

February 6-9, 2011

WORKING PAPER

Culture of Command & Control of Nuclear Weapons in the Middle East - Egypt under the Muslim Brotherhood

Dr. Israel Elad-Altman

The Institute for Policy and Strategy

The Institute for Policy and Strategy (IPS) conducts projects and research on a broad analytical scope, concentrating on identifying emerging issues and trends crucial to Israel's national policy and decision-making process, including national security and strategy; foreign policy; the Jewish people; social policy and education.

Drawing on its range of networks and convening power, IPS fosters informed dialogue and debate, which impact national policy by producing and following the implementation of pragmatic responses, strategic directions and policy solutions.

The Herzliya Conference

Israel's premier global policy gathering, the Annual Herzliya Conference on the Balance of Israel's National Security is the flagship of IPS activities. The conference exclusively draws together international and Israeli participants from the highest levels of government, business and academia to address the most pressing national, regional and global issues.

The Conference proceedings, reports and recommendations provide leaders with timely and authoritative assessments and policy recommendations needed to guide their organizations through the challenging geopolitical, economic and social developments. As strategic, political processes and events emanating from an ever-turbulent Middle East increasingly impact the global arena, the deliberations at Herzliya cover a broad span of issues, ranging from nuclear proliferation and the Middle East peace process to finance, energy security and global warming.

This paper reflects the opinion of its author/s only

Executive Summary

If the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) rules Egypt, it will move to acquire military nuclear capabilities, if Egypt does not have them already. This would be especially true if Iran, and perhaps other states following Iran, appear to be aspiring to a nuclear weapons capability, including Saudi Arabia, or a post-Saudi regime in Arabia, or perhaps Turkey. The MB will view this as the implementation of an explicit divine instruction for Muslims to possess all the means required to deter their enemies. In addition, the MB will consider the possession of such capabilities as the guarantor of its survival in power, deterring external forces from seeking to topple it. The MB, which is committed to the liquidation of Israel, will see the possession of nuclear weapons as putting it in a position to abrogate the peace treaty with the Jewish state and to threaten the latter with conventional military action, under the protection of a nuclear "equalizer" that might be perceived to negate any Israeli deterrence in this regard, or even use nuclear weapons if they come to be perceived as valid instruments in the surge towards victory over "infidel" forces of one kind or another. In this sense, an ideologically religious fundamentalist Egypt would bear some striking similarities to an ideologically radical Iran with nuclear weapons, where vast geographic, demographic and natural resource reserves could lead a strongly willed anti-status-quo leadership to launch nuclear weapons in the belief that it could still prevail in a nuclear exchange, while absorbing relatively high attrition rates, which other, less populated or smaller states in the region could not. Religious fervor and commitment, while not necessarily being irrational per se, could in this sense contribute to nuclear blows by miscalculation, rather than by premeditated design.

The MB will probably assign the nuclear project to an ideologically loyal military force, which will be formed in parallel to the existing military which the MB will not trust (a force along the lines of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps – IRGC). It can be a modern version of the Secret Apparatus which operated within the Brotherhood, but it will have to start from scratch and will take time and significant resources to establish. Given the turbulent history of leadership and control in the movement, it is not easy to predict what its nuclear decision-making and control will really look like. Zealots might act against the will of the formal leadership and perhaps behind its back, and securing nuclear weapons and materials against unauthorized access by radical elements in the movement may become a major problem.

A doctrinal question which may arise pertains to how far does the "deterrence of the enemy", to which Muslims are obliged by the *Qur'an*, go? *Shar'i* legal opinion has by and large authorized the acquisition of nuclear weapons, and even advocated it – as a deterrent. This leaves wide room for interpretation of what deterrence is: is being a threshold state a sufficient deterrent, or should one assemble a weapon, test a device, or openly threaten to use the weapon, in order to create deterrence? And can one transfer the weapons or materials to fellow Muslims, like Hamas or Hizballah, so that they too can deter the "enemy" in the name of "Islamic justice" against "infidel usurpers"?

How can a nuclear MB be deterred? How sensitive will it be to civilian casualties on its side? The MB's ideology idealizes death in *jihad* as a supreme value. At the same time the MB is neither messianic nor apocalyptic, and as a persecuted opposition movement has pursued a

pragmatic strategy in which first priority is given to the movement's preservation and expansion, and conflicts with stronger adversaries are avoided if they put the movement's very survival at risk. **This is likely to change once the Brotherhood is in power and equipped with nuclear weapons, which will enable hard liners to argue that the movement's survival is now assured and that the past pragmatism is no longer necessary.**

As far as sensitivity to civilian casualties is concerned, the MB's Palestinian branch, Hamas, which rules the Gaza Strip, made use of civilians as human shields for its combatants during the Gaza War (2008-9) and bragged about it. One should not expect the Egyptian MB to have a different approach. More generically, it can be assumed that an Egyptian MB rule would view casualties as part of the struggle towards achieving ideologically mandated goals – and by divine commandment and conviction there can be no victory without a willingness to incur great sacrifice. It should perhaps be noted that the MB is a Sunni organization, with all that this could entail in terms of its commitment to effect revolutionary, come messianic, change in the region, usually attributed more commonly to Shiite movements, such as the Iranian Islamic Revolutionary regime – the experience with al-Qa'ida and its allies is disconcerting in terms of radicalization trends evident in Sunni movements too.

It should be noted that the MB is a global movement with branches or groups affiliated with it to various degrees operating all over the Arab and Muslim worlds and in non-Muslim countries, in Asia and Africa as well as in Europe and North America. If the Egyptian MB takes power, and as a government possesses military nuclear capabilities, this might have wide-ranging implications, like the empowerment of MB branches in Arab or other states or the likelihood of proliferation, for example to Hamas, which is part of the MB movement. At least, Hamas might enjoy the benefits of extended deterrence offered by a MB nuclear armed Egypt, which given current tensions could spark severe escalation (such as a regional "Cuban Missile Crisis"), or worse. In this sense, a nuclear armed MB Egypt would raise the specter of an almost al-Qa'ida-like global threat, and other concerns regarding nuclear security similar to those that exist today with respect to the integrity of the Pakistani assets facing various forms of threats.

Command and Control in an MB nuclear armed Egypt would be subject to the evolution and trends observable in a revolutionary leadership once it was in power. Our closest basis for comparison is Iran, notwithstanding that the Iranian Revolution was Shiite, and non-Arab. The following sections highlight some of the possibilities that may be contemplated regarding nuclear security, C2 (Command and Control), C3 (Command, Control and Communications), C3I (Command, Control, Communications and Intelligence), deployment, and unauthorized use issues in an MB nuclear armed Egypt.

Introduction

The Muslim Brotherhood (MB) is the strongest political opposition movement in Egypt and the country's only real mass political movement. Its objective is to take power in order to establish an Islamic state which will implement Islamic religious law (the *Shari'a*), free Muslim lands from Western dominance and influence in all its manifestations, and spread Islam worldwide. In this sense, the agenda of the Sunni MB in Egypt is reminiscent of the Shiite Iranian Islamic Revolution, or of the Sunni al-Qa'ida and its diverse affiliates deployed regionally and globally. It is currently assessed that an MB takeover of power in Egypt under present circumstances is not a likely scenario: the movement has failed to do that during its 82 years of existence, and

at no point has it even been close to taking power. Still, it is a scenario that cannot be totally excluded: Hamas, the Palestinian MB branch, was not expected to win legislative elections in the West Bank and Gaza (2006) and to take control of Gaza, but it did in 2007. If we go back in time to the 1970s, nor were the radical Islamic revolutionary elements expected to take power in Iran after the collapse of the Shah regime, but they did. This paper tries to look at nuclear C3 issues in an Egypt ruled by the Egyptian MB.

There are several scenarios in which the MB takes power. In the first scenario, it takes power when Egypt is a *bona fide* non-nuclear state and is not pursuing a military program, or even a program seeking to achieve fuel cycle independence, as it is now. In another scenario, the MB takes power with Egypt having a nuclear program seeking nuclear fuel cycle independence, or even having completed such a program, without a military program. Thirdly, the MB might reach power when Egypt already has nuclear weapons or a military nuclear program. It is our assessment that if Egypt is not a nuclear state when the MB attains power, the MB will launch a nuclear military program without delay. It will most likely look for help from ideologically allied parties with access to nuclear knowledge and material, be they Sunni Islamic experts in Pakistan or the Iranian government, with which the MB shares an animosity toward the US, Israel and the pro-Western Arab regimes, and which will be more than happy to have a foothold in Egypt. Unlike Saudi Arabia, Libya or Syria (or Algeria), all of which could become nuclear aspirants, Egypt does have the technological infrastructure to support a relatively extensive nuclear program, and already has in place several facilities that could be used to produce weapons grade materials (and might have more if nuclear power stations are constructed in the meantime). It also has a relatively advanced and extensive military industries infrastructure, like Iran and unlike the other potentially nuclear aspirant states in the region, thus capabilities that could support a weaponization program and produce relatively reliable delivery systems.

The Role of the Nuclear Capability



The MB logo

Why should the MB seek a military nuclear capability and what will be the role of this capability according to the MB's strategic thinking? In the MB's doctrine, possession of nuclear weapons would be the implementation of a divine instruction to Muslims to possess all possible means of war. In addition, the MB will consider the possession of a nuclear deterrent as the ultimate guarantor of its survival in power in the face of external plans to topple it. Furthermore, the MB is deeply opposed to Egypt's peace treaty with Israel, and, like its Palestinian offshoot Hamas, is committed to the liquidation of the Jewish state and to the establishment of Islamic rule in Palestine in its place. The MB will see the possession of nuclear weapons as putting it in a position to abrogate the peace treaty with Israel, and to threaten the latter with conventional military action, under the protection of a nuclear "equalizer" that would negate any Israeli deterrence in this regard, or even use nuclear weapons if they come to be seen as valid instruments in the surge towards victory over "infidel" forces of one kind or another.

The doctrinal aspect is reflected in the MB logo. The logo features a *Qur'an* and two crossed swords and beneath them the first word from Verse 60 of *Sura 8, Surat al-Anfal* ("The Spoils of War"), which says: "You shall prepare for them all the power you can muster, and all the equipment you can mobilize, that you may frighten the enemies of God, your enemies, as well as others who are not known to you; God knows them. Whatever you spend in the cause of God will be repaid to you generously, without the least injustice." This *Sura* describes how the Muslims defeated the much more numerous pagan people of Mecca in the battle of Badr (624 AD). This particular verse is so well known that its first word is enough for many Muslims to understand what stands behind the logo.

It would be fair to expect that as soon as the MB takes power, it will move to "prepare all the equipment it can mobilize" in order to frighten the enemies of God, and its own enemies. The *Qur'an* speaks here actually about deterrence ("that you may frighten..."). A doctrinal question which may arise pertains to how far does the "deterrence of the enemy", to which Muslims are obliged by the *Qur'an*, go? *Shar'i* legal opinion has by and large authorized the acquisition of nuclear weapons, and even advocated it - as a deterrent. This leaves wide room for interpretation of what deterrence is: is being a threshold state a sufficient deterrent, or should one assemble a weapon, test a device, or openly threaten to use the weapon, in order to create deterrence? And can one transfer the weapons or materials to fellow Muslims, like Hamas or Hizballah, so that they too can deter the enemy in the name of Islamic justice against "infidel usurpers"?

Sheikh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, probably the most influential Sunni jurist nowadays, and who enjoys strong influence in the MB, has ruled that Muslims should acquire nuclear weapons as a deterrent, in line with that *Qur'anic* phrase, "that you may frighten the enemies of God." Those weapons should provide "an armed peace - when you possess the means to deter your enemy so that he cannot launch aggression against you." But nuclear weapons should only be used for deterrence.¹

Indeed, the MB has spoken openly of the need for Egypt to acquire nuclear weapons. In its 2005 parliamentary election platform, for example, the MB declared that under its leadership, Egypt would develop "special national programs, such as the nuclear program, the space and aviation program, armaments program, and the biotechnology program."² In the summer of 2006, after pressing the Egyptian government for more than a year to restart the country's nuclear power program, the MB escalated its nuclear goals and openly called for Egypt to develop nuclear weapons to counterbalance Israel's nuclear capabilities. A spokesperson of the Brotherhood's parliamentary caucus stated in July 2006: "We are ready to starve in order to own a nuclear weapon that will represent a real deterrent and will be decisive in the Arab-Israeli conflict."³ MB deputies argued that Egypt's old strategy of calling for a Nuclear Weapons Free Middle East is of no use, and demanded that Egypt acquire nuclear weapons to deter Israel, in fact to reinstate the conventional advantages that Egypt, when allied with other Arab forces, might enjoy over Israel, if its perceived nuclear option were to be cancelled out by an Egyptian "equalizer".⁴ In May 2009 an MB parliament deputy said that Egypt should acquire nuclear weapons in light of the accelerated arming of Israel and Iran.⁵

1 Qatar Television, October 18, 2002.

2 Sammy Salama, Khalid Hilal, "Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood Presses Government for Nuclear Weapons", *WMD Insights*, Monterey Institute Center for Nonproliferation Studies, November 2006, Issue, http://wmdinsights.com/110/110_ME3_EgyptianMuslim.htm.

3 *Ibid.*

4 <http://www.ikhwanonline.net/Article.asp?ArtID=26065&SecID=250>, February 1, 2007.

5 http://www.thememriblog.org/blog_personal/en/16621.htm.

Even prominent scholars in the official Egyptian religious establishment, which is financed by the state and by and large supports the government's positions, have supported the acquisition of nuclear weapons. The establishment's formal position was pronounced by Egypt's most senior Islamic jurist, the Mufti, Dr. 'Ali Gum'a, in a *fatwa* he issued in May 2009.⁶ The main thrust of the *fatwa* was to prohibit the use of non-conventional weapons against non-Muslims by non-state actors, groups or individuals – which was the question to which the *fatwa* responded. But it also stated that weapons of mass destruction can and should be used by Muslim states for deterrence and self-defense. The Mufti said that the acquisition of such weapons by Muslim states for the purpose of deterring aggressors is required according to the *Shari'a*, because *Allah* said "You shall prepare for them all the power you can muster." On this matter, then, the Mufti, who answers to the government, shares the view of the MB opposition ideologues.

Decision-Making and Command Regarding Nuclear Weapons

The formal model of decision-making and control of the Egyptian MB, as it was established by the movement's founder and first leader (General Guide), Hasan al-Banna, is very Egyptian, in the sense of the Egyptian tradition of a strong state with total control of society, where the ruler is omnipotent, and runs the state through a vast and loyal bureaucracy. The ruler, who in most cases is in power for life, consults with advisers, but takes decisions alone and does not need to build coalitions.

This model is still adhered to formally, and the movement is formally led by a General Guide who presides over a leadership structure consisting of a consultative council, an executive bureau and an elaborate hierarchical bureaucratic system. Yet in reality this model was fully practiced only under Hasan al-Banna, who led the movement for 21 years until he was assassinated in 1949. Since then, decision-making and control patterns have shifted from this model. Oftentimes real power was wielded not by the General Guide and the formal leadership structure, but rather by strong groups and individuals behind the scenes. Clear decision-making mechanisms do not exist.⁷

As for control, it stands to reason that the MB leadership will seek to construct the parallel (IRGC-type) force which will be in charge of the nuclear assets with a view to ensure its utmost loyalty, discipline and orderliness - which the old Special Apparatus often lacked. The supreme leader and his close advisers will have direct control over the command of that parallel force, and of the commanders of field units. How this will work in practice, however, is hard to predict.

Similarly, diverse opinions can be expected within the MB leadership, if in power, regarding its nuclear doctrine. While some elements in the MB leadership might tend to proceed cautiously, others could push for radical positions, leading to internal conflicts in which the radicals might act against the will of the formal leadership and perhaps behind its back. The more ruthless in such a scenario could thus potentially marginalize the cautious, as is typical of both Arab and other authoritarian political cultures.

The Muslim Brotherhood is a political movement whose ideology is religious. Unlike Khomeini's Islamic republic, where the religious jurist is the ruler, the Muslim Brotherhood is led, with some exceptions, not by religious authorities, jurists or preachers, but by bureaucratic-organizational types of individuals. Religious authorities have influenced

6 http://www.islamonline.net/servlet/Satellite?c=ArticleA_C&cid=1242759335439&pagename=Zone-Arabic-News%2FNWALayout, May 31, 2009.

7 Ibrahim al-Houdaibi, "As Succession Nears, which way Will Egypt's Muslim Brothers Lean?" http://www.dailystar.com.lb/article.asp?edition_id=1&categ_id=5&article_id=109378, December 4, 2009

the movement's doctrine, but have not been involved in operational decision-making. Beyond issuing rulings allowing the use of nuclear weapons in *jihad*, therefore, it is not likely that they will be involved in decision-making regarding the brandishing, or use, of those weapons.

Who will be in charge of managing the nuclear project, and of operating strategic military nuclear assets? It is assessed that the MB regime will not trust the existing regular army. This is a legacy of many revolutions in the region over the years, especially of those that are ideologically highly charged. The army will inevitably be viewed as part and parcel of the ousted secular elites, and its officer corps deeply influenced by, and with close connections with the US, or the West. The new regime will most likely establish a new military force, parallel to the regular army, as a large Praetorian Guard, along the model of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC). This parallel army will be responsible for the most sensitive and important projects, like the nuclear infrastructure and the surface-to-surface missiles (SSMs), much as the IRGC in Iran is responsible for some of the more sensitive aspects of the strategic nuclear assets, such as the SSM arm of the IRGC Air Force, and is expected to be in control of nuclear weapons when they become available and are deployed.

In constructing this new force, the MB can fall back on its own history. Between the 1940s and the 1960s it had a secret paramilitary and terrorist arm, the "Special Apparatus" or the "Secret Apparatus", which operated parallel to the MB's organizational structure; was compartmentalized to the regular Brotherhood members and to most of their leaders; and was answerable directly to the General Guide, the Brotherhood's supreme leader. Muslim Brethren who were members of the Special Apparatus in the 1960s are among the MB's present leaders. But since such a parallel force does not exist it will have to start from scratch and will take time and significant resources to establish.

As the MB's history shows, zealots might act against the will of the formal leadership and perhaps behind its back. Thus, in a nuclear armed MB-dominated Egypt, securing nuclear weapons and materials against unauthorized access by radical elements in the movement may become a major problem.

How Can One Deter a Nuclear MB?

The question arises whether it would be possible to deter an MB nuclear armed Egypt? Will such a government be sensitive to casualties among its population? In this sense, an ideologically religious fundamentalist Egypt would bear some striking similarities to an ideologically radical Iran with nuclear weapons, where vast geographic, demographic and natural resource reserves could lead a strongly willed anti-status-quo leadership to launch nuclear weapons in the belief that it could still prevail in a nuclear exchange, while absorbing relatively high attrition rates, which other, less populated or smaller states in the region could not. Religious fervor and commitment, while not necessarily being irrational per se, could in this sense contribute to nuclear blows by miscalculation, rather than by premeditated design.

The MB is a political movement, and as all political movements, once it took power its perspective will differ from what it was when the MB was an opposition movement. Still, its purpose in acquiring power is to implement its ideology. It can therefore be expected to face some degree of tension between its ideological commitments, on the one hand, and the imperatives of the reality in which it has to function as a government, on the other. Which choices it will make on the range from ideological purism to political realism is hard to predict, but the possibilities of miscalculation due to ignorance regarding

adversarial forces, errors of judgment due to common inherent human faults, domestic political constraints, bureaucratic interest-driven disinformation and misinformation, and competition for legitimacy and prestige – are all seriously disconcerting.

On the one hand, then, there is the ideology. Martyrdom and noble death in *jihad* are central elements in the MB's ethos as it was shaped by the movement's founder, and still immensely revered and admired, Hasan al-Banna. God grants a "noble life" to that nation alone which "knows how to die a noble death," he said. He extolled death as an important end of *jihad* in the phrase "the art of death". "Death is art," he said. The *Qur'an* has commanded people to love death more than life. Unless "the philosophy of the *Qur'an* on death" replaces "the love of life" which has consumed Muslims, then they will reach naught. Victory can only come with the mastery of "the art of death". These themes have been an important aspect of MB training.⁸ Thus, the obligation of sacrifice is an essential prerequisite for victory, there can be no victory without it. This too bears at least some potential for grave miscalculation in an escalating crisis scenario.

Muhammad Mahdi 'Akif, the General Guide from January 2004 to January 2010, stated in a missive entitled "*Jihad* and Martyrdom [*Istishhad*] Are the Way to Glory and Victory" that Islam regards resistance against occupation, like the ones in Palestine, Afghanistan and Iraq "a *jihad* for God" (*jihad fi sabil Allah*).⁹ In an article outlining the MB's objectives, 'Akif stated that for the MB, *jihad* was the most elevated pillar of Islam after "the two testimonies" (that there is no God but *Allah* and that Muhammad is His messenger), and recapitulated the Prophet's saying, often quoted by al-Banna: "He who dies and has not fought, and was not resolved to fight, has died a *jahiliyya* (unholy, in ignorance of God) death."¹⁰ 'Akif declared that all Zionists - civilians and soldiers - must be killed, because the "Zionist People" as a whole is an armed military force occupying Palestine, and there is no difference between military Zionists and civilian ones.¹¹

It follows that once in power, the Egyptian MB would consider itself obliged to mount an active *jihad* to liberate occupied Muslim lands, from Palestine through Iraq to Afghanistan. It follows also that casualties would not deter the MB from pursuing the *jihad*. This puts in question the relevance of Western theories of nuclear containment and deterrence, originally developed to address non-democratic states whose objective was to spread a certain ideology, to build an empire, or simply to survive. Will a movement for which death in holy war in *Allah's* name is a key objective be deterred by the threat of death? To clarify, the belief is not messianic or suicidal, but rather that sacrifice is an essential element on the path to divinely assured victory, and that therefore great sacrifice is not a messenger of defeat but rather of imminent victory. Neither does this mean that an MB leadership would deliberately seek great destruction among its own people, but rather that it would be prone to miscalculate the magnitude of disaster due to ignorance and guidance by subjectively warped or slanted prisms toward realities in a nuclear environment. Nor does this mean that the probabilities of nuclear war are inevitably high; they are not, and even a radical leadership is likely to be rational, and cautious. The problem is one of degree, how probable is "probable", and what the margin of error may turn out to be – even a relatively small one could be catastrophic.

To be sure, the MB's mainstream trend is neither messianic nor apocalyptic, and the movement's survival and expansion are its first

⁸ Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brotherhood*, London: Oxford University Press, 1969, p. 207.

⁹ "Al-Jihad wal-Istishhad huma Tariq al-'Izza wal-Nasr," www.ikhwanonline.com, April 15, 2004.

¹⁰ Al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn wa-'Awdat al-Sahwa al-Islamiyya," www.ikhwanonline.com, July 10, 2005.

¹¹ "Akif: La Farq bayna al-Madaniyyin al-Sahayina wal-'Askariyyin," www.ikhwanonline.com, February 9, 2005.

priorities. In the 1950s and again in the 1960s extremist trends in the MB dragged it to violent confrontations with the Nasser regime which brought it close to being eliminated as a movement, and since then it has eschewed violence; adopted electoral politics as a central strategy; avoided confrontations with the regime whenever those could put the movement's very survival at risk; and practiced self restraint even under heavy repression. This has an ideological dimension: the Brotherhood regards itself as the real Islamic community, which should gradually Islamize society until the movement becomes identical with society and state. Putting at risk the movement's survival amounts, therefore, to risking the existence of the real Islamic community. Thus, the MB have demonstrated obviously rational and cost-effective, rational-actor model, characteristics, and can be expected to carry these through when it becomes responsible for a relatively modern state, which Egypt is (again, more like Iran than the other states in the region).

It is an open question, however, how much of this pragmatic approach will survive the MB's reaching power and having nuclear weapons at its disposal: some elements in the MB might continue to preach caution, but others will argue that the movement has finally been endowed with a God-given ultimate power which ensures its survival, and therefore that a pragmatic approach is no longer mandated.

As far as the question of civilian casualties is concerned, there is a lesson to be learned from the experience of Hamas, the MB's Palestinian branch, which has ruled Gaza since June 2007. Hamas provoked Israel to launch its military operation against Gaza in December 2008-January 2009, and had no compunctions in using civilians as human shields. On the contrary, it boasted making use of them as a strategy. Thus, Hamas' TV channel, *al-Aqsa TV*, showed (February 29, 2009) a Hamas MP stating the following:

[The enemies of Allah] do not know that the Palestinian people have developed their [methods] of death and death-seeking. For the Palestinian people, death has become an industry, at which women excel, and so do all the people living on this land. The elderly excel at this, and so do the *mujahidin* and the children. This is why they have formed human shields of the women, the children, the elderly, and the *mujahidin*, in order to challenge the Zionist bombing machine. It is as if they were saying to the Zionist enemy: "We desire death like you desire life."¹²

One can clearly detect here Hasan al-Banna's praise of Islam's "art of death" as against its enemies' "love of life", a ubiquitous disdain for the Western sanctity of life and pursuit of material values, which is common to extremist and undemocratic ideologies throughout history, especially evidenced in the twentieth century. Concern for civilian life, therefore, may not be a powerful deterrent when the MB takes power.

What then could deter a nuclear MB in power? To be deterred the MB perhaps will have to perceive that it faces a credible existential threat in spite of its possession of nuclear weapons. In other words, it will need to be convinced that the sacrifices entailed in nuclear escalation are not a channel that leads ultimately to victory, but rather to the demise of the ideology that is held dear, and that it risks collapse of the espoused agenda. Short of that, the MB apparently will not hesitate to advance its agenda most energetically and forcefully, not to say ruthlessly, under the cover of its nuclear weapons assets.

Will the Enemy's Identity Influence C3 Procedures?

As demonstrated in the chapter on nuclear C3I in Egypt under the present regime, or a continuity regime, Muslim Arab rulers of Muslim countries like Nasser of Egypt and Saddam of Iraq had no qualms about using chemical weapons against Muslims, their own nationals included, leading one to assume that under the present regime in Egypt, the enemy's being Muslim will have no influence on nuclear C2 procedures and levels of control. But will the fact that the enemy is Muslim have no effect on those procedures and levels of control in a regime run by the Muslim Brotherhood, an Islamist religious movement?

It will not. It was the Muslim Brotherhood which introduced to modern politics the method of defining a Muslim enemy or rival as an apostate (the method of *takfir*). Once defined as such, that enemy or rival can be fought against. The Egyptian Brotherhood carried out assassinations against its rivals, Muslims, including a prime minister, and the Syrian branch conducted a terror and guerilla war against the Syrian regime. Neither would the likelihood that Muslims might be unintended victims of attacks on non-Muslims (Israeli targets, for example) be a deterrent. The justification will be that those Muslims were blessed with the privilege of dying a martyr's death with all the associated benefits.

The issue of the legality, in the eyes of MB ideological formulators, of using nuclear weapons against Muslim adversaries, or the possibility that Muslims might be killed as collateral damage in nuclear attacks directed at non-Muslims, is raised here only in the sense that this is an indirect issue. For, inevitably, an MB nuclear armed Egypt would target principally non-Muslim rivals, such as the US, Israel, their allies, or other diverse groups (Russians, Communist Atheists, Hindus, etc, as the imagination may invoke), but Muslims are an integral part of the region and are likely to be victims one way or another of nuclear escalation, and of any nuclear exchange. More interesting is the question whether a nuclear armed Islamic Revolutionary Iran, being a natural Shiite rival of a Sunni MB nuclear armed Egypt, might come to be viewed as a nuclear ally or as an adversary, and targeted specifically so as to nullify its influence for regional dominance, and to mitigate its anti-status-quo troublemaking potential, being as it is as such directly in competition against an MB nuclear armed Egypt.

Will Differences between Sunni and Shiite Traditions Affect Nuclear C3 Culture in an MB-Ruled Egypt?

Sunni traditions in the Middle East regarding the state and its means of power are generally different from Shi'i ones in this regard due to the different historical conditions – Sunni Islam by and large has been the faith of the rulers and ruling elites, whereas Shi'ism has by and large been associated with the ruled and the persecuted by state power. Does this difference have relevance to nuclear C2? To our understanding what counts is not Sunni versus Shi'i traditions, but rather much more so the local political culture. Thus the political culture of Sunnis in Egypt, who see their identity and loyalty closely related to the concept of the Egyptian state and to its ruler, differs from that of Sunnis in Iraq or Saudi Arabia whose identity is first and foremost tribal, whose loyalty is to their tribal leaders, and for whom the concept of the state means little. Similarly, in the Egyptian military culture officers are often appointed to key and sensitive positions on the basis of seniority and perhaps merit, not on the basis of their tribal affiliation.

12 <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g0wJXf2nt4Y>

Moreover, Egypt's cultural traits as a centralized, strongly hierarchical and highly bureaucratic state have made their imprints on the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood which, in this sense, is very Egyptian: in its centralist leadership, powerful hierarchical and bureaucratic organizational apparatus and strong discipline the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood differs from other branches of the movement.

The Iranian Factor

If the present Iranian regime is in power when the Egyptian MB takes over power, and given the ideological affinity between that regime and the Egyptian MB, their common animosity toward the US, Israel and the pro-Western Arab regimes, and their relative international isolation, a strategic alliance and defense cooperation, including in the nuclear field, may develop between them. Iran will seek to turn Egypt under the MB into a satellite, as close to Iran as Hamas or even more so. There will be elements in the Brotherhood who will resent or openly oppose such a course, but the Iranians may take advantage of the defense cooperation to infiltrate the Egyptian defense and security organizations in terms of intelligence and influence. In that context they are likely to try to use their involvement with the nuclear program in order to achieve influence in it, and to control it.

Implications of the MB's Global Nature

The MB is a global movement with branches or groups affiliated with it to various degrees operating all over the Arab and Muslim world, and in non-Muslim countries in Asia and Africa, as well as in Europe and North America. The strategies of the various branches vary from place to place, according to local conditions. But the Brethren by and large share the basic doctrine of an existential struggle between Islam and the West, in which the movement's goals are to liberate Muslim lands from the occupation or influence and exploitation of the West, to unify the Muslims, to establish the Islamic state ruled by the *Shari'a*, and to spread its version of revivalist Islam worldwide.

Beyond a shared doctrine, many of the branches are connected in various degrees to the International Organization of the Muslim Brotherhood, a loose association which is dominated by the Egyptian branch, the movement's "mother" and the strongest branch. If the Egyptian MB takes power, and as a government possesses military nuclear capabilities, this could thus have wide-ranging implications, like the empowerment of MB branches in Arab states, or globally.

Command, Control, Communications and Deployment Issues in an MB Nuclear Armed Egypt

Pursuant to all the above comments and observations, it is not easy to make definitive assessments regarding the C2, C3 or C3I structures that an MB regime would establish in an MB nuclear armed Egypt.¹³ We project with a high degree of certainty a combination of characteristics that may draw on two sources: one is the Iranian example, where the establishment of a fundamentalist Islamic revolutionary regime has given rise to certain patterns that are very relevant to the issue here before us. The other is the typically Egyptian milieu. The precise measure of blending of the two is an imponderable, but the following is

¹³ Some of the typically Egyptian characteristics of command, control and deployment issues are covered in the chapter on a continuity regime nuclear armed Egypt.

an attempt to underline some of the most salient aspects.

As detailed above, an MB takeover would probably entail a demoting of the regular Egyptian security establishment, identified as it would be with the *ancien regime*, including the armed forces, the internal security forces associated with the deposed secular regime, and the intelligence establishment. The degree to which these would be marginalized, and by what means, is not clear – the very ruthless methods employed by the Iranian Revolution may, or may not, be repeated. But it can be fairly surely be surmised that a certain degree of the functionality of the armed forces will be retained, even if the senior echelons are removed, by one method or another, or remain but are distrusted by the MB leadership. This way or that, it is assessed that the MB leadership will establish a highly loyal Praetorian Guard type force, along the lines of the IRGC but not necessarily of its scope or influence, to be entrusted with the most sensitive of the MB regime's agenda items, including custodianship of a nuclear weapons asset capability. Alternatively, or additionally, specific mission-oriented entities, or units, are likely to be established to this end.

Since the Egyptian armed forces already possess very extensive and significant Air Force and SSM capabilities, these can be expected to be very firmly confiscated or otherwise requisitioned to serve the agenda of the MB revolution's agenda. To this end, for reasons of the expertise required for their maintenance and operation, significant manpower elements can be expected to be co-opted into the MB system, even at the price of some compromise regarding ideological dogma (perhaps learning the lessons of the debilitating harshness practiced by the Iranian Revolution towards these assets in its early days, which left Iran vulnerable and exposed to attack by Iraq in September 1980, resulting in disastrous reversals in the Iran-Iraq War, at least during its first two years, until late 1982 when the tide was turned in favor of the Iranians, by the fierce resolve of the IRGC, and the reconstruction of the Iranian army after its debilitating harassment by the Islamic Revolution). If it is the Air Force and the SSM force in an MB ruled Egypt that is entrusted with a nuclear delivery capability too, then it might be expected that a superseding command structure may be superimposed upon the existing one, so as to solidify the chain of command down from the "Supreme Leader" through to the relevant field subordinate ranks.

In time, as the regime solidifies its hold over the diverse elements of the Egyptian system, then given the strength of the IRGC-like force, or Praetorian Guard entrusted with the regime's survival and essential agenda items, including its strategic assets, it might gradually gnaw away at the existing structures and seek to displace them. In such a scenario, ideological prerogatives will become dominant, and there will be less leeway for the caution and moderation inherent in the current, or existing, or continuity regime systems, and Egypt will, in fact, become much more like Iran as we know it.

The chain of command, in a nuclear context MB Egypt, would then develop in the following manner: the MB equivalent of the "Supreme Leader" would still be the ultimate authority regarding the brandishing of the nuclear option – either for deterrence, for escalation, threats, or actual use *in extremis*. Some of the problems which have arisen in the Iranian context would then likely be repeated in the Egyptian: the "Supreme Leader's" information gatekeepers, who "screen" the information reaching him, manipulate it in their and others' interests, and the influence of key figures over the Praetorian Guard / IRGC entrusted with the strategic assets and operations (in the Iranian case President Ahmadinejad and the IRGC elements behind him and favored by him; in the Egyptian case, such forces could easily evolve too given the dynamics of a mystical and extremist foundation legitimizing the MB regime).

Thus, the chain of command in an MB nuclear armed Egypt could be likened to that of an IRGC-dominated Iran: the prerogative of the “Supreme Leader”; the fierce loyalty and ideological commitment of a trusted force superimposed on the military structure, separate and independent; extremist elements attempting to manipulate information and messages while maintaining their credibility in the eyes of the “Supreme Leader” for political expediency; interference by religious figures with agendas of their own; and a chain of military command involving the senior command of the ideological force structure (in Iran meaning the IRGC), the heads of the relevant forces (in Iran the IRGC Air Force), the Minister of Defense, the Chief of Staff, and the field commanders. A nuclear armed MB Egypt would have to define authorization standard operating procedures (SOPs), and to ensure the security of nuclear assets against theft by renegade elements, and of course to adopt existing measures, or install new ones to prevent unauthorized use, much as discussed in other contexts. These can be expected to involve a very few of the customary Western precautions and procedures, but they will be tailored to the specific needs and ambience of an Egyptian nuclear weapons and strategic delivery systems environment.

Notwithstanding everything that can be said about an Egyptian MB emulation, *grosso modo*, of the Iranian model, still it is worth emphasizing, if this is not obvious, that Egypt is not Iran, and that typically Egyptian models of C2, C3, C3I, deployment and doctrine are unlikely to be wholly jettisoned. Egypt is Egypt, and Egyptian characteristics and traditions are likely to remain significant and perhaps even dominant – there is a typically “Egyptian” way of doing things, and this will not vanish overnight. Much of what has been stated (in a separate chapter) regarding the scenario of a continuity regime ruling over a nuclear armed Egypt – will likely remain valid for an MB

ruled nuclear armed Egypt. It may be assessed that C2 structures, and deployment, will be subject to similar considerations of the relative benefits and risks – the advantages of dispersal in the vast geographical expanse that is Egypt, including Upper Egypt and the Western Desert – versus the concentration near the capital, the Cairo area and the Delta. A regime that is unsure of itself may prefer to concentrate such assets geographically nearer its centers of control, or near its centers of influence, which may be two different things. In this case, the analogy to the Iranian case is ambiguous, because the Iranian regime acts in this regard with a great degree of confidence – it does not doubt its absolute ability to rule over any deployment mode opted for – and this may or may not turn out to be the case in a future MB ruled nuclear armed Egypt.

Similarly, communicating nuclear orders is likely to be impacted by a change of regime in Egypt. An MB rule can be expected to be naturally distrustful of established communication capabilities, to establish additional, redundant and circumventing channels of communication, and to perhaps rely less on computerized, cyber and hi-tech capabilities, for a myriad of reasons, including a suspicion that they may be corrupted by Western or adversary foiling mechanisms that would make them unreliable in a crisis situation, or because they would be operated by professional echelons that would be, rightly or wrongly, suspected of association with the secular pro-Western *ancien regime*, or Western interests or influences, and therefore disqualified. Thus, redundancy would be mandated, and C3 systems involved could theoretically revert to what have been termed “primitive” communication means – personal orders, trusted emissaries or runners, point-to-point safe telephones, default broadcast codes understood only by trusted subordinates, etc.

Institute for Policy and Strategy
Lauder School of Government, Diplomacy and Strategy
Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) Herzliya
P.O.Box 167, Herzliya 46150, Israel
Tel: 09-9527389, Fax: 09-9527310
E-mail: ips@idc.ac.il
Website: www.ips.idc.ac.il

