CURRENT TRENDS IN ISLAMIST IDEOLOGY

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*Center on Islam, Democracy, and
The Future of the Muslim World*

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The Sunni-Shi'a Conversion Controversy

ISRAEL ELAD-ALTMAN

T**he Middle East is increasingly characterized by a decline of the Arab nation-state and a concomitant rise in importance of more primordial allegiances to tribal and religious communities. The Sunni-Shi'a divide is becoming a central feature of regional politics, reflecting the reaction of Sunnis to what they term the "Shi'a surge" or "tide" (*al-madd al-Shi'i*). Key elements of this surge are Iran's push for status as a regional power, Iraq's sectarian strife and its new Shi'a leadership, and Hezbollah's quest for dominance in Lebanon. Saddam Hussain's execution further exacerbated Sunni suspicions and animosity. As Sunni Arabs increasingly see Iran's nationalistic, hegemonic ambitions behind the Shi'a surge, the religious Sunni-Shi'a divide is gradually becoming an Arab-Iranian one as well.**

Sunni Arab leaders in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and elsewhere have expressed concern about these developments, while violent *salafi-jihadi* Sunni groups in Iraq are at war with the Shi'a, whom they consider to be apostates. Such mainstream Sunni Islamist movements as the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) in Egypt and Jordan, however, as well as Hamas, have so far favored an alliance with Iran, Hezbollah and the Shi'a against their common enemies—Israel and the United States. But this strategy faces another potential threat: the apparently growing trend of Sunnis converting to Shiism (*tashayyu'*), most remarkably in predominantly Sunni Egypt and Jordan, but also in Sunni-majority Syria and in countries as far away as Sudan and Morocco.

This trend has been attributed to intensive Iranian missionary activity, the growing popularity of Iran under President Ahmadinejad, and the rising star of Hezbollah as a result of its feats in the July-August 2006 war with Israel and the emergence of its charismatic secretary general, Hasan Nasrallah, as a new Arab hero. Many Sunni Arabs now see Iran and Hezbollah as the only forces willing and capable of standing up to the United States and Israel. And their political enthusiasm has affected the religious sphere, prompting numerous conversions to Shiism.[1]

While it is impossible to determine their actual number, these conversions have aroused a passionate debate. Sunni Arabs are worried that their societies are now subject

to a sinister religious and ideological invasion, not only by Shiism, but also by nationalistic Iran. They see Iran as seeking to advance its hegemonic ambitions in the region through Shiitization.[2] Sunni critics of this development sometime describe it as "the return of the Safavis," alluding to the Safavid empire's policy of Shiitization as a means of expanding its influence and combating the Ottomans.[3]

If the Shiitization trend persists, new sectarian problems may well arise in countries where Shiism has previously been almost nonexistent, like Jordan, or extremely marginal, like Egypt—countries that can ill afford more strife. The trend might also signal a shift in the centuries-old public perception about the respective merits of Shiism and Sunnism. For centuries Sunnis have been the stronger communities in the Muslim world and usually the rulers, while the Shi'a have been weaker and usually the ruled. And the Sunnis have, to some degree, viewed this greater worldly success as proof of the validity of their faith. The new wave of conversions suggests, then, that a growing number of Sunnis—impressed by the rise of Iran and Hezbollah and the decline of the Sunni Arab states—may now consider Shiism to be religiously superior to Sunnism.

Assessing the Situation

Reliable data about this phenomenon, however, are hard to come by. The sensitivity of the subject leads many converts to keep their conversions a secret—a practice acceptable and sometimes even recommended by Shiism. In Egypt an estimated 750,000 Shi'a make up about one per cent of the population. Most of them have not converted recently, but the rate of conversion is increasing, and the Shi'a are becoming more assertive. In Jordan several hundred families are estimated to have recently converted, largely because of the influence of the tens or even hundreds of thousands of Iraqi Shi'a who have moved to Jordan since 2003. Despite this limited number of converts, Jordanian authorities see conversion as potentially serving Iranian objectives and, hence, a national security risk.

Sunni governments in North Africa are also on alert. In November 2006 Algeria's minister of education reportedly dismissed eleven teachers for conducting Shi'a missionary work (*dawa*) in the schools.[4] Teachers who are Shi'a expatriates from Iraq, Syria and Lebanon are held to be primarily responsible for the spread of Shiism in Algeria, but Hezbollah's al-Manar television channel is influential as well.[5] In early January 2007 the Algerian Religious Affairs Ministry disclosed that it was investigating the activities of Shi'a groups in the western part of the country. These groups were calling for the repudiation of Sunnism and the adoption of Shiism, as well as extolling both Iran for heroically challenging the crusader West and Hezbollah for defeating Israel. The Algerian authorities said that they were concerned about their activities and were determined to stop them.[6] In Morocco, Shiism is reportedly spread by Moroccans working in European countries,

particularly Spain and Belgium, where they are being proselytized by Shi'a institutions connected to Iran.[7]

In Sudan, meanwhile, a coalition of Sunni religious organizations has launched a campaign against Iran's missionary activities there. The Supreme Council for Coordination Among the Islamic Associations has warned of a major conspiracy, led by new converts to Shiism and backed by Shi'a organizations and Iran, to spread Shiism in Sudan. To illustrate what it termed the "Shi'a danger," the Council claimed that whole villages have been converted to Shiism, and that Shi'a mosques and *husainiyyat* (worhip places smaller than mosques) have proliferated in Khartoum. The Council urged the government to close down the Iranian Cultural Center in Khartoum.[8] Such anxiety among the Sunnis is not unfounded: Shiism has indeed been spreading in Sudan for over two decades, as many Sudanese identify with the Iranian revolution and are grateful for Iran's support of their regime during its long years of isolation by the West. Shiism has become even more popular recently with the growing enthusiasm for Hezbollah—manifested by a proliferation of Hezbollah's flags and Nasrallah's portraits.[9]

Yet apparently the most intense Iranian missionary activity and the highest rate of conversion to Shiism is in Syria, Iran's close ally. Shi'a shrines in Syria attract tens of thousands of Iranian pilgrims annually, as well as Arab Shi'a from the Gulf states. At al-Sayyidah Zainab, the most important of these sites, a Shi'a seminary (*hawzah*) is featuring such prominent scholars as Shaykh Muhammad Husain Fadhlallah and attracting new converts to Shiism from Syria and beyond. Iran, which is accused of paying for conversions, is establishing more seminaries and places of worship around Syria. The huge influx of Iraqi Shi'a who have moved to Syria since 2003 is also helping to change the sectarian landscape.

Syrian religious authorities dispute reports of large numbers of conversions, however, attributing them to opposition sources. Their own socio-statistic study of conversions in Syria, covering the years 1985 to 2006 and published last November in Damascus, argues that most converts have been Alawis rather than Sunnis.[10] But even if its findings are correct, the study (whose authors are anonymous) apparently does not take into account the possible impact on conversion rates of Hezbollah's achievements vis-à-vis Israel last summer. Nor does it deny the existence of an intensive Iranian missionary effort in Syria.

A prominent Syrian Sunni scholar, Wahbah al-Zuhayli, former head of Hay'at `Ulama' al-Sham (Association of Syrian Religious Scholars), has openly criticized the campaign conducted by Iran's political and religious institutions seeking to convert Syrians. He described it as an "aggression" and charged the Iranian embassy in Damascus with using financial enticements to persuade people to adopt Shiism. Zuhayli claimed that such practices have succeeded in converting hundreds of Syrians, and that the Syrian government is silent about it. He said that he complained about the campaign to Iran's supreme leader, Ali Khamenei, and asked that it be stopped.[11]

The Sunnis Strike Back

These developments propelled leading Sunni scholars to react. Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, head of the International Union of Muslim Scholars and probably the most popular and influential Sunni religious authority, launched a dramatic and scathing attack on the Shi'a on August 31, 2006. He accused them of trying to penetrate Egypt and convert its people to Shiism; he warned that if such efforts were allowed to continue, Egypt could become a second Iraq within the next two decades; and he blasted Hasan Nasrallah for being a fanatic.[12] On November 26, 2006 Qaradawi again denounced the Shi'a, this time for trying to exploit Hezbollah's victory against Israel in order to penetrate Sunni societies and convert the Sunnis to Shiism.[13]

On October 21, 2006 Shaykh Salman Bin Fahd al-Awdah, a highly authoritative Saudi-Wahhabi cleric, stated with equal fervor that a Shi'a flood was engulfing the Levant countries, particularly Syria, and several other Muslim countries as well. The impression that one party was stealthily infiltrating the other had fomented tension between Sunnis and Shi'a, he said. Warning that the Shi'a expansion into the Sunni sphere amounted to playing with fire and posed a very serious threat to Islam, he urged Iranian leaders to consider the risks it entailed.[14]

These statements doubtlessly reflect the two scholars' deep frustration with the Shi'a. Both had strongly supported Hezbollah in its war with Israel despite the reservations of other prominent Sunni clerics. A leading Saudi Wahhabi cleric, Shaykh Abdullah Bin Abd al-Rahman al-Jabrin, for instance, had issued a *fatwa* asserting that it was a sin to join, support or pray for Hezbollah. He said the group was infidel, being Shi'a, and doing the bidding of Iran, which was seeking to spread its influence in the region. In response to this *fatwa,* both Qaradawi and Awdah had defended Hezbollah unequivocally. They ruled that the Shi'a were good Muslims and an integral part of the Muslim nation. They also drew a distinction between the Shi'a of Iraq, whom they viewed as fanatics, and those of Lebanon, who they said were not.

Qaradawi had long advocated rapprochement (*taqrib*) between Sunnis and Shi'a, arguing that the differences in their jurisprudence pertained to secondary matters rather than to principles of faith.[15] He even had a prominent Shi'a scholar, Ayatollah Muhammad Ali Taskhiri—secretary general of the Iranian-backed Al-Majma' al-Alami lil-Taqrib bayna al-Madhahib al-Islamiyyah (International Institute for Rapprochement Among the Islamic Legal Schools)[16]—appointed as one of his deputies at the International Union for Muslim Scholars.

But Qaradawi may now have experienced a change of heart. When he first assailed the Shi'a for trying to penetrate Egypt, he also criticized their religious beliefs, perhaps for the first time. He said that most Shi'a believe that the Quran is imperfect and seek to curry favor with Allah by cursing the Prophet's companions (*al-Sahabah*), who were Ali's rivals.

Furthermore, on the occasion of another such attack on the Shiitization campaign, Qaradawi reportedly accepted Zuhayli's conclusion that the Iranians' push for rapprochement (*taqrib*) is merely a means of disguising their true goal, which is to convert the Sunnis.[17]

Given this history and the ongoing Sunni-Shi'i strife in Iraq, it is not surprising that the "Conference on the Rapprochement Among the Schools of Fiqh" convened in Doha in January 2007 was quite contentious. Qaradawi opened the meeting by criticizing Iran for trying to spread Shiism in Sunni countries. "It is not permissible for one school of jurisprudence to try to propagate itself in countries which are purely under another school," he said, adding that Iran would gain nothing by such efforts.[18] During subsequent sessions, he repeated his criticism of Shi'a missionary activities in Sunni-majority countries. He said they were well programmed and organized, and refuted the claim, made at the conference by the Iranian Ayatollah Taskhiri, that they were being carried out solely by individuals. Qaradawi particularly denounced Shi'a proselytism in Palestine.[19]

Because Qaradawi has traditionally held such an ecumenical attitude toward the Shi'a, such statements indicate how seriously he now views the problem. Indeed, Qaradawi's previously voiced opinion about the similarity between basic Shi'a and Sunni principles has been used by former Sunnis to justify their conversions to Shiism,[20] and Qaradawi has consequently been blamed for opening the door to Shiitization by minimizing Sunni-Shi'a differences.[21]

The Muslim Brotherhood's Reaction

One would have expected the largest and most influential Sunni Islamist movement, the Muslim Brotherhood (which in many ways is deeply influenced by Qaradawi), to react publicly to the Shiitization debate. That, however, has not happened; as a rule, the Brotherhood has preferred to remain silent. Its spokesmen usually evade the question, speaking generally about the unity of Islam and the need to avoid sedition.

Muhammad Mahdi 'Akif, who—by serving as the general guide of the Egyptian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood and the International Organization of the Brotherhood—is formally the movement's supreme global leader, expressed unequivocal support for Hezbollah during the last war in Lebanon. When pressed on the issue of conversion to Shiism, he said that Hezbollah is successfully leading the resistance against Israel and the Brotherhood hence recognizes its leadership in that struggle. The arguments between Sunnis and Shi'a must be suspended until after the common Zionist enemy is defeated and the Arabs recover all their rights, he added, because that battle takes precedence over every other issue.[22] The Sunni-Shi'a alliance is best demonstrated by the close ties between Hamas (the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood) and Iran and Hezbollah.

To date there have been only two public exceptions to the general MB silence

concerning Shiitization. In Sudan the local MB organization joined the protest campaign of the Supreme Council for Coordination Among the Islamic Associations mentioned above, and the MB's veteran leader there, Sadiq 'Abdullah 'Abd al-Majid, criticized the government for allowing Shi'a books to enter the country.[23] This happened despite the fact that the MB's Sudanese branch professes allegiance to the general guide of the Egyptian branch as the supreme authority of the MB movement.

The second exception is the Syrian branch of the movement. It has been highly critical of Iran's missionary activities in Syria, arguing that the ultimate goal of such efforts is to change the national and religious identity of the Syrian people. It has attacked Iran for trying to diminish what it terms Syria's "Arab depth," and has also accused the Syrian regime of turning the country into an Iranian province.[24]

In Jordan a member of parliament from the Islamic Action Front, the Jordanian MB's political party, did reportedly complain to the government about missionary activities carried out by Iraqi Shi'a residing in Jordan,[25] but that has not been the official position of his movement. If the conversion trend continues, however, the MB in Egypt and Jordan, as well their affiliate Hamas, will find it increasingly difficult to maintain their alliance with Iran and Hezbollah. The MB's loyalty will be severely tested if Iran and its proxies manage to translate their newly acquired prestige into tangible gains for the Shi'a. Hezbollah may succeed, for example, in forcing a constitutional change in Lebanon that gives it political predominance at the expense of the Sunnis.

Jordanian public opinion on this matter already appears to be changing. In the aftermath of Saddam's execution, many Jordanians who had previously supported Iran turned against it and began urging the MB to review its attitude toward "the Safavis."[26] Demonstrators protesting the execution were reported to have clashed with MB supporters in Jordan, who are closely linked with Hamas, and shouted slogans against both Iran and Hamas.[27]

The Front Line in Lebanon

It is in Lebanon that the MB dilemma is most visible, though conversion is not its main cause. Here the Hezbollah-led effort to topple the Siniora government is increasingly being seen as a Shi'a-Sunni power struggle. Shaykh Faysal Mawlawi—the secretary general of the Lebanese MB (Al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyyah), a prominent Sunni jurist in his own right and Qaradawi's deputy at the Qaradawi-led European Council for Fatwa and Research—has consistently promoted an ecumenical position regarding the Shi'a. Like Qaradawi, he ruled that they are Muslims and diverge from the Sunnis on secondary matters only.[28] In July 2006 he rejected Jabrin's *fatwa* against Hezbollah,[29] and his organization expressed its support for Hezbollah and declared that its own members were fighting hand-in-hand with Hezbollah.[30]

Since then, however, political developments in Lebanon have complicated matters for the MB. Hezbollah launched a campaign to topple the Siniora government by withdrawing its own ministers from it, staging open-ended street sit-ins, and threatening to escalate its civil disobedience measures. While al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyyah claimed neutrality in this conflict, it in effect supported the "14 March Coalition" government and the formation of an international tribunal to investigate the Hariri assassination—despite efforts by Hezbollah and its allies to depict the struggle as a fight between Lebanese and Arab nationalist forces on the one hand, and supporters of American imperialist intervention in Lebanon on the other. Mawlawi stated that the sit-in campaign was dangerous and called on Hezbollah to stop it. He charged that Iran had started to implement a project of expanding its influence in the region. He said that, until recently, he had thought that Hezbollah was not a part of that project—that its struggle was against Israel and the United States. But what had happened lately had led him to think otherwise, and Mawlawi called on Hezbollah to come back to its Lebanese identity (*Lubnaniyyatihi*).[31]

An editorial piece on the official al-Jama'ah website, entitled "Does the Opposition Deserve the Sacrifices of the Lebanese?," was much more blunt. It criticized the Hezbollah-led opposition for resigning from the government against which it had had no complaints, and accused it of destroying any chance of rescuing Lebanon's deteriorating economy by creating the crisis. It argued that the threat to force the government's collapse through the street action was unwarranted, the Siniora government being the legitimate product of a parliamentary majority—a majority resulting from the free and lawful elections that had benefited all the parties. "The Resistance, to which all Lebanese look up in the hope that it will defend the country, has fallen victim to the quest for petty gains in governmental power."[32]

Another major Lebanese Sunni figure, meanwhile, has remained fervently loyal to Hezbollah. Shaykh Fathi Yakan, a well-known Muslim Brotherhood thinker and former leader of al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyyah who broke with it to form the rival Islamic Action Front, is close to the Syrian regime and has openly supported Hezbollah. Furthermore he has attacked al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyyah for its support of the government. On 8 December 2006 Yakan took the highly symbolic step of leading the Friday prayer of the Shi'a laying siege to the offices of Prime Minister Siniora. (Hasan Nasrallah issued a special *fatwa* authorizing his followers to pray behind a Sunni prayer leader).[33] Addressing the gathering, Yakan declared, "This sit-in will foil the American project in Lebanon as the resistance broke the myth of the invincible Israel during the July-August war. This massive protest can last not only for one more week or month but for years until it defeats the American plot."[34]

Conclusion

S unnis have converted to Shiism in the past, and their conversions neither attracted much attention nor generated heated public debate. The current debate is indicative of the current state of politics in the region. For the rising Shi'a, religion has become an important political tool, and Sunni Islamist reactions to this fact differ from one arena to another, depending on the degree to which religion has become politicized. But the more the Sunni-Shi'a issue is framed as an Iranian-Arab contest, the more Arab Sunni forces now aligned with Iran will come under pressure to change their strategy. Arab Shi'a communities in Sunni-majority or Sunni-ruled countries, like those of the Gulf Cooperation Council, may also well become the target of growing Sunni suspicion and animosity—possibly pushing them to radicalization in a kind of a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Notes

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2. On Shiitization as a manifestation and tool of Iranian nationalism, see Hazem Saghieh, "Iran and the 'Shiitization of the Sunnis," *al-Hayat* 12 December 2006, http://english.daralhayat.com/opinion/OPED/12-20061224-b493ae05-c0a8-10ed-01a3-3c7157f8; and Mashari al-Dhaydi, "al-Ta`ifiyyah wa-Tuyuf al-Siyasah," *al-Sharq al-Awsat,* 9 January 2007, www.asharqalawsat.com/leader.asp?section=3&article=400822&issue=10269.

3. See, for example, www.alrased.net/show_topicphp?topic_id=513&PHPSESSID=fc234502ee26325a3751db141e0fac47.

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30. See statement by Shaikh Ibrahim al-Masri, deputy chairman of al-Jama'ah al-Islamiyyah, in www.islamonline.net/English/News/2006-07/29/02.shtml.

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The Development of a Jihadi's Mind

TAWFIQ HAMID

What occupies the mind of a *jihad*-driven Muslim? How is such fervor planted in young and impressionable believers? Where does it originate? How did I— once an innocent child who grew up in a liberal, moderate and educated household—find myself a member of a radical Islamic group? These questions go to the root of Islamic violence and must be addressed if free societies are to combat radical Islam. To further this aim, I will explore the psychological development of a *jihadi*'s mind through my own first-hand experience as a former member of a Muslim terrorist organization.

I was born in Cairo to a secular Muslim family. My father was an orthopedic surgeon and an agnostic at heart; my mother was a French teacher and a liberal. Both considered Islam to be, primarily, an integral part of our culture. With the exception of my father, we would fast on Ramadan. Even though my father was not religious, he understood our need to fit into the community and never forced his secular views on us. He espoused diverse philosophical ideas but encouraged us to follow our own convictions. Most importantly, he taught my brother and me to think critically rather than to learn by rote. I never had any doubt, however, that we were Muslim—that Allah was our creator, Mohammed his messenger and the Quran our book. I believed that if I performed good deeds, I would be admitted to paradise where I could satisfy all my personal desires. I also knew that, alternatively, my transgressions would be punished by eternal torture in hell. I absorbed these beliefs largely from the surrounding environment rather than from my parents; they were shared by most children around me.

I attended the private Al-Rahebat primary school in the area of Dumiat, which is about 125 miles north of Cairo, when I was 6 years old. Though managed by Christian nuns, the school was supervised by the Egyptian government and required its Muslim students to attend classes on Islam. Before each Islamic lesson began, the teacher would dismiss the Christian students, who were then obliged to linger outside the room until the lesson was over. Adding salt to the Christian children's wounds, many Muslim pupils would tease

them for their faith—telling them that they would burn in hell eternally because they ate pork and were "infidels."

This made a strong impression on me. I felt sorry for the Christians, sensing that they must be hurt by being treated as an inferior minority in an Islamic society. In my short life it was the first time I perceived that my Christian friends were not my equals. My parents had never suggested that we were superior to Christians, and I counted many among my friends. We used to play 'hide and seek' and other games together.

Not only Christian children in the school were persecuted, however; non-practicing Muslims were scorned as well. Observant Muslim children would gather around those who did not fast during Ramadan and sing, "You who eat or drink during Ramadan are the losers of our religious … the black dog will tear apart your guts." Such treatment of Christians and non-practicing Muslims encouraged us to think that non-believers were inferior creatures and that it was right to hate them—they did not follow Islam and the Prophet Mohammed and, therefore, deserved to be tortured in hell forever. Though my secular upbringing prevented these thoughts from entirely dominating my mind at the time, other children were affected even more.

The Beginning of a Dream

When I was nine years old, I learned the following Quranic verse during one of our Arabic lessons:

> But do not think of those that have been slain in God's cause (*shaheed*) as dead. Nay, they are alive! With their Sustainer have they their sustenance. They are very happy with the reward they received from Allah (for dying as a *shaheed*) and they rejoice for the sake of those who have not joined them (i.e., have not yet died for Allah). (Quran 3:169-70) [1]

It was the first time I was exposed to the concept of *shaheed* (martyr), and naturally, I began to dream of becoming one. The thought of entering paradise very much appealed to me. There I could eat all the lollypops and chocolates I wanted, or play all day without anyone telling me to study. What made the concept of *shaheed* even more attractive was its power to quell the fear I experienced as a young boy—for we were taught that if we were not good Muslims (especially if we did not pray five times per day), a "bald snake" would attack us in the grave. The idea of dying as a martyr provided a perfect escape from the frightening anguish of eternal punishment. Dying as a *shaheed,* in fact, was the *only* deed that fully guaranteed paradise after death.

In secondary school I watched films about the early Islamic conquest. These films promoted the notion that "true" Muslims were devoted to aggressive *jihad.* While jihadi seeds

were thereby planted in my mind, they did not yet especially influence my personality or behavior. I was mostly occupied with school work and such hobbies as sports, stamp collecting, chess and music. My father actively encouraged my brother and me to participate in ordinary activities. In fact, we were members of an exclusive private club where we pursued our hobbies and favorite sports. In my early years of high school, I was also—as many teenagers are—preoccupied with sex and hobbies. A variety of religious and cultural constraints made it virtually impossible to experience sexual activity, however.

During my last year of high school, I began to ponder seriously the concept of God while reading about the molecular structure of DNA in a biology book. These thoughts prompted me to learn more about Islam and to devote myself to serving Allah. I remember one particularly defining moment in an Arabic language class when I was sitting beside a Christian friend named Nagi Anton. I was reading a book entitled *Alshaykhan* by Taha Hussein that cited the Prophet Mohammed's words: "I have been ordered by Allah to fight and kill all people (non-Muslims) until they say, 'No God except Allah'" (*Sahih Al-Bukhari* and *Sahih Muslim*). Following the reading of this Hadith, I decisively turned toward Nagi and said to him, "If we are to apply Islam correctly, we should apply this Hadith to you." At that moment I suddenly started to view Nagi as an enemy rather than as a long-time friend.

What further hardened my attitude on this matter was the advice I received from many dedicated Muslim fellow students, who warned me against befriending Christians. They based their counsel on the following verse:

> O ye who believe! Take not the Jews and the Christians for your friends: They are
> but friends to each other. And he amongst you that turns to them (for friendship)
> is of them (an infidel). Verily Allah guideth not a people unjust. (Quran 5:51)

In view of this verse and the previous one, I felt obliged as a Muslim to limit my relationships with my Christian friends. The love and friendship I once felt for them had been transformed into disrespect, merely because I wished to obey the commandments of my religion. The seductive ideas of my religious studies had diluted the influence of my secular upbringing. By restricting my contact with Christians, I felt that I was doing a great deed to satisfy Allah.

First Encounters with Jamaah Islamiyah

My high test scores enabled me to gain admission to the medical school at Cairo University in the late 1970s. At the time Islamism was proliferating rapidly. This was due in part to the money and textbooks Saudi Arabia's Wahhabi sect donated to promote Salafi Islam, but more importantly, Islamism gained adherents because Egyptians

attributed the growing wealth of Saudi Arabia to its strict practice of Salafism. We enviously lamented, "Look how Allah has blessed the Saudis with money and oil because they apply *sharia* law." We believed that our economic problems would be solved if we did the same—just as Allah had blessed the Saudis, He would bless us.

At medical school I met members of Jamaah Islamiyah, an Islamic organization then approved by both the Egyptian government and the university, though later classified as a terrorist organization. Jamaah built a small prayer room in our medical school that later developed into a mosque with an associated library. The mosque was behind the physiology and biochemistry departments, and members of Jamaah came there daily before science classes to lecture to us about Islam. They warned us about the punishments awaiting us after death if we did not follow Islam strictly and were effective in advancing Islamism among many of the students, including me. Our fear of being punished after death was exacerbated by our work in the cadaver room, where we dissected dead bodies. Seeing death regularly during anatomy and physiology courses made us feel that the life of this world was meaningless compared to "real" life after death. Jamaah Islamiyah impressed that idea on us by citing the following Quranic verse:

> Those who desire the life of the present and its glitter—to them we shall pay (the price of) their deeds therein—without diminution ... (yet) it is they who, in the life to come, shall have nothing but the fire—for in vain shall be all good things that they have done in this (world), and worthless all that they ever did. (Quran 11:15-16)

Indeed, the preachers used a range of verses (see Appendix A) to warn those who did not follow Mohammed and Islam rigorously that they would suffer in hell forever.

Studying the anatomy and physiology of the human body increased my belief in a creator and made me more enthusiastic about my faith. The rising power of Jamaah Islamiyah inside the medical school was another critical factor in fostering my religious zealotry and that of my fellow students. Once Jamaah Islamiyah became influential, it prohibited such social events as listening to music, which it deemed un-Islamic. Female students were separated; they were not allowed to sit with males. Students were afraid to defy the group's hostile decrees. Its control reached the point where Christian professors were threatened. I will never forget when they attacked an anatomy professor, Dr. Edward, because he asked Jamaah leaders to end their "mandatory" daily sermon so that he could start his anatomy class. Jamaah Islamiyah's control of our medical school gradually limited our rights. Its members exploited the lack of restrictions on their conduct to deprive everybody else of freedom.

Inside Jamaah Islamiyah

During my first year of medical school, a Jamaah member named Muchtar Muchtar invited me to join the organization. Muchtar was in his fourth year, and Jamaah had given him the title *amir* (prince or caliph)—a designation taken from early Islamic writings that is associated with the Islamic Caliphate or Amir al-Momenin (Prince of the Believers). I accepted his invitation, and we walked together to Jamaah's mosque for noon prayers. On the way there Muchtar emphasized the central importance in Islam of the concept of *al-fikr kufr*, the idea that the very act of thinking (*fikr*) makes one become an infidel (*kufr*). (In Arabic both words are derived from the same three root letters but have different meanings.) He told me, "Your brain is just like a donkey (a symbol of inferiority in the Arab culture) that can get you only to the palace door of the king (Allah). To enter the palace once you have reached the door, you should leave the donkey (your inferior mind) outside." By this parable, Muchtar meant that a truly dedicated Muslim no longer thinks but automatically obeys the teachings of Islam.

Initially, I thought that I would experience an ordinary prayer session like those in other mosques. But before the prayers began, the participants were required to stand shoulder to shoulder and foot to foot. The leading cleric, Mohammed Omar, personally checked our arrangement for fifteen minutes to make sure that there were no gaps between our shoulders or feet. The reason for this exercise became apparent when Omar recited the following verse: "Truly Allah loves those who fight in His Cause in battle array, as if they were a solid cemented structure" (Quran 61:4). This militaristic attitude during prayers was the first step in preparing me for the concept of *jihad* against "the enemies of Allah," the non-Muslims.

Following the prayers, members of Jamaah welcomed me and introduced me to a "brother" named Magdi al-Mahdi, who advised me to start reading Salafi books. I followed his advice and became immersed in those texts. After a few months of listening to Jamaah's belligerent religious sermons and reading the materials they recommended, my personality was utterly transformed. I started to grow my beard. I stopped smiling and telling jokes. I adopted a serious look at all times and became very judgmental toward others. Bitter debates with my family ensued. My behavioral and intellectual transformation greatly alarmed my father. My mother was also concerned; she said that the Quran should be understood in a more moderate manner and advised me to stop reading Salafi materials.

Salafi teachings expressly forbid acting on sexual desire. They prohibit a man from touching any woman or even looking at one. Speaking to a woman on a personal level is not permitted. To be alone with a woman without relatives present, it is believed, would "invite Satan to be the third person." Women became for members of Jamaah, therefore, forbidden creatures. But while relations with women were strictly proscribed, the erotic

passages in Salafi writings (see Appendix B) simultaneously aroused in us a powerful sexual desire. This dilemma led us to conclude that dying for Allah provided our only hope for satisfying our lust, because that lust could be satisfied only in paradise. It is not surprising that Osama bin Laden and other terrorist leaders sent letters to their suicide murderers that described to them the *Hur*, or white ladies awaiting them in paradise. [2]

In addition to its severe prohibitions governing sexual conduct, Salafi Islam also strictly limits most artistic expression, which it considers to be satanic. Music involving string instruments is *haram* (forbidden). Songs, especially romantic ones, are prohibited as well. It is *haram* to listen to a woman's singing voice. Even drawing is restricted. Such harsh prohibitions suppressed my ability to appreciate beauty and prepared my mind to accept the inhuman elements in Salafi doctrine. By way of contrast, it is interesting to note that Sufi Muslims enjoy music, singing and dancing, and they rarely, if ever, engage in terrorism.

Unfortunately, I followed Salafi Islam. My hatred toward non-Muslims increased dramatically, and *jihadi* doctrine became second nature to me. My goal of being a physician and healing the sick grew tainted, infected by my strong wish to subjugate non-Muslims and impose *sharia* law.

Meeting Zawahiri

At one afternoon prayer session, an imam I had never met before gave a sermon. He was one of the fiercest speakers I had ever heard. His passion for *jihad* was astonishing. He advocated complete Islamic dominance, urging us to pursue *jihad* against non-Muslims and subdue them to *sharia*—the duty of every true Muslim. His rhetoric inspired us to engage in war against the infidels, the enemies of Allah. He particularly condemned the West for the freedom of its women. He hated the fact that Western women were permitted to wear what they pleased, to work and to have the same opportunities as men. He dreamt of forcing the West to conform to a Taliban-style system in which women were obliged to wear the Islamic *hijab*, were legally beaten by men to discipline them, and were stoned to death for extramarital sex. After the imam's speech my friend, Tariq Abdul-Muhsin, asked me if I knew this speaker. When I said I did not, Tariq told me that he was Dr. Ayman Al-Zawahiri and, because I was a new member of Jamaah, offered to introduce us.

Al-Zawahiri was exceptionally bright, one of the top postgraduate students in the medical school. We called him by his title and first name—Dr. Ayman. He came from a well-known, highly educated and wealthy family. As was customary for Jamaah members, he wore a beard and dressed occasionally in the Pakistani style of the Taliban.[3] He disapproved of Egypt's secular government; he wanted Egypt to follow *sharia* law and Coptic Christians to be made *dhimmis*—second-class citizens submissive to Islam. To disparage secular Arab governments, he cited the following verse: "For they who do not

judge in accordance with what God has bestowed from on high are, indeed, Infidels" (Quran 5:44).

When I met him, Zawahiri welcomed me affectionately. He spoke quietly, gazing intently at me through his thick glasses. With a serious expression he placed his hand on my shoulder and said, "Young Muslims like you are the hope for the future return of *Khilafa* (Caliphate or Islamic global dominance)." I felt a great sense of gratitude and honor. I wanted to please him by contributing to his "noble" cause. Throughout my membership in Jamaah, I would meet with Zawahiri on six more occasions. He did not have much time to spare however; Zawahiri was deeply involved in several Islamist organizations.

One of Zawahiri's significant achievements was to personalize *jihad*—that is, to have transformed it from a responsibility of the Umma, the Islamic collective, to a duty of Muslim individuals. His goal is to spread the empire of Islam through the actions of individual radical Muslims, each of whom is incited to wage a personal *jihad.* This allows young Muslims to carry out suicide bombings without the endorsement of the collective body. Zawahiri and his fellow *jihadis* base their philosophy on the verse that states, "Then fight in Allah's cause—you are held responsible only for yourself—and rouse the believers (to fight)" (Quran 4:84).

The Distortion of My Mind

Within several months I was invited to travel to Afghanistan to join other young Muslims in training for *jihad.* It was fairly common to be recruited after the end of Friday prayers. Volunteering to train in Afghanistan was very simple: I only needed to register my name in certain mosques, and organizers would carry out all the logistical and financial arrangements. I was excited to go because I believed that I would be fulfilling "the command of Allah" to wage *jihad.* It seemed the easiest way to guarantee my salvation in the afterlife and to attain my purpose in life.

We viewed both the Soviets and the Americans as enemies. The Soviets were considered infidels because they did not believe in the existence of God, while the Americans did not follow Islam. Although we planned to fight the Soviets first, our ultimate objective was to destroy the United States—the greatest symbol of the infidel's freedom. My personal dream was to be an Islamic warrior, to kill the enemies of Islam, to smite their necks in accordance with the Quranic verse that read, "When ye meet the Unbelievers smite at their necks" (Quran 47:4). We considered the Prophet Mohammed to be our role model. The Quran commanded us to follow in his footsteps: "Ye have indeed in the Messenger of Allah a beautiful pattern (of conduct) for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Final Day, and who engages much in the Praise of Allah" (Quran 33:21).

Salafi Islamic texts demonstrate Mohammed's uncompromising nature (see Appendix C). They encourage devout Muslims to emulate the Prophet's deeds and to accept and

defend his actions in even the harshest passages. When confronted by outsiders, however, these same Muslims insist that such stories are misinterpreted because they are taken out of context—though they rarely, if ever, provide the context. This self-protective denial effectively paralyzes further criticism by the West. Meanwhile, these texts are taught and understood in a very literal way by both the young members of Jamaah and many other Muslims. I was not allowed to question any established teaching of Salafi ideology. The Salafists consider any criticism of Islamic texts as *redda* (apostasy) punishable by death and eternal damnation. Out of simple fear, then, I attempted to idolize Mohammed and to emulate him as he is portrayed in the Sunna.[4] The fear of such harsh punishment deters most other Muslims from criticizing Salafi teaching as well.

I increasingly felt at ease with death because I believed that I would either defeat the infidels on earth or enjoy paradise in the afterlife. *Jihad* against non-Muslims seemed to me to be a win-win situation. The following verse, commonly cited by Jamaah members, validated my duty to die for Allah:

> Allah has purchased the believers, their lives and their goods. For them (in return) is the Garden (of paradise). They fight in Allah's Cause, and they slay and are slain; they kill and are killed … it (paradise) is the promise of Allah to them." (Quran 9:111)

I passed through three psychological stages to reach this level of comfort with death: hatred of non-Muslims or dissenting Muslims, suppression of my conscience, and acceptance of violence in the service of Allah. Salafi religious indoctrination played a major role in this process. Salafists promoted our hatred for non-Muslims by emphasizing the Quranic verse that read, "Thou wilt not find any people who believe in Allah and the Last Day loving those who resist (i.e., do not follow) Allah and His Messenger" (Quran 58:22).

Salafi writings also helped me to suppress my conscience by holding that many activities I had considered to be immoral were, instead, *halal*—that is, allowed by Allah and the Prophet. My conscience would normally reject polygamy, for example, because of the severe psychological pain it would cause my future wife. Salafi teaching encourages polygamy, however, permitting up to four wives as *halal:* "Marry women of your choice, two or three or four" (Quran 4:3). I accepted such ideas—ideas that contradicted my moral outlook—because I came to believe that we cannot negotiate with God about his commandments: "He (Allah) cannot be questioned for His acts, but they will be questioned (for theirs)" (Quran 21:23).

Once I was able to suppress my conscience, I was open to accepting violence without guilt—the third psychological stage. One Salafi method of generating this crucial attitude is to encourage violence against women, a first step in developing a brutal mentality. Salafists emphasize the following text:

Men are superior to women because Allah has given them more preference than to women, and because they financially support them. Therefore the righteous women are devoutly obedient, and guard in (the husband's) absence what Allah would have them guard. As to those women on whose part you fear that they do not obey you, admonish them, avoid making sex with them (as a form of punishment), and beat them; but if they return to obedience, seek not against them Means (of annoyance): For Allah is Most High, great (above you all). (Quran 4:34)

A mind that accepts violence against women is much more likely to be comfortable murdering hated infidels and responding to the verse that reads: "O Prophet, strive hard (fight) against the unbelievers and the Hypocrites, and be harsh with them. Their abode is Hell, an evil refuge indeed" (Quran 9:73). It is clear that the three psychological stages in Salafism that I have described are deeply interconnected.

Hesitation and New Understanding

As I considered attending a terrorist training camp, however, my conscience reasserted itself. The habit of critical thinking that my parents had instilled in me when I was growing up began to undermine the violent indoctrination to which I had been subjected. If I had taken the next step toward *jihad,* I might well have become a terrorist killer. Instead, I experienced an intense inner struggle that felt like an earthquake shaking my principles. I realized that harming innocent people is immoral and that a religious ideology pledging war on non-believers must be bankrupt.

It is unfortunate and disastrous that the theological underpinnings of Salafism are both powerful and prevalent in the approved, traditional Islamic books. These texts teach, moreover, that the Quran's later, more violent passages abrogate its earlier, peaceful ones. This concept, called *nasikh wa-l-mansukh*, has effectively diminished the influence of the peaceful verses.

When I discussed the implications of the violent passages with a few Sufi clergy, they suggested that one "should be good and peaceful to all mankind" and that "the understanding of the violent verses will be clarified on the day of judgment." These views were not based on rigorous Islamic eschatology, however, or on an objective analysis of the religious books. They merely embodied a desired perception of Islam. My secular parents offered the same tolerant perspective, insisting that Islam is a religion of peace. But for me both responses were unsatisfactory because they suffered from the same problem—they were not theologically grounded. My difficulty was not resolved, and I continued to live with a complex dilemma.

My crisis of conscience was mostly internal, but I did share some of my doubts with my

mother. On one occasion a fellow medical student named Abdul Latif Haseeb started a conversation with me about religion. We discussed whether it was right to kill apostates or stone women to death, as well as whether Mohammed could be considered a pedophile because he married the seven-year-old Aisha (See Appendix C.) We weighed the merits of declaring war on non-Muslims to spread Islam and agreed that it should be rejected because it is condoned only by supplemental Salafi books rather than by the Quran itself.

Haseeb belonged to a sect known as Quranist, which strictly adhered to the teachings of the Quran but rejected other writings. This opened my eyes. I was impressed that my new friend disagreed with many Salafi teachings. I also realized that Haseeb was not alone in his beliefs; his father and several mutual acquaintances shared the same ideas. They relied on new interpretations of the Quran and spurned the traditional Salafi text-books. They accepted and tolerated different views within Islam and, in most circumstances, had a peaceful analysis of the verses.

Haseeb invited me to join the sect, and I accepted his invitation in order to examine the Quranists' ideas more thoroughly. Though not without problems, the sect possessed at least some rigor and was more moderate than Salafism. It provided me with a protect-ed sanctuary that allowed me to keep my identity as a Muslim while giving me the flexi-bility to reinterpret Quranic verses in a nonviolent way. The group counted among its members the liberal peace activist Mahmoud Mohamed Taha,[5] whom I met on one occasion. Mahmoud was later murdered in Sudan by exponents of Salafi doctrine for the crime of "apostasy" because his teaching clashed with theirs. I eventually built on the Quranists' ideas in developing a fresh understanding of the Quran that is compatible with the values of human rights and modernity.

Combating Salafi Islam

By immersing myself in Salafi ideology, I was better able to judge the impact of its violent tenets on the minds of its followers. Among the more appalling notions it supports are the enslavement and rape of female war prisoners and the beating of women to discipline them. It permits polygamy and pedophilia. It refers to Jews as "pigs and mon-keys" and exhorts believers to kill them before the end of days:

> Say: "Shall I tell you who, in the sight of God, deserves a yet worse retribution than these? Those (The Jews) whom God has rejected and whom He has condemned, and whom He has turned into monkeys and pigs because they worshipped the powers of evil: these are yet worse in station, and farther astray from the right path (than the mockers)." (Quran 5:60)

Homosexuals are to be killed as well; to cite one of many examples, on July 19, 2000, two gay teenagers were hung in Iran for no other crime than being gay.[6]

These doctrines are not taken out of context, as many apologists for Islamism argue: they are central to the faith and ethics of millions of Muslims, and are currently being taught as part of the standard curriculum in many Islamic educational systems in the Middle East as well in the West. Moreover, there is no single *approved* Islamic textbook that contradicts or provides an alternative to the passages I have cited. It has thus become clear to me that Salafi ideology is what is largely responsible for the so-called "clash of civilizations." Consequently, I have chosen to combat Salafism by exposing it and by providing an alternative, peaceful, and theologically rigorous interpretation of the Quran.

My reformist approach naturally challenges well-established Salafi tenets, and leads Muslims who follow Salafi Islam to reject me. Why? I have not altered the Quran itself. My system is simply one of inline commentary, in which dangerous passages are flagged and reinterpreted to be non-violent. I have added these inline interpretations to key Quranic passages and examples of the commentary are freely and easily available.[7] For over fifteen years I have tried to preach my views in mosques in the Middle East, as well as to my local community in the West, but have faced the unwavering hostility of most Salafi Muslims in both regions. Muslims who live in the West—who insist to outsiders that Islam is a "religion of peace" and who enjoy freedom of expression, which they demand from their Western hosts—have threatened me with murder and arson. I have had to choose between accepting violent Salafi views and being rejected by the overwhelming majority of my fellow Muslims. I have chosen the latter.

Even though radical Islam began to reassert itself in the 1970s, it did not become widely pervasive until quite recently. In the early 1990s many people were intrigued by my ideas, and only a few militants threatened me with violence. One day, after I gave a peaceful Friday sermon, I walked home with a friend. To my surprise, several men ran up and threw stones at us from behind in order to intimidate me from returning and speaking in their mosques. As time has passed, this violent and threatening behavior has become more common: Dr. Wafa Sultan in the US, Abdul Fatah in Egypt, and many, many others have received and continue to receive death threats. Recently, Dr. Nawal Al-Sadawi, a liberal Muslim thinker and women's rights activist, was forced to flee Egypt because of her public statements. Dr. Rashad Khalifa was murdered in the United States after he published his own re-interpretation of the Quran which was less violent than was traditional. In Egypt, Dr. Faraq Fuddah was shot to death after publishing condemnations of Jihadists. Egyptian Nobel Prize winner Najib Mahfouz was stabbed in the neck for writing his novel, *Awlad Haretna,* perceived by Salafists as blasphemous. The list goes on. Still, the majority of members in many Muslim communities have adopted the violent teachings of the Islamists.

Salafi indoctrination operates through written words and careful coaching. It is

enormously seductive. It rapidly changed me into a *jihadi*. Salafi sacred texts exert a pow-erful influence on millions of Muslim followers throughout the world, and terrorism is only one symptom of the Salafi disease. Salafi doctrine, which is at the root of the West's confrontation with Islamism, poses an existential threat to us all—including Muslims. Indeed, Salafism robs young Muslims of their soul, it turns Western communities against them, and it can end in civil war as Muslims attempt to implement Sharia law in their host countries. A peaceful interpretation of Islam is possible, but the Salafi establishment is currently blocking moderate theological reform. The civilized world ought to recognize the immense danger that Salafi Islam poses; it must become informed, courageous and united if it is to protect both a generation of young Muslims and the rest of humanity from the disastrous consequences of this militant ideology.

Notes

1. Bracketed comments, here and in every Quranic citation, are mine. They reflect standard Salafi interpretations..

2. (Quran 55: 72): "The *Hur* (white ladies with wide eyes) are awaiting for you in the tents (in paradise)."

3. Zawahiri adopted the Taliban style of dress because it was typical of the early Islamic conquest—the long, loose-fit-ting trousers facilitated fighting on horseback. He and other members preferred this style to typical Saudi dress.

4. Sunna relate the words or conduct of Prophet Mohammed that are not described in the Quran. They are written in many Salafi books such as *Sahih Al-Buchary* and *Sahih Muslim.*

5. 1909 –1985.

6. "Iran Executes Two Gay Teens in Public Hanging", *International Gay and Lesbian Alliance* (on-line); available from http://www.ukgaynews.org.uk/Archive/2005july/2101.htm; Internet; accessed 8 March 2007.

7. Visit www.muslimsforhumanrights.org for many examples.

Appendices

Editor's note: The following selections from the Quran and secondary Muslim sources have been supplied by the author as examples of the writings that radical Salafis routinely draw from in their discussions about hell, the prom-ises of paradise, and everyday sexual conduct. The translations are supplied by the author. Salafi literalism, of course, is not the only way of interpreting the Quran, and importantly, many Muslims do not accept the secondary literature as authoritative or relevant to their lives. Nonetheless, this literature is an essential part in the toolkit of those radi-cals who seek to shape impressionable, predominantly male, Muslim minds.

Appendix A

• "For those who do not follow Allah garments of fire shall be cut out for them (in the life to come); burning water will be poured over their heads causing all that is within their bodies, as well as the skins, to melt away. And they shall

be held by iron grips; and every time they try in their anguish to come out of it, they shall be returned there to and (be told): "Taste suffering through fire (to the full)!" Quran 22:19-22

- "But those of the left hand (did not obey Allah and Mohammed or follow them)—how unhappy those of the left hand. They will be in the scorching hot wind and boiling water, under the shadow of thick black smoke, neither cool nor agreeable. …They will be gathered together on a certain day which is predetermined. Then you, the erring and the deniers will eat *Zaqum* (a thorny tree), fill your bellies with it, and drink scalding water, lapping it up like female camels raging of thirst and disease. Such will be their entertainment, their welcome on the Day of Doom … the welcome of boiling water and the entertainment of roasting in Hell. This is the ultimate truth." Quran 56:41-57

- "For We have truly made it as a trial to torment the disbelievers. *Zaqum* is a horrible thorn tree that grows in Hell. The shoots of its fruit-stalks are like the heads of devils. Truly they (the non-Muslims) will eat it and fill their bellies with it. On top of that they will be given a mixture made of boiling water to drink especially prepared. Then they shall be returned to the Blazing Fire." Quran 37:63-68

- "Soon will I fling them into the burning Hell Fire! And what will explain what Hell Fire is? It permits nothing to endure, and nothing does it spare! It darkens and changes the color of man, burning the skin! It shrivels and scorches men." Quran 74:26-29

- "We have prepared the doom of Hell and the penalty of torment in the most intense Blazing Fire. For those who reject their Lord is the punishment of Hell: Evil, it is such a wretched destination. When they are flung therein, they will hear the terrible drawing in of their breath and loud moaning even as the flame blazes forth, roaring with rage as it boils up, bursting with fury. Every time a fresh crowd is cast in, Hell's wardens will ask, 'Did no Warner come to you?'" Quran 67:6-8

- "'This,' it will be said, 'is the Fire, which you used to deny! Is this magic fake? Burn therein, endure the heat; taste it. It's the same whether you bear it patiently, or not. This is My retaliation for what you did." Quran 52:14-16

- "Those who shall dwell forever in the Fire are given to drink boiling water that tears their bowels to pieces, and cutting their intestines to shreds." Quran 47:15

Appendix B

- Narrated Anas: "The Prophet used to go round (have sexual relations with) all his wives in one night, and he had nine wives." *Sahih al-Bokhari*

- Narrated Anas: "that Prophet Mohammed used to make sex with all of his 11 wives in only one hour of a day or a night … and he said that Mohammed has been given the power of 30 men in making sex." *Sahih al-Bokhari*

- "In paradise: When the Muslim enters the room to have sex with the first lady of the 72 Hur (beautiful ladies with wide eyes and white skin), he will find her waiting on the bed … He will not become bored at having sex with her and she will not become bored of having sex with him … and every time he has sex with her he will find her a virgin again … and his penis will never relax (i.e. it will be continuously erected) after the coitus … Some disciples asked the prophet, "Are we going to have sex in the paradise …?" Mohammed said "Yes, and I swear with the name of the one who controls my soul and body (Allah) that every time the man will finish his turn at sex with her … she will return back a virgin." *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*

• "A man was sleeping in the house of Aisha (the youngest wife of the prophet) and he ejaculated while sleeping. The concubine of Aisha saw him while he was cleaning it (the semen) with water ... She spoke to Aisha who explained to the man that she used to scrub the semen of the Prophet directly with her nails after it dries up." *Sahih Muslim, Book of Tahara*

• "The ladies of the paradise awaiting the followers of Mohammed are so beautiful to the degree that light shines from their faces, their bodies are as soft as silk, they are white in colour and they wear green clothes and golden jewelry ... These beautiful ladies say to the believers when they enter the paradise ... "we are eternal for you (to enjoy us) ... We are very soft and will never get unhappy. We are continuously ready (for sex) and we are always satisfied and will never be discontent ... So blessed is this man who will have us and we will have him." *Tafsir Ibn Kathir*

Appendix C

• "Allah granted Rayhanah of the (Jewish) Qurayza to His Messenger as booty (but only after she had been forced to watch him decapitate her father and brother, had seen her mother hauled off to be raped, and her sisters sold into slavery)." *Tabari*

• "... after Mohammed attacked the Jews of Bani Khriza he killed all their men and divided the women for sexual pleasure among Muslims and enslaved their kids and took their money and treasures." *Sahih al-Bokhari, Kitab al-Maghazy*

• "One day a woman came to Prophet Mohammed (pbuh) and said to him "Do you have a desire in my body (for sex)? If so ... I am offering myself to you ... Mohammed's daughter said, this lady does not have any dignity so she offers herself to man!" ..."The Prophet said to his daughter "This lady is better than you ... as she wanted to be with the Prophet of Allah so she offered herself to him." *Sunan Ibn Maga, Kitab al-Nikah*

• "The Prophet has a higher claim on the believers than (they have on) their own selves, (seeing that he is as a father to them) and his wives are their mothers (i.e. not allowed to marry any other person)." (Quran 33:6) In Salafi books, the above Quranic verse is understood to mean that Mohammed was allowed certain privileges above all other Muslims. According to the classical theologian al-Qurtubi, these privileges include: "... if (Prophet Mohammed) looked at a woman her husband has to divorce her and Mohammed is allowed to marry her to have sex ... if he divorced a woman it is not allowed for anyone to marry her ... and he was allowed to take for himself the food from the hungry and the water from the thirsty ..." *Tafsir al-Qurtubi, Surat al-Ahzab*

• "The Prophet married her (Aisha) when she was six years old and he consummated his marriage when she was nine years old, and then she remained with him for nine years." *Sahih al-Bokhari*

• According to Aisha, "The Prophet engaged me when I was a girl of six (years). We went to Medina and stayed at the home of Bani-al-Harith bin Khazraj. Then I got ill and my hair fell down. Later on my hair grew (again) and my mother, Um Ruman, came to me while I was playing in a swing with some of my girl friends. She called me, and I went to her, not knowing what she wanted to do to me. She caught me by the hand and made me stand at the door of the house. I was breathless then, and when my breathing became all right, she took some water and rubbed my face and head with it. Then she took me into the house. There in the house I saw some Ansari women who said, "Best wishes and Allah's Blessing and good luck." Then she gave me to them and they prepared me (for the marriage). Unexpectedly Allah's Apostle came to me in the forenoon and my mother handed me over to him, and at that time I was a girl of nine years of age." *Sahih al-Bokhari*

• According to Aisha, "I used to play with the dolls in the presence of the Prophet, and my girl friends also used to play with me. When Allah's Apostle used to enter (my dwelling place) they used to hide themselves, but the Prophet would call them to join and play with me." *Sahih al-Bokhari* (Author's note: Playing with the dolls and similar images is forbidden, but it was allowed for Aisha at that time, as she was a little girl and had not yet reached the age of puberty.)

• Narrated Jabir bin Abdullah: "While we were returning from a Ghazwa (holy raid) with the Prophet, I started driving my camel fast as it was a lazy camel. A rider came behind me and pricked my camel with a spear he had with him, and then my camel started running as fast as the best camel you may see. Behold! The rider was the Prophet himself. He said, "What makes you in such a hurry?" I replied, "I am newly married." He said, "Did you marry a virgin or a matron?" I replied, "A matron." He said, "Why didn't you marry a young girl so that you may play with her and she play with you?" *Sahih al-Bokhari*

The Struggle for the Soul of Tatar Islam

MARLENE LARUELLE

Islam in Russia, though unfamiliar to many and often associated solely with the Chechen conflict, has a long and varied history. Only a thousand kilometers or so east-southeast of Moscow, Muslims have a significant presence in the Volga-Ural region, which converted to Islam as far back as the tenth century. Altogether, there are about sixteen million Muslims—Tatars, Bashkirs, Chechens, Ossetes, Ingush, etc.—in Russia, comprising over ten per cent of the population. And their numbers continue to grow. They constitute a double minority, in effect, by being both religious and national minorities within an essentially Orthodox country in which ethnic Russians make up eighty per cent of the population.

The Russian government does grant Muslims specific linguistic and cultural rights, however, and most live in such autonomous republics as the Republic of Tatarstan. These political entities are perceived as being sort of national states within the larger Russian state. Five and a half million Tatars comprise the largest minority group in Russia and, in distinct contrast to Muslims living in the Caucasus, view themselves as the very embodiment of "Russia's Islam."

Today Tatar Islam faces a number of challenges: whether to define Islam as a national identity or as a religion; how to respond to Salafist agitation for politicization of Islam, on the one hand, and conservative de-politicization, on the other; and how to define Tatar Islam's place in the *ummah* and its relations with the rest of the Muslim world. The Spiritual Board of Muslims of Tatarstan (DUM) is led by conservative Hanafi theologians who advocate a return to Islamic values, or a "re-traditionalization" of post-Soviet Muslim society. As they press for a return to Islamic tradition, however, they also want Sufi national traditions to be respected and refuse to get involved in politics.

DUM members are at odds with a number of factions. They are openly at war with local Salafist movements, which they consider to be too fundamentalist, too politicized, and too universalist in their conception of Islam. They denounce the Salafists as being alien to national religious traditions. The Spiritual Board also opposes the Tatar

presidential apparatus, which, it says seeks a religiously un-justified accomodation with Western ideas and values by advocating the adoption of a new form of "Euro-Islam" or "neo-Jadidism." The latter is a reference to the Jadid movement inspired by the ideas of Ismail Gaspiraly (1851-1914) that first emerged among Tatar Muslims in the nineteenth century and spread throughout Russian Turkistan. Its earliest adherents, a profoundly Russified Muslim élite of that era, sought to modernize Islam and reconcile it with Western liberal and progressive thought and to give the Turkic Muslims an active role in Russian politics. Although these debates are taking place today within a very particular Russian context, they are clearly also a reflection of the greater ideological arguments currently shaking up the Muslim world.

The Multiple Speakers for Islam in Tatarstan

To understand these debates, it is necessary to know something about the institutional actors involved in the contest over Tatar Islam: the state, the Spiritual Board, the Council of Religious Affairs, the nationalist movements and the imams. These groups represent particular political interests that explain, in part, their ideological and theological positions. After five centuries of being incorporated into an officially Orthodox Russian empire and after seventy years of militant state atheism, the Tatar Islam emerging today is a complicated phenomenon. It is also marked by the considerable role that state structures play in its development and the specific political framework of a Tatarstan existing within the Russian Federation.

Tatarstan supports a substantive version of federalism and led the ethnic republics' autonomist revolt in 1993 during discussions about the new Russian constitution. This period of overt opposition to Moscow ended with the bilateral treaty of 15 February 1994, which gave Tatarstan the (unconstitutional) status of an "associated state."[1] Tatarstan continues, however, to stress its distinctive—loyal yet autonomous—status by taking such steps as joining the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Tatarstan's paradoxically loyalist position within the Russian Federation is reflected in the equally erratic political biography of its president, Mintimer Shaimiev. Shaimiev ran on the ticket of the pro-Yeltsin party Nash Dom—Rossiia (Our Home Is Russia) in the 1995 legislative elections. He then toyed with dissent as a member of the Otechestvo—Vsia Rossiia (Fatherland—All Russia) party of the regional *nomenklatura,* which was led by Yevgeny Primakov, before finally joining the Unity party that supported Vladimir Putin's 1999 presidential bid. The Constitutional Court rewarded this loyalty, supporting Shaimiev and a number of other regional presidents in their unconstitutional bids to remain in power for a third term. On 25 March 2005 Tatarstan's Council of State granted Shaimiev presidential powers for the third consecutive time.

Since the first days of *perestroika,* Shaimiev has stressed the ethnically mixed character

of his republic. He has sought to turn Tatarstan into a symbol of Russia's awareness of its religious and ethnic diversity. For him the best way to ensure Tatar sovereignty is to perfect the Soviet system of federalism rather than to try to restore a lost Tatar state. Tatarstan's presidential administration consistently upholds a Eurasian model of the republic, presenting it as the "bridge" between Russia and Central Asia.[2] As early as the start of the 1990s, Shaimiev very symbolically announced the reconstruction inside the Kazan Kremlin of both the Orthodox Cathedral of Annunciation and the Kul-Sharif mosque; he also established religious parity by conferring public status on both Orthodox and Islamic holidays.[3]

In addition, the republic officially rehabilitated Sultan Galiev (1880-1941?), a symbol of 1920s Tatar national communism and a forerunner of Third-Worldism. Galiev believed that membership in the then-Bolshevik Russian state was compatible with the unification of all Turkic peoples—an attractive notion for contemporary Tatar intellectuals and politicians, who have always seen themselves as the élite of the Turkic world. Sultan-Galievism thus allows Tatarstan's political authorities to combine their Turkic and Muslim Tatar national identity with European-style modernity and strong loyalty to the Russian state.[4]

Tatar nationalism is inseparable from the religious renewal that the republic has experienced since the fall of the Soviet Union. After declaring sovereignty on 30 August 1990, the Tatar nationalist movement rejected the authority of the DUMES—the Central Spiritual Board of Muslims of European Russia that Stalin had created in 1943 to cover all of Russia—and demanded the establishment of a spiritual board dedicated exclusively to Tatarstan's affairs. Under the leadership of the mufti Gabdulla-hazrat Galiulla, then, the Tatar DUM (Spiritual Board of Muslims of Tatarstan) was founded in 1992.

Galiulla's activities were far more political than religious in character, however. He was closely involved with both the nationalist Pan-Tatar Public Center (Vsetatarskii obshche-chestvennyi tsentr) and the Ittifak Party, the self-proclaimed mission of which was to unify the Tatar nation around Islam. He violently opposed the policies of President Shaimiev and supported independence for Tatarstan.[5] Finally, wearied by the recurrent opposition from the DUM and the multiple conflicts among different ulamas, government officials decided to reclaim the religious institutions. During the 1998 Congress of Muslims of Tatarstan, the authorities in power forced the DUM's high functionaries to quit the political scene and to reduce their support for the nationalists in exchange for government assistance in reconstituting institutional unity for Tatar Islam. Galiulla was dismissed from his position, and the mufti Gusman-hazrat Iskhakov was elected in his place.

Unlike Galiulla, Iskhakov was very respectful of secular power and set about depoliticizing the DUM. In exchange the public authorities adopted, in 1999, a law "On freedom of conscience and religious organizations" stipulating that all the republic's Muslim organizations be represented and led by a centralized religious body—namely, the DUM.[6]

By guaranteeing the existence of a single religious structure to cover all the national territory, this law served the interests of both the DUM and government authorities, who saw the rival muftiates as undermining Tatarstan's ability to exercise its rights within the Russian Federation. The DUM, then, has officially become the sole religious authority for Muslims living within the borders of the republic, which is territorially subdivided into *muhtasibat* covering all of Tatarstan's forty-five administrative entities. It establishes standards for religious instruction and oversees all Muslim educational institutions within its jurisdiction.[7] The 1999 law has provoked significant polemics both inside and outside the republic. Galiulla announced his opposition by refusing to recognize the DUM's juridical supremacy and continues, to this day, to press for political engagement from religious personnel.

After the public authorities and the Spiritual Board, the next main actor in the world of Tatar Islam is the Council of Religious Affairs. This body is heir to a Soviet structure created at the time of Stalin's "reconciliation" with religions during the Second World War. In 1943 the Soviet authorities established a Council for Russian Orthodox Church Affairs, and in 1944, a Council of Religious Affairs for non-Orthodox forms of worship.[8] These two institutions merged in 1965 into one Council of Religious Affairs, which survived the collapse of the Soviet regime. It still monitors the application of legislation relevant to religious matters, while also facilitating communication between state institutions and religious movements. Although the conditions surrounding such relationships have radically changed in the post-Soviet era, the Council continues to symbolize the interference of secular power in the spiritual realm. Its main functions involve the enforcement of laws that ensure respect for official secularism, give preference to religions recognized as "traditional" and restrict the rights granted to those classified as "non-traditional."[9]

It is not surprising that the president of the Council of Religious Affairs of the Cabinet Ministry of Tatarstan, Rinat Nabiev, lauds the principle of interconfessional tolerance that exists throughout the Russian Federation, and especially in Tatarstan.[10] In his opinion, the degree to which this principle has become a reality is due, at least in part, to "the Russian intellectual élites who came to integrate numerous elements of Muslim culture."[11] A principal mission of the Council of Religious Affairs is to promote non-transcendent religious expression—such as charitable activity—that stresses the collective and conformist character of faith over the individual's relation to God. The Council is devoted to transforming religious institutions into charitable associations. According to Nabiev, anchoring religion in altruistic social activities and in "charitable thinking" is what applying the secular principle of interconfessional tolerance means. For him, indeed, "it is precisely this interaction that, in the Volga region, has prevented wars from being launched and purges based on religious and ethnic criteria."[12]

In this struggle to define and guide Islam in Tatarstan, the Council, the political authorities and the Spiritual Board are joined by yet another set of rivals. Nationalist Tatars

also lay claim to Islam. As represented by the Pan-Tatar Public Center and the Ittifak party, the Nationalist Tatar movement has always declared its support for Islam—but initially as a culture, not as a political system. In the early 1990s it championed the idea of a secular national state in which Islam would merely be recognized for its role in national culture and in maintaining the moral health of the people. By the end of the decade, however, the situation had changed: the Ittifak party switched its emphasis from nationalism to Islamism. Today its leader, Fauziya Bairamova, speaks of the complete Islamicization of individual, social and political life, and calls for a return to the original and universal rules of Islam as laid down in the Quran. In 2000, after the Ioldyz *madrasa* in Naberezhnye Chelny was closed for allegedly accommodating "Wahhabites," the Pan-Tatar Public Center also adopted a more fundamentalist vision of Islam and began arguing that the religion was the sole authentic defender of Tatar identity. Both the Ittifak party and the Pan-Tatar Public Center denounce the Spiritual Board, which they consider too moderate.

Significant conflicts also exist among Tatarstan's Muslim "clergy." From about one hundred in 1990, the number of imams and ulamas has now reached over three thousand. Several new institutions of religious education have been established as well. Among them are the Muhammadiyah *madrasa* and the mosque of the so-called "millenium of conversion to Islam" in Kazan, the Islamology Department at the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences, the Orientalism Institute at the University of Kazan, and the Islamic University of Russia. Such growth has naturally sparked divisions. Urban and rural imams do not enjoy the prestige or status granted to the instructors of the *madrasas,* for instance, nor do they often share their religious ideology. The younger generation of clerics, trained in higher educational institutions, tends to espouse a universalist vision of Islam, while most of the ulamas are still wedded to a more traditional, popular Islam and are themselves barely distinguishable from the rest of the population.

This diversity of Tatar Islam's representatives accurately reflects the diversity of the religion itself, which continues to grow. There were eighteen officially recorded Muslim communities in 1988, more than seven hundred in 1992, and there are around a thousand today. These groups run the spectrum from fundamentalists to traditionalists to partisans of a moderate, liberal vision of religion.

The Spiritual Board of Tatarstan: Apolitical Conservatism?

Following the example of the Orthodox Christian hierarchy in Russia, the ulama*s* of the DUM aspire to have a major influence on the development of Islam in Russia. The supreme mufti Gusman Iskhakov and his first deputy Valiulla Iakupov have consequently sought a high profile in the numerous theological and ideological debates taking place in the Tatar public space. They assert that, while the secularizing forces within society might be discouraged, Tatarstan must accept the social reality of contemporary Russia, which is

officially a secular state.[13] The DUM further emphasizes the need to consider the multi-ethnic character of Tatarstan, in which Muslim Tatars represent only half the population, the remainder being comprised of other nationalities and confessions. The DUM, then, maintains a pragmatic attitude toward political matters: it upholds the decisions of the presidential administration and recognizes the principle of separation between church and state.

According to the DUM's Kazan muftiat, the break-up of the Soviet Union and the resulting ideological vacuum prompted many individuals to turn to religion for consolation. And it contends that, after many decades of widespread atheism, this religious "renewal" is indeed real, pointing especially to the increasing number of youth who now attend worship services—an activity previously limited to older persons. Yet, the muftiat also recognizes that Tatar Islam's institutional framework is weak. Most imams have received only on-the-job training—a fact that contributes to the conservation of the values of traditional Tatar Islam but also to the separation of its practices from Muslim universal norms. Iakupov admits to the low level of theological knowledge of today's imams, who at times even spread ideas inconsistent with Islamic dogma and cause believers to flee in search of a more rigorous understanding of the faith.[14]

These educational disparities also contribute to some generational conflicts. Iakupov acknowledges that older imams tend to resent the new generation of better educated theologians who are trying to establish new religious norms. The older generation is very reluctant to change practices that enabled Islam to survive decades of official atheism on the supposition that they conflict with *sharia,* which is poorly understood in any case.[15] Iakupov also warns that the younger generation's desire for more rigorous religious observance may have some unfortunate consequences: movements he refers to as "Wahhabite" may well be able to take advantage of this difficult period of radical post-Soviet change to spread caricatured religious values among individuals with little knowledge of Islam. Such extremist movements attempt to attract youths under the cover of discourse that promises renewal and a break with the past, and that condemns the practices of older generations.

The DUM muftiat is concerned about the development of what it calls fundamentalist "sects" and recalls that Tatarstan has already been repeatedly accused of allowing Salafist doctrines to flourish on its territory, even though the local clergy widely condemn them. The muftiat denounces these "sects" for being financed from abroad, and Iakupov especially criticizes the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Moscow for using its considerable resources to disseminate Wahhabi propaganda throughout the country. The muftiat accuses the embassy, in effect, of foreign interference for the methods it has employed to influence Russia's Muslims. In addition to spreading literature, the DUM contends, these include sending children to study in Arab countries, opening of institutions of theological instruction in Russia, and educating "religious cadres" under the supervision of Arab

teachers and proselytes from abroad. The DUM also takes to task the Tablighi Jamaat,[16] who are active throughout the Russian Federation; the neo-Sufi movement of Suleymani; and the Nurjus[17] from Turkey, who are themselves well established in Tatarstan (especially in Naberezhnye Chelny) with seven Tataro-Turk secondary schools. The muftiat further accuses the Nurjus of concealing their fundamentalist agenda and of taking advantage of the Federation's liberal legislative framework by falsely registering as a cultural association rather than a religious institution.[18]

Iakupov has no doubt about who should be held personally responsible for the growth of "sects" in Tatarstan—namely, the supreme mufti of Russia, Talgat Tadjuddin. Iakupov charges that Tadjuddin has fostered divisions in Tatar Islam since 1980, when he became head of the DUMES. By allegedly repressing his rivals, Tadjuddin is seen to have given rise to two non-official movements in Tatarstan, the "Faizrakhmanisty" and the "Mofliukhunovtsy."[19]

The first movement is comprised of the disciples of Faizrakhman Sattarov, who was one of a group of Tatars authorized to study at the *madrasa* Mir-i Arab in Bukhara. Sattarov was an imam in Leningrad, Rostov-on-Don, Ufa and Oktyabrsky, before being named acting supreme mufti at the DUMES in 1970. At the end of the 1980s, he created his own religious group, which still survives today in Kazan, Ufa, Naberezhnye Chelny, Leninogorsk, Almetevsk and a few villages. The Faizrakhmanisty rejects the Hanafite *madhhab*, or school of Islamic jurisprudence. Much of its discourse is borrowed from Hanbali and Shafi schools of jurisprudence, although structurally it is modelled on the Sufi order.

The second group Iakupov singles out for mention was founded by N. Mofliukhunov, who worked as superior of the Chistopol mosque from 1961 to 1988. Also educated in Bukhara, Mofliukhunov gained some celebrity status as translator of the *Nugmani Tafsir*, the famous commentaries on the Quran by the 11th Century Turkic theologian Yakub Ibn Nugman. His movement rejects the role of the Hadith in theology, denying them any authenticity and demanding adherence solely to the Quran. It also refuses to recognize the legitimacy of many rites and traditions sanctioned by the DUM, and condemns pilgrimages to the historical sites of Bulgary and Biliar, where the Tatars were first converted to Islam in 922, as being "pagan."[20]

Confronted with these "sectarian" groups, the Kazan muftiat works to promote a more moderate position. It rejects the idea, advanced by fundamentalists, of returning to some form of "pure Islam"—an idea that it sees as dangerously utopian. For the DUM this conception of Islam is unacceptable because it involves replacing national mores with imported foreign elements; what the partisans of fundamentalism seek to change is precisely Tatar religious practices. Rather than abandoning many of its theological conceptions and existing rites, the DUM declares, Tatar Islam should take pride in the legitimate specificity it has achieved thanks to those who, now as always, have remained faithful to the

Prophet. The muftiat holds that the pre-Islamic practices integrated into Islam, the Sufi traditions that shaped the Tatars' understanding of God, and the pilgrimages to the sites of local saints are more important and more legitimate than the notion that every Muslim throughout the world should pray in exactly the same way.

The Spiritual Board thus calls for an apolitical and traditionalist re-Islamicization of Muslims. On the political level it tacitly endorses the official secularism of the Russian state, vaunts the religious tolerance that unites it to Orthodoxy, and supports the political authorities of Tatarstan in their defence of the republic's interests. On the religious level it presses for public acknowledgement of Islam as a key element of national identity, for obligatory courses of religious education in the schools, and for Tatar Muslims to attend mosque services regularly and to follow Islamic precepts in their daily lives—precepts regarding marriage, the duty to have many children, the deference owed to elders and imams, and so on. On the theological level the Spiritual Board maintains that Hanafism should be strictly respected; that traditional readings of the Hadith should continue; and that local rites and pilgrimages, as well as Sufi traditions, be followed—even if some portray such practices as contrary to the principles of "classical" Islam.

At the same time the DUM criticizes those—including reformist Tatar political authorities and their intellectual allies—who support the revival of Jadidism. It asserts that reforms designed to update Jadid ideas, which were first developed in the context of czarist colonization and the juridical domination of Orthodoxy, are simplistic and irrational. Both Iskhakov and Iakupov reject the Jadid sanction of the concept of *ijtihad*, the process of making a legal decision by independent interpretation of the Quranic or Sunni sources, which they see as both impeding their own goals as well as lending legitimacy to the simplistic views of the fundamentalists. They consider that *ijtihad,* which is used to justify individual interpretations of the Quran and the Hadith, will strengthen Wahhabism by undermining the authority of official Hanafi Islam. The DUM holds, moreover, that the theological interpretations proposed by the presidential administration and its ideological adviser, Raphael Khakimov, are too inspired by the religious model of western Europe, where faith is accepted as being open to an infinite number of individual interpretations. It denounces the notion that faith is equivalent to private morality and does not require any personal religiosity or collective practice—a phenomenon it presents as a form of "Muslim Protestantism."[21]

The Spiritual Board, therefore, is in a difficult position between two "dangers": that of being marginalized by a widespread religious "renewal" movement that may come to be dominated by more radical elements; and that of contributing to a process of secularization that may diminish its role as mediator between the state and the population. In navigating this situation, the DUM has placed its hopes in the development of Islamic state education, which it believes will enable it to regain control over the whole Muslim community and to orchestrate a balance between collective religiosity and secular legislation.

"Euro-Islam": A Secularized Conception of Islam?

In the early 1990s, the presidential administration of Tatarstan saw itself as an enlightened, fundamentally secular oligarchy interested in preserving the republic's ethnic and religious diversity. It sought to uphold a strong national identity that would, however, be compatible with Russian political realities.[22] The formation of this "new" identity involved, not only the rehabilitation of Islam as a defining element of national identity, but also its evolution into a modern faith that would respect official secularism and other religions.

This pragmatic goal has shaped the proposals for reconceptualizing Islam that have been spearheaded by Rafael Khakimov (1947-), the leading theorist for Tatarstan's authorities. A political adviser to President Shaimiev, Khakimov heads the ideological section of the Tatarstan-New Century party (Tatarstan's version of the pro-Putin United Russia party) and directs the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of Tatarstan. Despite his great influence, however, Khakimov does not have a monopoly on public statements on Islam; he merely voices the official position of the Tatar administration on religious matters.

Khakimov advances a subtle theological position that simultaneously condemns the traditional form of Tatar Islam as ethnocentric and opposes the idea that Islam is monolithic. He argues that Islam was historically rooted in national cultures—cultures recognized by the Quran as legitimate—and is, therefore, fundamentally pluralistic. Khakimov's aim is to enhance the status of Hanafism as a pragmatic theological school that recognizes not only *sharia* but also the value of common law and is willing to adjust Islamic principles to different cultural contexts. In this way, unlike the DUM, which seeks to restrict the use of *ijtihad*, Khakimov is a proponent of it. He advocates a more flexible approach to dogma and, using a traditional expression, wants to "reopen the gates of *ijtihad*" that were closed in the ninth century.[23] In a famous pamphlet entitled *Where Is Our Mecca? A Manifesto of Euro-Islam*, he insists on dissociating Islam from Arab culture: one can be Muslim, he asserts, without any cultural link to the classical Middle East.[24]

Khakimov clearly draws on the reformist legacy of Jadidism which defended the individual's right to challenge community opinion and the local *madhhab*. Khakimov has recognized that such ideas are easy to adapt to contemporary circumstances—though the Jadidists also believed in the future political unity of the Turkic world, while today they are portrayed strictly as Tatar national heroes. The pan-Turkic and pan-Islamic aspects of their thought are viewed as being too disruptive in light of contemporary political realities and are diplomatically ignored.[25] Otherwise, however, Khakimov considers Jadidism to be a direct precursor to the particular Euro-Islam that he is trying to develop: "Jadidism is the source of all contemporary Tatar culture."[26]

Khakimov wants to root Islam in modernity: being the religion of free human beings,

Islam must result from free choice. He argues that there can be no intermediary between God and man, and no Islamic justice without equality between men, and between men and women. *Ijtihad* is the only way to introduce liberal thought into Islam, enabling it to avoid a "clash of civilizations" and to respond to the growing Islamophobia in Russia.

Tatar Euro-Islam has a positive conception of modernity. According to Khakimov, the Tatars understand the need for a secular state, a democratic and liberal political system, and mastery of cutting-edge technologies. Islam must help modernize society, not re-traditionalize it. Since the late nineteenth century, the arrival of capitalism in Russia has "fundamentally changed the functions of Islam: once an institution of ethnic preservation, it had to become a factor of development."[27] Thus Khakimov accepts and even applauds the paradoxical behavior of the vast majority of Tatars who consider themselves Muslims even though they fail to frequent mosques. Khakimov draws on this sociological data to confirm his concept of Euro-Islam, understood as the "contemporary form of Jadidism— a neo-Jadidism which better reflects Islam's culturological aspect than its ritual side."[28]

Khakimov believes there is an intrinsic link between the national and religious aspects of Tatar identity, or "Tatarness." He identifies two cultural factors that will determine the people's future: "Firstly, the status of Tatar as the key language in the Turkic group. Secondly, Jadidism as one of the most highly developed forms of Islam."[29] Khakimov's ideas are not, therefore, at all free of nationalist implications. He has publicized his nationalist convictions in several texts, including *Who Are You, Tatar?*, which was published in Russian in 2002.

Khakimov particularly decries the Russian authorities—both czarist and Soviet— whom he accuses of having wrongly divided the Tatars into several ethnic groups by giving separate institutional recognition, not only to the Tatars of Crimea, Astrakhan and Siberia, but also to the Nogais and Bashkirs.[30] Khakimov considers the Bashkir nation to be an artificial construct created by the Bolsheviks, and dismisses the claims made by present-day Kriashens[31] and Bulgars for status as separate peoples to be equally unfounded. He harshly criticizes Tatar society as well for its lack of commitment to the adoption of the Latin alphabet, a project that the Second World Congress of Tatars voted for in 2002 but the Russian Duma then deemed unconstitutional.

More generally, Khakimov condemns Russian historiography and its discriminatory view of the Tatars as barbarous sons of the Mongol empire; for him they are the "descendants of the Turkic genius."[32] He even claims they played a key role in the creation of the Russian empire, which was born from the seizure of Kazan and Astrakhan in 1552 and 1556, respectively. Having been the first Russified Muslims, he argues, the Tatars joined the Muscovite aristocracy, fought to expand the empire, "opened up" Siberia and Central Asia, and mediated Russia's relations with the Muslim world. The Tatars have the longest tradition of coexistence with the Russians, Khakimov maintains, and have contributed to Russia's Eurasian identity for five centuries. While Khakimov's ideas are Eurasianist, they

also have a pan-Turkic zeal to them. He sees the Tatars as the unifiers of the Turkic peoples and Turkic unity as inevitable—despite opposition from Moscow. In the long term such unity will strengthen Russia, moreover, because the Turkic peoples are the "natural" allies of the Slavs.[33]

Khakimov's theological conception of Islam, then, emphasizes the historical role and geographical position of Tatarstan as a "bridge between civilizations" or a cultural crossroads. "We need Jadidism," he has written, "because it draws on the values of the West and of the East in equal measure. . . . The fates have decreed for the Tatars to become the northern outpost of Islam; they are situated on the border between West and East, not only geographically, but culturally as well."[34] Khakimov's theories have garnered little popular support in Tatarstan, however. They are not appreciated among the ulamas, who interpret them as a form of forcible modernization through covert secularization; they are too intellectual and elitist for the masses; and, above all, they are seen as expressing official opinion on religious matters. Indeed, Tatarstan's political strategy inside the Russian Federation is precisely to stress both the republic's cultural—national, linguistic, religious—distinctiveness and its acceptance of modernization.

Conclusion

Several ideological readings of Islam are currently being debated in Tatarstan. Through the figure of Rafael Khakimov, the Tatar state promotes a secular version of religion and conceives of Islam above all as an element of national culture. Tatar nationalism is thereby linked to Euro-Islam. Khakimov concentrates on nationalist discourse in the hope of skirting theological difficulties that he sees as archaic. His goal is to foster a reform of Islam that would render it compatible with Western norms of individualism and economic and political liberalism. In its dealings with Russia, the European Union, and the United States, Tatarstan would like to present Euro-Islam as the face of Islam in the republic—despite the fact that it is contested by local theologians.

Precisely because it must fight against both Euro-Islam and Salafism, the Spiritual Board finds itself in the most difficult position. On the one hand, the DUM condemns Euro-Islam for reducing religion to little more than a servant of nationalism or a cultural tradition; on the other, it refuses to espouse any universalist conception of Islam. It seeks, instead, to develop relations with the rest of the Islamic world in the hope that Tatar Islam will be recognized as legitimate by other countries and Islamic institutions. While doing so, however, it rejects the notion that local traditions should be changed in the name of a hypothetical "universal Islam" whose practices and dogmas would be uniformly applied.

The DUM's Tatar theologians argue that the movements calling for a literal reading of the Quran come from the Arab world and bring with them Arab cultural elements that need not be accepted in Tatarstan. In addition, these movements seek to undermine the

supremacy of Hanafism—and its flexible approach to dogma—within the Russian Federation. Finally, these proselytizing movements promote a more militant vision of Islam: they divide the world into *dar al-Islam* (land of Islam) and *dar al-Harb* (land of war), and desire to politicize the faith so as to use it in the struggle against the so-called "Western domination."

The Spiritual Board judges such conceptions of Islam to be unacceptable. It recognizes that Tatar Islam is a minority religion within the mostly Orthodox Russian Federation and should, therefore, adopt a more conciliatory than confrontational attitude. Muslim proselytism is frowned upon by the local theologians, who see it as a potential source of interconfessional tensions. It was not surprising that the various Spiritual Boards of Russia strongly disapproved of the creation, in 2004, of a Russian association of ethnic Russians who had converted to Islam. The DUM also rejects the distinction between *dar al-Islam* and *dar al-Harb;* it hardly seems to apply to Russian Islam, which has lived in relative peace within the Christian world for many centuries. The Spiritual Board is quite aware, moreover, that religion is little practiced among Tatar Muslims, who tend to think of themselves more as Russian citizens than as Muslims cut off from their co-religionists.

The Spiritual Board opposes the anti-Western politicization of Islam. In the international arena Tatarstan considers itself to be at the very forefront of the "dialogue of civilizations." And the great variety of societies within the Islamic orbit undercuts the notion—so loudly proclaimed by Islamic propaganda—of a universal Islam. Indeed many Muslim societies, especially those on the "periphery" of the Islamic world, have developed a much more nuanced vision of Islam. They do not seek a confrontation with the "West" and refuse to limit their conceptions of Islam to only those approved of in the Middle East.

Notes

1. J.-R. Raviot, "Identité régionale et identité nationale: l'émancipation politique du Tatarstan de juin 1988 au 21 mars 1992," *Revue d'études comparatives Est-Ouest*, no. 1 (1993): 101–30.

2. N. A. Nazarbaev, *Evraziiskii soiuz: idei, praktika, perspektivy 1994–1997* (Moscow: Fond sodeistviia razvitiiu sotsial'nykh i politicheskikh nauk, 1997), pp. 111–14.

3. M. Shaimiev, "Tatarstan: dialog religii, dialog kul'tur," *Rossiia i musul'manskii mir,* no. 1 (1996): 44–6.

4. See A. Bennigsen, C. Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Sultan Galiev: Le père de la révolution tiers-mondiste* (Paris: Fayard, 1986).

5. A. Malashenko. *Islamskoe vozrozhdenie v sovremennoi Rossii* (Moscow : Carnegie, 1998).

6. *Zakon Respubliki Tatarstan* "*O sovesti i o religioznykh ob'edineniiakh*," Kazan, no publisher, 1999, p. 25.

7. R. Muhametshin, *Islam v obshchestvenno-politicheskoi zhizni Tatarstana v kontse 20 veka* (Kazan: Tatarskoe izd., 2000), pp. 8-52.

8. The Council of Religious Affairs is managed by the civil administration and monitors the religions-state relations, whereas the DUMES concerns only Islam and is managed by Muslim theologians. O. Luchterhandt, "The Council for Religious Affairs," in *Religious Policy in the Soviet Union,* ed. S. P. Ramet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 59.

9. Russian legislation actually divides religions into "traditional" religions (Orthodoxy, Islam, Buddhism, Judaism) and "non-traditional" religions (Protestantism, Catholicism, new Christian or Muslim religious movements).

10. For official discourse on the question of "peaceful coexistence" of religions in the country, see R. A. Nabiev, G. Iskhakov and A. Iu. Khabutdinov, eds., *Islam v Tatarstane: Opyt tolerantnosti i kul'tura sosushchestvovaniia* (Kazan: Master-Lain 2002); R. N. Musina. "Etnokonfessional'nye protsessy v Respublike Tatarstan," in *Islam i khristianstvo v dialog kul'tur na rubezhe tysiacheletii* (Kazan: Academy of Sciences of Tatarstan, 2001), pp. 261-64.

11. R. Nabiev, "Mezhkonfessional'naia tolerantnost' v strukture identichnosti rossiiskikh musul'man Povolzh'ia," in *Islam, identichnost' i politika v postsovetskom prostranstve*, special issue of the journal *Kazanskii Federalist*, vol. 13, no. 1 (Kazan: Kazan Institute of Federalizm, 2005), pp.115-23.

12. Ibid.

13. Russia is a secular state that recognizes a separation between church and state. The legislation is ambiguous, however, because the Orthodox Church enjoys special status as a cultural symbol of the nation. The present discussion about whether or not Orthodoxy can juridically be given official supremacy has aroused the concern of Russia's Muslims.

14. V. Iakupov, "Rol' traditsionnogo islama v religioznom vozrozhdeniia, " in *Islam, identichnost' i politika v postsovetskom prostranstve*, pp. 36-46.

15. V. Iakupov, *Islam traditsii: Poiski "khoroshego" islama* (Kazan: Iman, 2004).

16. The Tablighi Jamaat is a Muslim missionary and revival movement that wants to bring about a spiritual awakening among Muslims. Originally started in India, the movement has spread to more than one hundred countries and is now well represented in Russia.

17. The Turkish Nurju movement, inspired by Said Nursi and Fethullah Gülen, spread to Central Asia and Russia in the 1990s. Its first ambition is to contribute to the re-Islamization of the "Turkic brothers" by developing Turkish schools in the Post-Soviet space.

18. Since the second half of the 1990s, Russian legislation on religious matters has become increasingly tighter. It is now somewhat difficult for new religious movements to gain juridical recognition. A number of them, therefore, prefer to present themselves, and have registered themselves, as cultural associations.

19. V. Iakupov. *Tatarskoe "bogoiskatel'stvo" i prorocheskii islam* (Kazan: Iman, 2003).

20. The Spiritual Board recognizes Bulgary and Biliar as revered pilgrimage sites (local *hajj*) while fundamentalists denounce them as "pagan."

21. V. Iakupov, "Rol' traditsionnogo islama v religioznom vozrozhdeniia," in *Islam, identichnost' i politika v postsovetskom prostranstve*, pp. 36-46.

22. See R. Mukhametchin, "Les composants islamiques de la politique confessionnelle en république du Tatarstan," in *Islam et politique en ex-URSS,* ed. M. Laruelle and S. Peyrouse (Paris : L'Harmattan, 2005), pp. 41–59.

23. R. Khakimov, "Islam v Povolzh'e," www.kazanfed.ru/dokladi/islam_in_volga_region.pdf.

24. R. Khakimov, *Gde nasha Mekka? Manifest evroislam* (Kazan: Magarif, 2003), p. 63.

25. On historical Jadidism see S. A. Dudoignon, ed., *Le Réformisme musulman en Asie centrale, Du "premier renouveau" à la soviétisation, 1788–1937, Cahiers du monde russe*, vol. 37, no. 1-2 (1996) and S. A. Dudoignon, D. Is'haqov and R. Mohämmätshin, eds., *L'Islam de Russie: Conscience communautaire et autonomie politique chez les Tatars de la Volga et de l'Oural, depuis le XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Maisonneuve & Larose, 1997).

26. R. Khakimov, "Kriticheskoe myshlenie i obnovlenie islama," in *Islam, identichnost' i politika v postsovetskom prostranstve*, pp. 28-35, www.kazanfed.ru/authors/kKhakimov/publ7/.

27. R. Khakimov, "Vostok i Zapad sblizhaet idzhtihad–svobodomyslie," *Respublika Tatarstan*, 7 October 2004, www.tatar.ru/?DNSID=b11935a40a8d2f2beae0e77066037228&node_id=2863.

28. R. Khakimov, "Kriticheskoe myshlenie i obnovlenie islama."

29. R. Khakimov, "Kto ty, tatarin?," http://miraska.narod.ru/tatars/hakim2.htm.

30. R. Khakimov, "Ia—samyi tatarstanskii natsionalist," *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, 21 March 2002, www.tatar.ru/?DNSID=b11935a40a8d2f2beae0e77066037228&node_id=1563.

31. The Kriashens are Tatar speakers who have been Orthodox for several centuries. Kriashen nationalist intellectuals want the Kriashens to be recognized as a distinct "nationality." In the 2002 census, "Kriashen" was included in the multiple-choice list of "nationalities," an act that the Tatars perceived as a provocation staged by Moscow to weaken Tatar identity and challenge the Tatars' status as the titular nationality in Tatarstan. However, the final result (about 23,000 Kriashens were counted) did not have any particular repercussions.

32. R. Khakimov, "Kto ty, tatarin?," *Vostochnyi ekspress*, no. 17-18 (26 April-2 May 2002): 3.

33. Interview with Rafael K. Khakimov, Institute of Federalism, Kazan, April 2004.

34. R. Khakimov, "Evroislam v mezhtsivilizatsionnykh otnosheniiakh," *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, 26 October 1998, p. 3.

The Rise of Political Islam in Soviet Central Asia

SEBASTIEN PEYROUSE

This article proposes to challenge the idea that the appearance of Islamists in the Central Asian states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan was made possible, and occurred, only after the collapse of the Soviet Union. Without an understanding of the history of Islam in the region, it is difficult to grasp the current ideological recomposition of Central Asian Islam. Nor is it easy, without a historical perspective, to gauge the real impact of these newer Islamic movements and their social and institutional implantation in regions such as the Ferghana Valley and even inside the official structures of the Spiritual Boards of Muslims. For many decades, Central Asia has experienced considerable internal theological debate among reformers, conservatives, and fundamentalists. These oppositions, however, did not derive from outside influences, but rather have developed as a function of local criteria—regional traditions, references to influential intellectual figures, the relation of the region to the Soviet state, and particular social and economic conditions. Indeed, in Central Asia, Islamic revival has been primarily an indigenous movement. The doctrines of political Islam developed on their own in Central Asia, within the very heart of the Soviet system. It was the Russian repression of reformist Islam leaders that led to the rise of fundamentalist Islam in the region during the Soviet period.

The Birth of SADUM

The modes of passing down tradition and the ideological influences that contributed to building Soviet Islam within an officially atheist state are complex. In the first place, it is essential to retrace the ideological and theological affiliations that gave birth to the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan (SADUM), the sole official representative body for Islam in Central Asia for the period from 1943 to 1991. With its vision of creating the "New Man," the Bolshevik regime considered religion to be a mark of the old world. In Central Asia, the regime hesitated at first to confront Islam

directly so long as the regime's power in the region remained weak. After some initial hos-tilities, the Bolshevik authorities backed down and, between 1921 and 1924, conceded Islam a period of respite. But once the so-called *basmatchi* opposition weakened, Soviet power then recanted on its concessions: Quranic tribunals and religious schools were prohibited, many mosques were closed (of the 26,000 in 1912, only over a thousand remained in 1941), books written in Arabic scripture were burned, practicing Muslims were excluded from the administration, and, in 1934, the remaining Muslim property was requisitioned.[1] Paradoxically, the Jadidists (reformists), the majority of whom had agreed to collaborate with Bolshevik power, were the first victims of the Stalinist repressions.[2] As a result of their gradual decline the public space of Central Asia opened up for discours-es that, instead of appealing to a reform of Islam through modernization, would appeal to reforming it through a mythical return to origins.

Despite the massive repression of Islam, certain figures were able to continue propa-gating their religious ideas and to train disciples in a hostile ideological environment. Clandestine schools (*hujra*) continued to hand down Quranic teachings to their students, notably in the Ferghana Valley. Thus, in Turkistan at the time of the 1917 revolution, many fundamentalist figures were successfully pursuing their activities in Tashkent, the capital of the Russian governorate, and in the Ferghana Valley. This is the case, for instance, for Said ibn Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahid ibn Ali al-Asali at-Tarablusi ash-Shami ad-Dimashqi, better known as Shami-damulla (born somewhere between 1867 and 1870), a theologian from the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire who trained many Uzbek theologians. Shami-damulla was educated at the al-Azhar university in Cairo. Accused of Wahhabism by the government of Sultan Abd al-Hamid II (1876-1909), he was forced to leave the Ottoman Empire and subsequently established himself in Tashkent in 1919.[3]

At the time, the repressive policies carried out by the Tsarist regime and, subsequent-ly, the Soviet state against Sufis, who had traditionally dominated the religious life of the capital, weakened the influence of the latter on the population. Conservative theologians of the Hanafite school then took up the place left vacant by the Sufis. From the moment of his arrival, Shami-damulla, who gave courses and sermons at the Dasturkhantchi Madrasa (*al-Madrasa ad-dasturkhanija*), attracted the attention of the theological mili-eus of the old town of Tashkent. An adept of the Shafii *madhhab* (school of jurispru-dence), his mode of thinking was overtly Salafi: he refused the heritage of the medieval ulamas and proclaimed that the way to deal with contemporary problems was by return-ing to the sources of Islam, that is, the Quran and the authentic *Hadith* of the Prophet. He denounced the population's ignorance on matters of Islamic dogma and was particularly opposed to the cult of saint worship, which had been a predominant feature in the reli-gious life of Central Asian populations. At first, the Bolshevik regime regarded Shami-damulla as a modernist, and they therefore tolerated him insofar as he combated Sufism, which was perceived as obscurantist.[4] But sometime around 1924-1925, the local

authorities reprimanded him for his fundamentalist notions, prohibiting him from preaching, with the result that he became involved in clandestine pedagogical activities. In 1932, he was accused of spying for Great Britain and attempted to flee to Chinese Turkistan, but he was arrested in the Khorezm region and died there.

Shami-damulla's disciples subsequently formed a community called Jamaat Ahl al-Hadith. They propagated fundamentalist ideas, ignored Hanafi madhhab, and were strongly influenced by some specific elements of the Shafii *madhhab* as conceived by Shami-damulla. As part of the Central Asian clerical élite, the group's principal members included figures such as Dzhamal-khodja-Ishan, Hasan-hazrat Ponomarev, Mullah Yunus Khakimdzhanov, Mullah Abd as-Samad, and Ishan Babakhan. In 1936-37, the group's leading figures were arrested and imprisoned, and some of them were executed. However, in 1941, with the Soviet Union's entry into war, Stalin resolved upon a historic compromise with religion. He rehabilitated Orthodoxy and similarly agreed to recognize Islam, endowing it with structures that came to be known as the Spiritual Boards of Muslims.[5] In late 1941 and early 1942, two members of Jamaat Ahl al-Hadith, Ishan Babakhan and his son Ziyauddin Babakhan, were freed from prison. In April 1942, both men were received by the president of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Iuldash Akhunbabaev, and participated in the Congress of Ulamas Organizing Committee.

In October 1943, the Soviet authorities established a Spiritual Board of Muslims of Central Asia and Kazakhstan (SADUM) based in Tashkent. This Board had under its aegis seventy-five percent of all Soviet Muslims, and, with its prestige, symbolically dominated the other Spiritual Boards established in the Caucasus and Russia.[6] In 1945, the famous *madrasa* Mir-i Arab of Bukhara was reopened and for a long time remained the only institution for Islamic theological instruction in the entire Soviet Union. The teachings of Shami-damulla and his fundamentalist disciples spread, then, via many indirect routes, all the way up to the central institution of SADUM itself. Almost from the moment of its inception, the legitimacy of the Spiritual Board was the subject of many theological conflicts, as its very existence was deemed contrary to Islamic tradition. As the representative of infidels (*kafir*), SADUM was perceived to be the symbol of a secular and atheist power, and it was therefore deprived of theological legitimacy.

The Babakhan Dynasty

The Babakhan dynasty, which ruled SADUM for three generations, succeeded both in giving quasi-institutional support to fundamentalist conceptions of Islam and in introducing elements from other *madhhab* into the predominantly Hanafite Islam of Central Asia. Upon the creation of SADUM in 1943, Ishan Babakhan (1861-1957), already very old at the time, was named first mufti. He was assisted by his son Ziyauddin Khan (1908-1982), who headed the Uzbekistan *qaziyat*, or Muslim directorate (SADUM

had one *qaziyat* for each republic). Upon Ishan's death in 1957, Ziyauddin was then appointed supreme mufti. He enjoyed a certain prestige among the local ulamas since, in 1945, he had been to the Hajj with his father and, in 1947, had been authorized to go to the Middle East, and notably to the al-Azhar University in Cairo. Throughout his career, Ziyauddin Babakhan attempted to incorporate his former colleagues from the Jamaat Ahl al-Hadith into the Spiritual Board. In public, he always tried to appear as an exemplary Hanafite, and never ceased claiming that his family was a member of the Sufi brotherhood Naqshanbandiyya. However, in practice he fought against Sufism and led his private life according to the precepts of Ahl al-hadith. He also granted protection to another group of theologians, born in the 1930s of a split with Ahl al-hadith, namely the Ahl al-Quran. Led by Mullah Sabircha-damulla, this group did not, like the Ahl al-hadith, place the Hadith at the center of its teaching, but rather sought as much as possible to limit their field of application; nor did it not recognize any of the *madhhab*, trying instead to base itself solely on the Quran.

Returning from his first stay in the Middle East, Ziyauddin Babakhan brought with him many Hanbali publications, whose rigorism and puritanism corresponded well to the precepts taught by the disciples of Shami-damulla in the framework of Ahl al-hadith. Moreover, as of the 1960s, the Soviet Union wanted to make a show of its respect for Islam and so made Central Asia, and in particular Uzbekistan, into its propaganda showpiece.[7] Several high officials of SADUM were authorized to travel to Muslim countries, and Babakhan took advantage of these many occasions to bring back to Uzbekistan numerous fundamentalist works. He then contributed to spreading the ideas of Ahl al-hadith by publishing the Quran and collections of Hadith. He also published several *fatwas* against local tradition and ritual practices, which he denounced as "non-Islamic." Some of SADUM's *fatwas*, for instance, pointed out that circumcision is not obligatory in the Quran and so is only a matter of custom (*sunnah*), others denounced the excessive expenditure occasioned by marriages and the dowry principle (*kalym*), and still others criticized the cult of saint worship (*mazar*).[8]

With his strong grip on the system of confessional teaching, Babakhan also succeeded in weakening the positions of the Hanafi *madhhab*. SADUM controlled the *madrasa* Mir-i Arab of Bukhara, which served as the main base for religious teaching, the *madrasa* Baraq-khan, which was opened from 1956 to 1961, and as of 1971 the Higher Islamic Institute of Tashkent. The level of instruction of these establishments remained low, and the teaching staff was relatively poorly educated. Conversely, the clandestine system of religious education, particularly developed in Ferghana, assured a very good level of education. With Babakhan's protection, a number of ulamas educated within this clandestine system were able to gain entrance to the official establishments, and from there could be appointed to prominent positions on the Spiritual Board. In this way, the official educational institutions made it possible to give legal status to knowledge acquired in the

hujra system. This system being predominantly influenced by fundamentalist precepts, the Hanafite conservatives lost ground.[9]

Ziyauddin Babakhan's theological ideas were profoundly marked by the notion of a return to "pure Islam." His puritanism led him to regard the Central Asian traditions as superstitious practices contrary to the renewal of Islam. His rigorism was originally influenced by the Shafiism of Shami-damulla and his disciples and was reinforced through his Hanbali readings. His particular fundamentalist orientation, then, favoured a non-Hanafite re-Islamicization of the young Soviet generations. As a result, the conservative-leaning Hanafite ulamas mostly disapproved of the *fatwas* SADUM issued, and countered with *fatwas* of disavowal (*raddiyya*). In the midst of an officially atheist Soviet Union, the ulamas did battle by issuing interposed *fatwas*. These antagonisms rendered the boundary between official and unofficial conceptions of Islam rather unstable. Paradoxically, however, the political authorities preferred to support the fundamentalist theologians rather than the conservative elements and the Sufi movements, even if the latter sought conciliation with the secular atheist power.[10]

If such ideological affiliations were possible in the Soviet Union, it is also because the local élites had managed to maintain their places in society despite the repressions and purges of the Soviet system. The Babakhans, for instance, belonged to a holy filiation called *khodja* (descendents of saints). This noble family of Tashkent had been well known since the nineteenth century.[11] It seems that all the *qaziyat* were led by *khodja*: Hodji Akbar Turajonzoda in Tajikistan, Nasrulla Ibadullaev in Turkmenistan, Yusuphon Shakirov in Kyrgyzstan. Khodja families dominated in the cultural, educational, scientific and medical domains. In Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, fifty percent of the degree holders in sciences during Soviet times were of noble or "holy" origin. Likewise in governmental structures, where, for example, Inom Usmankhodzhaev, president of the presidium of the Soviet Supreme of Uzbekistan in 1978, succeeded Sharaf Rachidov in 1983 as the first secretary of the Uzbek Communist Party. The traditional Central Asian élites thus succeeded in penetrating the Soviet system, in which favoritism and a corporatist spirit ruled, and in maintaining their positions via a patronage system and traditions of endogamy that are still in existence today.[12]

The Schism Between Conservatives and Radicals

During the 1950s and 1960s, with Ziyauddin Babakhan at the head of SADUM, the Muslims of Central Asia witnessed the beginnings of a schism between Hanafite conservatives and the newer, much more fundamentalist, informal movements influenced by Hanbalism and Shafiism. This schism took on its full magnitude in the 1970s around the two major figures of Mullah Hindustani (1892-1989) and his student, Mullah Hakimjan-Qori Morghiloni. Both men left a profound mark on Muslim revivalism in

Central Asia and influenced numerous clandestine Quranic schools in the region. Whereas, on the one hand, Hindustani was regarded as a conservative Hanafite who had remained faithful to his madhhab, on the other hand Mullah Hakimjan-Qori was often presented as the "father" of the Wahhabites of Ferghana. Based in the town of Marghilan, Mullah Hakimjan-Qori is supposed to have broken with Hindustani early on, accusing him of being too respectful of secular power, and to have disseminated Salafist ideas since the 1950s. Yet, later, he came too, at least in part, to oppose the development of fundamentalist currents.

Mullah Hindustani was educated in Islamic theology in Kokand, Tashkent, and in Afghanistan. After the normalization of relations between the Bolshevik power and Kabul, he left for Kashmir, and while there adopted the surname Hindustani. He returned to Kokand in 1933 and was promptly arrested and deported to Siberia. Once set free, he successfully had himself appointed as the imam of a small mosque in Dushanbe, and, having been rehabilitated after Stalin's death in 1953, obtained a position at the Tajik Academy of Sciences. Tajikistan, considered as a peripheral republic, was indeed much freer than Uzbekistan, where Soviet political pressure was much more brutal. He rapidly became one of the major, most-respected figures of clandestine Islam, a reputation that earned him several prison sentences and ambivalent relations with the KGB.[13] At the time of the thawing of relations under Khrushchev, he started up a religious clandestine school that educated the majority of imams still working in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan today.[14]

However, in the 1970s, many of Hindustani's disciples began to reject his classic Hanafite vision of Islam and propagate more fundamentalist ideas. Some broke even with the more radical Mullah Hakimjan-Qori Morghiloni, denouncing his lack of commitment to a militant defense of the faith. The most famous of these antagonists were Rahmatullah Allama (1950-1981), who was inspired by the traditions of Ahl al-hadith, and Abduvali-Qori Mirzoev (1952-1995?), who was influenced by Ahl al-Quran. Both were based in Andijan. Abduvali-Qori was particularly famous for his virulent remarks against Hanafites, proclaiming that, according to Ahmad ibn Hanbal, the founder of the Hanbali school, the other schools of Islam should not be recognized.[15]

Confronted with this dissent, Hindustani continued throughout his life to disseminate *samizdat* texts and cassettes seeking to counter the development of fundamentalist currents. He accused his former students of being "Wahhabites." The term, however, is somewhat inappropriate: in the Soviet Union, as in the post-Soviet states today, the term "Wahhabite" was employed as a general term of disqualification against all the fundamentalist currents that appeal to a literal reading of the Quran and believe that Islam can be reformed only by returning to its origins. But it is quite often the case that currents accused of "Wahhabism" are not influenced by the thought of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792), nor by the Saudis, and belong to various different schools. Indeed, the opponents of Hindustani, for their part, rather define themselves as restorers and

present their movement as a *mujaddidiyya* (reformation). This name was taken from that of a Sufi brotherhood that preached a return to the Islam of the four Caliphs, and which was active in Central Asia, especially in the Ferghana region, since the second half of the eighteenth century.

The antagonisms between conservatives and fundamentalists touched on very diverse aspects of religion. Some concerned the relation of Islam to modernity. Hindustani, who was educated at the time of the conflict between the Jadidists and the Qadimists (traditionalists) in the 1910s and 1920s, disregarded the idea of the possible "purification" of Islam, something that he considered to be a heresy and a foreign importation into Central Asian Islam. Opposing him, the fundamentalists criticized the incompetence of local imams, the general ignorance of the population concerning religious questions, and the submission of conservative ulamas to secular power. At issue in these polemics were also ritual practices and interpretations of the Quran. The young theologians educated in the clandestine schools regarded the numerous local traditions as innovations (*bida*) not in conformity with *sharia*. For example, the young theologians invited men to grow their beards long and to wear the skullcap, and women to return to wearing the *hijab*, despite the political risks run by such acts in an atheist state. They equally condemned the reading of certain *ayats* at funeral rites (*djanaz*) and the practice of paying imams for prayers. They refused to perform certain gestures during collective prayer (*namaz*), and, as well as speaking out against saint worship (*ziyarat*), criticized pilgrimages to tombs of Sufi masters, the sumptuousness of marriages, and so on. Moreover, the debates were eminently political. In 1979, during a public meeting, Rahmatullah Allama gave speeches that were both anti-communist and anti-Hanafite. He declared that the *ummah* could not exist outside of an Islamic state, and accused the ulamas of refusing to fight against secular power in order to protect the *ummah*. Hindustani, by contrast, who had suffered from the Soviet atheist purges, considered that Islam should rejoice at conciliation with the state and not seek to confront it with violence.

Throughout the 1970s, the schism between conservatives and fundamentalists increased in magnitude whenever the Soviet regime was less violent in its repression of religion. It also intensified with the arrival of the new theologians, who, educated in clandestine schools, had succeeded in being incorporated into SADUM and being able to teach in state institutions, and thus occupied official positions. Fundamentalists seem to have been dominant in the Uzbek Ferghana Valley (Ferghana, Marghilan, Andijan, Kokand) as well as in the surrounding towns, Osh (Kyrgyzstan), Ura-Tyube, and Khudzhand (Tajikistan). Although deeply rooted in rural milieus, the fundamentalists also controlled several mosques in the capitals, in particular in Tashkent and Dushanbe. SADUM played an ambiguous role in this schism since Ziyauddin Babakhan himself contributed to the spreading of anti-Hanafite literature in Central Asia. Several witnesses have confirmed, for example, that the religious writings brought by the Saudi delegation to the Soviet

Union were given to SADUM, which then proceeded to disseminate them through its own channels. Some Saudi works were even studied in the clandestine schools in Andijan. In any case, it seems that, even if they made use of foreign literature, fundamentalist circles did not receive external financial support and operated on their own funds. It is also difficult to define them as "Wahhabites" in the strict sense of the term: their puritan and rigorous fundamentalism was clearly inspired by the Hanbalite, and occasionally Shafii, traditions, the development of which had occurred in the region without a proclaimed need either for a brutal rupture between the *madhahib* or for a total condemnation of Hanafism.

The Social and Political Embedding of Radical Ideas

The two Brezhnev decades (1964-1982) were marked by the discreet return of Islamic practices in the daily lives of Central Asian peoples.[16] The Central Asian communist leaders found it easy to close their eyes to officially prohibited religious practices, as they were themselves believers. They openly practiced the important Muslim feast days and the various rites of passage (circumcision, marriage, burial) alongside Soviet festivities. The spring New Year holiday (*navruz*), the start of Ramadan, the feast of the Breaking of the Fast (*id-al-fitr*), and the sacrifice feast (*kurban bayram*) were observed by Soviet Muslim citizens who continued, at the same time, to drink alcohol and eat pork. A number of *chaikhana* (tea houses) were used as mosques, and many Party officials even diverted public funds to finance places of worship.[17] The fundamentalists thus attempted, in their own way, to enlist in and contribute to this process of re-Islamicization already underway, a process understood to be a generalized rehabilitation of previously repressed values. However, they were distinct from it insofar as they were opposed to practicing traditional Islam, preferring instead purification of dogma and of rites in the name of a "return" to an original Islam.

In 1979, two external events shook Central Asian societies, and in particular the border republic of Tajikistan: the Islamic revolution in Iran and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. The Central Asians made up a large percentage of the military personnel sent to Afghanistan, the Soviet authorities having at first thought that the invasion would be better accepted if it took the form of citizens who shared the same religion and even the same language. Very quickly, however, Moscow became aware of the birth of a Muslim solidarity that led a number of Central Asian conscripts to sympathize with the Afghani *mujahidin*. In 1980, thirty Tajikistanis headed illegally to Peshawar to put themselves in the service of the Afghans, meanwhile riots erupted in Alma-Ata (Kazakhstan) at the occasion of the burying of Muslim soldiers killed in Afghanistan in a military cemetery. In March 1980, less than four months after the start of conflict, Moscow decided to recall a large number of the Central Asian reservists sent to Kabul.

These events provoked another reversal on religious policy in Central Asia: the scheduled Islamic conferences were cancelled, visits by muftis in countries allied to the USSR were suspended, and anti-Islamic propaganda was re-launched. Still, in 1984 displays of protest against the Soviet presence in Afghanistan reverberated throughout the bordering zones of Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The Afghan conflict played a crucial role, therefore, in crystallizing Islamism in Central Asia.[18] For instance, the leader of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Juma Namangani, acknowledged having become a "born-again" Muslim after having served in the Soviet army in Afghanistan.

In the 1980s, as the Soviet system started to seize up, the theological schism took on more distinctly political and economic overtones. Although they belonged to other *madhhab*, the fundamentalists' changes concerning ritual practices were not in any way illegitimate, since a diversity of rituals is usual in Islam. The changes in ritual practice were, however, utilized to assert political differences in the conception of Islam's relation to secular power.[19] The more the Soviet state weakened on the ideological level, the more the fundamentalist movements went on the offensive, proclaiming the impossibility of any coexistence between the *ummah* and a secular state. In addition, the economic disintegration of the Soviet system reinforced these movements. In the 1970s, a petite bourgeoisie emerged, in particular in the wealthy valley of Ferghana, made up of merchants, clandestine producers, particularly in the textile industry, and of people working in the tertiary sector. During Soviet times, these lucrative activities were prohibited, and individuals belonging to these social categories could not hope to capitalize on the fruits of their labor. Their religious puritanism was thus accompanied by a political will to put an end to the Soviet state's centralized system and to establish an Islamic state in which these economic activities would be legalized and would serve as a basis for charitable religious activities.[20] The commercial milieu of the Ferghana, therefore, played an important role in giving material support to fundamentalist movements. These commercial activities financed the construction of numerous mosques, both clandestine and official, the aim of which was to attract ordinary believers with little knowledge of dogma or of the political roots of the conflict.

During these same years, SADUM lost control of various Muslim communities. The son of Ziyauddin Babakhan, Shamsuddin Babakhan, who was appointed to head of the Spiritual Board in 1982, was not highly regarded by the ulamas. They thought of him as incompetent and unconcerned by the religious schism reverberating through Central Asian Islam at the time. In March 1989, they succeeded in having him dismissed and having Muhammad-Sodiq Muhammad-Yusuf (later dismissed in 1993) appointed in his place. Muhammad-Sodiq was educated in mostly radical, clandestine schools. His ascent confirms that many ulamas educated in the fundamentalist schools were able to gain entrance to the official institutions of SADUM.[21] However, once he became mufti, Muhammad-Sodiq played a more nuanced role, seeking to preserve the unity of Central

Asian Muslims, while at the same time trying to develop their ability to engage in independent political action.

Despite the appointment, the supporters of the two theological tendencies continued to confront each other openly, especially in the Ferghana Valley, where certain mosques refused entry to Muslims of the opposing current. Muhammad-Sodiq himself was especially opposed to Abduhvali-Qori, who preached at Andijan's main mosque (where he remained until 1994), and to the radical Salafite imams who dominated several mosques in Namangan. This city was divided into opposing movements that organized theological disputes between some leading figures such as Umar-khon domulla, Dowud-khon Ortikov, the *qazi* of Ferghana Abdurauf-khon Gafurov, and Abdulahad Barnayev, the imam of the Gumbaz mosque, known for his Wahhabite stance.[22] In May 1990, Muhammad-Sodiq succeeded in reuniting all the ulamas in a plenary session at SADUM at which it was decided to issue a common *fatwa* intended to govern questions of dogma; in reality, however, it worked only to aggravate the conflict.[23] In 1991, the theological conflict was overrun by a new schism, political this time, which tore SADUM apart: with the collapse of the Soviet Union, each *qaziyat* proclaimed its independence, resulting in the splitting of the central institution into five new institutions, each one corresponding to one of the new Central Asian states, a phenomenon obviously encouraged by the political authorities.

The Institutionalization of Fundamentalist Movements

The political liberalization initiated by Mikhail Gorbachev's *perestroika* enabled the proliferation of contacts between Central Asians and other Muslim countries. The mufti of Uzbekistan Muhammad-Sodiq and the *qazi* of Tajikistan Akbar Turajonzoda went, for example, to Libya and Jordan and made contact with Islamist currents, in particular with the Muslim Brotherhood. Publications from Saudi Arabia, but also from Iran, Pakistan, Turkey, and Jordan, began to flood in and were disseminated among the Muslim communities. The beginning of the 1990s also saw Arab militants from al-Qaeda circles begin to appear in the Ferghana Valley. But while this external ideological input is undeniable, Central Asian Islamism nevertheless remained an indigenous movement.

Indeed, there is a direct continuity between the actors of the 1970s schism and the Islamist leaders who emerged in the 1990s. This was the case, for example, with the founding fathers of the Islamic Rebirth Party, Said Abdullo Nuri and Sharif Himmatzade, who were educated by Hindustani and participated in the polemics with Rahmatullah Allama. Said Abdullo Nuri (1947-2006) in particular can be regarded as a key figure linking the Soviet and post-Soviet periods. As early as 1973 he was imprisoned by the Soviet authorities for distributing Islamic literature. Then, after leaving prison in 1974, he organized the first Islamic Organization of youth in the Soviet Union called "Islamic Renaissance,"

movements of the time was Adolat (Justice), which first emerged in 1988 in Namangan under the leadership of Hakimjan Satimov. Adolat was essentially composed of young men organized into district militias (of up to 8,000 members[25]) who patrolled the streets and attempted to regulate market prices. They aimed to replace the local authorities and proclaimed that *sharia* should govern the public order. The movement was very clearly financed by commercial groups seeking to institutionalize a security service subject to their interests.[26] In 1990 at the latest, the movement became radicalized and was transformed into Islom Adolati or Islom Lashkarlar (Warriors of Islam), led by Tahir Yuldashev after the latter distanced himself from the Wahhabi imam Abd al-Ahad, who headed the Gumbaz mosque.

Among the other Islamist movements requiring mention are Tawba (Repentance), eliminated in 1995, the Khalifatchilar movement (Partisans of the Caliphate), and Akromiyya, which subsequently became well known for its participation in the insurrection in Andijan in May 2005.[27] Violent actions multiplied after the collapse of the Soviet Union and the constitution of new independent states. Thus, in December 1991, a group of young Islamist militants from Tawba and Adolat, headed by Tahir Yuldashev, took control of the building of the former Communist Party in Namangan. They demanded that the political authorities confirm that the new independent state would be an Islamic one, that *sharia* would be implemented, that separate schools for girls and boys would be established, and that local Muslims would be given one of the administrative buildings of the town. On 19 December President Islam Karimov went to Namangan to speak with the insurgents and seems to have been deeply impressed by the massive support the Islamists enjoyed among the local population.[28] This event probably played a role in the hardening of the regime and the will of the Uzbek president to use repressive means to fight against Islamism.[29]

In the spring of 1992, again in Namangan, members of Tawba took representatives of the local authorities hostage and destroyed public buildings. The negotiations failed, and President Islam Karimov was compelled for the first time to send in the army to liberate the hostages. Several militants were arrested, but their leader managed to escape. In December 1992, the leader of the Uzbek IPR, Abdullah Utaev, disappeared in prison, and Adolat and Tawba were dissolved by the authorities. Their militants gradually merged with those of the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, itself in the process of being formed, and sought to unify all the small Islamic movements.[30] In Kazakhstan, the Alash party, which was of Islamo-nationalist persuasion, was also quickly repressed. As of 1992-1993, throughout Central Asia, the political authorities had organized a repression of Islamic movements; these latter then exited the public stage and went underground.[31] Only the Tajik IRP would come to regain official status in 1999.

Rethinking Islam in the Soviet Period

Theological debates about the place of Islam in the heart of a non-Islamic state were only very briefly interrupted during the Soviet period. Even in the 1920s and 1930s, the worst years of Stalinist repression, the local ulamas opposed each other in their readings of Islam and continued to train disciples. SADUM, despite its apparent subservience to official communist discourse, enabled the discreet intercourse of theological discussion and the pursuit of debates among reformers, conservatives, and fundamentalists. From the 1970s onward, but probably from even the 1960s, the Ferghana Valley became the main region in which fundamentalist conceptions of Islam crystallized, and a leading battleground between Hanafite conservatives and fundamentalists inspired by Hanabalism and Shafi'ism. The doctrines of political Islam did therefore not come to the region simply via external influences from the Middle East, but developed within the Central Asian Soviet milieu itself.

A knowledge of the historical roots of Islamism in Central Asia is essential to properly understanding the contemporary situation. Contemporary Islamist currents in Central Asia, from the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan to the Hizb ut-Tahrir, did not spring up on virgin soil.

The local population, hit hard by the pauperization it has experienced since the fall of the Soviet Union, is now often the involuntary actor of antagonisms between differing conceptions of Islam. The inhabitants follow the teachings proffered by the local imams (themselves having been educated by different currents and inspired by different spiritual masters), support them financially, and protect them from the repression carried out by the state, but are not necessarily aware of the political stakes implied by these differing interpretations of Islam. The deterioration of the economic situation and the political instability of the region merely contribute to fertilizing the compost already prepared in the Soviet past.

NOTES

1. S. Keller, *To Moscow, Not Mecca: The Soviet Campaign against Islam in Central Asia, 1917–1941* (Westport: Praeger, 2001); M. Kamp, *The New Woman in Uzbekistan: Islam, Modernity, and Unveiling under Communism* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2006); D. Northrop, *Veiled Empire: Gender and Power in Stalinist Central Asia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 2004).

2. A. Khalid, *The Politics of Muslim Cultural Reform: Jadidism in Central Asia* (Berkeley and London: The University of California Press, 1998).

3. For a biography of Shami-damulla, see A. Muminov, "Shami-Damulla i ego rol' v formirovanii 'sovetskogo' islama," in *Islam, identichnost' i politika v postsovetskom prostranstve* (Kazan: Kazan Institute of Federalism), 13, no. 1 (2005), 231-247.

4. V. V. Naumkin, *Radical Islam in Central Asia: Between Pen and Rifle* (Lanham and Boulder: Rowman & Littlefield, 2005), 40.

5. A. Bennigsen and C. Lemercier-Quelquejay, *Les musulmans oubliés. L'Islam en Union soviétique* (Paris: Maspero, 1981); C. Poujol, "L'islam en héritage: nouvelle approche d'une problématique persistante, entre résistance participative et acculturation passive," in S. Peyrouse, ed., *Gestion de l'indépendance et legs soviétique en Asie centrale: Cahiers d'Asie centrale*, nos. 13-14 (2004), 199-214; C. Poujol, "How can we use the concept of transition in Central Asian post-soviet history? An attempt to set a New Approach", http://www.cimera.org/sources/7_19.pdf; Y. Roï, *Islam in the Soviet Union: From the Second World War to Gorbachev* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).

6. In 1944 the Spiritual Board of Shiite and Sunni Muslims of Transcaucasia and the Spiritual Board of the North Caucasus and Dagestan were also created. The Spiritual Board of European Russia and of Siberia succeeded the Spiritual Assembly created by Catherine II in 1783. The administration of official Islam concerned only Sunnis and the Twelvers Shiites: the Ismaelians, the Baha'I, the Ghulats, and the Yezidis did not dispose of any recognized Soviet structure (they don't have any Spiritual Board representing them).

7. S. Erşahin, "The Official Interpretation of Islam under the Soviet Regime: A Base for Understanding of Contemporary Central Asian Islam," *Journal of Religious Cultures* 77 (2005), 1-19.

8. B. Babajanov, "O fetvakh SADUM protiv neislamskikh obychaev," in M. B. Olcott and A. Malashenko, eds., *Islam na postsovetskom prostranstve: vzgliad iznutri* (Moscow: Carnegie Center, 2001), 170-184.

9. B. Babajanov, "Sredneaziatskoe dukhovnoe upravlenie musulm'an: predystoriia i posledstviia raspada," in M. B. Olcott and A. Malashenko, eds., *Mnogomernye granitsy Tsentral'noi Azii* (Moscow: Carnegie Center, 2000), 55-69.

10. Interviews by V. V. Naumkin confirm that the Soviet political authorities were aware of supporting the fundamentalists against the Sufi movements. Naumkin, *Radical Islam in Central Asia,* 52. On Sufism as a key element of alternative Islam in the USSR, see A. Bennigsen and E. Wimbush, *Mystics and Commissars: Sufism in the Soviet Union* (Berkeley, University of California Press, 1985).

11. The term *hodja* appeared in the names of several representatives of the Central Asian élites, especially in the form of Khodzhaev. Other titles such as *said*, *ishan*, *tura*, and *emir*, can also be found in surnames and first names, once again indicating belonging to the "descendants of saints," as the title *khan* (*khon*) can be added to some masculine first names to indicate the ancient nobility of the family.

12. S. Abashin, "Les descendants de saints en Asie centrale: Élite religieuse ou nationale?", in Peyrouse, *Gestion*, 215-230.

13. M. B. Olcott, "Roots of Radical Islam in Central Asia," *Carnegie Papers*, no. 77 (2007), 17.

14. For a detailed biography of Hindustani, see B. Babadjanov and M. Kamilov, "Muhammadjan Hindustani (1892-1989) and the Beginning of the 'Great Schism' among the Muslims of Uzbekistan," in S. A. Dudoignon and H. Komatsu, eds., *Islam in Politics in Russia and Central Asia* (*Early Eighteenth to Late Twentieth Centuries*), (London, New York, and Bahrain: Kegan Paul, 2001), 195-219.

15. A. Muminov, "Traditional And Modern Religious–Theological Schools in Central Asia," in L. Jonson and M. Esenov, *Political Islam and Conflicts in Russia and Central Asia* (Stockholm: The Swedish Institute of International Affairs, 1999), 101-111.

16. A. Bennigsen and E. S. Wimbush, *Muslim National Communism in the Soviet Union* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979).

17. W. Fierman (ed.), *Soviet Central Asia: The Failed Transformation* (San Francisco, Oxford, Westview Press, 1991), 27.

18. A. Bennigsen, "Soviet Islam since the Invasion of Afghanistan," *Central Asian Survey* 1, no. 1 (1982), 65-78 and, by the same author, "Islam in Retrospect," *Central Asian Survey* 8, no. 1 (1989), 89-109.

19. B. Babajanov, "Ferganskaia dolina: istochnik ili zhertva islamskogo fundamentalizma?" *Tsentral'naia Aziia i Kavkaz*, no. 4(5) (1999), 125-131.

20. A. Kariev, "La vallée du Ferghana dans les années 1970-1980, aspects économiques et sociaux du mouvement islamiste," in M. Laruelle and S. Peyrouse, eds., *Islam et politique en ex-URSS* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2005), 263-271.

21. A. Abduvakhitov, "Independent Uzbekistan: A Muslim Community in Development," in M. Bourdeaux, ed., *The Politics of Religion in Russia and the New States of Eurasia* (New York, M. E. Sharpe, 1993), 192-305.

22. For more details about these figures see Olcott, "Roots of Radical Islam in Central Asia," 20-25.

23. Muhammad-Sadik Muhammad-Yusuf has published an analysis of the aspects of dogma involved in this schism in *Ihtiloflar hakida* (Tashkent, 2003).

24. A. Malashenko, *Islamskoe vozrozhdenie v sovremennoi Rossii* (Moscow: Carnegie Center, 1998), 121.

25 A. Abduvakhitov, "Islamic Revivalism in Uzbekistan," in D. E. Eickelman ed., *Russia'Muslim Frontiers: New Directions in Cross-Cultural Analysis* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 89.

26. Muminov, "Traditional And Modern Religious–Theological Schools in Central Asia."

27. A. Il'khamov, "The Phenomenology of "Akromiya": Separating Facts from Fiction," *China and Eurasia Forum Quarterly*, 4 (2006), 39-48.

28. Information provided by my Uzbek interlocutor.

29. B. Babajanov, "Islam officiel contre islam politique en Ouzbékistan aujourd'hui: La direction des musulmans et les groupes non-hanaf i," *Revue d'études comparatives Est-Ouest,* 31, no. 3 (2000), 151-164.

30. O. Roy, "*Qibla* and the Government House: The Islamist Networks," *SAIS Review* 21, no. 2 (2001), 53-63.

31. Z. Baran, "Radical Islamism in Central Asia," *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology* (Washington D.C., Hudson Institute), 2 (2005), 41-58.

The Jordanian Regime Fights the War of Ideas

YAIR MINZILI

I n recent years, the Jordanian regime has faced a growing threat to its stability from violent as well as politically radical Islamic groups. The most blatant expressions of this were the rocket attacks on Aqaba in May 2005 and the subsequent attacks on hotels in Amman in November of the same year. These attacks were carried out by groups affiliated with the late Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and the al-Qaeda organization in Iraq.

Even after Zarqawi's demise in 2006, however, the Jordanian regime did not let up on its efforts to confront radical Islamic groups. Instead, it continued to fight an all-out war against radical Islamic organizations. Unlike other states in the region and elsewhere whose activity against radical Islam concentrates primarily on military-terrorist aspects, the Jordanian regime has aimed explicitly at weakening radical *salafi* ideology, and specifically, *takfiri* ideology, which it sees as a main source from which Islamist terror and radical political movements spring. In this struggle with extremist ideology, the Jordanian regime has focused on two connected objectives: de-legitimizing and refuting radical *salafi* ideas, and disseminating a more moderate, traditional conception of Islam in the hopes of "immunizing" susceptible publics against extremist Islam. In addition to tackling radical ideology in this two-fold way domestically, the Jordanian regime has also attempted to discredit radical ideas and mobilize moderate Islamic forces throughout the Muslim world.[1]

This article analyzes the Jordanian regime's efforts to defend itself and to launch a counterattack against *takfiri-jihadi* ideology during the second half of 2005 and in 2006—a time during which various radical Islamist elements had become emboldened and intensified their terrorist and political campaign to undermine the Jordanian government.

Radicalism's Strengths

In recent years, public opinion surveys conducted in Jordan have confirmed that a portion of the population subscribes to *takfiri-jihadi* ideology and helps to recruit and organize support for al-Qaeda and other jihadist groups.[2] This extremist Islamic stream enjoys several significant advantages and sources of strength, including a diverse organizational and ideological infrastructure; an ability to rely on and benefit from the political and ideological cover provided by the radical mainstream Muslim Brotherhood movement (which has deep roots amongst both the Trans-Jordanian and Palestinian publics in Jordan); and the regional impact of the war in Iraq, which radicals have skillfully used to inflame passions and disseminate their ideas on the so-called "Arab Street." Tackling all of these sources of strength poses a number of challenges to the Jordan regime, as it has a weak religious establishment that lacks popular authority and is incapable of mobilizing those with religious authority to defend the regime's views.

The institutional infrastructure of the *salafi-jihadi* stream in Jordan includes the many websites of global jihad groups, which provide mass dissemination of the ideology, as well as book stands and popular mosques that are not under the regime's supervision.[3] Many activists from jihad groups who have been arrested were first indoctrinated with extremist ideology in these popular mosques.[4] Although many of these mosques are led by preachers who, from a traditional Islamic perspective, lack religious credentials to be considered legitimate scholars, young people in particular are easy prey for their propaganda.

The Muslim Brotherhood movement plays a central role in preparing the ground for the internalization and absorption of *salafi* ideology in Jordanian society, especially among the younger generation. Since the growth of the Muslim Brotherhood movement in Jordan, there have been internal struggles within that movement between one wing that aspires to engage politically with the existing regime, and another, more extremist wing, schooled in the *takfiri* doctrine of Sayed Qutb, which engages in a sharp political and ideological confrontation with the regime. Throughout most of the movement's history in Jordan, the Muslim Brotherhood's extremist wing has usually been identified with leaders of Palestinian origin, whose identification with the Hashemite regime was weaker than that of their Trans-Jordanian colleagues.[5] In the past, this extremist wing has been relatively marginal, and in the 1980s and 1990s its main energy was directed toward the jihad in Afghanistan and subsequently in Chechnya, Bosnia, and other places. However, especially in the last year, this stream has gained strength, as reflected in the public elections in early 2006 for the leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic Action Front party, in which more radical individuals were elected. The extremist wing has been a leading element in the intensified Islamist confrontation with the Jordanian regime ever since.[6] One expression of the Muslim Brotherhood's *takfiri* and *jihadi* outlook is the

religious rulings of its leaders supporting the jihad in Iraq and Palestine and demanding that Arab leaders rally Muslims to join the fight. These religious rulings assert that any Muslim providing assistance to infidel "occupying forces" is committing an act of treachery and declaring war on Allah and his prophet, which is in essence an act of heresy and abandonment of the community of believers (*khuruj min milat al-islam*).[7]

The ongoing war in Iraq has also contributed to the strengthening of *takfiri-jihadi* ideology in Jordan. Extremist Islamic organizations in Iraq, led by the al-Qaeda movement, are viewed by many radicals as the vanguard in the war against Islam's enemies, and they enjoy the admiration of and moral support from some Jordanians and others throughout the Arab world. The war has served as a major catalyst enabling the leaders of these organizations to disseminate the idea of jihad throughout the Arab and Muslim world. Their extremist interpretation requires each Muslim to devote himself to jihad (*fard 'ayn*) at this time, because they portray the fighting in Iraq as a war against foreigners who have captured Muslim land. The intensive propaganda campaign conducted by al-Qaeda and its affiliated organizations via the media, especially on the Internet, only reinforces this position. This propaganda reaches almost every home and facilitates the formation of local terrorist organizations, some of which are linked to existing organizations and some of which are independent. The Jordanian regime has not been passive in the face of this propaganda, and has not taken the easy path of relying on the "less radical" Muslim Brotherhood as an alternative to al-Qaeda.

Four Tests

Since the end of 2005, the Jordanian regime has faced four important tests in its ongoing struggle with *takfiri-jihadi* ideology. The first test was initiated by the *takfiri-jihadi* camp itself on November 9, 2005, with the series of attacks that were simultaneously launched against three hotels in Amman. Following the attacks, Zarqawi issued a communiqué to the Jordanian public justifying the bombings, whose victims were Muslims, and sharply criticizing the Jordanian regime. The bombings were viewed by Jordan's establishment as a serious turning point with regard to Islamic terror threats against the stability of the kingdom and its government. The attacks were a blow to internal security and revealed that Zarqawi had a considerable number of sympathizers. Many regarded him as a hero waging war against the American aggressor and enemy, whereas others even expressly identified with his *salafi-jihadi* outlook.

King Abdullah responded to the bombings by ordering a more comprehensive and aggressive campaign against Islamic terrorism and its ideology. At the end of November 2005, he replaced the government of Badran, only seven months after its establishment, and formed a new government led by a former general and outgoing Jordanian ambassador to Israel, Marouf Bakhit. In his letter of appointment for the new government, the king

launched an unprecedented attack against what he described as the "culture of *takfir*" and instructed the government to draw up a strategy against it that would not only focus on a security solution, but also develop ideological, cultural, and political strategies against this extremist ideology.[8] Among other things, King Abdullah called for increased utilization of the media to disseminate alternative Islamic ideas and the values of tolerance and moderation, with the "Amman Letter" he had initiated and published in 2005 serving as the source of training and inspiration.[9] The Amman Letter was issued by a convention of 180 Muslim scholars from various schools that was organized by the King and that aimed at presenting a wide consensus of scholars against "illegitimate, extremist fatwas" that justify terrorism.

The second test came from the most radical wing of the Muslim Brotherhood. Drawing encouragement from the victory of Hamas in the January 2006 Palestinian parliamentary elections, they expressed support for a Hamas government, demanded the return of the Hamas representatives to Jordan who had been expelled in 1999, and rejected the Jordanian regime's accusations that Hamas had tried to smuggle weapons into Jordan with the goal of carrying out attacks within the kingdom. This stance by the Muslim Brotherhood placed it in direct confrontation with the Jordanian regime. The opposition of Hamas to peace with Israel, a country with which Jordan has signed a peace accord, and its adherence to an active jihad against Israel, made any kind of exchange impossible. Moreover, in the Jordanian regime's view, discussions with the Hamas government would benefit the Muslim Brotherhood and its Palestinian wing (a substantial part of the movement), thereby strengthening the most radical faction of the Muslim Brotherhood's Jordanian branch, which had won important institutional leadership positions in the parliamentary elections in March 2006.

The third test began immediately after the killing of Zarqawi by American forces in Iraq on June 9, 2006. That was an outstanding achievement, and the Jordanian regime openly celebrated the role it claimed to have played in the operation. But this exuberance dimmed following the unusual step taken by four Muslim Brotherhood members of the Jordanian parliament, who visited the Zarqawi family's house of mourning in the city of Zarqa and conveyed their condolences. The most prominent of them, Shaykh Mohammed Abu Fares, who is known for his adherence to the *takfir* idea, went so far as to declare Zarqawi a martyr (*shaheed*). At the same time, he stated that Zarqawi's victims in the series of hotel bombings on November 9, 2005, could also be considered martyrs from the perspective of Islamic law.[10]

The condolence visit paid by the parliamentarians and Abu Fares' declaration, which was regarded by many as a religious ruling, together with the refusal of the Muslim Brotherhood's leadership and party to apologize for these moves, sent shock waves through the Jordanian establishment. From the Jordanian regime's perspective, the actions of the four parliamentarians, together with the Muslim Brotherhood's declared support for Hamas,

gave legitimacy to the *takfiri-jihadi* ideology and even encouraged acts of terror.[11] The Muslim Brotherhood's actions were seen as an unprecedented provocation and as a harsh blow to the regime's fight against terrorism and the ideology that drives it.

The regime responded immediately by arresting the four members of parliament. The government then issued a series of harsh condemnations that bordered on accusing the four of attempting to incite a civil war (*fitna*) because of the uproar they had aroused. In an attempt to calm the atmosphere, the parliamentary bloc of the Islamic Action Front issued an announcement declaring the Muslim Brotherhood's loyalty to the state and their disavowal of terrorism and notions of *takfir*.[12]

Despite this conciliatory gesture, the regime launched a vigorous campaign against the Muslim Brotherhood. It exercised the law to its fullest extent against three of the four members of parliament by bringing them to trial at the State Security Court. Mohammed Abu Faras and a second parliamentarian, Ali Abu Sukar, were charged with harming national unity and inciting fanaticism and racism and received prison terms of a year and a half.[13] At the same time, the court struck a blow at the movement's socioeconomic stronghold, the Islamic Center Association. The association incorporates many dozens of social welfare and medical assistance centers for the general public, thereby helping the movement to garner public sympathy and electoral support. Citing reasons of financial mismanagement and poor organization, the regime expropriated the Muslim Brotherhood's control over the Islamic Center Association and transferred it to the management of a council operating on the regime's behalf.[14] In early October 2006, King Abdullah awarded a pardon to Abu Fares and Abu Sukar, who were released from prison. However, the indictments against them were not cancelled, and they did not return to parliament.[15]

The fourth test of the Jordanian regime occurred when the war broke out in Lebanon between Israel and the Hezbollah organization on July 12, 2006. This conflict served as a great boon to the Muslim Brotherhood, as it diverted the attention of the Jordanian establishment, public opinion, and the media, and thereby diminished the intense campaign the regime had been waging against the Muslim Brotherhood. The Israel-Hezbollah war also provided the Muslim Brotherhood with new ammunition to promote its ideology, calling for an Islamic battle in the spirit of jihad against Israel and its principal ally, the United States. The Muslim Brotherhood disregarded the religious disparities between Sunni and Shi'a, declaring complete solidarity with Hezbollah and the Lebanese people.[16]

In fact, the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood's expressions of support for Hezbollah were numerous. The secretary general of the Islamic Action Front, Zaki Bani Arsheed, sent a letter to Hezbollah's leader Shaykh Hassan Nasrallah congratulating him on "the victory against the Israeli-American attack." Dr. Ibrahim Zaid al-Kilani, head of the Association of Scholars of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood, issued a fatwa on July 30, 2006, that described the resistance (*muqawama*) of Hezbollah and the jihad in Palestine and Iraq as a single battle of Islam against its enemies, and called on Muslim leaders to

support "the resistance and the jihad" with arms, money and all of their "soul." These fatwas are similar in spirit to those issued by Shaykh Yusuf al-Qaradawi, the Qatar-based Egyptian cleric whose rulings are widely accepted by the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas as authoritative. Qaradawi rejects the rulings of Wahhabi shaykhs as well as statements by Ayman al-Zawahiri that describe Hezbollah and the Shi'a in general as heretical, and gives priority instead to the conduct of jihad and the struggle against Islam's perceived enemies.[17] Qaradawi states, in fact, that there is nothing wrong with the Shi'a identity of the Lebanese resistance as long as it bears arms, strives to purify Muslim land from the Israeli stain, and is victorious. He refers to Hezbollah as undertaking a religiously legitimate Islamic jihad and compares this struggle to "its sister in Palestine."[18]

The Jordanian regime tried to take the wind out of the sails of the Muslim Brotherhood's propaganda on this issue by declaring its overall support for the country and people of Lebanon, by expediting large air shipments of relief supplies to meet vital humanitarian needs, and by offering to rebuild what was destroyed in the war. When the war was over, the regime renewed its measures vis-à-vis the Muslim Brotherhood by passing legislation aimed at restricting the Muslim Brotherhood's religious-political methods of operation. The law restricts the use of mosques and public sermons in order to reduce public incitement.

Countering Salafi Ideology

The campaign waged by the Jordanian regime to de-legitimize *takfiri-jihadi* ideology actually began more than a year prior to the Amman hotel bombings with the publication of the "Amman Letter" (*Risalat Amman*) on November 27, 2004. The initiative for the letter is credited to King Abdullah himself, who derives authority from his status as a descendant of the Prophet's family, and the text was posted on the home page of the king's Internet site. The document presents a moderate formulation of Islam based on a middle way (*wasatiyya*). The Amman Letter's "middle way" teaching differs from the radical middle way preached by Shaykh Yusuf Qaradawi as well as many Saudi elements in that it focuses on daily religious practice, and not on the use of Islam for encouraging political struggle and violence. The Amman Letter further advocates co-existence between peoples built upon respect for mutual pacts and agreements, and rejects *takfiri-jihadi* ideology as a clear distortion of Islam.

The Jordanian regime lobbied to obtain wide Islamic backing from religious authorities for the document at a July 2005 conference of prominent Islamic scholars, both Shi'a and Sunni, that it convened in Amman. The conference adopted the document and approved fatwas advocating co-existence between the eight "legitimate" schools of Sunni and Shi'a Islam. It also sought to refute the religious and legal foundations of *takfiri-jihadi* ideology. Two other decisions made at the conference carried great weight: an

agreement among scholars to invalidate any accusation of *takfir* and an attempt to limit the authority to issue fatwas to widely accepted ulama, thus prohibiting "unqualified clergy" from issuing fatwas.[19]

After the November 2005 bombings, the regime sought to mobilize the Islamic world to stand by its side in its battle against radical *salafi* ideology. One early expression of its success in this effort came at a summit conference of the Islamic Council organization, which approved a number of decisions condemning the *takfiri* doctrine and supporting the Amman Letter. The Bakhit government also launched a campaign denouncing *takfiri* ideas and advocating the adoption of moderate Islam. The Amman Net radio broadcast a round-table discussion about the rise of the *takfiri-jihadi* ideology in which the speakers described that ideology as a modern-day continuation of the ideology of the *khawarj* movement, a violent movement rejected as heretical long ago by mainstream Sunni Islam.[20] The speakers also attempted to refute *takfiri* ideology by citing a number of *sharia* prohibitions, including those against declaring that a Muslim is a heretic unless he publicly announces his heresy; the prohibition on spilling Muslim blood—except the blood of those who engage in prostitution, abandon the religion and Muslim community (*rida*), or commit an act of murder; and the fact that the authority to carry out a death sentence is given to the Muslim ruler alone. The speakers additionally cited a traditional prohibition against any group issuing or acting upon a fatwa that is contrary to an existing fatwa, as well as a prohibition against harming non-Muslim civilians such as women and children and those who do not bear weapons. Finally, they rejected the *takfiri* doctrine that permits the killing of a Muslim who is under the protection of a non-Muslim during a war against them (*tatarus*).

Another conference sponsored by the Jordanian Center for Research and Information in mid-March 2006 expressed sweeping opposition to the phenomenon of religious extremism. The ulama and scholars who attended attacked in particular the imposition of "religio-legal terror" (*irhab fiqhi*) on Muslims by schools of religious law, and in the use of *takfir* by a number of preachers against Muslims who did not accept the opinion of a certain religious sage (*'alim, faqih*). One former Jordanian minister, Shaykh Abd al-Aziz al-Hiyat, pointed out that even the companions of the prophet had disagreed with one another, yet unlike modern-day adherents to *takfiri* ideology, they did not refer to each other as heretics.[21] On April 24, 2006, a conference on "The Role of the Moderate Stream (*wasatiyya*) in the Reform and Awakening of the Nation" opened in Amman under the patronage of Prince Ghazi Bin Mohammed and with the participation of prominent Sunni and Shi'a religious scholars from throughout the Middle East. In addition to rejecting extremism and violence, the conference advocated adopting the principles of the Amman Letter and the decisions of the conferences of the moderate stream of Islam that have been held in recent years in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The conference also called for dialogue between the various Islamic streams in order to reach a common

approach for confronting the challenges facing the contemporary Muslim world. Finally, the conference addressed the need for Muslims to think about globalization not as a threat but as an opportunity for reciprocal relations with the world and, in particular, European cultures.[22]

On May 27, 2006, another conference convened in Amman to address the challenges of creating a "Civic Democratic Islamic Discourse." Some fifty religious scholars from twenty-one countries participated in the conference, which was organized by the Al-Quds Center for Political Studies and the Konrad Adenauer Foundation. The conference discussed a number of issues, including the future of Islam in light of democracy and globalization, the relationships between religion and the state, the idea of the state in modern Islamic thought, and the concepts of jihad, terror, violence, transfers of power, pluralism, and minority rights of non-Muslims in Muslim societies.

Conference participants presented papers that thoroughly debunked the *takfir* doctrine and the use of force to impose ideas, and also made proposals for waging war against the *takfiri* and *jihadi* ideas. Several participants focused on the problematic nature of the Muslim Brotherhood's political ideology, which is not, they said, consistent with moderate Islam and the values of democracy, and is infected with *takfiri* ideology.[23] The conference called for Islamic movements to "close the gates of *takfir* and *tafsik*" (accusing someone of disavowing Islam); to break through the intellectual stagnation and isolation they have brought upon themselves; to come to terms with modern innovations; and not to take a rigid view of statements attributed to the Prophet.[24] An additional call was made to demand that the Muslim Brotherhood movement internalize the principles of democracy in its philosophical literature and organizational outlook and institute reforms in its religious view based on enlightenment, civic responsibility, and the full acceptance of democracy. The implication was that as long as the Muslim Brotherhood failed to do this, its participation in the political process in the state should be restricted.[25]

On August 25, 2006, the Al-Fiqh Al-Islami Institute convened yet another conference in Amman attended by religious scholars from throughout the Muslim world. The conference was largely devoted to exploring Islam's stance toward extremism and terror. One Jordanian representative (the advisor for Islamic affairs, Abd al-Salam al-Abadi) presented the key points of the Amman Letter. The conference participants issued a strong attack on *tafkiri* and *jihadi* ideas from Islamic and universal perspectives. In this context, the conference attempted to draw a distinction between jihad in Islam and the doctrine of terror adopted by contemporary extremist organizations.[26] They argued that jihad was designed to protect the sanctity of Islam, and that its goals and methods are well defined. By contrast, the doctrine of terror, which is quick to accuse others of disavowing Islam (*fasuk*), heresy (*kufr*), and abandoning the community (*al khuruj min al mila*), was designed to impose beliefs and opinions. The conference denounced what it described as "the mounting chaos of fatwas" (*faudat al-fatawa al-mutshadedeh*) issued by "unqualified

people who lack the appropriate education," citing fatwas that label groups and individuals as heretics and cause rifts among Muslims. Like the Amman conference in November 2004, speakers at this conference also devoted attention to defining the characteristics and qualifications required of a religious mufti before issuing a fatwa.

Tackling the Culture of *Takfir*

Another tactic of the Jordanian regime in its battle against Islamic extremism has been an attempt to refute the central religious tenets of the *takfiri* ideology. These include: the *salafi* interpretation of the concept of *kufr* (heresy) in the Quran and Hadith; the concept of jihad; the concept of *tatarus*; and the concept of *mu'ahad*.

Following the bombings in Amman, commentaries on Islamic law were published in Jordanian newspapers based on the opinions and rulings of religious scholars who had refuted the hard-line *takfiri* concepts of *kufr* and *kufar* (heresy and heretics). According to the *takfiri* concept, whenever these words appear in the Quran and Hadith they refer to *rida*, or denial of Islam and abandonment of the religion and the community of Muslims. In the hands of modern *salafist* ideologues, this interpretation is intended to prove that the *takfir* idea is not the invention of modern *takfiri* ideology, but actually originates from the Quran itself. *Takfiri* ideology refers similarly to the concept of *kufar*, in the sense of *murtadun* (heretics), which appears in the following verse that leaders of this stream often quote in their writings: "Those who do not rule in accordance with Allah's revelations are the disbelievers." (Quran 5:44). According to the *takfiri* interpretation of this verse, whoever does not make judgments based on what is said in the Quran is a heretic (*murtad*).

In contrast, traditional religious scholars have argued that the concept of *kufr* that appears in the Quran and Hadith should not always be understood as denial of Islam (*rida*), but rather as a serious violation (*kabira*) that is a sort of minor heresy (*kufr asghar*), which is a lesser offense. According to these religious sages, this is the way the aforementioned Quranic verse should also be interpreted. The use of this verse with regard to "heretics" is not intended to portray them as abandoners of Islam (*rida*). Rather, it is intended to deter and warn, and is used from a perspective of exaggeration. The religious sages maintain that the exclusive authority for declaring that a Muslim is a heretic (*murtad*) rests with the highest ulama, who base their rulings on precise evidence. One of the commentators, Ali bin Hasan al-Halabi al-Athri, even quotes the late Shaykh Abd al-Aziz bin al-Baz (the foremost Saudi-Wahhabi religious scholar of this generation) who stated that the hasty use of *takfir* is liable to lead to the most serious consequences and transgressions of sanctioning bloodshed (*istabahat al-damaa*), destruction of homes and facilities, and theft of public funds. Every Muslim who believes in Allah and in the world to come must renounce this deviant and misleading doctrine.[27]

The local media launched a strong attack against al-Qaeda's view of jihad after the 2005

bombings. The media identified it with "jihad via the sword," violence and terror, and made a clear distinction between what was termed "legitimate resistance to the occupier." Samer Khir Ahmed summarizes the main arguments against the *salafi* concept of jihad as follows: first, the victims of jihad organizations are mostly Muslims and not foreigners as these organizations claim; second, the jihad diverts the Islamic nation from its primary battle against imperialism, corruption and division; third, the jihad organizations seek to restore the nation's past glory through all-out warfare against moderate Muslims who are considered enemies. But in our era, the meaning of jihad is different than it was in the past. Today jihad means instituting reforms in Muslim societies, enhancing ways of thinking and a war against backwardness.[28]

After the Amman bombings, Zarqawi declared in an audio recording that the attacks were aimed against "Israeli and American intelligence personnel," thus justifying the attacks despite the fact that all of the victims were Muslims. Zarqawi's justification for killing Muslims sparked a legal discussion in the media around the issue of *tatarus*—whether it is permissible within the framework of a Muslim war against nonbelievers to kill Muslims who are under the protection of these nonbelievers (*tatarus*). Radical *salafi* ideology grants sweeping and unconditional permission to kill these Muslims, based on a far-reaching fatwa from the classical theologian Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328).

A number of Jordanian media commentators fiercely attacked this interpretation of Islamic law based on a medieval fatwa. Bassam Nasser, for instance, states that Ibn Taymiyya's fatwa permits the killing of Muslims only under very limited conditions—for instance, when it is impossible to defeat the enemy (*al-nakia fi al-audu*) in battle conditions in which Muslims are liable to be killed. If it is possible to kill enemies without harming Muslims, then this is preferable. It is not, however, obligatory.[29] Another commentator, Ali bin Hasan Al-Halabi al-Athri, pointed out the complete contradiction between the concept of *tatarus* as understood by the recognized orthodox scholars and the *salafi-jihadi* concept that "results in the killing of women, children and the elderly." According to the true Islamic law, *tatarus* killing only occurs in a situation when a Muslim fighter is forced to do this and does not take place by choice. As such, the attacks in Amman were illogical, counterproductive, and in complete contradiction to Islamic law.[30]

Ali bin Hasan Al-Halabi al-Athri also attacked the *salafi-jihadi* movement's disavowal of the protection that traditional Islamic scholars have granted to non-Muslims who enter the Islamic states (*dar al-islam*) in accordance with a defense and refuge pact (*aqd al-aman 'ahd al-idhin wal-istiman*) made with the Muslim authorities. The commentator quotes the words of the Prophet that clearly warned against violating this religious law (*hukum*): "whoever killed a *mu'ahad* will not smell the scent of Paradise."[31] It seems that the commentator's article on the issue of *mu'ahad*, which was published several days after the 2005 bombings in Amman, was intended to undermine Zarqawi's justification for the attacks that they were aimed simply against non-Muslims (American and Israeli military

personnel). Even in this case, the attacks constitute a crime and violate a serious prohibition, since these Americans and Israelis have the status of *mu'ahad*.

Legislating Against Extremism

Just as the bombings in Amman served as a catalyst for intensifying the Jordanian regime's ideological struggle against *takfiri-jihadi* ideas, they also gave a political push to the enactment of legislation designed to restrict the dissemination of this ideology. In particular, this legislation sought to limit the Muslim Brotherhood's use of mosques and religious means (with an emphasis on fatwas) for political ends. These laws were approved in the parliament and senate in September 2006 after a fierce, head-on confrontation with parliamentary Islamic (Muslim Brotherhood) opposition.

The most significant law passed was the Anti-Terror Law. According to the explanations of government spokesmen, the law is designed to fight terror and violence through preventive measures, early interception, and deterrence. The law defines an act of terror as "any action conducted via any means that is likely to result in killing or bodily injury or damage to public or private property, if the objective of the action is to disturb public order and security, including via intimidation, terror and violence, or to block the implementation of the law or to influence the policy of the state or government."[32] The dissemination and preaching of extremist ideas are also considered part of the preparations for carrying out acts of terror, according to the interpretation of the law by these spokesmen.

The Islamic opposition in parliament and elsewhere strongly opposed the law, arguing that it violated the articles of the constitution that guarantee individual liberty and freedom of religion. The opposition also argued that the law does not clearly define what constitutes terror and grants the security forces too much latitude to define terror, thus arbitrarily placing restrictions on liberties.

Another law, known as "The Law of Fatwas," gives legal expression to the desire that was reiterated in all of the conferences—to invalidate the issuance of fatwas by "unqualified people." The main objectives of the law are, on the one hand, to establish a mechanism that will prohibit extremist elements from issuing fatwas, and on the other, to strengthen the religious establishment by granting the primary authority to issue fatwas to a governmental council on religious law. As the law states, "it is prohibited for any person or entity to issue sharia fatwas on public issues and to undermine and cast doubt on fatwas issued by the Fatwa Council (*majlis al-iftaa*) and general mufti with the goal of harming and invalidating them." All of the members of the Fatwa Council are to be appointed by the government, and will in turn be responsible, among other things, for overseeing fatwas on all public matters, issuing fatwas that the public needs, and publishing Islamic research. The general mufti is appointed by royal decree, with the rank of minister, and is responsible for managing the council. This new law and organization is

intended to block loopholes that have previously facilitated the broad circulation of "problematic" fatwas from the *takfiri-jihadi* and Muslim Brotherhood movements pertaining to government policy and political issues. In a similar vein, a recent amendment approved by the senate and parliament to another law, the "Law of Preaching and Guidance" (*kanun al-wa'z wal-arshad*), states that the use of mosques for preaching, guidance, and teaching by clergy will be permitted only with advance approval from the Ministry of Waqf and Religious Affairs.[33]

Going Forward

Al-Qaeda's bombings in Amman on November 9, 2005, prompted the Jordanian government to take off its gloves and engage in a head-on ideological and political confrontation with Islamic terror movements and the *takfiri* ideological infrastructure that supports them. At the same time, the rise of a new form of extremism within the Muslim Brotherhood movement in Jordan and elsewhere during the same period intensified the regime's sense of threat, especially due to the Brotherhood's expressions of open support for the *takfiri* doctrine or, at best, its ambiguity about this radical doctrine.[34]

Against the background of these developments, the regime, backed by the institutional media, has initiated a focused attack on radical *salafi* ideology. In the regime's view, this ideology is no less a part of terror than the means of destruction employed by the terrorists. As such, undermining this ideology and its foundations in some contemporary forms of Islamic jurisprudence would be tantamount to preemptively thwarting terrorist plots. So far, the regime's struggle against radical *salafi* ideology has been conducted in a systematic way. The central question is how effective this comprehensive campaign by the Jordanian regime against radical ideology will be, and whether it is achieving tangible results.

There is no doubt that the Jordanian regime's ideological counterattack has been complicated already by domestic disputes between the Jordanian religious and political establishment and the political Islamist movement, led by the Muslim Brotherhood, regarding the diagnosis and treatment of the phenomenon of terror. In the establishment's view, the phenomenon of terror is a security problem arising out of radical ideology, and should be tackled through appropriate information campaigns and legislation. By contrast, the representatives of the camp of political Islam believe that the sources of radicalism are political backwardness, not ideology. They believe that despotism, the repression of political liberties, and the depressed socioeconomic situation all stand in the way of the regime's desire to fight terror. Thus, the required treatment is far-reaching political and economic reform, that is, "democratization" on the road to an Islamic regime.[35]

Additionally, the Muslim Brotherhood has worked tirelessly to portray Islamic terrorism against unarmed civilians in Iraq and against Israel as legitimate resistance (*muqawama*) against foreign occupiers. Against this background, the Jordanian regime's

de-legitimization of these terror organizations is not always accepted and internalized by the public at large. Nonetheless, the 2005 terror attacks in Amman by Zarqawi's al-Qaeda organization did lead the public to a more sober assessment of the radical Islamist movement, as it became apparent that the Islamist terrorists and their Muslim Brotherhood sympathizers do not distinguish between the killing of Americans, Israelis, Iraqi Shiites, or peaceful Jordanian citizens.

Both domestically and internationally, the regime's ideas-based counterattack on radical ideology has met with mixed reviews.[36] For instance, Ibrahim Gharbiya, a senior Jordanian expert on extremist Islamic organizations, has raised questions about the effectiveness of the state's campaign against *takfiri* ideology. After the shooting attack by a lone terrorist against a tourist group in the center of Amman on September 4, 2006, he stated that denunciations of terrorism and the information campaign to inculcate moderate Islam have not reached deeply into the general public, except among those who were already moderates. Extremist ideas and violent groups, he added, continue to serve as an instrument for recruiting activists: "Our ideological and administrative campaign to forestall extremism has not succeeded because it has not yet reached the sources of violence and crime. The existing simplistic solutions have not helped in the war against violence and have even served it. The search for the correct approach cannot be postponed."[37]

Nevertheless, the Jordanians have joined the fight. Jordan remains the one regime in the Middle East with perhaps the greatest cognizance of the ideological threat that radical *salafi* ideology poses. Unlike most other regimes in the Muslim world, Jordan has rejected the traditional paradigm of tolerance for ideological extremism in return for domestic stability, and in so doing has challenged the radical Muslim movement as a whole. It is doubtful that Jordan can succeed in this mission alone, and unfortunately, it is also doubtful that other states in the region will follow suit in the near future.

Notes

1. King Abdullah in an interview with CNN-Al-Rai, 24 June 2006.

According to one survey conducted prior to the attacks in Amman on 9 November 2005, some 64% of the Jordanian public sympathized with the al-Qaeda in Iraq organization led by Zarqawi. *Al-Hiyat*, 15 December 2005. However, this sympathy dropped sharply after the attacks in Amman. In a survey conducted immediately after these attacks, 72% of the sample believed that this group is a terror organization, 20% believed that it is not a terror organization, and 15.6% believed that it is a resistance organization. But after the killing of Zarqawi in June 2006, the percentage of those who regarded the organization as a terror organization dropped to 54%, while 20% still believed it is not a terror organization. By contrast, only 10% of those surveyed in 2004 believed that bin Laden's al-Qaeda organization is a terror organization, compared to 49% in 2005 and 41% in 2006. This indicates that there is greater sympathy for bin Laden's organization than for Zarqawi's. In any case, both organizations have levels of sympathy that explain the existence of a *takfiri salafiyyah* infrastructure, albeit a relatively small one. *Al-Rai, Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, 10 July 2006.

Ramadan al-Rawashdeh, who describes this situation, calls on scholars of Islamic law to battle against this phenomenon. *Al-Rai*, 15 June 2006. In the Old City of Amman (the Balad), near the Al-Husseini mosque, there are book stands disseminating propaganda material in the spirit of the *takfiri-jihadi* ideology. Since the second Gulf War, there has been a rise in demand in Jordan for books about the end of days and signs of the apocalypse.

A prominent example is Abed Shahadeh al-Tahawi, who is considered a source of religious law among extreme Islamic groups in Irbid. He preaches the *takfir* doctrine in mosques in the Irbid region. He was arrested and brought to trial. *Al-Dustour*, 23 May 2005; *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, 6 June 2005.

2. Shmuel Bar, "The Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan," Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies, June 1998, 50-52.

3. Ramadan al-Rawashdeh notes that this stream regards rulers and societies that do not accept its outlook as heretics. According to Rawashdeh, the regime has become more concerned following the declaration by one of the Muslim Brotherhood's leaders, Azam al-Hanidi, that the Muslim Brotherhood is capable of assuming executive powers in light of its achievements in Egypt in the December 2005 elections and the victory of Hamas in March 2006. *Al-Rai*, 17 August 2006. In another article, published after the killing of Zarqawi, Ramadan refers to members of the Muslim Brotherhood as new Zarqawis. *Al-Rai*, 15 June 2006. Sultan al-Khateb notes the development of Muslim Brotherhood philosophy toward support for violence and insubordination vis-à-vis the ruler. Tactically, the Muslim Brotherhood adopts a path of moderation until the stage of *takwin* or *tamkin*—the stage when it is possible to grab power. Then, they will move toward confrontation with the government. *Al-Rai*, 26 June 2006. In another article, Khateb calls for neutralizing the *takfir* propaganda of some of the Islamic movement's leaders in Jordan—that is, the Muslim Brotherhood—because it serves al-Qaeda and prepares the ground for this organization to flourish. *Al-Rai*, 27 June 2006. According to Rana al-Sabaa, a new leadership stream has become stronger within the Muslim Brotherhood that is more pro-Palestinian and sympathetic to al-Qaeda's philosophy. *Al-Hiyat*, 27 August 2006.

4. A *fatwa* by the head of the Council of Ulama of the Muslim Brotherhood, Dr. Ibrahim Zayed Kilani, published on 14 August 2004 on the Jabha web site of the Islamic Action Front www.jabha.net/fatwa.asp. Nadwah al-Majali summarizes how the jihad stream, on one hand, and the Muslim Brotherhood, on the other hand, have a stranglehold on the state and seek to undermine its foundations: "One stream attacks the regime through violence, confrontation, *takfir* and bombing attacks, while the other stream gently tunnels below the regime's foundations, penetrates the society and its institutions, mobilizes the street against it and raises doubts about its direction." *Al-Rai*, 27 June 2006.

5. The king placed the emphasis on the *takfir* schools, which constitute a platform for fanaticism, backwardness and insularity. *Al-Rai*, 25-26 November 2005.

6. Interview with the Jordanian press agency. *Al-Rai*, 13 November 2005.

7. *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, 12 June 2006.

8. Rana al-Sabaa notes that the dispute that developed between the regime and the Muslim Brotherhood convinced the regime of the dominance of the extremist Hamasi stream in Jordan. *Al-Hiyat*, 27 June 2006.

9. Jabha web site of the Islamic Action Front, 4 July 2006.

10. *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, 17 August 2005.

11. *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, 7 July 2005.

12. *Al-Rai Al-Ghrad*, 2 October 2006.

13. A religious ruling approved at the Islamic conference in Amman, 4-6 July 2005, granting full legitimacy to the Shi'a and regarding it as equal to the Sunna, works here to the benefit of the Muslim Brotherhood in their call to support Hezbollah. *Al-Rai Al-Ghrad*, 7 July 2005.

This discussion brings to mind the Nasserite doctrine of the 1960s that coined the concept of "unity of the ranks" (all of the Arabs against Israel) that takes precedence over "unity of purpose" (the unique conception of each regime regarding the ultimate course of the Arab world).

14. *Al-Sabil*, 29 July 2006.

15. "Jordan's 9/11 – Dealing with Jihadi Islamism," *Middle East Report* 47, International Crisis Group, 23 November 2005, p. 16; *Al-Rai Al-Ghrad*, 6-8 June 2005; *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, 7 July 2005.

16. *Al-Dustour*, 16 November 2005.

17. *Al-Rai*, 19 March 2006.

18. *Al-Rai*, 27 April 2006.

19. *Al-Rai*, 29 May 2006; *Al-Ghrad*, 28 May 2006.

20. Dr. Al-Murtada bin Zayed al-Mahturi, member of the Ulama Association of Yemen and a lecturer at Sana'a University, *Al-Rai*, 29 May 2006.

21. *Al-Rai*, 29 May 2006.

22. *Al-Ghrad*, 26 June 2006; *Al-Rai*, 29 May 2006; *Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, 27 June 2006.

23. Dr. Abdallah Salahin, the dean of the Faculty of Shari'a at the Jordanian University, in a round-table discussion on Amman Net radio about the rise of the *takfiri-jihadi* philosophy. *Al-Dustour*, 16 November 2005; Ali bin Hasan al-Halabi al-Athri, *Al-Ghrad*, 16 December 2005. See also the decision of the ulama sages on this issue at the Amman conference in July 2005.

24. *Al-Ghrad*, 18 November 2005.

25. *Ibid.*

26. *Ibid.*

27. *Ibid.*

28. *Al-Ghad*, 29 August 2005.

29. *Al-Rai, Al-Ghad*, 13 September 2006, 26 September 2006; *Al-Rai*, 8 September 2006.

30. The expert on extremist Islamic organizations, Mohammed Abu Raman, writes that gray areas in the various positions taken by the Muslim Brotherhood are not recent developments, but date back over twenty years. *Al-Rai*, 7 August 2006. He also writes that it is important that the message of the opposition— that is, the Muslim Brotherhood—be examined and that it express a clear philosophical stance against violence and extremism in order to channel the youth to constructive paths. In practice, he says, the Muslim Brotherhood's message fans the youth's frustration and anger, resulting in disaster for all. *Al-Hiyat*, 15 September 2006. Former Jordanian minister Salah al-Kalab notes that political Islamic movements throughout the Middle East, including Jordan, have systematically refrained from condemning terror attacks by Islamic terror organizations and have even occasionally expressed a position justifying the acts of terror. He contends that these movements have placed themselves—by extending logistical and ideological assistance for acts of terror—in the terror camp itself. *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat*, 25 August 2006.

31. Round-table discussion between representatives of the establishment and representatives of political Islam, against the background of the Amman bombings. Internet site of Al-Sabil, the mouthpiece of the Muslim Brotherhood, 24 November 2006.

32. In a comprehensive study of the Jordanian regime's struggle against Islamic terror and the ideology of this terror following the Amman bombings, the International Crisis Group notes the weaknesses of the ideological part of this struggle: "The problem with the Amman Message is that it bears no relation to the situation on the ground…In an attempt to bridge the gap between weak and discredited imams and the militant *salafi* alternative in Salt, the *awqaf* and the GID [General Intelligence Department] are placing more charismatic imams or even respected community patriarchs in the city's mosques. Again the impact is open to question." The quotation appears on page 16 of the report.

33. *Al-Ghrad*, 5 September 2006.

Afghanistan's Islamist Groups

HUSAIN HAQQANI

The recent resurgence of the Taliban in parts of Afghanistan has, once again, attracted attention to this poor and relatively isolated Central Asian country for its notoriety as a haven for extremist Islamism. Islam has been a key element of Afghan identity for centuries. But it was only during the anti-Soviet Afghan Jihad (1979-88) and the ensuing civil war (1992-2001) that religious traditionalism gave way to the radical ideas inspired by Saudi Arabian Wahhabism and South Asian Deobandi orthodoxy. Even today the Taliban's harsh and austere fundamentalism does not appeal to a majority of Afghans. Radical Islam has been kept alive in Afghanistan, however, by a combination of ethno-tribal dynamics and external factors, notably Pakistan's desire to control Afghan foreign policy—the history of which is long and complicated.

Contemporary Afghanistan emerged in the late nineteenth century as a buffer state between the British Indian empire and the czarist Russian empire. During the nineteenth century, Britain and Russia competed for influence in Central Asia through espionage and proxy wars in what came to be called the "Great Game." Britain feared that the Russian empire might expand southward and threaten its control over India, the "jewel in the British crown" that had been progressively acquired at great expense over more than a century. While such security concerns led the British to push their Indian frontier westward, both they and the Russians encountered fierce resistance there from Muslim tribes. The Russian prince Alexander Gorchakov described these tribes as "lawless."[1]

Recognizing Afghanistan as a buffer between them saved the two empires from having to confront each other militarily. The British had lost precious lives in their effort to control Afghanistan directly. By accepting a neutral and independent Afghan kingdom, they sought to pass on the burden of subduing some of the lawless tribes to a local monarch, albeit with British economic and military assistance. In 1893 representatives of both the British and Afghan governments agreed on a border through Afghanistan's frontier with British India that had been drawn by the British civil servant Sir Mortimer Durand.

This border, named the Durand Line, intentionally divided Pashtun tribes living in the area to prevent them from becoming a nuisance for the Raj. On their side of the frontier,

the British created autonomous tribal agencies, controlled by British political officers with the help of tribal chieftains whose loyalty was ensured through regular subsidies. The British used force to put down the sporadic uprisings in the tribal areas but generally left the tribes alone in return for stability along the frontier.

Adjacent to these autonomous tribal agencies, "settled" Pashtuns lived in towns and villages under direct British rule. Here, too, the Pashtuns were divided between the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) and Baluchistan, which did not enjoy the status of a full province under British rule. Although Muslim, the Pashtuns generally sided with the cause of anti-British Indian nationalism and were late, and reluctant, in embracing the All India Muslim League's campaign for the separate Muslim state of Pakistan in the twilight years of the British Raj.

Religious sentiment has always been strong in Afghanistan and was a crucial factor in Afghan resistance to British influence. Conservative religious leaders successfully opposed attempts at westernization by King Amanullah, who ruled from 1919 to 1929, and subsequently supported the short nine-month reign of the Tajik Bacha-e-Saqqao on the basis of his promise to rule according to Islamic law. When Pashtun ascendancy was restored under King Muhammad Nadir Khan in 1929, Pashtun tribes secured support for him from the ulama (learned religious scholars) by granting the religious establishment considerable influence. Afghanistan's 1931 constitution described Islam as the state religion and officially endorsed the *sharia* (Islamic law) enunciated by the Hanafi school. It created a dual legal system, providing for *sharia* courts alongside secular ones. And in 1950 King Zahir Shah established the Faculty of Theology at Kabul University and counted theologians among his advisers.

Religion was not the only cohesive element in Afghan society, however. The monarchy, backed by British subsidies, managed by and large to create an Afghan national identity independent of religious devotion. Afghanistan served as both a buffer and a backwater for British India until 1947, when the withdrawal of the British and the partition of India created the independent state of Pakistan. As successors to the Raj, Pakistani leaders assumed that Pakistan would inherit the functions of India's British government in guiding Afghan policy. But Afghanistan did not share this vision and responded to the emergence of Pakistan by questioning its rationale.

Afghanistan voted against Pakistan's admission to the United Nations, arguing that Afghanistan's treaties with British India relating to Afghan borders were no longer valid. After all, a new country was being established where none had existed at the time these treaties were signed. Afghanistan demanded instead the creation of a Pashtun state, "Pashtunistan," that would link the Pashtun tribes living in Afghanistan with those in the NWFP and Baluchistan. There were also ambiguous demands for a Baluch state "linking Baluch areas in Pakistan and Iran with a small strip of adjacent Baluch territory in Afghanistan."[2]

The most outspoken advocate of this irredentist claim was Sardar Mohammad Daoud, a cousin of King Zahir Shah who also served as his prime minister for several years. Daoud was a leading member of the secular and modernizing Afghan elite that sought to develop Afghanistan with foreign, mainly Western, assistance.

For its part Pakistan attempted to overcome such conflicting ethnic allegiances—as well as the threat posed by the much larger India—by promoting Islamic identity and solidarity. Afghanistan's initial reluctance to recognize Pakistan and the Afghan claim on Pakistani territory inhabited by Pashtun tribes along their border added to the psychological insecurity of Pakistani leaders. These leaders already believed that India sought to undo partition. Their fear of an Afghan-Indian pincer movement led them to adopt a policy of encouraging conservative Islamic beliefs among the Pashtun tribes. They expected that this emphasis on religion, as opposed to tribe or ethnicity, would contain and roll back the demands for "Pashtunistan."

Afghanistan was a landlocked country with limited resources that had depended heavily on foreign, especially British, subsidies in the decades before the end of the British Raj. When British military and economic support dried up after 1947, the Afghan state sought outside aid. Efforts to secure significant American assistance did not succeed, however. The United States, seeking alliance with the much larger Pakistan, chose to neglect Afghanistan and "inadvertently pushed Afghanistan towards rapprochement with the U.S.S.R."[3] Even so, until 1953, the United States "dominated Afghanistan's external trade, aid and cultural contacts,"[4] indicating a marked preference for Western ties among Afghanistan's elite. But the monetary value of these exchanges stood at less than one million dollars a year.[5]

Afghan modernizers sought higher levels of aid for their country's development and were frustrated by the American view that Afghanistan was not ready for industrialization. U.S. aid was confined to an irrigation project that was never completed, as well as some agricultural and education projects. In 1949-50, furthermore, border clashes with Pakistan and an embargo by Pakistan on oil supplies to Afghanistan caused serious hardship for the landlocked country, which had hitherto imported virtually everything through the Pakistani port of Karachi.

In 1950 the Soviets offered, and the Afghans accepted, a barter agreement that provided for the exchange of Soviet oil for Afghan wool and cotton. Advocates of closer ties with the Soviet Union began winning the argument at the royal court in Kabul by pointing out that the Soviets were willing to finance Afghanistan's modernization while the Americans were not. The United States began providing a significant amount of aid to Afghanistan only in 1956 and only after Soviet aid had already started flowing. By 1968 Afghanistan had received $550 million in Soviet aid compared to $250 million in American assistance.[6]

Other developments, meanwhile, were taking place in the political arena. The 1964 constitution of Afghanistan established the primacy of secular law but recognized Islam's

sacred status and stipulated that *sharia* law would be the law of last resort "where no exist-ing secular law applied."[7] And with the introduction of an elected parliament in the 1960s, political factions began to emerge. Among these were the communist People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) and Islamist groups that "set out to establish a political movement that would work for the creation of an Islamic state based on Sharia law."[8] In *Islam and Politics in Afghanistan* (1995), Asta Olesen discussed the rise of the Islamist groups:

> In Afghanistan, where the social and economic development was considerably slow-er than in the neighboring countries and the cultural polarization thus less pro-nounced, the Islamic revival movement was felt among the small group of educated youth, rather than in the population at large. Since the revival affected the educated middle class, there was a comparatively close correspondence between revival as a social-psychological phenomenon and the spreading of the religio-political ideology of what came to be known as Islamism.[9]

The strength of such Islamist sentiment increased more rapidly after 1973, when Sardar Daoud overthrew King Zahir Shah in a Soviet-backed coup involving the PDPA and proclaimed Afghanistan a republic.

Communism versus Islamism

The overthrow of the monarchy and the increasing influence of Afghanistan's relative-ly small Communist Party led to the emergence of anti-Communist opposition in the name of Islam. Some of Communism's strongest opponents were conservative Muslims who supported traditional social structures and sought to preserve the free-market economy. But other would-be Afghan Islamists had already been looking to Pakistan's Jamaat-e-Islami as both a model and a mentor.

By the 1960s Pakistan's Jamaat-e-Islami had established links with Islamist groups in most parts of the Muslim world, notably the Muslim Brotherhood in the Middle East. The writings of Jamaat-e-Islami's founder, Maulana Abul Ala Maududi, were being trans-lated into several languages, and their arguments were particularly effective in mobilizing Islamist networks in many countries. As Pakistan's next door neighbor, Afghanistan was among the first countries to receive Persian and Pashto language translations of Maududi's writings. Jamaat-e-Islami also received financial assistance from Saudi Arabia and the Saudi-sponsored Rabita al-Alam al-Islami (Muslim World League) to support its ventures in global outreach, particularly in areas under Communist control or influence.

The Muslim-majority regions of Central Asia attracted Jamaat-e-Islami's attention, and it began efforts both to establish contact with Muslims in those areas and to tell the world

about Communist oppression there. Next to its headquarters in Lahore, Jamaat-e-Islami established the Darul Fikr (Center for Thought) that published numerous accounts of the Communist oppression of Muslims during the late 1960s. Afghanistan was a crucial link in the Jamaat-e-Islami's broader Central Asia plan.

In 1972 the earlier informal Afghan Islamist groups coalesced to form Jamiat-e-Islami Afghanistan (Islamic Society of Afghanistan). Led by Burhanuddin Rabbani, a professor of theology at Kabul University, Jamiat-e-Islami Afghanistan resembled Pakistan's Jamaat-e-Islami in more than just its name. The party was inspired by Maududi and the thinkers of the Muslim Brotherhood. It sought to restructure all aspects of society in accordance with a particular and radical interpretation of Islamic principles.[10] Rabbani's early followers included two Kabul University students, Ahmed Shah Massoud and Gulbeddin Hekmatyar, who both played significant roles in subsequent events in Afghanistan.

In 1973, however, the newly established President Daoud did not countenance open opposition to his regime by Jamiat-e-Islami Afghanistan. He ordered a crack-down on the party's leadership, and they fled to Pakistan where they took shelter with Pakistan's Jamaat-e-Islami. Daoud soon turned against the Communists as well. Befriended by the shah of Iran, who urged him to cut Afghanistan's close ties with the Soviet Union, Daoud purged Communists from his administration in 1975, moved away from the Soviets and reached out to the West for aid. But this policy reversal did not last long as Daoud was killed in a 1978 coup orchestrated by the PDPA. Nur Muhammad Taraki took over as president of a Soviet-backed Communist regime led by the PDPA.

The events of 1978-79 contributed to a large extent to what happened next in Afghanistan. In 1978 Afghanistan signed a treaty of friendship with the Soviet Union. In early 1979 the Iranian Revolution took place—depriving the United States of a staunch ally in the region—and later that year Soviet troops occupied Afghanistan, ostensibly to help their Afghan Communist friends.

During the same Daoud era, of course, the exiled Afghan Islamists were engaged in a variety of activities in Pakistan. Long before the Soviet military intervention and soon after their arrival in Peshawar in 1973, Rabbani and his supporters were given financial support by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), and some members of Jamiat-e-Islami Afghanistan were provided military training. After signing up for Pakistani support, however, the Afghan Islamists experienced dissension in their ranks. In 1976 Hekmatyar split off from Jamiat-e-Islami Afghanistan to form the Hizb-e-Islami Afghanistan (Islamic Party of Afghanistan), which also operated from Pakistan.

Rabbani wanted to move cautiously and gradually, building broader support before seeking power. Following Maududi's lead, Rabbani's original scheme for an Islamic revolution did not envisage open armed struggle and certainly nothing that could be described as terrorism. Although Maududi's followers have been involved in militant struggles for the last several decades, none of his writings explicitly advocated violence.

Rabbani, too, was initially reluctant to convert Jamiat-e-Islami into a militia or a guerilla army—though later, after the Soviet occupation, the party became a leading band of *mujahidin* (holy warriors).

Hekmatyar, on the other hand, willingly embraced radical methods from the beginning. His militancy soon made him a favorite of the ISI, which was at that stage more interested in putting military pressure on Daoud's regime than in laying the foundations of a sustainable Islamic revolution in Afghanistan. The ISI also had an eye on identifying future leaders for an Afghanistan more closely linked to Pakistan. As an ethnic Pashtun, Hekmatyar seemed more qualified for that role than the non-Pashtun Rabbani.

Once the Soviets intervened militarily, Pakistan converted its relatively small-scale operation of aiding Afghan Islamists into what has come to be known as the Afghan Jihad. The United States and its allies trained *mujahidin* in Pakistan to fight against the Soviets in Afghanistan. The majority of the *mujahidin* were recruited from the more than three million Afghans living in Pakistan's refugee camps. Initially, the Afghans joined one of several *mujahidin* parties, at least three of which—the Harakat-e-Inquilab-e-Islami (Islamic Revolutionary Movement) led by Maulvi Muhammad Nabi Muhammadi, the Mahaz-e-Milli Islami Afghanistan (National Islamic Front of Afghanistan) led by Syed Ahmad Effendi Gailani, and the Jabha-e-Nejat-e-Milli Afghanistan (Afghan National Liberation Front) led by Sibghatullah Mujaddedi—described themselves as moderate and opposed to fundamentalism. Nine Afghan Shia *mujahidin* groups also fought the Soviets, primarily with Iranian backing.

Over time it became apparent that the Pakistani authorities favored the Sunni fundamentalist groups, who also benefited from large-scale financial support from Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries. Soon, Deobandi and Wahhabi *madrasas* (Islamic seminaries) sprouted in Afghan refugee camps and in the border areas along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, producing the next generation of Pashtun Islamists for both countries.

The Afghan Jihad brought the once isolated Afghans into contact with the most radical elements of the global Islamist movement. The Palestinian teacher Abdullah Azzam set up the Maktab al-Khidmat lil Mujahideen al-Arab (Arab Services Bureau) in Pakistan to facilitate the participation of radical Arab Islamists in the jihad. In his monograph *In Defense of Islamic Lands*, Azzam laid out the case for global jihad and inspired radical Muslims from all parts of the world—including Egypt, Algeria, Saudi Arabia, Chechnya, Bosnia, Philippines, Uzbekistan and Thailand—to fight alongside the Afghan *mujahidin*.

The war in Afghanistan, which caused significant damage to Soviet prestige and military might, ended in 1988 when the Soviets agreed to withdraw their troops from Afghanistan under the Geneva Accords. The Accords did not provide, however, for a transition from the Soviet-installed regime to an internationally acceptable government in Kabul. The Afghan Communist regime survived for almost four years after the Soviet withdrawal, and the *mujahidin* continued their war—albeit without active American and

Western assistance. During this period Saudi Arabia and Pakistan remained involved in funding and arming different *mujahidin* factions, and following the fall of the Communist regime in 1992, the struggle for power among the Islamist factions plunged Afghanistan into a bitter civil war. The civil war raged furiously until the rise of the Taliban movement of *madrasa* students in 1993-94. The Taliban took over the capital of Kabul in 1996 and remained in power until 2001, when they were toppled by military action instigated by the 9/11 terrorist attacks on the United States.

The Taliban provided safe haven to Islamist militants from all over the world. According to one estimate, the total number of foreign jihadis in Afghanistan at the end of the anti-Soviet jihad included about 5,000 Saudis, 3,000 Yemenis, 2,800 Algerians, 2,000 Egyptians, 400 Tunisians, 350 Iraqis, 200 Libyans and dozens of Jordanians.[11] These veterans of the war against the Soviets served as the vanguard for jihadist movements in their respective countries and beyond, and eventually coalesced into al-Qaeda, the group led by Azzam's student from Saudi Arabia, Osama bin Laden.

The influence of Azzam and al-Qaeda has shaped the ideology of Afghanistan's radical Islamist groups in recent times. The older groups, Jamiat-e-Islami and Hizb-e-Islami, have now been augmented by the well-structured and ideologically coherent Taliban movement. Each group's strategy and beliefs have altered somewhat over time under external influences.

Traditional and Political Islam

For several centuries, Islam in Afghanistan combined tribal customs,[12] Sufi beliefs and formal Islam. Ninety percent of Afghanistan's Muslims are Sunnis; the rest are Shias. According to Afghan folklore, Pashtun tribes accepted Islam soon after the advent of the faith, converted by one of Prophet Mohammed's companions who belonged to the Bani Afghana tribe. Historians say that most Afghans converted to Islam much later, however, possibly in the tenth and eleventh centuries. While the claim of early conversion—and a direct link to the prophet—indicates the significance of their religion to most Afghans, Afghanistan was not rigorously orthodox throughout most of its history. It was, rather, a religiously conservative society where *sharia* was interspersed with Afghan tribal custom. Religious orthodoxy prevailed, but only alongside tolerance for other religions and sects. Traditional Islam meant low government interference in defining what was Islamic and the prevalence of Sufi practices and popular Islam—a folksy Islam that blended pre-Islamic rituals and a reverence for saints and shrines not explicitly identified with the teachings of Quran and the Prophet Muhammed.

The early influence of political Islam came to Afghanistan from the South Asian subcontinent. In the sixteenth century a Sufi Naqshbandi, Shaykh Ahmad of Sirhind (1563-1624), launched a campaign to purify Islam of the Hindu influence on Muslim

practices that had occurred while Muslims ruled large parts of India. Ahmad opposed the religious syncreticism supported by the Mughal emperor Akbar (1542-1605), who ruled from 1556 until his death. Ahmad's declared mission was to return Islam to its roots—to the Quran and the Hadith—and a branch of his family, the Mujaddedis, later settled in Kabul during the nineteenth century and became prominent as conservative religious figures.

During the eighteenth century Shah Waliullah of Delhi (1703-1753), an Indian religious scholar, renewed Ahmad's call for religious purity but coupled it with the need for political action. He appealed to the Afghan chieftain Ahmed Shah Abdali to "save the Muslims" in India and to preserve Muslim rule by defeating the rising power of the Hindu Marathas. Waliullah's Indian disciples were instrumental in the rise, during the nineteenth century, of the *mujahidin* movement led by Sayyid Ahmed of Bareili (1786-1831). This puritanical group fought Sikh and British rulers in Afghanistan and the region that constitutes the northwest region of Pakistan.

But despite their long tradition, fundamentalist movements in Afghanistan had somewhat limited influence until the Afghan Jihad and subsequent developments. Now fundamentalism is a powerful force in the country, with most Afghan Islamist groups linked to four key ideological traditions. These are the Deobandi and Jamaat-e-Islami (both with their origins in South Asia), the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt, and the Wahhabi movement that originated in Saudi Arabia.

The Deobandis trace their origin to the Dar ul Ulum (Center for Knowledge) *madrasa* established in 1867 at Deoband, India. Influenced by Waliullah and his teachings, this group's founders sought to revive a version of the Prophet Mohammed's teachings and to reject all Western and other outside influences, which they viewed as amoral and materialist. The school was established to train a new generation of ulama who would know how to interpret *sharia* and guide other Muslims in leading their lives in accordance with Islam. The Deobandis emphasize the need to purify Islam by discarding un-Islamic practices, such as the veneration of Sufi shrines and saints, that they think have crept into the religion as a result of Muslims' interaction with polytheists and unbelievers. They have generally held a very restrictive view of the role of women and been predisposed to anti-Shia and anti-Western sentiments. Jihad has played an important role in their thinking since the militant campaigns against British rule initiated by many Deobandi pioneers.

Until recently, however, the Deobandis were not considered a threat to the established order in Afghanistan even by the secular Afghan elite. In the early twentieth century the Afghan government sought their aid in setting up its own state-controlled *madrasas,* and Deobandi ulama attended the 1933 coronation of King Zahir Shah. At that time they submitted a memorandum to the Afghan prime minister regarding the services Dar ul Ulum Deoband could offer the government. The memorandum read in part:

> The intellectual relations between Dar ul Ulum of Afghanistan and Dar ul Ulum Deoband [could] be developed for purely educational purposes in such a way whereby the authorities of the latter may directly estimate the latest academic needs of Afghanistan and the world of Islam and in the light of this estimate prepare such ulama in the changed circumstances of the period that they may co-operate fully with the aim and purpose of the free governments in the world of Islam and prove sincere workers for the state.[13]

Though some Deobandi *madrasas* were then set up as a result of Zahir Shah's flirtation with the original Dar ul Ulum in India, it was not until a half-century later that the number of *madrasas* increased significantly. During the anti-Soviet Afghan Jihad, the Pakistani government of General Ziaul Haq encouraged the establishment of *madrasas* where young Afghans could be inculcated with jihadi ideology at an early age. Most of the *madrasas* in the rural areas and in the refugee camps, however, were run by semi-educated mullahs who were not that well versed in the conservative educational agenda of the Deobandi school. These jihadi neo-Deobandis promoted views that were influenced as well by both the *Pashtunwali* tribal customs[14] and Wahhabi funding from Saudi Arabian charities.

Deobandi influence reached its peak when the Taliban, students of Deobandi *madrasas* in Pakistan, assumed power in Afghanistan in 1996. The Afghan Jihad had helped the mainly traditionalist Deobandi ulama link up with radical global Islamist movements. Foreign sources of funding, aid and arms—as well as contacts with international networks—had slowly caused the Deobandi ulama to adopt more radical revivalist views. The financial ties that developed with Saudi Arabian Islamic charities and the Saudi Arabian government during the anti-Soviet struggle strengthened the ideological ties between Deobandi and Wahhabi Islam.

The Taliban were primarily *madrasa* students of Pashtun descent who had grown up in the Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan. Disillusioned by the factionalism, criminal activity, and fighting among the warlords that continued to afflict their country after the Soviet withdrawal, they became determined to restore peace, cleanse society of its ills, enforce *sharia* and establish an Islamic way of life. The Taliban were backed by the Pakistani ISI, which saw them as a viable alternative to the various warring—and by-now-uncontrollable—*mujahidin* groups. They also received aid from Saudi Arabia and from various Islamist individuals and charities in the Gulf. Within the course of two years beginning in 1994, the Taliban gained control over most of Afghanistan. The country's northern region, however, remained under the control of a coalition of former *mujahidin* parties known as the Northern Alliance, which was dominated by Jamiat-e-Islami and its charismatic military commander, Ahmed Shah Massoud.

The Taliban regime took Kabul in 1996 and was soon recognized as Afghanistan's

official government by three countries—Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. It opposed Afghanistan's tribal and feudal structure and gave no role to tribal chiefs. The close ties that had developed between the Deobandis and Wahhabis over the years led to an anti-Shia, anti-Sufi, puritanical form of Islam being taught in Afghan *madrasas*. The Taliban were against modernity and governed without reference to any scholarship on Islamic or Afghan history. One Taliban official explained, after the imposition of a ban on television and other forms of entertainment, that people "should spend their time going to the mosque and learning about prayer....We want to reform society and make it 100 percent Islamic."[15] The regime's retrogressive policies, especially with respect to women, eventually both lessened the support of the Afghan masses and alienated international public opinion. But the Taliban did manage to keep control over Afghanistan until 2001, when American-backed Northern Alliance forces dislodged them from power.

The Taliban were ultimately punished by the international community for giving refuge to Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda. Because of the contacts he had made during the Afghan Jihad, bin Laden was on good terms with several Afghan *mujahidin* factions, and they had welcomed him when he came to Afghanistan in 1996. Eventually, however, he established a bond with the Taliban and supported their regime.[16] Despite immense political and military pressure after 9/11, the Taliban regime refused to give up Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda organization on the grounds of their adherence to the *Pashtunwali* tribal code that emphasized hospitality and refuge.[17] But bin Laden's status as an Afghan Jihad veteran and his assistance to Taliban finances in the face of international sanctions were the more likely reason.

When the Taliban regime fell, a new U.S.-backed government was formed under President Hamid Karzai—a government that now faces a "resurgence" of the Taliban in some areas of Afghanistan and in the border areas of neighboring Pakistan. Though the Taliban regime was defeated, most of its fighters were never caught or disarmed. They simply melted away into the Afghan countryside, making possible a return to the battlefield of an ideologically hardcore contingent. And the resurgent Taliban are clearly less influenced by traditional Deobandi ideas than by al-Qaeda's radicalism. In a recent interview on British television, the influential Taliban leader Mullah Dadullah declared:

> The Americans have sown a seed. They will reap the crop for quite a long time. We will get our revenge on them, whether in Afghanistan or outside.... The suicide martyrs, those willing to blow themselves up, are countless.... Hundreds have registered their names already and are ready to go, and we have hundreds more on the waiting list. Each is anxious to be the first to be sent.[18]

Another distinct element among Afghanistan's Islamists is the breakaway faction Hizb-e-Islami led by Maulvi Yunus Khalis. This faction represented—as did the Taliban—

the Deobandi school during the anti-Soviet Jihad and its aftermath. Its military com-
mander, Maulvi Jalaluddin Haqqani, joined forces with the Taliban and served in their
government as a minister. And Haqqani now actively participates in the violence precip-
itated by the Taliban's resurgence, though he is not formally part of the Taliban and main-
tains a separate identity.

The Impact of Maududi and the Muslim Brotherhood

The other South Asian ideological movement that affected Afghanistan was Jamaat-
e-Islami, whose founder, Maulana Abu Ala Maududi, is considered to be the first
complete theoretician of the modern Islamic state. He believed that contemporary civi-
lization was leading the world to doom and only Islam could rescue humanity. For him
Islam was more than a religion; it was an ideology, a way of life. He devised the concept
of "theo-democracy," which meant a theologically circumscribed democracy or "limited
people's sovereignty under the suzerainty of God."[19] Maududi upheld the doctrines of
one single law *(sharia)* and divine sovereignty, while advancing the idea of an Islamic rev-
olution ignited by the struggle between Islam and un-Islam that would lead to the cre-
ation of an Islamic state. He also realized, however, that an Islamic state would be unable
to reconcile the ideals of democracy with the rigid demands of Islamic law unless the
population willingly abided by the demands of that law. It was necessary, therefore, to
Islamize society before creating an Islamic state.

To this end Maududi created an organization called the Jamaat-e-Islami (Islamic Party)
in 1941. It was organized like a communist party, with cadres and so on, and its aim was
to educate society in preparation for the revolution. Accordingly, Jamaat placed a good
deal of emphasis on education and propaganda. The Jamaat-e-Islami is perhaps the "first
movement of its kind to develop systematically an Islamic ideology, a modern revolution-
ary reading of Islam and an agenda for social action to materialize its vision."[20]

The origins of Jamaat-e-Islami's counterpart in Afghanistan lay in the 1950s in Kabul
University. Such Afghan professors as Gholam Muhammad Niazi and Burhanuddin
Rabbani, who had studied in Egypt and been influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood as
well, were the movement's initial supporters and leaders. The influence of Maududi and
Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan grew once the Afghan Islamists took refuge in Pakistan.

In 1965 this Islamist group of professors and students formulated its program in a
shabnama (night letter) entitled *Jihad,* which declared its goal to be the creation of an
Islamic state in Afghanistan. The group's other publications included the pamphlet *Ma ki
asteem wa chi me-khwaheem* (Who We Are and What We Want). This pamphlet talked
about the decay and degeneration of Afghan society, the bad effect of foreign ideologies,
and corruption among the elites. The remedy for these ills lay in the revival of true Islam,
which would guarantee equality, freedom, moral uplift and prosperity.[21] From 1967

onwards, Rabbani's group focused on cultural reform and translated works of foreign Islamists like Sayyid Qutb and Maududi.

When Jamiat-e-Islami Afghanistan was eventually established as a political entity in 1972, it consisted of both Pashtuns, such as Hekmatyar, and non-Pashtuns, such as Rabbani and Ahmed Shah Masood who were both ethnic Tajiks. Hekmatyar had first become known for his movement Sazman-i-Jawanan-i-Musulman (Organization of Muslim Youth), which protested the pro-Western policies of King Zahir Shah and Prime Minister Daoud. After he broke away and formed Hizb-e-Islami in 1976, the Pashtuns rallied under its banner, and Jamiat-e-Islami became a predominantly Tajik group. Hekmatyar's faction remains active in parts of Afghanistan today, waging a war against the Karzai government and international forces alongside the Taliban but not under their leadership.

The only Afghan Islamist group to embrace Wahhabi theology openly and in its entirety is the Ittehad-e-Islami Afghanistan (Islamic Union of Afghanistan) led by Abdur Rab Rasul Sayyaf, a Saudi-trained theologian who gained influence during the anti-Soviet jihad through his ready access to Saudi funding. Sayyaf was the only significant Pashtun warlord to side with the primarily non-Pashtun Northern Alliance during Taliban rule. And that has enabled him to play an active political role in the post-Taliban era. Strongly committed to *sharia* rule, Sayyaf's group has succeeded, through bargaining, to secure control over Afghanistan's judiciary under the Karzai administration.

Afghanistan remains a major battleground for the struggle between the forces of modernity and Islamist obscurantism. The Karzai government is still struggling to establish the writ of the state throughout the country. In doing so, it has accommodated several Islamist factions (such as Sayyaf's group, a major section of Rabbani's party and a splinter group of Hizb-e-Islami) in the government. Efforts have also been made to identify Taliban leaders who might be labeled moderate and, therefore, allowed to participate in the legitimate political process. President Karzai has been consistently forced to mediate in the ideological struggle between Afghanistan's secularists and Islamist blocs within the government.

The Taliban continue to pose a major threat to Afghanistan's security, as well as to the reformation of a modern Afghan state. In addition, Afghanistan must also contend with a burgeoning narcotics trade and the regional ambitions of its neighbors, especially Pakistan. There is evidence that in some cases, extremist Islamist groups including the Taliban have utilized profits from the illegal trade in opium and heroin to fund their operations. For the foreseeable future, the shadow of Islamist groups will continue to loom over the West's efforts to advance Afghanistan's reconstruction.

Notes

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6. Ibid., p. 150.

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0. Ibid., p. 30.

11. Figures taken from Richard Engel, "Inside Al-Qaeda: A Window into the World of Militant Islam and the Afghan Alumni," in *Jane's Intelligence and Insight,*

http://www.janes.com/security/international_security/news/misc/janes010928_1_n.shtml.

12. The indigenous Afghan code of conduct known as *Pushtunwali* includes such concepts as *nanawati* (refuge or asylum) and *malmastiya* (hospitality to all).

13. S. A. A. Rizvi, *History of the Dar ul Ulum Deoband* (Deoband, 1980), p. 230; cited in Olesen, p. 188.

14. See note 12.

15. "Afghanistan Bans TV Sets, VCRs," Associated Press, 12 July 1997.

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