry Kissinger established a paradigm for U.S. grand strategy in the Middle East. In this paradigm, American policy should seek always to empower moderates and marginalize radicals. The best way to do this was through careful management of the region’s balance of power, primarily through diplomatic means. The essence of such diplomacy is “carrots-and-sticks” engagement -- credibly threatening negative consequences for regional actors who work against U.S. goals, but also promising strategically significant benefits in exchange for cooperation.

This paradigm guided U.S. policy in the Middle East throughout Kissinger’s tenure in office and through subsequent administrations. At the height of the Cold War, for example, the realist paradigm guided American efforts across three administrations to draw Egypt out of its alliance with the Soviet Union and into a strategic partnership with the United States, which provided subsequent administrations a dramatically improved platform for projecting political influence and, when necessary, military power in the region. By taking Egypt out of the Arab-Israeli military equation through the U.S.-brokered Camp David accords in 1978, the realist paradigm also fundamentally strengthened Israel’s security by rendering impossible a recurrence of a generalized Arab-Israeli war like those of 1948, 1967, and 1973. Similar logic animated America’s ongoing strategic partnership with Saudi Arabia and, after the first Gulf War, the launch of a more comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace process at the 1991 Madrid conference. Although the Clinton administration’s efforts to broker peace treaties between Israel and the Palestinians and Israel and Syria in the late 1990s proved unsuccessful, the peace process nonetheless bolstered the American and Israeli positions in the region by establishing conceptual frameworks for an ultimate resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. It also provided a practical framework for keeping a lid on “hot spots” such as southern Lebanon and, as a result of Israeli-Palestinian security cooperation in the late 1990s, significantly reducing the incidence of anti-Israeli terrorism by groups such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

The Bush Experiment

The current Bush administration argues that 9-11 exposed the Middle Eastern “stability” provided by the realist paradigm as an illusion. The region’s radicals -- whether running “rogue” regimes or operating through non-state movements -- were too threatening to be managed through diplomatic engagement and long-term political processes. And so-called “moderate” regimes in the Arab world, while they might cooperate with the United States militarily and strategically, indirectly encouraged radical forces by refusing to liberalize internally; in some cases, these regimes seemed to directly support radicals through internal security strategies that sought to buy off domestic opponents by quietly funding their activities abroad.

To address what it perceived as the shortcomings of realism, the Bush administration articulated its alternative approach to the Middle East. The conceptual discontinuities between the Bush approach and that of its predecessors make the record of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East in the five years since 9-11 as close to an “experiment” as one is likely to get in the indeterminate realm of strategic analysis. The results of this experiment so far have been devastating: Over the last five years, U.S. policy in the Middle East has emboldened radicals and weakened moderates.

The Middle East is today more unstable than at any point in the post-Cold War period, and there is no evidence to suggest that this instability will give rise to a more secure and prosperous region in the future. Look at the trends: With regard to rogue regimes, Saddam may be gone, but Iraq has become a greater source of regional instability than it was during the last years of his rule. Iran’s influence in the region is growing and the Iranian leadership is increasingly inclined to use that influence to threaten U.S. interests. Despite the forced withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon last year, the regime of President Bashar al-Assad has actually strengthened its grip on power and bolstered its support for Hamas and Hizbullah. The administration’s biggest success in taming a regional rogue -- Libya’s abandonment of its weapons of mass destruction programs and ties to terrorists -- was achieved through traditional “carrots-and-sticks” engagement with the Quaddafi regime, an idiosyncratic exception to the broader pattern.

Regarding democratization, the administration’s three examples of U.S.-engineered democratic empowerment in the region -- Afghanistan, Iraq, and Lebanon -- are all basket cases. Hamas’ electoral victory earlier this year has invalidated the administration’s “garbage collection” model for lowering Palestinian national aspirations and encouraging Palestinian acceptance of final-status terms less demanding of Israel than those outlined by President Bill Clinton at the end of his tenure. There is no evidence that democracy reduces the incidence of terrorism, and ample evidence from places like Egypt and Saudi Arabia that holding more open elections in most Arab societies would produce governments that are more anti-American and less reformist than incumbent “authoritarians.”

The Current Crisis

Seen against this backdrop, the current conflict represents a deliberate attempt by a loose coalition of some of the Middle East’s more problematic actors -- Hamas, Hizbullah, the al-Assad regime in Damascus, and hard-line elements in the Iranian power structure -- to re-radicalize the Arab-Israeli arena. The conflict began on June 25, when Hamas militants kidnapped an Israeli soldier from inside “Green Line” Israel. The operation -- which was ordered by Hamas’ external branch, lead by Khalid Mishal in Damascus -- grew out of a competition for influence within Hamas between Mishal and Ismail Haniya, leader of the Palestinian Authority’s Hamas government elected in January. Before the outbreak of violence, Haniya and other Hamas leaders in the territories had begun to explore ways to moderate the party’s posture toward Israel (an effort reflected in a recent op-ed by Haniya in *The Washington Post*). These efforts had no effect on official thinking in Israel or Washington, but they did prompt Mishal to initiate an anti-Israeli terrorist operation calculated to undermine Haniya and assert his own primacy.

By declining to provide avenues for engagement with the international community that might have been politically plausible for Haniya, the Bush administration left him vulnerable to pressure from more extreme competitors. Israel’s military response to Mishal’s provocation -- including the arrest of Palestinian cabinet members -- has further weakened Haniya’s position, but in ways not likely to help Israel in the long run. On July 10, two weeks into the conflict, Mishal gave a high-profile press conference in Damascus, at which he suggested that he, not Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas or Haniya, is the true leader of the Palestinian national movement.

Two days after Mishal’s press conference, Hizbullah conducted operations in the Sheb’a Farms area along the Israeli-Lebanese border that resulted in the deaths of eight Israeli soldiers and the kidnapping of another two. Hizbullah claimed that the operations were intended to obtain “bargaining chips” to swap for Lebanese prisoners held by Israel. In pre-9-11 days, the disposition of prisoners would have been handled through political channels -- primarily, U.S. engagement with Syria and third-party engagement with Iran and Hizbullah itself. But with the Bush administration’s refusal to engage directly or indirectly with such “bad actors,” there were no operative political channels for dealing with the issue. And

with the launching of Israel's military campaign in Gaza, Hizbullah's leader, Hassan Nasrallah, had an opening to link his group's "resistance" activities with the Palestinian cause in a manner that has greatly enhanced his regional standing. Once Hizbullah struck, Israel had no choice but to respond militarily, even if the strategic logic of its response is highly dubious.

Neither Hamas' external branch nor Hizbullah would have undertaken such provocative initiatives without approval from Syria and Iran. For al-Assad, the operations served to remind the United States and Israel that neither country could solve its security problems in the region without a strategic understanding with Syria. In the post-9-11 period, al-Assad has never been willing simply to accept the Bush administration's demands, insisting that U.S.-Syrian accommodation provide strategic gains to Damascus as well as Washington -- effectively asking for a road map for normalizing Syria's relationship with the United States and its place in the region. As long as Washington gives al-Assad no incentive to cooperate, he will continue to work against U.S. interests.

In Iran, support for Hamas and Hizbullah's escalatory moves is a way for the most hard-line elements in the Islamic republic's power structure -- President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and the Revolutionary Guard, which is closely linked to Ahmadinejad's Abadgaran political movement -- to push back against Tehran's move toward multilateral nuclear talks including the United States. The reassertion of a more radical line in Iranian foreign policy is one of the most profoundly negative potential consequences of the Bush administration's refusal to pursue "carrots-and-sticks" engagement with Tehran during the last five years, even though it had opportunities to do so.

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei has supported the move toward nuclear negotiations with the United States. While Khamenei is unquestionably conservative on many domestic issues, on foreign policy he is a traditional Persian nationalist prepared to think about Iran's national interests in pragmatic terms. During the tenure of reformist President Mohammed Khatami (1997-2005), Khamenei clearly worked against Khatami's efforts to liberalize Iranian society, but endorsed Khatami's many notable changes in the Islamic republic's foreign policy, such as an opening to Europe and rapprochement with Saudi Arabia and other Gulf Arab states. In the aftermath of the 9-11 attacks, Khamenei approved Iranian cooperation with the United States, including a direct and authoritative diplomatic channel, to unseat the Taliban. Iranian diplomats who dealt with U.S. counterparts during this period indicated that there was interest in Tehran in using this cooperation to effect a broader opening to the United States. In 2003 -- when the Islamic republic was not yet spinning centrifuges and enriching uranium -- Khamenei sought to initiate a diplomatic process aimed at resolving differences between the two nations. The Bush administration consistently refused to respond.

After Ahmadinejad took office last year, Khamenei took steps to limit the new president's influence on the nuclear issue and the broader question of relations with the United States. Ahmadinejad and his allies have been looking for a chance to reassert a harder line in Iran's foreign policy; the current escalation in the Arab-Israeli arena has given them that chance. Even if pragmatists are able to steer Iran into multilateral nuclear talks, the Bush administration's continued refusal to contemplate a U.S.-Iranian "grand bargain" means that the talks cannot succeed. And, as Iranian nuclear development proceeds, the quality of any deal that Washington might ultimately be able to negotiate with Tehran will continue to decline.

From the beginning of the current crisis, the Bush administration has clung to the increasingly discredited conceptual foundations of its approach to the Middle East. The president decided to stand back while Israel's military offensive against Hizbullah proceeded, hoping that, by weakening Hizbullah's military and political base in Lebanon, conditions would be established to bring about Hizbullah's disarmament and, by extension, deliver a blow to Iran and Syria. But it is evident that Israeli military action will not achieve these aims. Hizbullah is not some foreign entity, imposed on Lebanese society by puppet masters in Damascus and Tehran; it is a sectarian political and social movement with enormous popular support among Lebanese Shia, Lebanon's largest and most disenfranchised communal group. Disarming Hizbullah or moving it to the north would require the removal of the Shia population from southern Lebanon.

A Recovery Strategy

To repair the American position in the Middle East, the United States must reject the false premises of the Bush approach. The most dangerous illusion guiding recent U.S. policy toward the Middle East is that stability somehow “caused” 9-11.

Under current circumstances, a realist strategy for restoring American leadership in the Middle East would include at least five elements:

- * The United States needs to widen its approach to defusing the current crisis to include direct engagement with both Syria and Iran. To facilitate a cease-fire and introduction of a multinational force in southern Lebanon, Washington should recognize that Hizbullah’s disarmament would come about only as part of a broader political settlement in the region.

- * The United States should convey its interest in a broader strategic dialogue with the al-Assad regime in Damascus, with the aim of re-establishing U.S.-Syrian cooperation on important regional issues and with the promise of significant strategic benefits for Syria clearly on the table.

- * Washington should indicate its willingness to pursue a “grand bargain” with Iran, in which the Islamic republic would accept restraints on its nuclear activities and abandon its support for the terrorist activities of Hamas, Islamic Jihad, and Hizbullah in return for U.S. commitments not to use force to change Iran’s borders or form of government, to lift unilateral sanctions, and to normalize bilateral relations.

- * The United States and key partners should articulate a more substantive vision for a two-state solution to the Palestinian question, including parameters for resolving key final-status issues that would meet the minimum requirements of both sides. This vision should incorporate the Saudi-initiated Arab League peace plan, which offers normalization of Arab states’ relations with Israel to complement peace treaties that end Israel’s occupation of Palestinian and Syrian territory.

- * While the United States should engage moderate Arab partners more systematically on economic reform and human rights. Washington should drop its insistence on early resort to open electoral processes as a litmus test for “democratization.”

How feasible is the pursuit of such a strategy? Although Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and her team seem sporadically motivated to try to take policy in a more realist direction, their impact remains limited to tactical matters. It is highly unlikely that the administration will alter its basic strategic orientation.

This focuses attention on the role of Democrats as the nation’s “loyal opposition” and whether the party can articulate a “return to realism” in U.S. foreign policy. The party has little to be proud of in the way it has discharged its role on foreign-policy issues. It has endorsed (or acquiesced to) all of the fundamental tenets of Bush’s revisionist approach to the Middle East. Broad support for the Iraq War among congressional Democrats was intellectually legitimated by “experts” like Kenneth Pollack, who wrote a best-selling book using an analytically flawed assessment of the Iraqi WMD threat to argue that going to war against Saddam was the “conservative” option. Similarly, Democrats have not posed a significant challenge to the administration’s emphasis on democratization in its strategy for the war on terrorism or its non-historical approach to the Palestinian issue.

Democrats have fallen into a “soft neoconservatism” that has dulled the party’s voice on foreign policy. Henry Kissinger once observed that the United States is the only country in which the term “realist” is used as a pejorative. The more progressive elements of the Democratic coalition have been especially strident in voicing their antipathy to Kissingerian realism. But it was the 20th century’s greatest Democratic secretary of state, Dean Acheson, who defined a fundamentally realist paradigm for U.S. foreign policy in Europe during the Truman administration that laid the foundations for eventual peaceful victory in the Cold War.

America needs that kind of wisdom about the Middle East today. It is time for Democrats to understand that, when it comes to curbing the threats posed by problematic states like Iran, encouraging reform in strategically important states like Egypt and Saudi Arabia, or ensuring Israel's long-term future, realism has become the truly progressive position on foreign policy.

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THE LONG HAUL IN MOROCCO

By Anouar Boukhars

Steps toward meaningful political reform in the Arab world have stalled, blocked by official changes of heart about the merit of representative democracy in stemming the tide of rising popular disaffection and Islamist jihadism. To be sure, support for democratic principles by the region's rulers has always been ambivalent at best. It is hard to believe that any absolute monarch or president-for-life would willingly agree to implement genuine change that would necessarily entail free and fair elections and constitutional reforms that dilute executive power and empower legislative and judicial branches of government. Even King Mohamed VI of Morocco, well known for his penchant for reforms and repeated rhetorical calls for embracing modernity and democracy, has shown no real taste for the diffusion of power, the structural base of any democratic polity. Despite evidence of democratization and the king's stated noble motivations, the Moroccan political system lacks any meaningful framework of checks and balances.

Morocco is still a quasi-absolute monarchy governed with a mixture of enlightened authoritarianism and relative parliamentary politics. Mohamed VI's endeavors to invent a new ruling bargain that breaks with his father's authoritarian reign yet perpetuates the dominance of the monarchy have succeeded in creating an image of Morocco as a modern and progressive constitutional monarchy. Domestically, however, the king has failed to deliver, leaving a large number of Moroccans impatient for the real political and economic reforms they hoped for when he assumed the throne in 1999. The current generation of young adults still complains of the same old practices of privilege, nepotism and cronyism that have plagued the Moroccan government for decades. Even the much-trumpeted official anti-corruption campaigns have met resistance in the inefficient and corrupt government bureaucracies. The powerlessness of elected institutions has created a suspicion of change and widespread political apathy captured by numerous surveys that show only a small minority of Moroccans trust politicians.

Today, Morocco is at a crossroads: The king can either prolong his father's authoritarian rule in a new guise at his own peril, or he can spearhead serious political reforms, anchored in human development and substantial democratic change. The country desperately needs the cultivation of a genuine nation of law that functions transparently, accountably and independently from the whims of the ruling establishment. This does not mean that the monarchy would necessarily lose its commanding influence. On the contrary, the king can still retain his prestigious role as a national symbol, enterprising power broker and honest arbiter in a democratic system bound by institutional checks and balances and constitutional responsibility of power.

Mohammed VI can be a powerful force for change if he could translate his rhetorical promises and vague endorsements of reform into concrete programs that could open the way for more power diffusion and compromise within the confines of well charted principles of political participation and a mutually agreed-on set of values endorsed by all nonviolent elements of the political spectrum. If constructed in good faith, a comprehensive and negotiated reform plan that openly

embraces all segments of the population committed to democratic principles, including religious tolerance, women's equality and political pluralism, could go a long way toward ensuring a sustainable democratic outcome.

It is in the monarchy's best interests to support such a constructive negotiation framework among the regime loyalists, socialists, conservatives, Islamists and other non-violent opposition groups. It is equally important that the ruling establishment reaches out to the Islamists in all their diversity and resists the temptation to use existing institutional constraints to manipulate and de-legitimize the mainstream Islamist movements who have already agreed to abide by the rules of the political game. There is increasing concern that a number of shanty-town populations will swing over to radical Islamists who reject the democratic process altogether, if the moderate Islamists of the Party of Justice and Development (PJD) prove incapable of participating in the system without being thwarted and discredited by it.

To meet the needs of a predominantly young and restless population, the monarchy needs to reform itself within a framework of laws and plural democratic values. The political parties are in desperate need of reforms as well. They are internally fragmented and unable to forge far-reaching opposition alliances for political transformation. Their aging leadership is perceived as too pliant, complacent and no longer capable of connecting with voters' everyday concerns. There were some recent tentative moves by the small parties of the left to regroup into one bloc called the Rally of the Democratic Left but even this attempt failed to entice the main socialist party into joining the merger. It is imperative for the parties of the left and right to regroup to achieve a working majority.

As Morocco gears up for the 2007 parliamentary elections, its political system faces two major challenges. One is related to the growing apathy and disillusionment of average Moroccans with politicians, the other has to do with political and human rights that are still lagging behind, despite the significant improvement in the status of women and the cultural rights of Berbers. The year 2007 thus represents an opportunity for the creation of a national pact that could help strengthen reforms already in motion and regain the confidence of the electorate.
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