

THE FUNDAMENTALIST CHALLENGE TO THE SECULAR ORDER IN THE MIDDLE EAST

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It has become clear that the end of the superpowers' rivalry did not and could not foster greater peace and stability within the Middle East. In the post-Cold War era, the distinct Arab-Islamic dimension of conflict in the Middle East has come to the fore after being suppressed by restraints once imposed by the international system.¹ The regionalization of world politics combined with the politicization of differences between civilizations has gained an increased salience in international affairs.

In the Middle East, the looming tension between competing secular and religious perceptions of order stand at the center of the conflict.² Secular nationalists are committed to the existing nation-state system, while their foes seek to replace it with a regional order based on their understanding of Islamic teachings. The post-Cold War quest for a new regional order is related to developments that date back to the formation of the Middle East following the abolition of the Caliphate and the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire in 1924.³

FROM THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE TO THE SIX-DAY WAR

The modern nation-state, introduced to the region in the post-Ottoman and post-colonial period, seemed to mark the ascendance of the secular over the religious.⁴ Islamically legitimized monarchies in Saudi Arabia and Morocco were the exception.⁵ As outlined in Sati al-Hasri's most influential work on pan-Arabism, the secular nation-state was an uncontested constraint that defined Arab politics.⁶ Prior to 1967, those who questioned this secular belief, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, were at the margin of Middle Eastern politics.⁷ On a regional level, the Arab states as outlined in the Arab League's charter have sought to achieve the political goal of pan-Arabism: the pursuit of Arab unity. Implicitly, each of the exist-

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ing Arab states—nation-states by the definition of the international system—were considered in Arabic to be a *dawlah qitriyya* (local state), not a *dawlah qawmiyya* (nation-state).⁸ Underpinning this distinction is the belief that only the pan-Arab state encompassing all of the Arab lands could be a real nation-state. Until 1967 pan-Arab unity was an unquestionable goal. The issue debated at the time was how to define pan-Arab unity: in radical or monarchical terms.⁹ The concept of pan-Arabism was considered as a basic given, a belief (*iman*) almost equal to the religious belief in Islam. Pan-Arabism was the dominant political ideology of the ruling elites and the intellectuals as well.

The Arabs' humiliating defeat in the Six-Day War of 1967 in which Israel captured East Jerusalem and the West Bank gave rise to political Islam as the greatest challenge to pan-Arabism and the secular nation-state system. A set of new counter-elites, the Islamic fundamentalists (Islamists), emerged. After putting secular Arab nationalism on the *Mizan al-Islam* (Islamic scales of justice), they found it wanting.¹⁰ The ensuing development was described as an "Arab Predicament."¹¹ Already in the early 1970s the *hull al-Islami* (Islamic solution) was presented as an alternative to the *hulul al-mustawradah* (imported solutions).¹² The Islamists proffered *al-dawlah al-Islamiyya* (Islamic state) as the true alternative to the nation-state, which was seen as an alien concept adopted from the West and imposed by Western powers.¹³ Contemporary Islamic fundamentalism was in many ways a revival of the ideology of "Islamic World Revolution" and "Islamic World Peace" earlier developed by Sayyid Qutb.¹⁴

CHANGING DYNAMIC OF ELITE POLITICS

During the height of Nasserism and before 1967, Middle Eastern political elites were either *Raj'i* (reactionary) or *wihdawi* (unionist, Pan-Arabist). This division applied to both political and intellectual elites. With the rise of political Islam, new fault-lines have emerged.

The contemporary contest for power in the Middle East is a political struggle between elites and counter-elites. The ruling elites are committed to maintaining the existing nation-states and their boundaries. Despite their rhetoric claiming Islam as a source of legitimacy, they are determined to preserve the inherently secular nature of their nation-states. This is true for Syria as well as for Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt, among other Arab states. On the other hand, the Islamist counter-elites are committed to the neo-Islamic concept of the Islamic state (*Dawlah Islamiyya*). Such a state has never existed in Islamic history and is based on a recent Islamist example of the "Invention of Tradition."¹⁵ In their political litera-

ture, Islamic fundamentalists denounce secular Arab nationalism as a Western conspiracy against Islam. Historically, the secular nation-state is a European achievement.¹⁶ The drive toward de-Westernization implies a rejection of this institution in non-Western societies.¹⁷ This is not a personal view of this author, but rather an impartial and correct description of the realities in the Middle East, in particular its Arab part.

THE PERCEPTION OF ORDER

The conflict between elites and counter-elites revolves around the concept of order. Following the dissolution of the late Islamic traditional order of the Caliphate in 1924, the Arab core area of Islamic civilization has been integrated into the global state system. After a transitional period of colonization, the former Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire established post-colonial sovereignty as modern nation-states. The result has been "the Arab State System."¹⁸ In fact, and from the very beginning, these new states lacked the structural institutional underpinning of real nation-states and with some exceptions this is still the case. For this reason they have been described as "nominal nation-states" or "quasi-states" and, as Hedley Bull puts it, have been addressed as sovereign nation-states only "for courtesy."¹⁹

The bipolar system of the Cold War artificially bolstered the stability and veiled the weakness of the new states. Middle Eastern conflicts were studied as part and parcel of superpower rivalries.²⁰ This incorporation into global structures did not undo the regional dynamic of the Middle East. As early as 1962, Aron's *Paix et Guerre Entre les Nations* proposed that bipolarity veils "the heterogeneity of civilizations." Aron presumed that this veiling could not be sustained indefinitely. In Aron's view, differences among civilizations and their worldviews create a real threat to international security. Samuel Huntington's recent book *The Clash of Civilizations* unveils the real source of conflict and disagreement in our post-Cold War era: the decline of the universalism of Western values and the political rise of non-Western civilizations, promoting their own norms and values, which define different paradigms of order.²¹

THE CLASH OF VALUES

At issue is the resentment this region has toward its incorporation within a Western-defined world order. In perception and reality, this order has been based on European norms and values and was not chosen by the people of the Middle East. On the grounds of this perception, Islamist counter-elites, both Arab and non-Arab, have led a growing revolt against

this cultural imposition. Some act within the existing political-legal structures, as in Turkey. Others agitate in the underground, as is the case in Egypt and Algeria.

The ideological device for legitimizing the challenge posed by counter-elites to the existing order has been the politicization of Islam: a new concept of order has been presented in the ideological terms of Islamism. According to some interpretations, Islam is a religion that also poses political claims. However, according to other interpretations it can be separated from politics. The concept of order (*nizam*), for instance, does not occur in the Koran or in any authoritative Islamic source: Islam is a religion and not a concept of order.²² The concept of *Hakimiyat Allah* (God's rule) and of the "Islamic state" are recent additions. Basically, political Islam or the ideology of Islamism—in contrast to the religion of Islam—is a political concept forwarding a new view of order aimed at delegitimizing domestic and global order and thus threatening stability.²³ Islamism, being the Middle Eastern civilizational variety of religious fundamentalism, is the political ideology of counter-elites in the Middle East. The basic attitude of religious fundamentalists—including the Islamic ones—is the "Remaking of the World."²⁴

In the Middle East both elites and counter-elites share the belief in Islam, but not in Islamism. To use a formula developed by Hedley Bull long before the end of the Cold War, Islamism is an expression of a "Revolt against the West."²⁵ It is not only directed against Western hegemony but also and foremost against Western values and rules. The earlier anticolonial revolt borrowed Western ideas to combat Western rule.²⁶ The current Islamist challenge is utterly anti-Western in that it opposes Western worldviews, including the assertion that the West's values have universal validity. In this understanding, the Islamist "Revolt against the West" fits fully into the concept of "Clash of Civilizations." It fuels this clash and has no interest in the search for commonalities. Pan-Arabists being the elites are in many ways anti-Western but only on political grounds. Their concept of the nation, among other views, is based on Western values.

POLITICAL ISLAM

Given Islamism's great diversity and its fragmented heterogeneity, it is empirically correct to speak of it in the plural, as Islamic fundamentalisms. In the case of Iran, the fundamentalists were able to seize power—also in the Sudan and to a certain extent in Afghanistan—and thus to advance themselves as power elites. However, most of the Islamist movements

continue to be in opposition to the existing states and to their elites and thus can be characterized as the counter-elites. This opposition is organized along two lines:

- In a few states, the new challengers are legal and act within existing institutions using inclusivist strategies, as is the case in Turkey, Jordan (until the 1997 election) and Malaysia.
- In most other Islamic countries, fundamentalists act in the underground and have their leadership in European exile. In Western Europe, these leaders enjoy and abuse the democratic right to political asylum for building up their logistics in the pursuit of Islamist international activities, primarily to prepare to topple existing regimes in the Middle East.

It is important to state that this latter group is inclined to commit acts of terrorism. During his visit to the Middle East in April 1998, British Prime Minister Tony Blair had to respond to questions regarding the United Kingdom's toleration of London-based activities of Islamic terrorist groups. Blair pledged in Cairo to present new legislation to Parliament to undermine these activities. After all, the Iranian revolution started in Paris, not in Tehran.²⁷

Given the nominal character of most of the Middle Eastern states, their stability can be maintained only through coercion and intensified surveillance of the populace through oppressive intelligence services. Iraq's "republic of fear" is only one brutal case in point.²⁸ Nevertheless, these states are not in a position to face the challenge posed by fundamentalist movements to the existing order. The fundamentalists are acting in the underground, resorting to the use of force while acting as irregular *jihād*-fighters.²⁹ Ruling elites are struggling to curb these counter-elites and their supporting systems.³⁰

Western media have described this new domestic use of force by irregulars—Kalevi Holsti's "wars of the third kind"³¹—as "Islamic terrorism." In fact, the reference to Islam in order to legitimize terrorist action stands in contradiction to the requirements set by the Islamic doctrine of *jihād*. Furthermore, the reference to Islam is not monopolized by fundamentalist groups. Islamic formulae are also used as a legitimacy device by the ruling elites, who are themselves the target of fundamentalist action.

THE EXISTING INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM: THE STRUCTURE OF POWER

During the Cold War, nation-states within the Middle East rallied either around the Eastern bloc led by the Soviet Union or the Western bloc led by the United States.³² Despite the bipolar focus of world politics, a trend toward regionalization existed even before the demise of bipolarity.³³ The Middle East, despite all the changes in the international system and increased regionalization, is not emerging as a new regional center in world politics. The current distribution of power in the international system depends on questions such as Brzezinski's inquiry: can we describe the existing order as unipolar in terms of American supremacy with the United States being the only hegemonic superpower?³⁴ Or is it going to be multipolar in terms of emerging and competing civilizations led by a core state as Huntington suggests?

The United States continues to be a superpower, and even more it is the only global player with the status of a hegemonic superpower. However, the United States, despite its resources, lacks the economic, political and military capabilities needed to impose norms and rules aimed at determining the desired conflict resolution on a global scale.

Both the diffusion of power and the growing sentiments of anti-Americanism create great obstacles in the way of unfolding a consensus regarding the needed global order. In addition, the crisis of the nation-state in non-Western civilizations is leading to an increasing disintegration of the existing domestic orders. Radical changes such as the destabilizing fragmentation in the Middle East³⁵ are smoothing the way for the rise of irregulars making use of force as *jihad* in the form of terrorism.³⁶ It is becoming more difficult for both the United States and concerned domestic states in the Middle East to contain these threats to stability by the use of traditional means.

On the state level, Arab states are getting weaker, while the other neighboring countries, Israel, Turkey and Iran, are getting stronger. At the same time, American influence in the region is waning despite U.S. mediation in the Oslo Peace process. Since the United States lacks the political will necessary to push the peace process forward,³⁷ Iran and fundamentalists throughout the region have been given a pretext for challenging the existing order, contributing to the decline of American influence in the Middle East. The Wye Accords of October 1998 have made little difference.

Turkey is pushing itself forward by seeking, with American support, to join the European Union, and by positioning itself as an "order-creating" center in the Middle East. But despite its increasing strength, it has

failed to accomplish this. Instead, Turkey is being torn apart by local conflicts and is caught between secular Kemalism and the political neo-Ottoman Islamists.³⁸ Turkey is no exception when it comes to the crisis of the secular nation-state.

During the Iraq crisis in November 1997 and again in February 1998, neither Turkey nor the pro-Western Arab states unequivocally supported the planned U.S. military strikes against Iraq. Middle Eastern states were not willing to take any risk in siding with the United States due to its failure to pressure Israel to comply with United Nations resolutions. Only when the United States applies its weight to ensure that the peace process gets back on track, can the United States facilitate reordering the Middle East along Western lines. In contrast, the Islamists want to purge the Middle East of Western influence and are using United States inaction towards Israel to underpin their arguments.

After the Israeli-Palestinian Oslo Peace Accords, elites throughout the region placed high hopes on the prospect for an emerging "New Middle East." The envisaged new regional order seemed to promise the opening of windows of opportunity.³⁹ Also, the prospect of creating a Euro-Mediterranean community bolstered by financial assistance offered by the European Union seemed to be equally promising.⁴⁰ The pro-Western option lies either in the American concept of the New Middle East or the European's proposal for a Euro-Mediterranean community.

In contrast, the Islamist movements, be they legal or underground, strongly oppose both the American and European strategies of reshaping power and order in the Middle East along the channels of regional cooperation. Instead they have used confrontation as means to de-couple the region from the West. The stalemate following the Israeli elections of May 1996 and the ensuing intransigent policies of the Likud government under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu have complicated the issues to a great extent, and have greatly strengthened and even increased the power of the fundamentalist opposition. By blocking the peace process, the Netanyahu government has abetted the further delegitimization of the existing Arab nation-states, an act which is likely to lead to further destabilization.

Following the Gulf War, the Arab community of states suffered more fragmentation, while non-Arab states like Israel, Iran and Turkey—despite domestic problems—gained more significance and prominence. In stating this shift in regional power, I am not arguing that these states are beyond the crisis addressed in this paper. In Turkey, for instance, the crisis of the Western-style nation-state and the Islamist opposition to it continues to be the basic issue in domestic politics. The power struggle between elites and counter-elites shifts the conflict from the international

to the internal level and thus reduces the influence of outside powers such as the United States or Europe.

Algeria is another example.⁴¹ No outside power can help end the killing or determine the outcome of Algeria's bloody domestic conflict. The result is a continued disintegration of the existing nation-state. The fundamentalists themselves are fragmented as well, and will not likely be able to seize power and establish the *nizam Islami* (Islamic order) they envisage in their rhetoric. Instead they are creating more disorder without being able to bring about their own proclaimed order.⁴²

Demographic changes resulting from tremendously high birth rates have provided additional domestic pressure on governments in the Middle East. The population nearly doubles each decade. Changing demographics are becoming more pressing and are depriving ruling elites of the capability to control their own territory and populace. Fundamentalists are even in a position to form extraterritorial domains lying outside the control of the state, be they in Algeria or even Egypt.⁴³ The importance of these changes is discernible through the weakening of the existing states.

The elites are becoming more and more unable to legitimize their rule. They are also becoming less capable of containing the counter-elites acting militarily as irregulars, be they fundamentalist movements or ethnic separatist organizations. In the Arab world, the ruling elites are preoccupied with maintaining power in their nation-states. They thus fail to address the issues that give rise to social unrest and discontent and are unable to provide the substantive stability, economic development and political institution-building that would lead to more participation and greater democratization. The few electoral events in the Middle East—with the exception of elections in Israel and Turkey, and to a very limited extent Morocco and Jordan—serve no other purpose than decorative cover.

In the post-bipolar world, regional and international security have been changing.⁴⁴ Instead of honoring these changed patterns of security, the ruling elites are reducing their security perceptions and policing their populations in order to maintain stability. Regional cooperation could be the appropriate framework for the unfolding of a regional power participating in and contributing to a new, multipolar world order.

In other words, the issue of establishing a regional order is key to questions of conflict and convergence in the Middle East. However, the prospect of creating a working regional order seems not to be in sight. The failure of the Damascus Declaration Group to establish a regional order by including representatives of Islamist groups in its negotiations is only one case in point. At first glimpse, the united Arab stance supporting

the Oslo peace process in their communiqué that concluded the Arab Summit of June 1996 seemed to be a promising prospect. Ruling Arab elites were, however, not able to translate their Cairo agreement into a common policy that would have smoothed the way for outside mediation, primarily by the United States. Weak Arab states combined with a fragmentation of power in the Arab Middle East have bolstered the Likud's belief in its supremacy and results in its continuing intransigence. These two factors also make external mediation more difficult and weaken the Oslo peace process.

In summary, the major threats to stability in the Middle East are found neither in exaggerated weapons of mass destruction nor in any foreseeable interstate wars. More paramount issues with regard to stability are the religious and ethnic conflicts leading to internal wars.⁴⁵ This, a major shift in the configuration of conflict and of its underlying constraints, has weakened states and the regional order.

The politicization of religion and the piecemeal breakdown of artificial statehood contribute to the destabilization of existing nation-states, create the major threats to their existence and thus pose significant challenges to the prevailing order. Despite this depressing analysis of a bleak situation, there exist some options for regional and global order. Both elites and counter-elites have occupied themselves in these efforts.

T H R E A T S T O R E G I O N A L S T A B I L I T Y

In the post-bipolar world, the Middle East provides a prominent illustration of the need for redefining the pending threats to stability. The following are major threats to that stability.

T H E A S C E N D A N C E O F N O N - S T A T E A C T O R S

In most Middle Eastern states, new non-state actors are challenging the elites in power. The challengers are the rising Islamist and ethnic counter-elites. The nation-state is by definition a secular institution, but not all ruling elites in the Middle East are secular. However, they make full use of Islam to legitimize their secular rule. For their part, counter-elites challenge this legitimacy and question its Islamic character. They employ religious symbols for delegitimizing the secular nation-state. In unfolding a concept of political Islam that provides the grounds for a new order, the counter-elites have moved to the center of Middle Eastern politics. In Algeria, the Islamist counter-elites are armed. In Egypt and Turkey they

have been successful in their march through the institutions (as lawyers, doctors, engineers and teachers) to establish themselves within the system itself. But, like Algeria, Egypt also has its irregular warriors.

Although I support inclusivist policies, I hesitate to optimistically believe that inclusion of Islamists within institutions is a magic formula that will change their worldview. Their goal of establishing an Islamic state cannot be shaken, thus preventing their integration. The participation of the Islamists in existing institutions partially contributes to pacifying them, but definitely does not make them an integrated part of the system. Even if successfully included, they continue to create a threat because they pursue a different concept of order based on divine worldviews.⁴⁶ Secular and divine order are irreconcilable. The "Islamic state" they aspire to is alleged by the *shari'a*. Their *shari'a* is definitely not divine because it is shaped by man, although they claim it to be divine and revealed by God. This allegedly divine *shari'a* stands in contrast to popular sovereignty and is thus, on all grounds, incompatible with the nation-state. It is wrong to argue, as some scholars do, that political Islamism and democracy are compatible.⁴⁷ It is naive and politically dangerous to believe in the feasibility of such symbiosis.

INSTITUTIONAL FUNDAMENTALISM

The use of force by irregulars and the intrusion into the institutions of the state and society by Islamists are the most significant source of instability in the Middle East. In Egypt, Islamist fundamentalist lawyers and judges have been able to implement the *shari'a* in their legal practices. The Mubarak regime has tolerated this for a variety of reasons. The internationally covered case of the Cairo professor Hamid Abu-Zaid who was declared *murtad* (apostate), and on these grounds divorced from his wife against the couple's will, then forced to leave the country, is a scandalous example. The president of Egypt did not dare to make use of his constitutional competence nor his authority to suspend the state court's decision because he feared antagonizing the strong fundamentalist establishment and did not want to risk provoking unpredictable developments. Mubarak has focused his efforts on combating terrorist fundamentalism while turning a blind eye to the fundamentalist infiltration of state institutions.

In the West, fundamentalism and terrorism are equated and confused. However, terrorism is only one diminutive aspect of fundamentalism. Fundamentalist violent actions, like the assault on Western tourists in Luxor, Egypt, in November 1997, could discourage tourists. A decline in

tourism would hurt the regime economically, but definitely will not topple it.⁴⁸ In contrast, institutional fundamentalism is a greater threat to the existing order because its followers act within the system and are in a position to remake the existing order without resorting to violence and the use of force.

OUTSIDE SPONSORSHIP

Two concrete sources of outside support for the fundamentalist movements can be identified. On the state level, the two fundamentalist regimes in the Middle East, Iran and Sudan, have supported the fundamentalist underground on all levels. In particular, the "Iranian Connection" is highly efficient in creating a threat to many states in the region.⁴⁹ According to evidence presented in a U.S. court in March 1998, Iran provides terrorist movements with annual financial support amounting to \$75 million.⁵⁰ Iran's ally, Sudan, is a highly underdeveloped country lacking the necessary capabilities to create an efficient network able to pose a real threat to neighboring countries. However, with Iranian military assistance, Sudan has been able to build up camps for training terrorists and to become involved in arms trafficking that supports cross-border terrorism. Lately this assistance has declined due to a lack of resources and due to the pressure on Sudan from Egypt to back down. Regarding Iran, the election of president Mohammad Khatami has softened Iranian politics. However, Khatami lacks the power to induce radical changes, so Iran continues to support terrorism.⁵¹

On the non-state level, the international fundamentalist network has grown in importance. In particular a logistical support system for the involved movements has developed in Western Europe. For example, the armed struggle in Algeria between the army and the diverse Islamist irregular warriors depends on the external support systems of the Islamic diaspora located in the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium and Scandinavia. It is sad to see the inaction of these European states, which condemn terrorism but tolerate diaspora fundamentalism and its logistics. In Western Europe, fundamentalism is confused with Islam and tolerated in the name of democratic rights and political asylum without an understanding of how these function as a cover for underground activities.

In view of the turmoil, delegitimization and destabilization in the Middle East, we may ask: how can aggression be prevented and sources of instability neutralized? The ruling elites in the Middle East are determined to meet this challenge and they lament the absence of European assis-

tance. In early 1998, Arab ministers of internal affairs met to deal with issues of terrorism, and in April of that year, they committed themselves under the auspices of the Arab League to a program for combating terrorism.

THE LIMITATIONS OF MILITARY FORCE

Considering the growing military strength of the irregulars and the two Katyusha wars between Israel and Hizbollah in Southern Lebanon (July 1993 and April 1996), I believe the traditional state-centered military approach is no longer capable of dealing with the existing threats to stability. Of course, the international arms trade and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction continue to be significant factors in the Middle East. However, the real and concrete threats come from other sources that cannot be contained by traditional military means. The military force of the mighty Israeli army proved unable to deal with the threats of Hizbollah in the irregular wars in Southern Lebanon.⁵² The ongoing terrorism in Algeria, Egypt, the Occupied Territories and elsewhere is on the rise while appropriate policies to address it are lacking.

REGIONAL SECURITY ALLIANCES

Military alliances might be useful to bolster stability if they were designed on regional grounds. At the moment, there are no such lasting and promising alliances. The existing military alliances, such as those between Israel and Turkey and between Syria and Iran, contribute to more instability. Syria supports the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK) terrorist attacks against Turkey, as well as those of Hizbollah against Israel. In return, the Turkish-Israeli alliance aims at deterring Syria. In fact the latter alliance has strengthened the Likud-Israeli drive to further stall the already derailed peace process, thereby contributing to further instability in the region.

How to order this disordered Middle East? From the point of view of ruling elites and based on economic and security concerns, either the New Middle East or a Euro-Mediterranean order would be a desirable regional order. Unlike the New Middle East, which was designed to support American supremacy, the Euro-Mediterranean order is part of a multipolar world order. However, the prospects for the implementation of either are currently not promising. The stalemate in implementing the Oslo accords blocks efforts to reorder and stabilize the Middle East. A by-product is the continued growth of fundamentalist movements and more intensified anti-Westernism. Both trends affect the choices and preferences for order in domestic, regional and global terms.

Under British Prime Minister Tony Blair's leadership, the United States' and the European Union's efforts were united. Blair then visited the Middle East and also hosted Palestinian Chairman Yasser Arafat and Prime Minister Netanyahu in May 1998 in London. However, these efforts produced no tangible results.

INTERVENTION AND THE USES OF FORCE

Elites and counter-elites in the Middle East share the perception that the Arab defeat in the Arab-Israeli wars was related to a conspiracy designed by outside powers.⁵³ Belligerent attitudes of these elites continue to prevail. Religious fundamentalists incite these attitudes when they resort to the use of force and they contribute to the informal militarization of conflict at the non-state level. In his recent book *The State, War, and the State of War*, Holsti shifts the focus and argues that wars of the "third kind," that is, wars by irregulars and not by institutionalized state armies, are most likely to prevail as the dominant pattern of future wars. I would agree that interstate wars are unlikely to occur in the foreseeable future in the Middle East.

The ruling elites in the Middle East still perceive the possibility that a war between an outside power and the Arab states could occur. Syria does not rule out an Israeli military assault, nor does the Israeli threat preclude a Syrian attempt to use force—despite Israeli military superiority and a strategic balance unfavorable to Syria. They still fear Iraq and some observers believe that a war between Syria and Turkey is likely.

The counter-elites have a different perception of war as well as a different understanding of its design. To them, "just wars" are based on *jihad*, while all other wars are believed to be expressions of aggression (*idwan*) by the infidels and by their nominal-Muslim proxies directed against true Muslims. For this reason they care little for the likelihood of interstate wars because such wars would have little impact on their use of force for achieving their goal of an Islamic order.

The Islamic term *jihad* does not refer to an interstate war. I hasten to add that the fundamentalist claim on the use of force as *jihad* is not in line with the classical Islamic concept of war. For this reason terrorism can by no means be legitimized as *jihad*, although Islamic fundamentalists as irregulars do perceive of their terrorist actions as *jihad*. On the other hand the Western translation of *jihad* as a "holy war" is equally wrong.

In a humanitarian sense, international intervention is highly desirable to stop the killing in domestic wars, whether in Algeria or Afghanistan. In terms of stability and order, some of the interventions could bear

positive results, as did the intervention in Bosnia in 1995. However, in many other cases, external intervention in domestic wars can prove to be futile. In Somalia, for instance, the international community discovered that, after the breakdown of the nominal Somali nation-state, the carnage caused by feuding clans was unstoppable. In this regard, Algeria is an even worse case. No outside power could ever stop the ongoing massacres. As a scholar who conducted extensive field research in Algeria and is thus well-informed about the domestic constraints and the involved parties, I believe military intervention to stop the killing and slaughtering of civilians would be futile. An intervention in Algeria would only escalate the conflict and may even worsen the situation by adding foreign casualties to the substantial number of domestic victims. Furthermore, alien soldiers will be compared with French troops of the colonial period.

In considering the already mentioned trend toward more regionalization in world politics and also in taking into account the intensifying “revolt against the West,” any Western intervention in an Islamic country, even for humanitarian reasons, would lend support to Islamists’ conspiracy theories and thus further complicate issues. Intervention by regional organizations, such as the Organization of African Unity or the Arab League, may be more suitable. However, these organizations lack the needed capabilities as well as the required political will to engage in such risky business. In the case of Algeria, intervention through the deployment of Arab troops might put the situation at ease. But such an intervention in light of the foregoing analysis is unlikely, nor is it desired by the Algerian government or any of the existing Arab states. The Arab League itself is not considering such an intervention.

As already indicated, violence in the Middle East is currently taking the shape of terrorism carried out by irregular warriors who are either religious fundamentalists or ethnic nationalists. No violence of this kind can ever be justified—even religion cannot sanctify these actions. It is most difficult to contain these threats by institutionalized armies and other traditional military means, which are mostly deemed to failure. A new approach to security is needed.⁵⁴

AVENUES OF CHANGE

The United States has maintained its supremacy as the only superpower capable of imposing solutions, as the case of Bosnia demonstrates. Despite this fact, the United States alone cannot ensure global order.

In the Middle East, the United States has proven to be incapable of saving the Oslo peace process. Since the United States provided the bulk of the needed troops to carry out the Gulf War but was not able to

shoulder the expenses by itself, it is questionable whether the United States—despite its primacy—can bear the costs of a global order.

From the Arab elites' point of view, a multipolar international system that allows for the regionalization of world politics is considered more desirable than a global order maintained by one hegemonic superpower. Arab elites also support the development of a regional security arrangement and a reliance on regional organizations and alliances, rather than outside powers, to settle conflicts in the Middle East. Domestic solutions are more acceptable to domestic elites in our age of "Clash of Civilizations," in which an alliance with outsiders could undermine elites' legitimacy.

Not only existing regional organizations, but also the framework of the United Nations needs to be reformed. The West should abstain from getting involved in domestic conflicts in non-Western civilizations in order to avert unnecessary escalation and to avoid strengthening the counter-elites in their drive against the existing order.

DEFINING A NEW WORLD ORDER

In summary, the views, perceptions and preferences of ruling elites and counter-elites in the Arab Middle East revolve around the concept of order, both in situations of conflict and convergence. By "counter-elites" I mean a new set of elites emerging in the Middle East. We are now dealing with two sets of elites. These differ with respect to their assessment of power and the existing power structure. The ruling elites understandably cling to the structures of state power, whereas the counter-elites are working toward an alternative, Islamic order. Earlier Middle Eastern elites looked to the West for political models, despite their anti-Western rhetoric. The new Islamists, in contrast, consider the nation-state an imported solution, and want to replace it with an Islamic solution of their own. In this dilemma ruling elites seek to detach themselves from the West in order to preserve their legitimacy.

Pan-Arabism, which adopted the Western framework of the nation-state and aimed at developing a pan-Arabic state, is waning. The Gulf War probably ended the dream of a pan-Arabic state, both among the ruling elites and the common people. As a result, the new conflict is now focused on the power struggle between existing nation-states and new Islamic movements.

For a better understanding of the cultural background of conflict in the Middle East and the world of Islam in general, it is imperative to reconsider the process through which the nation-state system became a

global phenomena. I feel that Westerners confuse the implications of globalization and universalization. The first refers to increasing economic interdependence and the globalization of structures, whereas universalization is the acceptance of one set of cultural norms and values. It is Western values' claim to universality that the Islamists fiercely oppose. The existing nation-states in the Arab world are the result of globalization. There are realists among the Islamists who are willing to accept these results, but want to reshape them. The existing states are institutionally weak and unstable, having neither history nor identity. The universalization of norms and values related to the nation-state has not taken place and will not do so in an age of Islamic awakening. At the moment, a process of de-Westernization and rejection of the nation-state is taking place, as Islamists counter-elites are replacing traditional, Western-educated pan-Arabist elites. The revolt against the West is not only concerned with Western political and economic hegemony, but also directly opposes the West's worldview. Islamists present a completely new alternative of political order, based on the politicization of Islam.

These changes mean that force is no longer primarily used in conflicts between states, but rather by popular movements within states. New security threats are internal rather than external, stemming from the delegitimization of existing states by Islamism. These new challenges have forced the old elites to pursue survivalist policies, while their opponents look to Islamization as a movement that can help their political fortunes. The immediate political outcome is destabilization and regional disorder.⁵⁵

Finally, I note that there are three competing alternatives for establishing order. First, there is the United States-Israeli concept of a New Middle East that emerged from the Oslo accords. Second, Middle Eastern elites prefer an exclusive Arab system (*Nizam arabi*) as an alternative to the New Middle East, which was perceived to be a Western imposed solution. A third alternative might be the Euro-Mediterranean Community, tying the Middle East and Europe together.

Each of these models suggests a path to convergence. Counteracting them are models of divergence based on domestic instability and conflict. Huntington's clash of civilizations is taking place within, rather than between, states in the Middle East. For example, in Turkey, the Kemalist pro-Western elites contend with counter-elites who nostalgically desire a return to the age of the Ottomans. Similarly, in Algeria we see a conflict between Western-educated Francophone elites and the Islamist counter-elites. The latter want Algeria to form a part of a greater Islamic Maghreb, and the nucleus of a new Islamic Mediterranean order. In other Middle

Eastern and Islamic countries issues of conflict and convergence vary due to different domestic constraints. However, the setup of ruling elites and counter-elites presented in this paper proves to be the dominant political structure around which the basic issues are designed and the struggle for power revolves. ■

NOTES

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¹ Raymond Aron, *Frieden und Krieg [Paix et guerre entre les nations (1962)]* (Frankfurt: Fischer Press, 1986), 468-9.

² "Theocratic/Secular States and Societies," in *Third Worlds: The Politics of the Middle East and Africa*, ed. Heather Deegan (London: Routledge, 1996), 64-91.

³ David Fromkin, *A Peace to End all Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Middle East* (New York: Avon Books, 1989).

⁴ Bassam Tibi, "The Simultaneity of the Unsimultaneous: Old Tribes and Imposed Nation-States in the Modern Middle East," in *Tribes and State Formations in the Middle East*, eds. Philip Khoury and Joseph Kostiner (Berkeley: California University Press, 1990), 127-152.

⁵ See the chapter on Islam as legitimation of royal authority in Morocco and Saudi Arabia in Bassam Tibi, *Islam and the Cultural Accommodation of Social Change* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1990 and 1991), 160-177.

⁶ On Husri's secular pan-Arabism and his pre-1967 impact on Arab politics see Bassam Tibi, *Arab Nationalism: Between Islam and the Nation-State*, 3rd rev. and enlarged edition (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), in particular parts II and III.

⁷ For more details see Richard Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969). A new edition is available.

⁸ On the perceptual contrast between both ideological formula territorial-state/nation-state in Arab political thought see George Tarabishi, *al-Dawlah al-Qawmiyya wa al-Dawlah al-Qitriyya* (Beirut: Dar al-Tariah, 1978).

⁹ Malik Mufti, *Sovereign Creations: Pan-Arabism and Political Order in Syria and Iraq* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996).

¹⁰ See Munir Muhammad Najib, *al-Harakat al-qawmiyya al-haditha fi mizan al-Islam [The Modern Nationalist Movements in the Balance of Islam]* 2nd ed. (al-Zarqa, Jordan, 1983).

¹¹ Fouad Ajami, *The Arab Predicament: Arab Political Thought and Practice since 1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 50-63.

¹² This formula was coined by Yusuf al-Qaradawi, *al-Hall al-Islami wa al-Hulul al-Mustawradah [The Islamic Solution and the Imported Solutions]* (Beirut: al-Risalah, 1972, 2nd ed., 1980). This was the first volume of the ensuing four volumes of *al-Hall al-Islami* to follow in the 1970s and early 1980s. On the impact of al-Qaradawi, see the chapter in Joyce M. Davis, *Between Jihad and Salam: Profiles in Islam* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), 219-233. Davis incorrectly classifies al-Qaradawi as a "moderate Islamist."

¹³ See Abdulrahman A. Kurdi, *The Islamic State: A Study Based on the Islamic Holy Constitution*

(London: Manell Publications, 1984).

¹⁴ Sayyid Qutb, *al-Salam al-'alami wa al-Islam*, 10, new printing (Cairo: Dar al-Shuruq, 1992).

¹⁵ See Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger eds., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

¹⁶ On the Western-European background of this institution, see the masterpiece by Anthony Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence* (Berkeley: California University Press, 1987).

¹⁷ On de-Westernization and rejection of the nation-state, see chapter one in B. Tibi, *Krieg der Zivilisationen: Politik und Religion zwischen Vernunft und Fundamentalismus* (Hamburg: Hoffmann & Campe Press, 1995; revised and enlarged new edition Munich: Heyne Press, 1998), 67-123.

¹⁸ Bassam Tibi, *Das arabische Staatensystem: Ein regionales Subsystem in der Weltpolitik* (Mannheim: Brockhaus Press, 1996).

¹⁹ See my contribution in note 4 above and Robert H. Jackson, *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990). Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977).

²⁰ For examples of the literature of this phased-out approach see Robert Litwak and Samuel Wells eds., *Superpower Competition and Security in the Third World* (Cambridge, MA: Ballinger Publications, 1988), and Samuel Wells and Mark Bruzonski eds., *Security in the Middle East: Regional Change and Great Powers Strategies* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1987).

²¹ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996).

²² This is the view of the late *al-Azhar* scholar Ali Abdul-Raziq, *al-Islam wa usul al-hukm* (Cairo, 1925; new edition Beirut: Maktabat al-Hayat, 1966). On Abdul-Raziq see B. Tibi, *Arab Nationalism: Between Islam and the Nation-State*, 174-177.

²³ Muhammad Said al-Aschmawi, *al-Islam al-Siyasi* [Political Islam] 2nd ed. (Cairo: Dar Sina, 1989).

²⁴ The seminal work on fundamentalism is the published five volumes research project run at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences published by Chicago University Press and edited by Martin Marty and Scott Appleby. Vol. 3 (1993) included in part III contributions on "Remaking the World through Militancy." My contribution is included in vol. 2 (1993) referenced in note 46 below.

²⁵ Hedley Bull, "The Revolt against the West," in *The Expansion of International Society*, ed. Hedley Bull and Adam Watson (New York: Oxford University Press, 1984).

²⁶ On the Western impact on all ideologies of decolonization see the comprehensive analysis by Bassam Tibi "Politische Ideologien in der Dritten Welt während der Dekolonisation," in *Handbuch der politischen Ideen*, 5 volumes, ed. Irving Fetscher and Hertafried Münckler (Munich: Piper Press, 1987-1993) 5: 361-402.

²⁷ Said Amir Arjomand, *The Turban for the Crown: The Islamic Revolution in Iran* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988). See my article in the supplement of *Stern* on the Iranian Revolution in May 1998.

²⁸ Samir al-Khalil, *Republic of Fear* (Berkeley: California University Press, 1987).

²⁹ On the Islamic concept of *jihad* see Bassam Tibi, "War and Peace in Islam," in *The Ethics of War and Peace*, ed. Terry Nardin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 128-145. See also Bassam Tibi, "Jihad," in *Protest, Power and Change*, eds. Roper Powers and William Voegelé (New York: Gerald Publications, 1997), 277-281.

³⁰ Among well-known sources in Arabic on the underground activities of these counter-elites see 'Adel Hammuda, *Qanabil wa Masahif. Qussat Tanzim Jihad* [Bombs and Holy Books: The Story of the Jihad-Organization], 3rd ed. (Cairo: Dar Sina, 1989); 'Abdullah al-'Amami, *Tanzimat al-Irhab fi al-'Alam al-Islami* [The Terrorist Organisations in the World of Islam] (Cairo: Dar Akhbar al-Yaum, 1993), and also Abdulazim Ramadan, *Jama'at al-Takfir fi misr* [The Takfir Movements in Egypt] (Cairo: al-Hay'ah al-Misriyya, 1995).

³¹ Kalevi J. Holsti, *The State, War and the State of War* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

³² Syria and Egypt were in the Eastern bloc, while Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Morocco were in the Western bloc.

³³ Louise Fawcett and Andrew Hurrell eds., *Regionalism in World Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

³⁴ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives* (New York: Basic Books, 1997).

³⁵ George Corm, *Fragmentation of the Middle East* (London: Hutchinson, 1988).

³⁶ On the concept of *jihad* and on its topicality in the context of the Gulf War, see John Kelsay, *Islam and War* (Louisville, KY: John Knox Press, 1993).

³⁷ See chapter 9 and 10 on U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East in Bassam Tibi, *Pulverfab Nahost: Eine arabische Perspektive* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlagsanstalt, 1997).

³⁸ For more details see Bassam Tibi, *Aufbruch am Bosphorus: Die Türkei zwischen Europa und dem Islamismus* (Munich: Diana Press, 1998).

³⁹ On the Oslo Peace see Omar Massalha, *Towards the Long-Promised Peace* (London: Saqi Books, 1994). On the economic implications of peace, see Stanley Fischer et. al., *Securing Peace in the Middle East* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1994).

⁴⁰ Bishara Khader, *Le Partenariat Euro-Méditerranéen* (Paris: Harmattan, 1997).

⁴¹ Michael Willis, *The Islamist Challenge in Algeria* (New York: New York University Press, 1996).

⁴² For this reason I chose the subtitle Political Islam and the New World Disorder for my new book on Islamic fundamentalism.

⁴³ Muhammad Mahfuz, *al-Lathim zulimo. al-Tanzimat al-Islamiyya fi Misr* [The Oppressed. The Islamist Organization in Egypt] (London: Riad el-Rayyed Books, 1988), and Barry Rubin, *Islamic Fundamentalism in Egyptian Politics* (London: MacMillan, 1990).

⁴⁴ Bassam Tibi, "Changed Patterns of Security in the Middle East after the End of the East-West Conflict," in *Five Years after the Fall of the Berlin Wall*, eds. Werner Kaltefleiter and Ulrike Schumacher (Frankfurt and New York: Peter Lang Press, 1996), 135-150.

⁴⁵ On these issues see David Carment and Patrick James eds., *Wars in the Midst of Peace: The International Politics of Ethnic Conflict* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1997). Specifically on ethnicity in the Middle East, see the contributions included in Milton Esman and Itamar Rabinovich eds., *Ethnic Pluralism and the State in the Middle East* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1988). See also the reader on ethnicity, John Hutchinson and Anthony Smith eds., *Ethnicity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

⁴⁶ See Bassam Tibi, "The Worldview of Sunni Arab Fundamentalists," in *Fundamentalisms and Society*, eds. Martin Marty and Scott Appleby (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1993), 73-102, see note 24 on this project.

⁴⁷ This critical reference is to the views of John Voll and John Esposito, *Islam and Democracy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996). I strongly disagree with them, because they not only confuse Islam with Islamism, but also contend that Islamic fundamentalism is compatible with democracy. See my critical review in *Journal of Religion*, 1998; for a different view see my article on fundamentalism and democracy in the *Encyclopedia of Democracy*, 4 volumes (Washington, DC: Congressional Quarterly, 1995) 2:507-510.

⁴⁸ On the implications and context of the fundamentalist assault in Luxor in November 1997 see the interview in *Stern* with Bassam Tibi: "Es wird weiter Terror geben", *Stern* 49, 1997, 25-26.

⁴⁹ Edgar O'Ballance, *Islamic-Fundamentalist Terrorism: The Iranian Connection* (New York: New York University Press, 1997).

⁵⁰ *International Herald Tribune*, March 1998.

⁵¹ *International Herald Tribune*, May 6, 1998, 1, 6.

⁵² On Hizbullah see the new volumes by Hala Jaber, *Hezbollah: Born with a Vengeance* (New

York: Columbia University Press, 1997); and Magnus Ranstorp, *Hizb'allah in Lebanon: The Politics of the Western Hostage Crisis* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997).

⁵³ Bassam Tibi, *Die Verschwörung: Das Trauma arabischer Politik*, three different and subsequent editions, first published (Hamburg: Hoffmann & Campe Press, 1993), Spanish translation *La conspiración* (Barcelona: Edition Herder, 1996). In his two volumes on "Arab conspiracy," Daniel Pipes seems not to know, and does not acknowledge this preceding research.

⁵⁴ On this issue, see the new part 5 to the second edition of Bassam Tibi, *Conflict and War in the Middle East: From Interstate War to New Security* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1998).

⁵⁵ See Bassam Tibi, *The Challenge of Fundamentalism: Political Islam and the New World Disorder* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998).