

## Who Speaks for Islam?\*

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## Introduction

Since the events of September 11, 2001 many in the West have come to view the Islamic world with a mixture of fear and hostility. Violent attacks against civilian populations, supposedly sanctioned by Islamic religious doctrine, seem to validate Samuel Huntington's theory of a "clash of civilizations."<sup>1</sup> In the West, Islamic principles, theology, and above all political activity in the name of Islam have become suspect, while traditional schools of learning and the Islamic seminaries, or *madaris*, have come under special scrutiny. There is widespread debate in the West over the training of Islamic clerics and religious leaders, the authority they hold in their societies, and whether they use this authority to promote violence against Western targets.

More and more Westerners, influenced by what they see, hear, and read in the media, have come to believe that it is the most extremist among the Islamists who represent, and speak for, Islam.<sup>2</sup> Lacking an understanding of the intricacies of Muslim societies and the debates and cleavages within them, many Westerners confuse the terms Islamist and fundamentalist with the term *ulama*, the traditional scholars and jurists of Islam.

The confusion about "Who Speaks for Islam?" is also related to the fact that there is no single locus of religious authority within Islam. There are currently multiple groups in a variety of states that simultaneously claim to speak on Islam's behalf. A major purpose of this paper is to identify these groups, including the *ulama* – the scholars of religion who were traditionally considered to be the authentic interpreters of Islamic faith and law. The *ulama* are themselves divided both by the schools of jurisprudence to which they belong and by their political orientations. Beyond the *ulama*, those who claim to

speakers for Islam include leaders of various Muslim states, many of which are products of the twin processes of colonization and de-colonization. Several of these leaders claim to speak on behalf of the Muslim world but often use Islamic discourse to advance the agenda of their state or regime.

Other claims to speak for Islam have been made by a number of Islamist groups that emerged in the second half of the twentieth century. Although these groups represent a relatively recent phenomenon, their ideas are rooted in *salafi* thought that goes back to the latter half of the nineteenth century.<sup>3</sup> Another cluster that claims to speak for Islam is made up of extremist groups that have deviated significantly from the strategies pursued by most Islamist political formations. These extremists include transnational networks that undertake violent terrorist activities in the name of Islam, whereas mainstream Islamists are primarily engaged in advocating social transformation and/or regime change through peaceful means within individual Muslim countries. Finally, more recently, scholars and proponents of what may be called the New *Ijtihad* have begun, however hesitatingly, to assert themselves if not as spokespersons for Islam then as significant voices advocating change in the Muslim world. This paper will analyze each of these claimants in turn.

### **The *Ulama***

The question of who speaks for Islam dates to its classical age, from the death of the Prophet in 632 AD to the end of the Abbasid Caliphate in 1258. Traditionally, the *ulama* and the *fuqaha*, the scholars of jurisprudence, were guardians of the Islamic faith and the leading authorities in religious matters. Their legitimacy rested largely on their partial independence from the state and their dual role of “representing the interests of the

state to the laity and the interests of the laity to the state.”<sup>4</sup> But, even in the classical age, there was no single source of religious authority for the entire Muslim world or even for the territories under the control of the caliphs of Islam. This was in stark contrast to the situation in Western Christendom where religious authority was concentrated in the Papacy until the time of the Reformation in the sixteenth century. The decentralization of religious authority in Islam emerged from the absence of a hierarchically organized clergy capable of acting as the fount of religious authority and scriptural interpretation. Consequently, religious authority in Islam has never been able to project itself as a rival to temporal authority in the way the Papacy has in Western civilization.

There was little attempt during the early centuries of Islam to impose a single body of interpretation, especially in matters of Islamic law. This is also suggested by the fact that there were hardly any wars of religion within the Muslim community, as opposed to the many conflicts within Western Christendom. Tolerance of both diversity within Islam and of other faiths was the rule rather than the exception in the classical period of Islam.

Five *madhahib*, or schools of Islamic jurisprudence (four Sunni, one Shia), were established within the first three centuries of the Islamic era.<sup>†</sup> They were named after the outstanding jurists who were the founders of these schools – the Hanafi, the Shafii, the

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<sup>†</sup> The schism within Islam that resulted in the two grand families of Islamic faith (the majority Sunni and the minority Shia) came about in the early years following the Prophet Muhammad’s death. In 657 the notables of Medina selected Ali ibn Abu Talib, cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet, as the fourth caliph. However, Muawiya, the Umayyad governor of Syria who had been appointed by Uthman, Ali’s predecessor as caliph, refused to recognize Ali’s authority. Those who sided with Ali became known as the Shia (partisans of Ali). The majority who accepted Muawiya’s rule as legitimate became known as the Sunni. For more background on this schism, see Appendix I to this paper. For a detailed rendering of the intricate set of events that led up to the Sunni-Shia division, see Marshall G. S. Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam, Volume 1: The Classical Age of Islam*, reprint edition (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1977), pp. 276-9.

Maliki, the Hanbali, and the Jaafri. Traditionally, the followers of the four Sunni schools considered all the Sunni schools and their interpretations equally legitimate and valid for their respective followers. There was some tension – inspired more by politics than by religion – between them and the followers of the Jaafri school, to which the overwhelming majority of Shias belonged. It was not until 1959 that the head of al-Azhar, Sunni Islam’s oldest and most renowned theological institution, issued a *fatwa* accepting the Jaafri *madhab* as the fifth school of Islamic jurisprudence on par with the four established Sunni schools.

This tradition of decentralization of religious authority and lack of significant tension among the various schools of jurisprudence helped the *ulama* retain a considerable degree of autonomy from the state, which they were thus less likely to confront or threaten. Simultaneously, the lack of centralized authority or hierarchy among the scholars of religion made it very difficult for temporal authorities to exercise control over them. Consequently, in practice, religious and temporal spheres came to be quite separate, with the leader in each realm following a policy of “live and let live.” Furthermore, the *ulama* normally exhorted their followers to accept established authority lest dissension lead to anarchy and the fragmentation of the *umma*, the community of believers. As noted Near Eastern scholar L. Carl Brown writes, “Rather than a divine right of rule, Islam came to recognize a divinely sanctioned need for rule.”<sup>5</sup>

This did not mean that the state in classical Islam desisted from using religion to buttress its political legitimacy; still, the state was never very successful in intruding into the religious sphere. For their part, the *ulama* accepted the temporal rulers’ right to rule as long as the latter protected the lands of Islam, did not interfere with their Muslim

subjects' practice of the faith, and promoted, at least by word if not always by deed, Islamic law (*shari'ah*). It was only in the seventeenth century, when the Ottoman Empire was at its zenith, that a concerted attempt was made by the state to incorporate the senior religious functionaries into the imperial bureaucracy.

The balance between the religious and political spheres shifted radically in modern times as Muslim states became powerful vis-à-vis the *ulama* in ways that were inconceivable two centuries ago. In most Muslim countries, the state now controls the private religious endowments, or *awqaf*, that formerly provided for the *ulama*. This is particularly the case in the Sunni Muslim countries, including Egypt, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, and others. Such financial control by the state has greatly eroded the autonomy of those learned in religion. It has turned many *ulama*, from the most learned, the *muftis* – those with the right to pronounce religious edicts (*fatwa*) – to common prayer leaders in mosques, into state functionaries. The expansion of the state's control can also be attributed to the reluctance of sovereign nation-states to function with the minimal religious control characteristic of the classical Muslim empires. As the “people” came to be seen as the source of political legitimacy in modern times, the state sought to control the people, including their religious leaders, in order to prevent challenges emerging from civil society.

The establishment *ulama*, those employed and supported financially by the state, face severe disincentives from expressing dissent, let alone actively opposing the regimes that pay their salaries. In the current era of mass political awareness, even in the least democratic countries, this relationship between the official clergy and unrepresentative regimes has severely diminished the popular authority of the state-appointed *ulama* and

has proved conducive to the emergence of alternative groups seeking to speak on behalf of Islam.

Even Al-Azhar, Sunni Islam's most esteemed institution of theological learning, has seen its authority questioned in recent years owing to its close ties to the Egyptian government. The world's oldest university, Al-Azhar ("The Brilliant") was founded in Cairo by the Shia Fatamid dynasty in 972 for the purpose of propagating the Fatamid's brand of Ismaili Shiism.<sup>6</sup> Over time, however, Al-Azhar came to be identified primarily with Sunni Islam, due to the subsequent influence of Sunni practice in Egypt.

Since its founding, Al-Azhar has been renowned as a center of academic debate, discussion, and learning. Although the university's *ulama* have generally followed a religious mandate, Al-Azhar has at times been at the forefront of political struggle, such as during the anti-colonialist movements against Napoleon's French armies at the turn of the nineteenth century as well as against the British in 1919. Despite occasional forays into the political sphere, Al-Azhar was able to maintain a large degree of independence from the state, as it drew its financial resources from *awqaf*. This changed, however, when Egyptian President Gamel Abdel Nasser nationalized Al-Azhar in 1961. The state assumed the authority to appoint Al-Azhar's Grand Sheikh, and created civil servants out of its *ulama*. Since Nasser, Egyptian presidents including Anwar Sadat and Hosni Mubarak have increasingly relied on Al-Azhar to garner public approval for policy decisions, most notably for the Camp David Accords in 1987 and the Persian Gulf War in 1990.

By the same token, Al-Azhar has been able to substantially expand its role in public life. In recent years, Al-Azhar officials have become involved in regulating many

spheres of Egyptian life, from the content of books, television, and other media, to policy issues such as whether or not sexual education should be taught in schools.

Al-Azhar's moral authority, however, has been questioned by an increasingly skeptical populace that views the state-employed *ulama* as tools in the government's battle against Islamists and extremists.<sup>7</sup> Contradictory *fatwas* have further diminished Al-Azhar's credibility. In August 2003, for example, Azhari Sheikh Nabawi El-Esh banned recognition of the Iraqi Governing Council; several days later, following a well-publicized meeting with the American Ambassador in Cairo, Grand Sheikh Mohammed Sayed Tantawi then reversed this judgment. In his rejection of El-Esh's *fatwa*, Tantawi declared that "no Egyptian cleric has the right to pass verdicts on the affairs of another country."<sup>8</sup> Not only did Tantawi's reversal incite outrage among those who viewed his decision as a direct result of American intervention, but he also brought into question Al-Azhar's jurisdiction by proclaiming that Azheri *ulama* had no right to rule upon Iraqi affairs.

In light of Tantawi's assertion, it is ironic that Al-Azhar may enjoy its greatest influence beyond Egypt's borders. Al-Azhar remains a pre-eminent voice in the Muslim world, particularly through its education of students and future-clerics from more than 50 countries. As Barabara Rosewicz wrote in the *Wall Street Journal*, "Poor Islamic countries beg for its missionaries and rich Arab ones hire its sheikhs to run their own Islamic universities. Al-Azhar graduates fill the clergy, courts, and government ministries all over the Middle East- with the exception of Shiite Iran."<sup>9</sup>

While state-sponsored *ulama* like those of Al-Azhar may increasingly be seen as "puppets," especially by frustrated and politically aware youth, a growing distinction is

apparent between establishment and non-establishment *ulama*. Non-establishment *ulama*, i.e. those not affiliated with the state, such as the Al-Azhar-educated Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, have recently achieved unprecedented levels of popularity. Al-Qaradawi has become a household name across the Arab world through his weekly appearance on the religious show *Al-Sharia 'h wa Al-Hayat* (Islamic Law and Life), broadcast on the Arabic satellite channel Al-Jazeera, as well as through his website, qaradawi.net

Although the decline of the establishment *ulama*'s authority intensified after the end of colonialism, the process actually began in the middle of the nineteenth century when the print revolution sparked a dramatic increase in literacy rates in many Muslim countries. As the scholar of Islamic Studies Carl Ernst has argued, a situation had been created in the Muslim world by the middle of the twentieth century that was analogous to the Reformation period in Christian Europe. Lay literate Muslims, not trained in the religious sciences (and, therefore, largely unfamiliar with the accumulated traditions of Islamic theology and jurisprudence and the tools required to interpret them) now had direct access to the sacred texts of Islam and the principal sources of Islamic law, the Qur'an and the Hadith, the sayings of the Prophet.<sup>10</sup> Access to these texts both in the original Arabic and in translation had a revolutionary impact across the Muslim world.

Thus began a process of scripturalism, or literal interpretation of the sacred texts, among certain groups of literate Muslims, paving the way for (what has been called in the context of the Reformation in Western Christianity) "the priesthood of the individual." Literal interpretation of sacred texts without adequate reference to context created a situation where "fundamentalism" could thrive among some Muslim thinkers and activists.<sup>11</sup>

## **Multiple Sovereignties and Nation-States**

The crisis of religious authority in the Muslim world was intensified by the colonization of Muslim countries by European powers, which began in the seventeenth century but was accelerated in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This process culminated in the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire following its defeat in World War I and the establishment of British and French control over its Arab regions under the Mandate system.<sup>12</sup> The Muslim world had fragmented into several autonomous polities in the very first centuries of Islam – the breakaway Umayyad Caliphate of Spain in the eighth century providing the earliest major example. However, the fiction of the unity of the *umma*, at least among the demographically predominant Sunnis, had been maintained until the advent of European colonialism through the institution of the caliph as titular head of the Muslim world.

The caliph's power was, for long periods, marginal, such as during the latter part of Abbasid reign from the middle of the tenth to the middle of the thirteenth century (when the caliph reigned by permission of Turkic dynasties that controlled Baghdad). The Ottoman emperor took the title of caliph in 1517 when his armies captured Egypt, where Mamluk rulers had kept the institution nominally alive by installing scions of the Abbasid dynasty after the Mongol sack of Baghdad in 1258. The Ottoman appropriation of the title demonstrated decisively that the caliphate had become tied to force and conquest and therefore had little religious sanction or significance.

In reality, the religious significance of the caliphate had always been in some doubt. The institution evolved from the Prophet's tradition of nominating a prayer leader

when he himself was unable – for health or other reasons – to lead prayers. Muhammad elected not to nominate a political successor, preferring that the community of believers choose their own leader after his death. This process was problematic from the beginning, as the selection of the very first caliph was challenged by those who wanted succession to be restricted to the House of the Prophet. Three of the first four caliphs were, in fact, assassinated, demonstrating the extent to which the legitimacy of the institution was contested. The religious sanction for the caliphate was further weakened when Muawiya transformed it into a hereditary monarchy, establishing Umayyad dynastic rule.<sup>13</sup>

Despite its shortcomings, the existence of the caliphate offered most Muslims a feeling of continuity and at least a formal locus of political authority, however geographically distant. Consequently, a great sense of loss was felt when the caliphate was abolished after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I, when the Republic of Turkey was established. The concept of the *umma* was deprived of political significance, although it continued to have emotional appeal for many Muslims. Some Islamists, for example the Hizb-ut-Tahrir and al-Qaeda, express nostalgia for the institution of the caliphate and are committed to its revival.

The restoration of the caliphate, however, is not widely supported. Most Muslims, including most Islamists, are at ease working within the parameters of the nation-state, despite the fact that the importation of the European concepts of the “sovereign state” and “nationalism” compounded the problem of decentralized and multiple authority structures in Islam. As established by the Westphalian European system, sovereignty resides in the nation, embodied politically and territorially in the state.<sup>14</sup>

The importation of the nation-state model also bolstered the already existing anti-colonial movements in Muslim-majority countries. Such movements often combined elements of territorial and ethnic nationalism with such ingredients as resistance to foreign domination, all the while drawing on Islamic heritage. Thus the concept of *jihad* re-entered Muslim popular imagination in the nineteenth century as a religious doctrine enjoining resistance to foreign rule.<sup>15</sup> During the colonial period, such resistance in the name of Islam was territorially limited to liberating particular colonial possessions. For example, in the latter part of the nineteenth century, the Mahdi's *jihad* focused specifically on the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, just as the *jihad* of the Indian "Wahabis" was directed only against the British in India.

The nationalist political project, even where it employed Islamic vocabulary, called above all for the construction of a modern, quasi-secular, independent state on the basis of the European model. This agenda promised an end to the humiliation of European colonialism, the implementation of a state-driven economic development program, and the assertion of a modern national identity based on *watan*, or homeland.

The Muslim world's emergence from colonial rule brought both general education and religious teaching largely under the control of the post-colonial, nationalist state. The increase in state power at the expense of the authority and autonomy of the *ulama* had major implications for the interpretation and enforcement of Islamic law. As the Islamic legal scholar Khaled Abou El Fadl has pointed out, "The disintegration of the role of the '*ulama* and their cooptation by the modern praetorian state, with its hybrid practices of secularism, have opened the door for the state to become the maker and enforcer of the divine law; in so doing the state has acquired formidable power that has further ingrained

the practice of authoritarianism in various Islamic states.”<sup>16</sup> Accordingly, many who desire to make societies more Islamic believe that this can be achieved only by using the state as an agent for Islamization through legal decree and coercive enforcement.

The primacy of the territorial state has also been both acknowledged and legitimized in the Muslim world by the creation of numerous inter-state organizations that deem themselves “Islamic” or “Muslim.” The leading example is the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), whose members are sovereign, territorial states with majority Muslim populations. These inter-state organizations explicitly acknowledge the doctrine of non-interference in the internal matters of their members. They operate largely on the basis of *realpolitik* with their members pursuing individual political, military, and economic goals, while sometimes using Islamic vocabulary to justify their policies.<sup>17</sup>

### **Self-Proclaimed Islamic States**

Some states in the Islamic world are theocracies and identify themselves as such based on their adherence in matters of governance to Islamic scripture and theology. Saudi Arabia and Iran in particular proclaim themselves Islamic and have intentionally used their Islamic credentials to further both their domestic legitimacy and their foreign policy goals. Both, on occasion, have also used their Islamic credentials to claim the authority to speak for Islam.

In the case of Saudi Arabia, the legitimacy of the hereditary monarchy that gives its name to the country rests upon the alliance between the House of Saud and the Wahabi religious establishment.<sup>18</sup> The Saudi state has used its Islamic identity to promote

its interests abroad both by setting up international governmental and non-governmental Muslim organizations and funding religious groups, educational institutions, and the construction of mosques in foreign countries. This dimension of its foreign policy became especially salient in the 1980s and 1990s following the Iranian Revolution in 1979 that challenged the Saudi hereditary order by terming it un-Islamic. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan the same year, however, provided the Saudis the opportunity to buttress their Islamic legitimacy by supporting the (American-backed) *mujahedin* engaged in fighting Soviet occupation.

In the meantime, the Saudi regime came face to face with a new, serious challenge at home: the emergence of a radical Wahabi movement, influenced by the extremist thought of the Egyptian Islamist Sayid Qutb. The Wahabi radicals broke ranks with the religious establishment allied to the House of Saud, denounced the regime as un-Islamic, and staged the 1979 takeover of the Ka'aba, the holiest Muslim shrine. Osama Bin Laden and his followers are ideological descendants of the neo-Wahabis and their leader, Juhaiman al-Utaibi.<sup>19</sup>

The neo-Wahabis turned violently against the Saudi regime for a number of reasons including their perception that the regime had deviated from the austere Islamic principles of the Wahabi theologians. The Saudi monarchy's dependence on the United States for its security and economic well-being sparked further hostility among Islamists. Consequently, Saudi Arabia, the "kingdom in the middle," as the political scientist Gregory Gause has called it, has seen rising tensions between two different Islamist tendencies.<sup>20</sup> This situation hamstring the Saudi regime's capacity to speak on behalf of Islam.

A similar situation exists in Iran. The Shah's repression of all forms of political opposition in the 1970s created the vacuum filled by Islamist forces, in this case a faction of the Shia *ulama*. Ayatollah Khomeini's rise as the primary vehicle for Islamists in Iran is explained in part by the fact that the Shia maintained financial independence from the Iranian state, in contrast to Sunni clerics' dependence on state patronage. Shia independence was achieved to a large extent through the payment of *khums*, or one-fifth of a person's income, by the religious laity to their *marja*, or preferred senior cleric.

The robust Shia tradition of *ijtihad*<sup>20</sup> enabled the politically activist faction of the Iranian clergy inspired by Khomeini to adapt its strategy to the concerns of the 1960s and 1970s. The same Shia predilection for innovation provided Khomeini the opportunity to advocate his theory of Islamic government as guided by the Supreme Jurist, with the Shia *ulama* the ultimate repositories of both moral and political rectitude.

Lay Islamist radicals were not, however, absent from the Iranian scene. The writings and speeches of activists such as Ali Shariati contributed significantly to the Shah's downfall. Nevertheless, non-clerical forces could not compete with the *ulama* for control of post-revolution Iran. The *ulama* were better organized, had much greater financial resources, and were more united than their non-clerical counterparts.<sup>21</sup>

Despite the pan-Islamic rhetoric of the early years of the revolution, the post-revolution Iranian political elite, still led by Khomeini, came to view the defense of Iranian interests as their primary (Islamic) duty. The Iraqi invasion of Iran in September 1980 reinforced their position that the defense of Iran was an essential prerequisite for the defense of Islam. In January 1988, Khomeini went even further by declaring that the

state's actions based on expediency could take precedence even over the requirements of the *shari'ah*.<sup>22</sup>

*Raison d'etat* continues to be the driving force as far as Iranian foreign policy is concerned. This was demonstrated most recently by Tehran's neutral posture during the American invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, and the regime's covert collaboration with the U.S. during the war against the Taliban, as widely reported by the media.<sup>23</sup> These policies reflected the Iranian regime's antipathy toward both Saddam Hussein and the Iraqi Baathists, as well as the Sunni fundamentalist Taliban. All in all, Iran's focus on national interest, just like Saudi Arabia's, compromises its capacity to speak either on behalf of Islam or the Muslim world at large.

Another instance of national interest superseding pan-Islamic rhetoric is the "Sulawesi Sea Crisis" that nearly brought Southeast Asian neighbors Malaysia and Indonesia to blows in February of 2005. The Malaysian state oil company Petronas sparked an international row by awarding oil exploration rights in a disputed, resource-rich region of the Sulawesi Sea that is claimed by both Indonesia and Malaysia. First Indonesia, then Malaysia responded with a show of gunboat diplomacy, sending fighter jets and warships to the contested area. Although both countries' leaders eventually resolved the dispute through diplomatic means, harsh words were exchanged, such as Indonesian House Speaker Agung Laksono's statement that, "the government should take stern action without hesitation, including military force if necessary."<sup>24</sup> The dispute engendered strong nationalist feelings, particularly in Indonesia, where protesters across

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<sup>‡</sup> *Ijtihad* can be defined as the exercise of independent reasoning by jurists to apply the *shari'ah* to legal questions arising from contemporary circumstances that are not covered by the Qur'an, *sunnah*, established precedent, or direct analogy.

the country burned Malaysian flags and hackers vandalized Malaysian government websites with defiant slogans and symbols.

Despite this confrontation, both nations insisted that their relationship remained strong, echoed by the statement of Indonesian Foreign Ministry spokesman, Yuri Thamrin, that, “We are both after all countries, which not only have good bilateral ties but are Muslim nations.”<sup>25</sup>

### **The Islamists**

The dilemma over “Who Speaks for Islam?” has been compounded by the emergence during the twentieth century of several political movements within predominantly Muslim countries that call for the establishment of governance systems based on what they consider the golden age of early Islam. Although their strategies and styles may differ, these movements are loosely united in their common belief that contemporary social, economic, and political problems facing Muslim societies cannot be resolved except by a return to the purity of the early Islamic polity. These groups and movements can be broadly termed “Islamist” in order to distinguish them from “Islamic,” for their primary focus is political rather than theological.

The process of re-appropriating and reinventing the distant past – and the accompanying rejection of intervening tradition, including the right to interpret religion – is rooted in the colonial experience, in the sense that colonialism reopened the issue of how Muslim societies ought to be governed and by whom. In other words, colonialism provided a motivation first to rebel against non-Muslim rule, and later to reconsider the

rules and mechanisms governing Muslim societies after the expulsion of European powers.

Many Muslims, especially the Islamists, came to consider the *ulama* incapable of providing a political vision for the future. The *ulama* seemed preoccupied with the finer points of theological interpretation and with legal precedents that did not apply to the contemporary situation. Furthermore, the *ulama* were accused (by reformers and revivalists alike) of detracting from the religion's innate dynamism by closing the gates of *ijtihad*. Such criticism of the *ulama* is epitomized in the writings of Muhammad Iqbal, the colonial era Islamic reformer and Indian poet-philosopher, who argued that their "false reverence for past history and its artificial resurrection constitute no remedy for a people's decay."<sup>26</sup>

Significant segments of the Muslim intelligentsia came to believe that the *ulama* were as responsible for Muslim decline as the temporal rulers who succumbed to Western power. A new group of lay thinkers, drawn largely from modern professions such as science, medicine, journalism, and secular education, along with a few activist *ulama* began to offer a new vision of the founding texts of the golden age of Islam. The Egyptian Hasan al-Banna, who founded the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928, contrasted the *ulama* of early Islam, who challenged their caliphs, rulers, and governors without fear, to the weakened *ulama* of his time, who he found busy ingratiating themselves with government authorities.<sup>27</sup> On the Indian subcontinent, Abul Ala Mawdudi, who founded the Jamaat-i-Islami in 1941, also held negative views of contemporary religious leaders. Of Mawdudi's views on the *ulama*, political scientist Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr writes, "His discourse on the Islamic state deliberately sidestepped the *ulama*, depicting them as an

anachronistic institution that has no place in a reformed and rationalized Islamic order... Mawdudi derided the *ulama* for their moribund scholastic style, servile political attitudes, and ignorance of the modern world.”<sup>28</sup> Sayyid Qutb, the chief ideologue of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in the 1950s and 1960s was even more critical of the *ulama*. He denounced the very idea of “men of religion, who take from religion a profession,” as a corruption of the Qur’anic message.<sup>29</sup>

These three thinkers-cum-activists were among the most important Islamist figures of the twentieth century. All of them attended universities as opposed to Islamic religious seminaries.<sup>30</sup> Abul Ala Mawdudi began as a journalist, while Hasan al-Banna and Sayyid Qutb started their careers in secular education. The writings of Sayyid Qutb, executed by Nasser’s regime in 1966, provided much of the basic motivation for Islamist activism. After his death, Qutb’s ideas were used to preach the violent overthrow of the Egyptian government, considered by Islamists to be a legitimate target for *jihad* because it had deviated from Islam. Qutb’s ideas about *jihad* against nominally Muslim regimes provided a major departure from traditional Islamic political thought in which *jihad* was permitted only for defensive reasons and only against non-Muslim opponents.<sup>31</sup>

While these reformers shared an Islamic vocabulary common to their visions, each of them was influenced by the political trajectory of his nation. Because they operate in different settings and contexts, no two branches of Islamism are identical. Thus the Muslim Brotherhoods in Egypt, Jordan, Syria, and the occupied Palestinian territories have adopted radically different political strategies in response to specific challenges that they face within their respective national boundaries. Indeed, the parent organization, the Egyptian Brotherhood, has itself mutated over time; its leadership in the early 1980s

unequivocally rejected the more radical and militant ideas associated with Sayyid Qutb, the organization's ideological guru of the 1960s. As French scholar Olivier Roy has pointed out, “[I]t is intellectually imprudent and historically misguided to discuss the relationships between Islam and politics as if there were one Islam, timeless and eternal.”<sup>32</sup>

Yet there are characteristics shared by Islamic societies that relate to the widespread appeal of Islamism in the post-colonial era. First, the secular, nationalist project has been generally unable to provide dignity, freedom, power, or wealth to most Muslim communities.<sup>33</sup> Second, these regimes have often turned to authoritarian and repressive methods, stifling political and intellectual debate and eliminating almost all secular opposition, thus creating political space that has been filled by Islamists. However, unlike secular groups that can be prevented from speaking in public or through the media, Islamist political activity can never be fully suppressed since Muslim religious institutions are, to a significant extent, immune from governmental retribution. Publishing houses that print religious literature as well as mosques and affiliated organizations continue to transmit political messages disguised as religious ones.<sup>34</sup> Third, Islamist groups have set up social service organizations in the fields of health, education, and welfare – areas in which corrupt and inefficient governments in most Muslim countries have failed. Such social services cultivate important constituencies: the underprivileged and the youth. Thus Islamist charitable networks from Turkey to Egypt to Pakistan have come to provide Islamist groups with great staying power in the face of state repression.<sup>35</sup> The much-reviled *madaris*, for example, often provide the only source of education, food, and shelter to the children of the Pakistani poor.<sup>36</sup>

While these three factors unite Islamist movements in post-colonial Muslim-majority states, Islamism has also flourished in Muslim-minority nations for a different set of reasons. In regions where Muslim groups are discriminated against, or where their aspirations for political participation, autonomy, or independence are thwarted, secular leadership has frequently failed to achieve the groups' objectives, and they have thus turned toward the more radical ideology of violent Islamism. Such ideological shifts have recently taken place among the adherents of ethnic secessionism, such as the Chechens and the Kashmiris, as well as among Palestinians. Such struggles, even when undertaken in the name of Islam, aim at creating new states or achieving national liberation. Although they draw upon the religious sympathies of Muslims elsewhere, they could well be considered "national" rather than "religious" movements.<sup>37</sup> Hamas in the occupied Palestinian territories and Hezbollah in Lebanon illustrate this phenomenon.<sup>38</sup>

Nevertheless, Islamism reinforces the belief among many in the West that Islam is a monolith, that the most extreme voices are its authentic spokespersons, and that Islamist groups, even if they operate under different names, are part of a grand global project. The truth is that in most areas – Pakistan, Egypt, and Turkey among them – there are usually several Islamist movements competing for authority within the confines of the same state. Certain networks, such as al-Qaeda, do attempt to work beyond and across national boundaries. However, these are fringe groups, which, although they attract the world's attention with acts of terror, are marginal to mainstream Islamist movements and to daily political struggles within most Muslim countries.

The major Islamist political formations, such as the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in Egypt, the Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) and the Jamiat-ul-Ulema-i-Islam (JUI) in Pakistan, the

Nahdat al-Ulama (NU) in Indonesia, and the Justice and Development Party (AKP) and its precursors in Turkey, have all acted according to the rules of regimes unsympathetic to their causes.<sup>39</sup> Several of these groups have even performed credibly in elections. Others have learned to lie low when suppressed and bounce back organizationally and politically when autocracies liberalize under domestic or international pressure. Some, such as the Pakistani JI, have even collaborated with military dictatorships to advance their agendas.

Turkey's Justice and Development Party, on the other hand, has become a so-called post-Islamist party. As the Turkish academic Ihsan D. Dagi explains,

Realizing that the rise of political Islam was detrimental to Islam's social and economic influence in Turkey, [the party] defined itself as 'conservative-democrat' in an attempt to escape from the self-defeating success of political Islam...Their demands are no longer grounded in Islam, Islamic civilization and values, and the uniqueness of Muslim society but on the universality of political modernity, i.e., human rights, democracy, and the rule of law.<sup>40</sup>

The Egyptian political formation known as Wasat, or Center, which is supported largely by former members of the Muslim Brotherhood, seems to be following the same path despite the fact that President Hosni Mubarak's government has repeatedly refused it license to operate as a normal political party.<sup>41</sup>

### **Transnational Islamist Networks**

Transnational Islamist groups, particularly militant ones, have come to the forefront of global concerns through terrorist activities over the last several years with the emergence of al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda itself is not a centralized or structured movement, but rather a label applied by Western governments and the media to what is a broad and

diverse “network of networks.”<sup>42</sup> While this makes it very difficult to counter al-Qaeda by conventional military action, it also means that al-Qaeda’s political impact is likely to be limited; the network offers no realistic political agenda that appeals to a territorially-defined political and social base.

Furthermore, al-Qaeda, like mainstream Islamist movements, is the product of a specific context: the failures of the Taliban regime enabled Islamist radicals – who had initially gathered in Afghanistan to fight the Soviet Union – to entrench themselves in the country. The United States, in conjunction with Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, played a significant role in facilitating, financing, and arming the so-called *mujahedin* to fight Soviet Communism in the 1980s. Consequently, not only did thousands of Islamist radicals gather in Afghanistan, but Afghan and Pakistani youth were widely radicalized, and today provide much of the manpower to al-Qaeda, according to Columbia University professor Mahmood Mamdani.<sup>43</sup> From the American perspective, the “good Muslims” of the 1980s have thus morphed into the “bad Muslims” of today. The *mujahedin* of the 1980s as are now called *jihadis*; while the former term has positive connotations because it is borrowed directly from Islamic vocabulary, the latter is an invention of Western commentators and thus pejorative.

Mamdani locates the al-Qaeda phenomenon within the American policy of the post-Vietnam era beginning in 1975. This policy aimed at creating terrorist groups and turning them into political movements, first in Angola and Mozambique and then in Nicaragua and Afghanistan, in order to destabilize leftist or revolutionary regimes considered to be Soviet proxies. According to Mamdani, this policy emerged out of the lesson that direct American intervention, such as in Vietnam, was likely to be both costly

and ineffective. UNITA and RENAMO in southern Africa, the Contras in Central America, and the various radical Islamist groups in Afghanistan were all funded and trained by the CIA to undertake terrorist activities.<sup>44</sup> In some ways, Islamist terrorists have roots more related to American Cold War policies than to Islamic scripture.

While al-Qaeda has succeeded in making itself known through spectacular acts of terrorism and a thirst for publicity, Tablighi Jama'at – the largest transnational Islamic movement – is unknown to most Westerners. Tablighi Jama'at (“group that propagates the faith”) is a missionary organization that traces its roots to colonial India. It consists predominantly of lay Muslims who preach to fellow Muslims and focuses on internal faith renewal, rather than conversion of non-Muslims. The group emphasizes a return to Islam as practiced during the time of the Prophet. According to its leaders in America, the Tablighi's goals are “devotion to God and promoting change in each individual, not society.”<sup>45</sup> Although the Tablighi renounces politics and violence, it has come under intense scrutiny from Western governments for being a breeding ground for Islamic extremists. Both American and European intelligence agencies cite its vulnerability to infiltration as well as its tendency to promote religious awakening among disaffected youth as cause for concern.<sup>46</sup>

### **Voices of a New *Ijtihad***

In contrast to the Islamists, a new group of Muslim thinkers, which has emerged during the past several decades, seeks to apply contemporary intellectual methods to the task of reforming Islam. These thinkers, whom we might loosely term the proponents of a New *Ijtihad*, are both a response to and a product of the modernization of Muslim

societies. They belong to a reformist tradition stretching back to the mid-nineteenth century, initiated by Muslim intellectuals including Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan in India, Syed Jamaluddin Al-Afghani across the Middle East and Central and South Asia, and Muhammad Abduh in Egypt, who, influenced by the European Enlightenment, applied positivist and rationalist thought to reconcile Islamic *turath* (tradition) with the challenges of modernity.

Although Sir Sayyid Ahmed Khan relied almost exclusively on the Qur'an for his interpretation of Islam, he was not a scriptural literalist. As political scientist Carl Brown has pointed out, Sir Sayyid insisted that Islam was “completely compatible with reason and with ‘nature.’ This meant that any supernatural events in religion, even the Qu’ran, could properly be interpreted allegorically or psychologically. In short, he was very much a nineteenth century advocate of science and positivism.”<sup>47</sup> Sir Sayyid’s ideas ran afoul of the traditional *ulama*, but he made a foundational contribution to the spread of modern education and rationalist thought among the Muslim elite in India, especially by setting up the modern educational institution that eventually became the Aligarh Muslim University.<sup>48</sup>

Considered to be one of the founders of Islamic modernism, Syed Jamaluddin Al-Afghani was a vocal critic of Western imperialism who called for a revival of Islamic civilization to counteract European domination. Afghani traveled widely throughout Muslim lands in the Middle East and Central and South Asia, attempting to mobilize the masses in a pan-Islamic movement against the imperial threat. Afghani was deeply concerned about the intellectual decay within the Muslim world, and he attributed the decline of Islamic civilization to neglect of the basic sciences and a lack of interest in the

pursuit of knowledge. Afghani believed that the only way to restore Islamic civilization to its former grandeur was to return to the “true core” of Islam. In his famous refutation of French philosopher Ernest Renan’s denunciation of Islam as an obstacle to philosophy and science, Afghani concluded:

If the Islamic world is as you say, then why are the Muslims in such a sad condition? I will answer: When they were [truly] Muslims, they were what they were and the world bears witness to their excellence. As for the present, I will content myself with this holy text: “Verily, God does not change the state of a people until they change themselves inwardly.”<sup>49</sup>

Like his mentor Afghani, the Egyptian thinker Muhammad Abduh advocated the reform of Islam by returning to the religion’s “pure state” and casting off what he viewed as its contemporary decadence and divisions. For Abduh, revelation and reason in Islam were complimentary and not antithetical. Islam, therefore, had the innate capacity to reform and adapt to changing circumstances by the exercise of reason or *ijtihad*. Abduh’s ideas influenced not only much of the modernist thinking in the Arab world, they also inspired what came to be known as the *salafi* (purist) movements in the early decades of the twentieth century. Exponents of *salafi* thought borrowed from Abduh’s ideas about jettisoning much of the accumulated “baggage” that they held responsible for Islam’s decline. However, rather than looking to Islam’s early period for a model of compatibility of faith with reason, the *salafis* prescribed a more literal return to the golden age of early Islam, in that way prefiguring Islamist movements of the second half of the twentieth century.<sup>50</sup>

Across the Muslim world as well as in Muslim communities in the West, recent decades have witnessed renewed calls for *ijtihad* based on rationalist interpretations of Islam. As the scholar of contemporary Muslim thought Suha Taji-Farouki points out,

while present-day proponents of *ijtihad* share a motivation with the “modernist” reformers of the late nineteenth century, they differ in the scope of their intellectual horizons.<sup>51</sup> Whereas the early modernists worked exclusively within an Islamic frame of reference, today’s thinkers avail themselves of multiple critical and interpretive frameworks. Most of these thinkers combine knowledge of Islamic learning and scripture with secular training (often undertaken in the West) in the social sciences, including anthropology, sociology, philology, philosophy, and hermeneutics. Their roots in Islamic and Western intellectual processes offer them a unique critical perspective on Islamic scripture and heritage.

The post-modernist discourse of “contextuality” has proven especially influential, as many of these thinkers hold that the Qur’an is situated in a specific time and place – namely, the community of the Prophet in the *Hijaz*. They believe that the message – the Qur’an’s core ethical principles – can and must be separated from its history, both at the time of revelation and over the nearly fourteen centuries since. Diverse thinkers such as the late Pakistani reformer Fazlur Rahman; his student, the Indonesian public intellectual Nurcholish Madjid; the Tunisian scholars Mohamed Talbi, Abdelmajid Charfi, and Mohamed Charfi; the Algerian Mohamed Arkoun; the Sudanese Abdullahi Ahmed An-Naim; and the American Amina Wadud have all emphasized the importance of the socio-historical context of the Qur’anic revelation and the necessity to differentiate between the Qur’anic message and intervening history.<sup>52</sup> Their critical rereadings of the Qur’an have admitted interpretations and innovations that prize reason, pluralism, universal human rights, gender equality, and other “heterodox” positions.

The Egyptian-born and Switzerland-based scholar Tariq Ramadan applies similar methods in his work on the place of Islam in modern Europe – an issue of growing importance as the Muslim population in the West continues to expand. Ramadan suggests that the only way to arrive at a European Islamic identity is to separate Islam from the cultures of the countries of origin. Recently denied entry to the U.S. by American authorities and prohibited from taking up his Chair at the University of Notre Dame, Ramadan has pointed out that “when you are trying to create bridges you are in the middle...you are too Western for the Muslims, and too Muslim for the Westerners. Controversy is natural.”<sup>53</sup> Other proponents of a New *Ijtihad* often face similar dilemmas. Although the ideas represented by these progressive voices have yet to find widespread resonance among ordinary Muslims, they do offer an alternative to more radical and revivalist interpretations of Islam, and a source of hope to those who support greater dialogue between Islam and the West.

## **Conclusion**

In answer to the question of who speaks for Islam, it is clear that there is no single locus of authority in the Muslim world today. While the traditional *ulama* have lost much of their popular credibility as interpreters of religion, neither the ruling elites in Muslim states, nor the Islamists, nor the militant fringe, nor the practitioners of the New *Ijtihad* have yet been able to fill this role.

The cacophony of voices attempting to speak for Islam has been amplified by the constant flow of unvetted expression through the Internet. As Gary Bunt, an academic who writes frequently on Islam and the Internet, establishes in *Islam in the Digital Age*,

the proliferation of “Islamic” websites has vastly increased the amount of debate in the Muslim world.<sup>54</sup> The Internet also offers believers an anonymous forum in which to address their religious concerns. Counseling sites and online *fatwas* are widely accessible and increasingly popular, while the development of online sermons and Friday *khutbahs* has extended the audiences of numerous preachers. The authority of online religious officials, however, is open to question. Unlike the state-sponsored *ulama*, the “Internet Imams” are beyond the control of government agencies; at the same time many of them have not gone through traditional training. As one would imagine, this arena of free expression is now home to a wide range of political opinions and is often used to mobilize opposition to those in power. The Internet has also been employed by extremist groups to promote their own agendas; however, it is almost impossible to verify whether specific sites speak for the groups, including al-Qaeda, that they claim to represent.

It might also be said that Islamism’s current popularity is in significant part due to the slow pace of reform in many Muslim – particularly, Arab – states, as well as to what is perceived by a large majority of people in the Muslim world as lack of serious commitment by major international powers, especially the United States, to address the grievances harbored by most Muslims.<sup>55</sup> Current events in Palestine and Iraq, which lie in Islam’s historical and political – if not demographic – heartland, resonate deeply with Muslims, accentuating the feeling of impotence across much of the Muslim world and increasing receptivity to Islamist arguments. Post-September 11 American policies have contributed to this pattern, demonstrating Washington’s insensitivity in the eyes of many Muslims.

The cacophony of voices claiming to speak for Islam is also an expression of a more fundamental crisis in the Muslim world – a century-long crisis of poor governance, particularly in the Arab world.<sup>56</sup> Since decolonization, Arab states have turned to a variety of political remedies – including nationalism, pan-Arabism, pan-Islamism, communism, and socialism – yet, with a few exceptions, all have failed to deliver widespread prosperity and good governance.

The tragedy of 9/11 played a major role in bringing the crisis within *dar-el-Islam* to the attention of the West. At home, 9/11 and the events of subsequent years have made Muslims more concerned about their current situation and about finding ways to resolve it. Progressive Muslim thinkers are growing bolder and are taking risks to challenge the *ulama* as well as the Islamists. This surge of intellectual effort has resulted in a soar in the number of books published over the last few years by the proponents of a New *Ijtihad*.<sup>57</sup>

Finally, it should be kept in mind that the relationship between Islam and the West has a long and perhaps cyclical history. The crisis within the Muslim world today might be said to mirror the situation of the West during the Middle Ages, when the Muslim empire was the center of knowledge and civilization. To end its stagnation, the West entered a period of self-reflection and embarked upon the Renaissance, in part by appropriating Islam's scientific and cultural advances. The renowned thirteenth-century Italian theologian and philosopher Thomas Aquinas, for example, sought inspiration in the works of Muslim philosopher Ibn Rushd, the most revered philosopher of the time at the Sorbonne.<sup>58</sup> Perhaps the Muslim world today, by examining its situation through the lens of modernity, will embark upon a contemporary Islamic Renaissance. We can only guess at how this might change the relationship between Islam and the West. What is

certain at this point is that greater communication, improved understanding, and identification of the multiple – and sometimes conflicting – sources of authority within each civilization can only hasten our entry into a new phase of the history of the Islamic-Western encounter.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order* (New York, Simon and Schuster, 1996).

<sup>2</sup> See p. 17 for an explanation of the term “Islamist.”

<sup>3</sup> The term *salaf* can be translated as the “revered ancestors.” The main thrust of *salafi* thought is its advocacy for the return to the pristine form of Islam practised by the first generation of Muslims. This is seen as the ideal from which later generations of Muslims have deviated, leading to Islam’s and Muslims’ decline.

<sup>4</sup> Khaled Abou El Fadl, “The Place of Tolerance in Islam,” *Boston Review*, December 2001/January 2002. Online at <http://bostonreview.net/BR26.6/elfadl.html>.

<sup>5</sup> L. Carl Brown, *Religion and State: The Muslim Approach to Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), p. 54.

<sup>6</sup> See footnote, p. 4 .

<sup>7</sup> Barbara Rosewicz, “Prestigious Al Azhar is Force of Moderation,” *The Wall Street Journal*, 10 Aug. 1987, p. 22.

<sup>8</sup> Mona El-Nahhas, “A confusing *fatwa*,” *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 4-10 September 2003. Online at <http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2003/654/eg6.htm>.

<sup>9</sup> Barbara Rosewicz, “Prestigious Al Azhar is Force of Moderation.”

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix II for a discussion of the Qur’an and the Hadith as the primary sources of Islamic law.

<sup>11</sup> The Oxford English Dictionary Online ([www.oed.com](http://www.oed.com)) defines fundamentalism as “strict adherence to ancient or fundamental doctrines, with no concessions to modern developments in thought or customs.” For an argument that a Reformation has already taken place in Islam with the emergence of scriptural fundamentalism and “priesthood of the individual,” two fundamental features of the Christian Reformation, see Carl W. Ernst, *Following Muhammad: Rethinking Islam in the Contemporary World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003), pp. 66-67.

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<sup>12</sup> The Mandate system was established by the League of Nations following World War I to provide for the administration of former Ottoman territories and German colonies in the Middle East, Africa and the Pacific. The Ottoman territories were divided among the European Allies, who were granted supervision over these lands as a precursor to eventual independence. In the Middle East, five new Mandates were created from the former Ottoman territories: Iraq, Transjordan, and Palestine were British Mandates, while Syria and Lebanon were administered by France.

<sup>13</sup> For an explanation of how the caliphate came to be controlled by the Umayyad Dynasty through Muawiya ibn Abu Sufyan, Islam's fifth caliph, see pp. 4-5 in the appendix (forthcoming) to this paper.

<sup>14</sup> The Peace of Westphalia, embodied in a series of treaties signed in 1648, marked the end of Europe's bloody Thirty Years War and the birth of the modern state system. The Peace of Westphalia abolished the unity of the Holy Roman Empire and enshrined into treaty law the doctrine that the religion of the ruler is the religion of the state and no state could force another to change its religion. Subsequently, national interests began to trump religion as the basis for disputes among European states.

<sup>15</sup> Rudolph Peters, *Islam and Colonialism: The Doctrine of Jihad in Modern History* (The Hague: Mouton, 1979).

<sup>16</sup> Khaled Abou El Fadl, "Islam and the Challenge of Democracy," *Boston Review*, April/May 2003. Online at <http://bostonreview.net/BR28.2/abou.html>.

<sup>17</sup> For details about the working of the OIC and other international Muslim organizations, see Saad S. Khan, *Reasserting International Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001).

<sup>18</sup> For a discussion of Wahabism, see Appendix III (forthcoming).

<sup>19</sup> According to Sadik Al-Azm, "Bin Laden may be seen as a more dangerous, advanced, and global version of Juhaiman al-'Utaibi. While Juhaiman directed his desperate, spectacular intervention against the most important local legitimising symbol of the Saudi system, bin Laden attacked the American core without which the local system could not possibly survive." Sadik J. Al-Azm, "Time Out of Joint," *Boston Review*, October/November 2004. Online at <http://www.bostonreview.net/BR29.5/alazm.html>.

<sup>20</sup> See Gregory Gause, "Kingdom in the Middle: Saudi Arabia's Double Game," in James F. Hoge, Jr., and Gideon Rose, eds., *How Did This Happen? Terrorism and the New War* (New York: Public Affairs, 2001),

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pp. 109-122, and Eric Rouleau, "Trouble in the Kingdom," *Foreign Affairs*, 81(4), July-August 2002, pp. 75-89.

<sup>21</sup> Nikki Keddie, *Modern Iran: Roots and Results of Revolution* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), chs. 9 and 10.

<sup>22</sup> Daniel Brumberg, *Reinventing Khomeini: The Struggle for Reform in Iran* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp. 135-6.

<sup>23</sup> See, *inter alia*, Jean-Michel Cadiot, "Tehran and Washington a step closer through Afghanistan," Agence France Presse, 7 October 2001; Nazila Fathi, "On the Sly, Iran Weighs Closer Ties With U.S.," *The New York Times*, 9 November 2001; Thomas L. Friedman, "The View From Tehran," *The New York Times*, 26 June 2002; Seymour M. Hersh, "The Iran Game: How will Tehran's nuclear ambitions affect our budding partnership?," *The New Yorker*, 3 December 2001.

<sup>24</sup> "Government Urged to Get Tough in Territory Dispute," *The Jakarta Post*, 7 March 2005. Online at <http://www.thejakartapost.com/detaillatestnews.asp?fileid=20050307181600&irec=2>.

<sup>25</sup> Quoted in Farrah Naz Karrim, "Resolve issue through talks," *New Straits Times*, 9 March 2005.

<sup>26</sup> Quoted in John L. Esposito, "Muhammad Iqbal and the Islamic State," in John L. Esposito, ed., *Voices of Resurgent Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 187.

<sup>27</sup> Saeed Abdullah, "The official ulama and the religious legitimacy of the modern nation state," in S. Akbarzadeh and A. Saeed, eds., *Islam and Political Legitimacy* (New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003), pp. 14-15.

<sup>28</sup> Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, "Mawdudi and the Jamat-i-Islami," in Ali Rahnema, ed., *Pioneers of Islamic Revival* (London: Zed Books, 1994), p. 105.

<sup>29</sup> Charles Tripp, "Sayyid Qutb: The Political Vision," in Ali Rahnema, ed., *Pioneers of Islamic Revival*, p. 178.

<sup>30</sup> Incidentally, the same is true of Osama bin Laden, who was trained as an engineer, and his deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri, who was trained as a physician.

<sup>31</sup> For analyses of Sayyid Qutb's ideas, see Yvonne Haddad, "Sayyid Qutb: Ideologue of Islamic Revival," in John L. Esposito, ed., *Voices of Resurgent Islam* and Charles Tripp, "Sayyid Qutb: The Political Vision," in Ali Rahnema, ed., *Pioneers of Islamic Revival*.

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- <sup>32</sup> Olivier Roy, *The Failure of Political Islam* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. vii.
- <sup>33</sup> For a discussion of the model of the “strangers” and the model of the “ancestors,” see Fouad Ajami, *The Arab Predicament*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 242.
- <sup>34</sup> For details of this argument, see Mohammed Ayoob, “Political Islam: Image and Reality,” *World Policy Journal*, Fall 2004, p. 3.
- <sup>35</sup> For Egypt, see Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam: Religion, Activism, and Political Change in Egypt* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002); for Turkey, see Jenny White, *Islamist Mobilization in Turkey* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003).
- <sup>36</sup> Husain Haqqani, “Islam’s Medieval Outposts,” *Foreign Policy*, Nov-Dec 2002, pp. 58-64.
- <sup>37</sup> For the Chechen case that bears out this thesis, see C.J. Chivers and Steven Lee Myers, “Chechen Rebels Mainly Driven by Nationalism,” *New York Times*, 12 September 2004.
- <sup>38</sup> For Hamas and Hezbollah, see respectively Shaul Mishal and Avraham Sela, *The Palestinian Hamas* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), and Judith Palmer Harik, *Hezbollah: The Changing Face of Terrorism* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2004).
- <sup>39</sup> See Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam: Religion, Activism, and Political Change in Egypt*; Jenny White, *Islamist Mobilization in Turkey*; Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *The Vanguard of the Islamic Revolution: The Jama’at-I-Islami of Pakistan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994); and Robert W. Heffner, *Civil Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).
- <sup>40</sup> Ihsan D. Dagı, “Rethinking Human Rights, Democracy, and the West: Post-Islamist Intellectuals in Turkey,” *Critique: Critical Middle Eastern Studies*, 13 (2), Summer 2004, p. 140. Also, see Mohammed Ayoob, “Turkey’s Multiple Paradoxes,” *Orbis*, Summer 2004, pp. 451-463.
- <sup>41</sup> Joshua A. Stacher, “Post-Islamist Rumbblings in Egypt: The Emergence of the Wasat Party,” *Middle East Journal*, 56(3), Summer 2002, pp. 415-432.
- <sup>42</sup> The term “network of networks” is borrowed from Jason Burke, *Al-Qaeda: Casting a Shadow of Terror* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003), p. 16.
- <sup>43</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim* (New York: Pantheon, 2004).
- <sup>44</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim*.

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<sup>45</sup> Susan Sachs, “A Muslim Missionary Group Draws New Scrutiny in U.S.,” *The New York Times*, 14 July 2003.

<sup>46</sup> Susan Sachs, “A Muslim Missionary Group Draws New Scrutiny in U.S.,” and Craig S. Smith, “French Islamic Group Offers Rich Soil for Militancy,” *The International Herald Tribune*, 29 April 2005.

<sup>47</sup> L. Carl Brown, *Religion and State: The Muslim Approach to Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), p. 95.

<sup>48</sup> For Sir Sayyid’s ideas, see Christian W. Troll, *Sayyid Ahmad Khan: A Reinterpretation of Muslim Theology* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1978).

<sup>49</sup> Nikki R. Keddie, *An Islamic Response to Imperialism: Political and Religious Writings of Sayyid Jamal al-Din “al-Afghani”* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), p. 173.

<sup>50</sup> L. Carl Brown, *Religion and State*, pp. 93-8.

<sup>51</sup> Suha Taji-Farouki, ed., *Modern Muslim Intellectuals and the Qur’an* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004)

<sup>52</sup> For a more in-depth exploration of these thinkers, see, *inter alia*, Suha Taji-Farouki, ed., *Modern Muslim Intellectuals and the Qur’an*; Rachid Benzine, *Les nouveaux penseurs de l’Islam* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2004); Fazlur Rahman and Ebrahim Moosa, eds., *Revival and Reform in Islam* (Oxford: Oneworld, 1999); Ronald Nettler, “Mohamed Talbi’s Ideas on Islam and Politics: A Conception of Islam for the Modern World,” in J. Cooper, R. Nettler, and M. Mahmoud, eds., *Islam and Modernity* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2000), p. 131; Abdelmajid Charfi, *Islam entre le Message et l’Histoire* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2004); Mohammed Arkoun, *Rethinking Islam: Common Questions, Uncommon Answers*, trans. Robert D. Lee (Boulder, CO: Perseus, 1994) and *The Unthought in Contemporary Islamic Thought* (London: Saqi Books, 2002); Abdullahi An-Naim, *Toward an Islamic Reformation* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1990); Amina Wadud, *Qur’an and Woman: Rereading the Sacred Text from a Woman’s Perspective* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999).

<sup>53</sup> Deborah Sontag, “Mystery of the Islamic Scholar Who was Barred by the U.S.,” *New York Times*, 6 October 2004.

<sup>54</sup> Gary Bunt, *Islam in the Digital Age* (London: Pluto Press, 2003), p. 141.

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<sup>55</sup> See Jean Lacouture, Ghassan Tuéni and Gérard D. Khoury, *Un siècle pour rien: Le Moyen-Orient arabe de l'Empire ottoman à l'Empire américain* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2002).

<sup>56</sup> See, for example, the *Arab Human Development Reports*, published by UNDP.

<sup>57</sup> See note 52.

<sup>58</sup> See Maria Rosa Menocal, *The Ornament of the World: How Muslims, Jews and Christians Created a Culture of Tolerance in Medieval Spain* (New York, Little, Brown, 2002).