

## Foreward

*Sherman Teichman, Executive Director of the Institute for  
Global Leadership*

Sixty-five million Americans voted for the President of the United States, Barack Hussein Obama. As Hendrik Hertzberg wrote in the *New Yorker*, “The President of the United States will be a person whose first name is a Swahili word derived from the Arabic (it means ‘blessing’), whose middle name is not only that of a grandson of the Prophet Muhammad but also of the original target of an ongoing American war, and whose last name rhymes nicely with ‘Osama’. That’s not a name; it’s a catastrophe, at least in American politics.”

It is a stunning development for the United States, and his election has transfixed the world, but how it will affect the Middle East is surely uncertain. Already there are scathing critiques of the selection of Rahm Emmanuel as chief of staff for his family’s alleged Lehi/Stern Gang affiliations, full-page ads in support of the Saudi government’s approach to peace, and a *New York Times* op-ed recounting of blogs of the Arab world, indicating that the Middle East is still a region of suspicion, skepticism and deep cynicism.

One pivotal and strident part of the election centered on the desirability, or the dangerous naivety, of Obama’s willingness to meet highly controversial leaders, allegedly “without preconditions.”

This debate is core to NIMEP’s history and trajectory of encounter. It resonates with our Institute’s efforts to prepare our students for the necessity of such controversial encounter, and our pedagogical efforts to hone acute, discerning listening skills, essential for conflict prevention, management and, hopefully, eventual reconciliation. (An account by one of NIMEP’s student creators, Rachel Brandenburg, a Fulbright Fellow to Israel, who remains a very vital force in our deliberations, can be found in her essay in the Spring 2005 edition of *NIMEP Insights*.)

In the introduction to the previous volume of *NIMEP Insights*, I wrote of our forum, “Iraq Moving Forward.” It began a controversial, several-year effort that culminated in a July 2008 Baghdad meeting to announce the “Helsinki II Agreement of Principles and Mechanisms,” our Institute’s effort to contribute to the transcending of sectarian warfare and killings in Iraq. We had initially invited pivotal actors,

including Ali Allawi, former Iraqi minister of defense; Lt. Col. Isaiah (Ike) Wilson III, U.S. Army, one of General Petraeus' most senior officers in Iraq; Ambassador Peter Galbraith; and the proxy of Iraqi National Security Adviser Mouwafak Al-Rubaie, Haider Al Abadi, a senior minister in Maliki's government, and a member of the Iraqi Council of Representatives. We hoped that these invitations would create a climate of dialogue.

Pursuing a vision and process honed previously in Northern Ireland and South Africa by our Institute's INSPIRE Fellow, Padraig O'Malley, the Moakley Professor of the University of Massachusetts Boston, we operated under the premise that "people from divided societies are in the best position to help other people from divided societies."

Padraig is a reconciliation expert who has worked in these regions for three decades. Drawing on the painful pasts of both conflicts, we convened a coterie of extraordinary leaders who had transcended their intense parochialism. They included Martin McGuinness, the former IRA commander and now the deputy first minister of Northern Ireland; Lord Alderdice, the chairman of the Northern Irish decommissioning body; Mac Maharaj, the leader of the ANC underground, a close confidant of Mandela who had been imprisoned with him for twelve years, and who asserted Mac was the most tortured man in the ANC struggle.

Others included Cyril Ramaphosa, the leader of the most powerful trade union in South Africa, the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM); and Roelf Meyer, minister of law and constitution in the de Klerck government of the National Party, who had worked closely with Cyril, the lead ANC negotiator during the talks, to bring about a peaceful end to apartheid and steer the country toward its first democratic elections in April 1994.

The principles agreed to by all sectors of the Iraqi political spectrum, from Shi'ite tribal chieftains to Kurdish leaders, ranged from a renunciation of terrorism and factionalism in government to respect for an independent judiciary; and an effort to lay the groundwork for the disbanding militias by having the parties promise to "resolve disputes and a ban on the use of arms by armed groups during negotiations." The full Principles and Mechanisms are reprinted in this volume.

The process is still underway. Representative William Delahunt (D-Mass.), a member of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, and chairman of the Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights, and Oversight, held congressional hearings in October in D.C.

on our efforts at Iraqi political reconciliation trying to facilitate the creation of political space. Our students prepared the briefing materials on the conflicts, staffed the Helsinki II meeting, and witnessed the signings in Finland. One of the students, Institute Synaptic Scholar Kelsi Stine, has continued to intern in South Africa with the Finnish NGO Conflict Management Initiative, founded by our Helsinki host, Finnish President and former Crisis Group Chairman Martti Ahtisaari. Another, J.J. Emru, traveled to Beirut with our Empower poverty alleviation program to intern for Kiva, the microfinance organization. This is the intent, the credo of the Institute, “to educate our students to ‘think beyond boundaries, act across borders.’”

Offering these opportunities is a hallmark of the Institute. Padraig, a longtime ally, took the Institute’s first immersive education research student with him to Northern Ireland in 1986. There they interviewed the families of the IRA hunger strikers, including the family of their leader, Bobby Sands, for Padraig’s book, “Biting At The Grave : The IRA Hunger Strikes and the Politics of Despair”.

This issue of NIMEP Insights presents some of the rich research yield of NIMEP’s recent trip to Syria. In Damascus, Aleppo and on the Golan Heights, trip participants met with a wide spectrum of figures, including Dr. Bouthaina Shaaban, minister of expatriate affairs and former adviser to Foreign Minister Walid Muallem; Waddah Abd Rabbo, founder and editor-in-chief of Al-Watan, as well as first non-government-controlled newspaper; Nabil Maleh, film director and former dissident part of “Damascus Spring”; Major Stefan Eder, the public relations officer for the UNDOF operation in the Golan Heights; Dr. Sami Moubayed, political analyst and Syrian University professor; Khaled Meshal, chairman of the Hamas Political Bureau; Grand Mufti Ahmad Hassoun, the highest-ranked Sunni cleric in Syria; and Patriarch Ignatius Iwas, supreme head of the Universal Syriac Orthodox Church.

I want to acknowledge the interactions of both our graduate and undergraduate students in the planning and execution of this workshop. Special thanks is due to our excellent Syria group leader, Fletcher School Ph.D. candidate David Ethan Corbin, for his leadership on the ground and his excellent article on Bashar al-Asad here in Insights. It is fascinating, and telling that one of the more prestigious Middle East think tanks of our country, the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution, eagerly sought to debrief our NIMEP delegation because of its unusual access to the leadership of Hamas in

Damascus.

We sponsor this type of workshop mindful of the trust we can place in our students, who without exception have arisen to the challenge to comprehend, to contest, to think independently, devoid of cant and ideology. It is the hallmark of NIMEP, and of all of the Institute's initiatives.

This summer, one of the Institute's core programs, Alliance Linking Leaders in Education and the Services (ALLIES), held its second consecutive Joint Research Project with Tufts students, cadets and midshipmen from the USMA at West Point and the USNA in Annapolis, in Amman, Jordan, thinking together and with Jordanian students. Their research centered on the impact of the Iraq war on Jordanian society.

For those with a very particularistic agenda, we have been accused at times of consorting with enemies. There is a radical difference between this baseless accusation and the difficult, highly enervating, at times even odious, but essential work to comprehend and challenge one's antagonists. We believe in this strongly. We are, for instance, now working to assist one of our board members, Tim Phillips, the co-founder of the Project on Justice in Times of Transition (now housed in our Institute), develop and create a film project entitled "Talking with Enemy."

We remain tremendously grateful to the leadership of the University, and the confidence in the Institute and its efforts expressed by Tufts' Provost Jamshed Bharucha and Associate Provost Vincent Manno, who understand our efforts as "transformational education" and as efforts to overcome our "reptilian brains." Pdraig understood that without abandoning the passion for revenge there will never be any chance of reconciliation. It is a powerful challenge.

We witnessed this during the wrenching moments of EPIIC's symposium, "The Politics of Fear," which included encounters between officers of the South African secret police and their victims; the tearful exchanges between leaders of the ANC and students from our service academies over the tactics of resistance and torture, the recounting of imprisonment and interrogation. Such moments stimulated our Board Chair Robert Bendetson, a Tufts alumnus trustee, to create the Helsinki effort and to underwrite it.

We are acutely mindful of the complexity inherent in these exchanges and of the imperfections and limitations of truth and reconciliation commissions. Yet we are determined to continue to think about how to

create ethical and sophisticated leadership. The first in our occasional series on transformational leadership, in collaboration with the Office of the Provost, honored President Martti Ahtasaari, our host in Helsinki, several weeks before the announcement of his richly deserved Nobel Peace Prize.

Through her inquiry into the Muslim Brotherhood's impact on the Arab Republic of Egypt, Michele Paison's scholarship seeks to understand the links between politics and religions and the impact of theological ideas and messianic passions alive in every religion. This edition's dedicated and thoughtful core of editors includes Khaled Al-Sharikh, a sophomore from Kuwait, the son of a diplomat, majoring in International Relations and economics; junior James Kennedy, who studied in Israel at the Hebrew University and at the American Task Force on Palestine in D.C.; and an Institute Synaptic Scholar, David Mou, a Chinese-American and a chair of the IR Director's Leadership Council .

We believe that we are building a community. Khaled's sister, Shamael Al-Sharikh, an Institute student in 1997, went on to complete her master's degree at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London. Now a columnist for the Kuwait Times, writing mostly on socio-political issues, and a team leader in the Oil Sector Services Company, she is a political activist for women's rights issues in Kuwait.

It is a community dedicated to dialogue, persistent efforts to understand, to probe, to suspend preconceptions. The excellent articles on society and inequality dilemmas in Israel by Hana Agha and Jessica Herrmann were derived from their research for the 2007/08 EPIIC "Global Poverty and Inequality" colloquium. Palestinian-Jordanian and Jewish American students, they also learned about insight, openness and maturity from their personal interactions conducting their research.

As part of our commitment to the Clinton Global Initiative and the internationalization of EPIIC, they were paired with Israeli-Palestinians, an Ethiopian Jewish immigrant, and the top law school student at Haifa University, and were hosted by the University of Haifa Law School.

A special thanks is due to Fletcher student and Israeli lawyer Dahlia Shaham, our current EPIIC TA and NIMEP adviser, for her consultation and perspective on these issues. She was formerly an analyst at the Reut Institute in Israel, a non-partisan nonprofit policy group designed to provide real-time, long-term, strategic, pro-bono decision support

to the government of Israel.

This year, NIMEP will revisit its origins and return to Israel and the West Bank in January under the valued and caring leadership of James Kennedy, David Mou and Israeli-American sophomore Amit Paz.

Dahlia will be its escort. She was chosen as the sole student speaker to commemorate the Fletcher School's 75th anniversary. This excerpt is from her address:

From personal experience I can say that it has been a rewarding choice. I came to Fletcher from Israel quite jaded from the old paradigms surrounding the conflict in the Middle East, and from the vicious cycle of violence and despair that they create. I came here hoping to find a new outlook and I found a lot more than that.

I found friends from Lebanon, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia who are just as unwilling as I am to cooperate with prejudice. I found a multidisciplinary faculty who were willing and able to guide me through paths of economic, financial and legal analysis that are rarely applied to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Most importantly, I found a community of free thinkers, not only in Fletcher, but in the greater Tufts community as well, through my exposure to the Institute for Global Leadership. Ours is a community that nurtures creativity instead of slamming it down with doubt. For many of us who come from areas of protracted conflict and failed politics, this wealth of perspectives is literally a breath of fresh air.

Well said . Thank you.



# Helsinki Agreement

Representatives of Iraqi parties and blocs held discussions in Finland from August 31 through September 3, 2007 and agreed to consult further on the following recommendations to start negotiations to reach national reconciliation:

1. To resolve all political issues through non-violence and democracy.
2. To prohibit the use of arms for all armed groups during the process of negotiations.
3. To form an independent commission approved by all parties, its task being to supervise the process of disarmament of non-governmental armed groups in a verifiable manner.
4. All parties will commit to accept the results of the negotiations and no party can be subject to a threat of force from any groups that reject all or part of any agreement reached.
5. To work to end international and regional interference in internal Iraqi affairs.
6. To commit to protect human rights.
7. To assure the independence and efficiency of the legal and justice systems, especially the constitutional court.
8. To ensure the full participation of all Iraqi parties and blocs in the political process and agreed governance arrangements.
9. To take all necessary steps to end all violence, killings, forced displacement and any further damage to infrastructure.
10. To establish an independent consultative body to explore ways to deal with the legacy of the past in a way that will unite the nation.
11. All Iraqi parties and blocs have to build Iraq and contribute efficiently to support all the efforts that would make the political process and Iraqi unity successful and to preserve its sovereignty.
12. All participating groups must commit to all of the principles listed here as a complete system of rules.

## **Political Objectives:**

1. To be rational in political speeches, for the national interest, and to move away from sectarian and ethnic dispute.

2. To bring an end to the displacement of Iraqi people and work to take care of those displaced, and secure their safe return, with guarantees of their safety by the national forces in co-operation with political parties and tribal leaders.
3. To deal with the subject of militias under the following procedures:
  - A. Arming, supplying, training and making sure that the security forces (army/police) are capable of undertaking their duties efficiently. Make sure that the security forces are equipped to adequate levels to achieve an effective national force.
  - B. Activation of economic development across the country, to contain youth unemployment and use the efforts of young people to rebuild in order to improve the quality of life for all citizens.
  - C. Those working outside the law and using military resources inappropriately shall be brought to justice, with no differentiation.
4. The emphasis on the common vision for all Iraqi political entities on the importance of termination of the presence of foreign troops in Iraq through the completion of national sovereignty and rebuilding a national army and security apparatus according to a national vision within a realistic timetable.
5. An emphasis on the continuation of constructive dialogue between different political groups aiming to fulfill national goals.
6. To convince political groups that are currently outside the political process to initiate and activate a constructive dialogue to reach common understandings.
7. To deal with armed groups which are not classified as terrorist, encouraging them to use peaceful political means to address the conflict and to provide their members with jobs and opportunities within state administrations.
8. Working towards correcting the misunderstanding that accompanied the political process and encourage all Iraqi political parties to participate in building Iraq in all aspects.
9. The cessation of the violation of the human rights of Iraqi citizens and their properties by continuous bombardment and military actions by foreign forces. The Iraqi government must take responsibility to protect innocent civilians.



# Employing Tact & Fostering Respect

## *The Importance of Multi-Level Diplomacy with Syria*

*Elieen Becque*

The winter of 2006 and the spring of 2007 witnessed a veritable flurry of diplomatic activity between Washington and Damascus. Washington began to envision a more regionally supported stabilization effort in Iraq, and the Bush administration stepped up efforts in both the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and in supporting Fouad Siniora, the embattled and pro-West Lebanese prime minister. Damascus played a secondary but elemental role in each of these initiatives. In December, Senators Bill Nelson, John Kerry, Christopher Dodd and Arlen Specter and Representative Patrick Kennedy visited Damascus. In April, Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi – the third-highest ranking elected official in the United States – traveled to Damascus with a group of Democratic representatives. Their aim was to pressure the White House to open official diplomatic relations with Syria. In each case, these U.S. officials visited Syria despite public statements of disapproval from the White House. While Pelosi toured the market in the heart of the old city and met with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad, U.S. President George W. Bush issued a statement from the White House press room indicating that he saw little point in talking to Syrian officials, saying, “Sending delegations hasn’t worked. It’s just simply been counterproductive.”<sup>1</sup> The Bush administration held that her visit would “lead the Assad government to believe they are part of the mainstream of the international community, when in fact they are a state sponsor of terror.”<sup>2</sup> Vice President Dick Cheney went so far as to characterize her visit as “bad behavior.”<sup>3</sup>

In January of 2008, the Tufts New Initiative for Middle East Peace conducted a research trip in Damascus and Aleppo, yielding great insight into Syrian political culture impossible to derive from university-based research. Among others, our team met with government officials, journalists, economists, civil activists and religious leaders. The sentiment that predominated was an expression of hope for the future of Syria, and in this report I will offer a small look into the benefits that could be derived from both a simple mentality

shift on the part of American citizens and a keener, more forward-thinking policy on the part of the United States government with regard to Syria, who could become a potential friend in the region.

I will examine the rhetoric and frequently conflicting actions of the Bush administration, synthesize exemplary material from our twenty meetings in Syria, and proffer areas in which shifts in mentality and official foreign policy might be most easily accomplished. Research trips of this nature are particularly good at cultivating the understanding that the United States is just like any other actor in the international system; it has a historical footprint, imperfect and often harmful policies, and sometimes takes action detrimental to the very ideas our Constitution ostensibly protects. Above all, like many countries in the international community, both the United States and Syria have the capability to make policy changes – diplomatic and otherwise – that would improve the lives of their respective citizenries.

## THE STANCE OF THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION

In April of 2003, four years prior to the spring lambasting of Nancy Pelosi, the United States was developing plans to invade Iraq, and the Bush administration began its own pattern of behavior toward Syria. Among the accusations leveled at the Syrian government were the following: developing weapons of mass destruction, possessing chemical weapons, providing military equipment to Iraq and harboring members of Saddam Hussein's regime.<sup>4</sup> In some instances, the truth of these statements was impossible to discern; in others, the truth was obvious while the significance was either negligible or unrelated to the issue of maintaining diplomatic ties with Syria. For instance, it became clear that weapons were indeed flowing through the Syrian border to Iraq. Where the weapons came from remained a point of contention, and when the Syrians realized the detriment to their credibility that the porous border was creating, the government stopped the trafficking. During those contentious weeks in April, the then-spokeswoman for the Syrian foreign ministry, Bouthaina Shaaban, attempted to downplay the hostility between governments, saying, "I think the diplomatic channels are much quieter and much more constructive than what the media presents."<sup>5</sup> In response to accusations by the Bush administration that Syria was harboring members of Saddam Hussein's regime, Shaaban pointedly denied the accusations: "Iraqis can go to Iraq but cannot come to Syria. This is the decision of the Syrian government. When we say our borders are closed, it means they are closed and when we say we do not allow any symbol of the Iraqi regime to come here, it means that we do not allow any."<sup>6</sup> When the

U.S. shut down an oil pipeline running from Iraq to Syria, Shaaban chose a non-confrontational attitude while other Arab states joined in a statement condemning the U.S. action against Syria.

The accusations made by the administration in April of 2003 are examples of the administration's use of hostile language as a diplomatic tool in conducting foreign relations. Its actions indicate a belief that language of this sort is more effective than meeting in person with members of a government with whom American officials differ. The elected officials who visited Damascus in the spring of 2007 did so in order to demonstrate American preference for a Syria not heavily aligned with Iran, and they also recognized geographical, historical, ethnic and cultural bonds between Iraq and Syria. Their actions, as opposed to those of the Bush administration officials, indicated a belief that maintaining diplomatic relations with Syrian officials could potentially afford strategic advantage for the U.S. in the region and aid the reconstruction effort in Iraq – two projects in which the United States has a strong vested interest.

In May of that year, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice broke with the Bush-Cheney line and met with Walid al-Moallem, the Syrian foreign minister, in Egypt. She subsequently invited his deputy, Faisal Mekdad, to the Annapolis Conference in November. The small cadre of administration officials who have chosen to ostracize the Assad regime in favor of threats and bad blood disregard the diplomatic potential apparently seen by Rice, Pelosi and other members of Congress who have visited Syria. The administration's hostile rhetoric and nonsensical policy do not bear analysis; they serve as an example of how diplomatic relations should not be conducted. A productive discussion addresses the real possibility for improved relations between the United States and Syria and the potential benefits each side might derive from a normalization of political maneuvering, cultural understanding and economic relations.

## DUAL POSSIBILITIES FOR NORMALIZATION

There are two avenues by which normalization might occur: through improved relations with the Syrian government and through improved relations with the Syrian people. The first necessitates respect in public and in private, and a willingness to speak with Syrian officials. Respect in this sense does not mean grand public statements; in fact, circumspection in the public discourse of international diplomacy is the most prudent prescription. Respect for Syria does not mean U.S. officials must agree with the Syrian government in all of its actions and policies – many of which are exactly

counter to a liberal democratic ideal – but it does mean that keen attention must be paid to the areas in which Syrian and American diplomatic interests might converge. These areas provide an opportunity for both cooperation and respect and political benefit. Both the U.S. and Syria have huge diplomatic and economic interests in stabilizing Iraq as soon as possible. Diplomatic respect certainly rules out public pronouncements that conflate domestic politics with international diplomacy. This conflation happens continually in both countries, but the domestic polity pays less attention to rancorous rhetoric between governments than some officials seem to think. For instance, the accusation that Syria was “harboring terrorists” makes for a reductionist and under-informed public dialogue in the United States and effects hostility and mistrust on the part of Syrian officials.

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The second avenue toward normalized relations with Syria, improved relations with the Syrian people, is a more complex goal – Syrians will never count the United States as a strong political or cultural ally, but the Syrian government has failed the populus so consistently over the course of many years that there is substantial room for growth in economic and cultural association between the two societies. Syrians would benefit from even minimal support of their underfed economy and civil society, both of which are struggling to blossom; the benefit to the United States would be that in supporting members of the business and cultural elite in Syria, we would cultivate economic allies and cultural liaisons. The professionals with whom the NIMEP group met practice professionally in highly varied sectors of society; their commonality is that each would benefit from increased Syrian political, economic and intellectual stature in the world community.

## NORMAL RELATIONS ARE CURRENTLY LACKING

Bouthaina Shaaban is now the Minister of Expatriate Affairs for the Syrian government. While she continues to toe the ruling Ba’th party line, she has not changed her diplomatic stance on contentious issues between the U.S. and Syria. She is a devoted promulgator of the Assad regime’s policy and propaganda. However, as a Syrian and an educated woman with a long and successful career in government, Shaaban is also a government official more

apt to pursue diplomatic dialogue given the choice between that and political posturing. Unfortunately, because of the manner in which she has been treated in the United States as a Syrian – though she is a government official and known to the U.S. authorities as such – she no longer makes business trips here. Four years after the events of April of 2003, it was Shaaban's job to keep dialogue between the two countries smooth and to promote the policy and propaganda of the Assad regime. She now conducts her business from home or Europe rather than be subject to treatment by U.S. Customs authorities. The insensitive treatment of and mistrustful attitude toward Syrian government officials whom the United States formerly counted among at least nominal friends has led to an erosion of diplomatic ties on this level. Shabaan's experience is an example of the policies of the Bush administration having real diplomatic ramifications to the detriment of all parties.

Dr. Sami Moubayed is a graduate of the American University of Beirut and the University of Exeter, and his candid and often critical assessments of Middle Eastern politics have earned him a reputation both in Syria and in the Western press. During our brief meeting, Moubayed was reluctant to speak about politics and maintained that the government has never interfered with anything he teaches in his classroom. He was not forthcoming in answering questions about the regime, but a change came over him when he began speaking about the universities slowly developing in Syria. In 2001, legislation was adopted that allowed for the establishment of private universities; Moubayed is a member of the international relations faculty at one such institution, al-Kalamoun University, which is one of just eight new Syrian universities not controlled by the Ba'ath party. Dr. Moubayed was impassioned in his criticism of how the universities are run, and the strain in his voice betrayed a clear emotional investment in the project of improving them. According to Moubayed, the success of such institutions is essential to the intellectual and cultural growth – indeed, survival – of his country. The universities are for-profit, which he views as a problem, because there are no admissions standards besides an ability to pay the tuition, students are not adequately educated in English before arriving, and they have not yet developed a rigorous work ethic. Furthermore, professors are not paid enough and there are no proper libraries. He is critical of the authoritarianism of the Assad regime because he sees clearly the possibility for a better education system, healthier economy and richer, more widespread intellectual culture in Syria. In November, on a Washington Post blog, Moubayed made the distinction between liberty and freedom, writing that a country such as



Syria can have nominal independence without having freed itself mentally, and that a good education is integral to the process of true freedom:

The human mind is well-suited to digest, challenge, adopt, or discard different views. Freedom comes from proper education, at home, school, university, and life. Many Arabs adopted 'liberty' from short trips to Europe, and by watching Lebanese satellite television. But 'liberty' does not mean wearing short skirts, drinking alcohol, or speaking a few words of English. It does not mean hanging out at the new posh restaurants of Damascus, Beirut, or Cairo. There is nothing wrong with that, for sure, but adopting these values without being educated about them produces very shallow, materialistic, and one-dimensional people who judge each other by how they look, where they socialize, and what kind of car they are driving. Life without entertainment is unbearable. Entertainment without life, however, is equally destructive. The solution to all of the above is education.<sup>7</sup>

Moubayed is a man hungry for the kind of enlightenment and academic rigor from which he has been the beneficiary, the kind of academic culture accessed with relative ease in many parts of Asia, Europe and North America. That he and his colleagues continue to write and teach in Syria is the best evidence that there is potential in Syria for what Dr. Moubayed envisions. This vision fits perfectly with what the U.S. would like to see happen in a country like Syria: a liberal education supports a democratic ideal from the intellectual ground up, creating an educated class of citizens wedded to notions such as free speech and basic human rights. The United States would do well to keep such institutions and people in mind when formulating policy; they are key not to "exporting democracy" but to cultivating an educated and cosmopolitan society less easily swayed by clerics or government propaganda.

In certain respects, Syria is a very open society; it has a cosmopolitan history and a small, distinct population that has been very well-educated. This population is familiar with the ins and outs of how the Assad regime functions – not everyone agrees with the brute force of the military police, repressed speech, or elections that are condemned as contrived and farcical<sup>8</sup> – but the majority of the people we interviewed have adopted an attitude of sufferance given the possibility of a more radical alternative. According to Nabil Maleh, a Syrian filmmaker and longtime civil activist, the danger posed to the Ba'th regime, and in turn to the existing civil society, by the Islamists is much greater than anyone acknowledges. According to Maleh, the Ba'th party can and has jailed leading members of the secular opposition movements, but they dare not jail the leaders of organized Islamist movements as these leaders are seen as having "Allah with them." In his opinion, the natural ally of the secular regime in Syria should be the secular intellectuals, though this



has not historically been the case. In the meantime, secular intellectuals are routinely jailed and silenced while leading Islamists have been given a wide operational margin.

Another sector of society that seems to have been given relatively free rein by the Assad regime is that of the Syrian business elite. But simply being given free operational rein is not enough to ensure a thriving business community. According to Amer Hafi, secretary general of the Syrian Young Entrepreneurs Association, the economic reform process is moving at an inadequately slow pace and hindering the growth of potential success in the business sector. The association does have a good relationship with the government and, according to Hafi, does not cross the “red lines” implicitly imposed by the regime on the private sector. SYEA’s mission is to provide new Syrian entrepreneurs with the support to start business. They “don’t claim huge success,” but state that their organization has brought people above the poverty line and that there are many goods and services with a potential market in Syria. Though its members are among the wealthiest of the Syrian elite, SYEA’s biggest problem is access to capital – a problem exacerbated by U.S. sanctions. An important example of these sanctions is the inability of Syrians to take the GMAT, the standardized test used by business school for admission to MBA programs. Logistical roadblocks such as this bar the way for elite members of Syrian society from entering American MBA programs. “These sanctions simply hurt people who are trying to improve their industries and their countries,” Hafi stated.

Though political scientists of the realist persuasion might disagree, it is at this level that an incredibly important element of international diplomacy takes place. In traditional theory, the constructivist school approaches international relations by examining goals, threats and cultural identities in all levels of society. These factors construct the social reality of interstate relations and allow for the actions of individuals and institutions to be taken into account when examining how the interstate system functions. The point is that Dr. Moubayed, Nabil Maleh and Amer Hafi are exactly the sort of people whom policy makers in Washington should have in mind when developing policy toward a country like Syria – not that it is a country full of liberal professors, far from it, but that this population exists and is chomping at the bit for every opportunity to advance a fragile private university system, a business community, a freer press and a more self-actualizing society.

The fact that the Assad regime in Syria – under both Bashar and his father – have ruled Syria according to policies that American politicians abhor is not a reason for American leaders to treat Syrian leaders with attitudes and public rhetoric tantamount to contempt. The relationship between

Saudi and American leaders is exemplary of the diplomatic hoop-jumping made possible when it appears the United States has something to gain from a normalized relationship. The irony of the foreign policy of the Bush administration is that while officials carry out policies in accordance with the private, unstated values of the administration (i.e. a carefully engineered friendship with the Saudi royal family), they seem to place such minimal confidence in the intelligence of those at whom their public pronouncements are aimed, for example, the American public or the Syrian regime. There is literally no pattern between what is said and what is done. This is to conduct foreign policy in the least intellectually rigorous and least nuanced manner possible; it creates an atmosphere of confusion and instinctual mistrust between both the administration and its citizens, and the administration and the foreign governments it has chosen to alienate.

## THE HISTORICAL FOOTPRINT

The vision of history held by most world leaders is embarrassingly shortsighted. In 1973, Henry Kissinger and Richard Nixon backed a Chilean military coup that led to Salvador Allende's death and installed Augusto Pinochet as dictator. Six years later, the United States backed the ascendancy of Saddam Hussein to power in Iraq. In 2003, our Congress decided to invade Iraq and topple that same regime. As of September 2008, the estimated civilian death toll since the invasion is around 90,000,<sup>9</sup> while the Department of Defense has confirmed 4,169 deaths of American servicemen.<sup>10</sup> This is not to say that the United States was directly responsible for the horror imposed on the Chilean people by Pinochet, that U.S. officials knew in advance what the Hussein regime would become or that American action has been the sole cause of civilian deaths in Iraq; it is to point out the hypocritical nature that American diplomatic rhetoric so often takes on. These stains on the history of American foreign policy are well-known examples in a history replete with instances of the United States imposing policies abroad from which we profess to divorce ourselves at home. However, this is not to say that the United States must sink under the weight of past foreign policy blunders – not nihilism, but pragmatism coupled with a minimal understanding of history are in order – it is impossible to judge the history of U.S. foreign policy as “better” or “worse” than that of any other powerful nation – in both Syria and the United States officials responsible for atrocities committed a generation ago are still in power. The best a new generation of leaders can do is to actually consider the actions of their predecessors when choosing the language and action of their own diplomacy.

The proverb made famous by Theodore Roosevelt at the turn of the last century, “speak softly and carry a big stick; you will go far,” might be an apt prescription for the future of U.S. policy toward Syria and the Middle East in general. No one disputes the military and technological prowess of the United States; there is no need for our foreign policy to depend on a continual reminder to other countries of these capabilities. Better to conduct foreign policy in the public and private arena according to the idea that the leaders of different countries are equals. In the impossibly complex and fluid world of international diplomacy, there is nothing to be lost and everything to be gained by treating even stated enemies with courtesy and grace. To recognize the authority of the Assad regime in Damascus without endorsing its mode of governance would be to take the diplomatic higher ground, giving the U.S. diplomatic capital instead of promulgating accusations of hypocrisy and incivility.

There are real benefits in the ideals from which the United States professes to derive our system of government, and what is more, the liberal democratic ideal has inherent appeal so long as humans continue to desire self-actualization. More so than arms capabilities and offensive rhetoric, this knowledge should be counted as an asset when constructing foreign policy and conducting international diplomacy.

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1 The New York Times, “Middle East” <http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/04/world/middleeast/04cnd-pelosi.html> (accessed February 24, 2008).

2 The Wall Street Journal, “Opinion Journal Archives, Global View,” <http://opinionjournal.com/columnists/bstephens/?id=110010912> (accessed February 24, 2008).

3 The Political Junkie, “Condoleezza Rice Visits Syria and Calls it a Success but Pelosi’s Visit “Sends Mixed Messages” According to Bush,” <http://geniusofinsanityworld.blogspot.com/2007/05/condoleezza-rice-visits-syria-and-calls.html> (accessed February 24, 2008).

4 In that month the United States also confirmed that it had shut down an oil pipeline running from Iraq that for two years had pumped some 150,000 barrels of oil a day to Syria.

5 Middle East Economic Survey, “The Political Scene,” <http://www.mees.com/postedarticles/politics/PoliticalScene/a46n16c01.htm> (accessed February 20, 2008).

6 PBS News, “Syria Pledges Cooperation, U.S. Says No Plans For War,” [http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/syria\\_04-16-03.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/syria_04-16-03.html)

7 The Washington Post, “Post Global,” [http://newsweek.washingtonpost.com/postglobal/sami\\_moubayed/2007/11](http://newsweek.washingtonpost.com/postglobal/sami_moubayed/2007/11) (accessed February 20, 2008).

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9 Iraq Body Count, <http://www.iraqbodycount.org/> (Accessed September 23, 2008). The World Health Organization estimates that number to be 151,000 between March 2003 and June 2006 alone. World Health Organization, “Media Centre,” <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2008/pr02/en/index.html> (accessed February 22, 2008).

10 Iraq Coalition Casualty Count, <http://icasualties.org/oif/> (accessed September 23, 2008).

# Like Father, Like Son

## *Personalized Succession: Bashar al-Assad and the New Challenges to the Ba'thist State*

*Ethan Corbin*

Syria has always had a unique position in the Arab world. Today, its status is no different. Though overwhelmingly Sunni Muslim, Syria is run by a nominally Shi'a Islam, Alawi minority.<sup>1</sup> Its population is a virtual ethnic and religious mosaic, comprised of Arabs, Alawis, Druze, Kurds and Armenians each belonging to various Muslim and Christian denominations. Its inhabitants speak Arabic, Kurdish, Armenian, Circassian and Aramaic. Further complicating matters is the fact that Syria's main ally in the region is the decidedly non-Arab, Shi'a Persian state of Iran - the burgeoning regional hegemon in the aftermath of the U.S. invasion in Iraq. Damascus also plays host to many non-state armed groups that pose a persistent threat along Israel's borders.

To the southwest, the Golan Heights, the fertile high ground that Syria lost to Israel in the 1973 war, remain mostly in the hands of the Israelis with only a small UN force governing a neutral, no-man's land between the two sides around al Quneitra. To the east, Syria is beset with the challenges of the continuous flow of refugees from the Iraq war - the total refugee population residing in Syria hovering around 1.7 to 1.9 million. Political instability along Syria's western border in Lebanon is often blamed on Syrian interference, and is one of the prime drivers behind U.S. bilateral sanctions against the country.

Regarding the ongoing Arab-Israeli conflict, Syria has made rather interesting news recently. The conspiracy of silence that continues to surround the incident of September 6, 2007, when Israeli jets penetrated Syrian airspace and destroyed what they claimed to have been a nascent nuclear facility in northern Syria is baffling to say the least. Some believe that the Syrian government is loath to admit being caught red-handed in an attempt to establish a nuclear program with North Korean assistance. Others believe that the action was merely an attempt to warn Iran about the potential hazards of its nuclear ambitions as well as its continued support of organizations operating along Israel's borders, such as Hezbollah.<sup>2</sup> The lack of reaction by the Arab League, the scant recognition of the Bush Administration and the enigmatic

reply by Syrian President Bashar al-Assad all seem to envelope the event in still more mystery.

If there is a common denominator to the analysis about Syria today it is simply that there is no real consensus about the motivations behind the state's actions. Many scholars continue to write of the impending demise of the highly centralized, diplomatically isolated and somewhat eccentric state. These predictions are all too quickly proven incorrect by the highly unpredictable nature of the region and their inability to count on the brutally rational decision making process of the Syrian state when faced with potentially existential crises. Decades into their grip on power, the Alawi family that took control of the state in 1970 still shows no genuine indication of an imminent end to its rein. While it is true that the decade started off difficultly for Bashar al-Assad, the seemingly Syria-unique ebb and flow of fortune switched decidedly back in favor of not only regime survival, but even of long-term sustainability, as Assad moves into his second term.

Though it has lived in virtual political isolation for decades, Syria remains a vital player in the Middle East. This is particularly true when it comes to any attempts to create a lasting settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Though more indirectly than directly, Syrian influence stretches across the region. It is evident in the continuing instability in Lebanon, along the borders of Israel, in the four corners of Iraq and in the rise of Iranian power in the region.

This article will attempt to briefly describe the history of Syrian state formation in the run up to the seizure of power by the Assad family. Then it will examine the means by which Hafez Assad was able to secure power in Syria as well as bolster the Syrian position vis-à-vis the rest of the Middle East. An inquiry into the mechanisms behind the power transfer from Hafez Assad to his son Bashar upon the death of Assad *père* in 2000 will provide a basis for understanding the position of the country today.

As Bashar moves into his eighth year in power, the continuing Assad legacy will be examined in light of two critical policy tracks, foreign and economic. As the principle drivers behind the present difficulties for Syria exist at the domestic, regional and global levels, there is no easy fix for the present Syrian quandary that has positioned it as an international pariah. The state's legacy of ties to Teheran and support of non-state armed groups who muddy the waters of the Arab-Israeli conflict have led to diplomatic isolation and economic stasis as the Western states and their regional allies have largely shunned Syria. Yet, it is precisely this state of affairs that reinforces Syrian-Iranian ties – Iran has become one of the few remaining release valves for an economy slow to meet the challenges of the 21st century and under the pressures of a looming fiscal collapse. Yet, despite this virtual catch-22, there are signs that Syria may be



slowly working its way toward economic liberalization as well as moving back into a position of prominence in the regional diplomatic chess match.

## A MIDDLE EASTERN DILEMMA

One quality that Syria shares with many neighbors in the region is the longevity of its head of state. Like Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia and, until recently, Iraq, Syria has not really suffered from too much political instability at the top, but rather from too much stability.<sup>3</sup> Part of the reason for this seemingly counterfactual statement can be found in the externally orchestrated delineation of nation states in the region in the early 20th century.

To varying degrees most of these states are very similar to one another in the histories of their creation. Key differences often depend more upon the luck the state had when France and Britain were dividing the former eastern and southern stretches of the Ottoman Empire in anticipation of its impending defeat at the hands of the Allied powers in World War I. Those often whimsical decisions dictated the levels of natural resources states would have upon entering the international system as weak rentier states – creating a region of strategic *haves* and *have nots*. States lacking in the natural rent of oil or gas found themselves scrambling for revenue in the form of strategic rent or the exportation of surplus labor to the oil-rich, but population poor, Gulf States.

In the case of Syria, it was France that would ultimately decide upon the former Ottoman district's new boundaries. France overran the Arab attempts at drawing a larger entity that the Arabs called the *bilad al-sham*, or “northern region” in Arabic. That area would have encompassed the concept of *Sooriya al-Kubra*, or Greater Syria, in modern-day Lebanon, Israel and Jordan, as well as parts of Iraq and Turkey. The resulting truncated state was an imperialist-imposed object of shame to the Arabs in Syria and an uncomfortable arena for the myriad ethnic and religious minorities that accounted for a significant part of the population.

Out of this uncomfortable arrangement came a weak state fraught with such disparate internal forces that it became a virtual regional power vacuum. For a decade and a half Syria witnessed coup after coup, and even surrendered its sovereignty in 1958-1961, to a pan-Arab state, when it aligned itself with Nasser's Egypt as part of the United Arab Republic (UAR) in the hopes of regaining its perceived greater glory as the Arab heartland. While the political scene remained fraught with instability, the brief Egyptian presence in the country left a lasting legacy of bureaucratic organization that was a much-



needed and noticeably missing element of Syrian state formation.

## ASSAD THE SAVIOR

Out of this chaotic period rose the Syria of Hafez al-Assad that soon defied the logic of Syria's brief history by becoming a regional bulwark of stability. Assad accomplished this seemingly impossible task by installing a populist authoritarian government system. He was able to manage the dueling supra- and sub-state pressures of Syria successfully – the desire to be a part of a larger pan-Arab state juxtaposed with the internal pressures fueled by the spectrum of religious and ethnic groups composing the state – and create a relatively successful state where none previously existed.

When Hafez al-Assad seized power in Syria, he rode in at the head of a curious French legacy that made the military the instrument of the Syrian minorities – and was lucky to have been at the end of a long period of coups that left precious little opposition standing in his way. He was able to woo the Syrian population by presenting himself as the long yearned-for Arab hero, ready to do battle with the imperial pawn in the region, Israel. Once in power, Assad was able to split the majority Sunni Arab population and secure the loyalty of the rural Sunni population by enacting land reforms at the expense of the Sunni urban absentee landowners. Simultaneously, Assad's one-party socialist system was able to co-opt the loyalty of the new classes that it was creating with new, state-led industrialization projects. The industrial barons at the head of the fledgling industries were a new upper-class ready to take the place of the urban Sunni notable families that had dominated Syrian trade and politics for so long; they owed their new position to Assad and the Ba'th party. By taking advantage of *asabiya*, or kinship, tradition as well as a well-crafted system of patrimonial rewards, Assad was able to secure command of the instruments of force in Syria and thereby shield himself from military coup.

Over time, however, populist authoritarian structures have shown themselves to become decidedly less populist and increasingly authoritarian. The delicate balancing act that the leader must play between charismatic hero and hard-line authority figure, while still accounting for the needs of several spheres of society beholden to the state, ultimately leads to a state that is highly personalized. The qualities of the individual leader rather than the governing system itself become central to the state's survival – leading to an inherent challenge upon succession. Syria's experience was no exception.

After five successive trips to the ballot box in the first three years of his reign, Assad would never again call upon the people in any substantial way to

dictate either the direction or composition of the state. He became obsessed with foreign policy. His constant regional machinations earned him titles such as the “Sphinx of Damascus.”<sup>4</sup> But with his attention directed elsewhere, Assad was soon beset with two challenges to his populist authoritarian state structure, economic policy stasis and political Islam. Though not unique, these two pressures seem to be particular to the populist authoritarian state structure.

## DISTRESSED AT HOME - THE DEATH OF ASSAD PÉRE

In 2000, the Ba’thist authoritarian ruler Hafez Assad struggled to start his fourth decade in power over the Syrian state apparatus. Visibly slowed by cancer and congestive heart failure, one of the longest serving rulers in the Middle East faced more than the usual challenges in his characteristically ornery state.<sup>5</sup> Much like the ailing ruler himself, the turn of the century did not augur well for Syria. The condition of the state was perhaps a cruel reminder of the way in which both ruler and country became so indistinguishable during Assad’s rule. Syria’s sclerotic economy limped along, crippled by the lack of genuine liberal reforms needed to meet the challenges of an increasingly global world.<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, Syria’s foreign policy, long the primary focus of Assad, fell into a dangerous vise-grip of potential strategic retreat and apathetic marginalization.

At home, both economically and socially, Syria had all the earmarks for crisis. Syrian oil reserves, which had peaked in the previous decade and upon which the government depended for over half of its revenues, started to wane.<sup>7</sup> The only other domestic industry that generated substantial income remained the agricultural sector, which proved too dependent on the fickle Middle Eastern climate.<sup>8</sup> A highly corrupt system of patrimonial rewards kept the Sunni bourgeoisie on a virtual dole. Beholden to the hard-line Alawi leader, the group served as a palpable reminder that a precious few held the strings to Syria’s economy. The ruling elite in the Alawi, Sunni and Druze circles enriched by pay-offs and placated by sinecures showed that regime loyalty was a heavy burden upon the state; not only that, it produced loyalty that was tenuous at best. The incendiary passions of the conservative Islamic urban centers of Hama and Aleppo remained largely silent. The exacting degree to which Assad retaliated against the Islamic movement in the 1980s, when it massacred thousands during a Muslim Brotherhood uprising, served as a stern warning against violent Islamic expression, but this still did not bode well for Syria as it entered a new century in which re-Islamization was becoming a reality throughout the Middle East.<sup>9</sup> In addition

to unresolved sectarian problems, Assad knew that his country increasingly faced the reality of regional and international marginalization.<sup>10</sup>

In all of the four major tenets of his foreign policy Assad faced new challenges to the same problems. The delicate balancing system that maintained Syria's hegemonic presence in Lebanon showed visible signs of breaking down. Rafiq Hariri, an anti-Syrian Sunni billionaire, looked likely to return to the position of prime minister in Lebanon. His record of campaigning for Lebanese independence from Syria did not portend well for Syria's military-strategic edge in Lebanon or for Syria's dependence on Lebanon as an economic release valve for the former's booming population and struggling employment sector.<sup>11</sup> As a result of its continued support of non-state armed groups operating both within its borders and in Southern Lebanon and the Occupied Territories, Syria's former position of power in the Middle East was compromised

by the growing indifference of the United States and Israel to the Syrian-Israeli peace process. The last-ditch efforts to negotiate peace with Israel had a blatantly moribund character, leaving the thorn of the Golan still in Assad's side. With the passing of the guard in the U.S., the Syrian leader did not know what to expect from the son of George H. W. Bush. Indications

were that Washington would no longer involve itself with Syria at nearly the same levels.<sup>12</sup> The growing illicit trade with Iraq, mainly through subverting the UN Oil for Food project, served as both an economic buttress and a political detraction due to Iraq's unpopular stature among other Arab states. Finally, continued ties to Iran in the form of willing participation in the Shi'a crescent across the region made Syria even more of a pariah among Arab states. The relationship that started, *inter alia*, as a method for each country to enhance its respective geo-strategic depth vis-à-vis Israel, was proving by the end of the century to be more of a political deadweight for Syria than anything else.

Into this confluence of events stepped the 34-year-old, second son of Hafez al-Assad, Bashar. Basil al-Assad, Hafez's first-born son, died six years before in a car accident. Prior to 1994, Hafez had assiduously groomed Basil for the post of president. With Basil's death, the bookish and somewhat awkward Bashar abruptly ended his residency in ophthalmology in London

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to return to the Middle East to begin his training as the next Assad of Syria. During the second half of the decade, Hafez showed all the signs that it was now Bashar who would inherit the presidency.<sup>13</sup> After the requisite year's mourning period, public spaces all across Syria soon became covered with posters of the Assad trinity of Hafez, Basil and Bashar, with captions reading, "*Qa'idna, Mithalna, Amalna*" (*Our Leader, Our Ideal, Our Hope*).<sup>14</sup>

## GROOMING THE NEXT ASSAD

Bashar's training progressed along three essential paths: support within the powerful military and intelligence structures; support of the general population; and his father's instruction of the Assad application of the populist authoritarian governance structure.<sup>15</sup> As such, within a few years, Bashar had achieved the rank of lieutenant colonel and subsequently of staff colonel in 1999. Starting in the mid-nineties, Bashar became the face behind a well-orchestrated public relations campaign to rout the republic of corruption, which was a chief criticism of the Ba'athist state among Syrians. The young Bashar was championed as the one who would lead Syria into a new era economic prosperity, starting with a cleanup of the scourge of corruption within Syrian government and business circles.<sup>16</sup> Bashar soon stood alone at military ceremonies beside defense minister Tlas and deputy chief of staff Aslan and attended meetings with regional leaders as the Syrian representative.<sup>17</sup>

Behind the scenes, Hafez started to eliminate potential early pitfalls to the intended succession. First, he concentrated on solidifying his family's support for Bashar. To do so, Hafez dismissed his brother Rifa't from his post as second vice president for national security affairs. Hafez had little trust for his Rifa't in the wake of Rifa't's attempted coup in 1983, when the president was sidelined by a heart attack. With renewed paramilitary defense forces and several years of service to the state developing his own cadre of loyalists, Hafez could not risk another coup attempt by his brother when his son stepped into power. In addition, Asif Shawkat, the husband of Bashar's sister, Bushra, entered into what would be a meteoric rise in the Syrian military intelligence apparatus. Hafez also made numerous other high- and mid-level shifts in both the military and intelligence structures, replacing the older generation with younger officers. The younger officers' loyalty to Bashar would become more certain as they came to associate their rise to power with Bashar's.<sup>18</sup>

Further, and probably according to Hafez's calculations, Bashar as the Syrian heir apparent embodied a dual legitimacy. First, and perhaps the

most obvious reason for such, was that Bashar was the son of Hafez al-Assad. Hafez al-Assad was the only leader that was able to bring the country out of the near-constant state of disorder. Hafez al-Assad also gave the Syrians a certain amount of pride in being Syrian. Under his rule, Syria achieved a degree of success against Israel in 1973, and subsequently proved itself in the realm of Middle Eastern politics as an unflinching bulwark against Israeli aggression. Hafez's doctrine of strategic parity with Israel throughout the decades gave Syria one of the most sophisticated military forces in the entire Arab world.<sup>19</sup> Second, at the young age of 34, Bashar was not tainted by the staid image of the older generation of statist elites in the inner circles of the military, intelligence and economic spheres. Bashar had the image of a genuine reformer, seeking to bring the country out of the economic doldrums and shake it out of its atavistic approach to technology.<sup>20</sup> His father allowed Syria to stand up, now it was time for Syria to become a beacon of strength and prosperity for the entire Arab world.

While it was relatively clear that Assad secured his governance structure from challenge while he was in power, the questions of succession, especially a personalized one, were many. Could such a highly personalized populist authoritarian structure continue through a different channel? Assad had taken the most unstable and capricious state in the Middle East since the end of World War II and made it a virtual bulwark of stability. Yet the 37 years of Ba'ath rule, 30 of which were under Assad, failed to breach some of the most substantial sub-state challenges to Syria.

Among the Syrian elites, it was known that the country remained stable because of Assad's own formula for state control; Syria under another different leadership might return to the pre-1963 cycles of military coups and lost identity. In addition, many of those in the first, second and third circles surrounding the head of state owed their entire fortunes to the Assad state structure.<sup>21</sup> The country's numerous intelligence and security services were steadfast reserves of loyalty, mainly due to their strong Alawi ranks. As such, many of the "old guard" Ba'athist elites in the Syrian government must have found it preferable to rally behind Bashar's assumption of power, rather than face the possibility of an undesirable power play.<sup>22</sup>

## MISLEADING THAW - NOT SO MUCH THE REFORMER AFTER ALL

Almost immediately after Bashar's assumption of power the intellectual, artistic and political commentators of Syria banded together to call for an increase in political freedoms in Syria. Bashar's image as a young leader who had spent time in the West, which was used to tout him as the figure to rid



the government of corruption, almost certainly was a factor. Another was that the country had not seen a new leader for 30 years. As Hafez had ruled the country with an iron fist, people knew that there was no chance to speak out against the authoritarian nature of the regime – as his son stepped in, people sought to see the new limits of power being imposed upon them.

The so-called Damascus Spring was initially met with little resistance from the state. As such, on September 27, 2000, the fledgling civil society movement published what has been translated as *The Statement of 99*, calling for economic, legal and administrative reforms that it stated were “urgent” as Syria faced the challenges of the 21st century.<sup>23</sup> In the wake of the publication of the statement, the government moved forward with a series of releases of both political and non-political prisoners that soon numbered in the thousands.<sup>24</sup> While many of the prisoners released were of members of the Muslim Brotherhood, Bashar refused to go so far as to repeal Law 49, which

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banned the Brotherhood and had been promulgated by Hafez in the wake of a 1980 attempt on the elder’s life by the organization. Though the statement noted the urgency of the reforms for Syria to move forward into the new millennium, it was careful not to criticize either Assad or the ruling Ba’th elites. The call for political reform was vague, but clear: “No reform, be it administrative or legal, will achieve tranquility and stability in the country unless fully accompanied by the desired political reform, which alone can steer our country towards safe shores.”<sup>25</sup>

The relatively positive reaction by Bashar and his cadre in the ruling circles of the Ba’th party sparked a sort of nationwide airing of grievances, though the tone of the opposition remained mute when it came to demanding political change. The civil society reform movement essentially split into two distinct factions at this point. Those advocating for *islah*, or reform, within the current political system and those moving to push for *taghyeer*, or change, of the whole Ba’th party system would soon come to odds with one another just a few months after the publication of *The Statement of 99*. On January 9, 2001, a large contingent of those decidedly in the *taghyeer* camp released *The Statement of 1,000* to the Arab press. Perhaps due to perceived openness on the part of the government, or a feeling that they could potentially tap into anti-government popular sentiment that would



lead to wider civil society protest on the scale of what has been witnessed in the color revolutions, the statement openly called for the replacement of the one-party system with multi-party democracy.<sup>26</sup>

An organized strike against the state by use of strategic non-violent means would fail to come about, though, as *The Statement of 1,000* did not elicit the popular reaction that its authors had hoped for in the early days of 2001. Instead, Bashar's government's ensuing crackdown was swift. Within a few weeks, Bashar had the plurality of the most vocal proponents for government change jailed on charges of treason.<sup>27</sup> For all intents and purposes, the short-lived Damascus Spring was cut short by what has become a long winter in the wake of the arrests of January and February of 2001.

In a recent interview with one Yasin Hajj Saleh, a journalist for *Al Hayat* and leading advocate for social reform in Syria, Saleh made it clear that the general population has become apathetic and the youth risk averse when speaking out against the Assad regime. Saleh stated that years of suppression had made the civil society landscape barren when he was released from prison in 1996, after 16 years of incarceration. As a result, traction for any kind of real civil expression was difficult to gain.<sup>28</sup>

Still, it can be argued that the movement for civil society reform laid the necessary groundwork for a future reappearance. As the state bears more and more pressure due its immutable bureaucracy and lack of genuine liberal economic reforms, it is becoming more and more difficult to abate massive popular uprising.<sup>29</sup> This line of reasoning was certainly buoyed by the chain of events in the following years that can be perceived as serious setbacks for Syria's regional and international strategic positioning. The implication of the regime in the Hariri assassination and the subsequent regional and international fallout have led to an ongoing UN investigation, Syria's loss of its military hegemony in Lebanon and continued pariah status in the eyes of the West. But, as Waddah abd Rabbo, the editor-in-chief of *Al Watan*, Syria's only private daily newspaper, states, the timing of any kind of serious attempts at positive civil expression was simultaneously compromised by 9/11, the subsequent U.S. incursion into the region and the above-mentioned shifts in regional politics.<sup>30</sup> The Ba'thists portrayed the event as a potential existential crisis for Syria and the people rallied around a "Syria first approach, letting the desires for social reform become subsumed by an overriding Syrian patriotism in the face of potential foreign aggression." Still, as Yasin Saleh is quick to point out, fears over state security have been the mantra of the governments of the entire Middle East for 60 years – "there has been a major war in the region every decade since 1948 spurring the same governmental reaction; security first and reform later. How are liberals and advocates of

democracy to fight this?”

Yet, the Syrian-security-first argument has become less and less plausible with the continued deterioration of the situation in Iraq, the electoral victory of Hamas in the Occupied Territories in December 2005, and the strategic victory of Hezbollah against Israel during the summer of 2006, as well the continued growth in the strength of the Syria's main ally in the region, Iran. Syria now seems to be in a stronger position than it has been for years. Still, the most serious effort at advocating civil reform, the Damascus Declaration--a group of prominent civil activists advocating social change over the last couple of years--recently saw the arrest of its newly elected leader Hourani along with 10 other persons of prominence in the movement.

### ECONOMIC REALITIES - A CHINESE MODEL?

While Bashar may have ridden into office bearing the standard that hailed him as the anti-corruption knight embodying the “hope” of the future for Syria, he certainly did not have much hope of enacting real reforms of the Syrian economy. As discussed above, the reasons for this are many. In large part they are due to the natural economic policy stasis that a state that enacted an import substitute industrialization (ISI) plan faces over time. Hafez al-Assad had been successful in his early days of breathing life into the Syrian economy. In the first half of the 1970s, ISI had been a very successful means of defensive modernization for Syria.<sup>31</sup> But as Hafez turned his attention more and more to the foreign policy arena, he let the Syrian economy pay the price.

The bloated state bureaucracy that soon employed over half of the working population of Syria was able to patch together enough cash in the form of strategic rent from the Gulf States for its position in the struggle against Israel, and Russian military aide skyrocketed as the Soviets saw an occasion to reengage with the United States in the Arab-Israeli conflict.<sup>32</sup> Otherwise, Syria's dominance of Lebanon at the political and later military level was able to create another important outlet for the economy. Lebanon became an outlet for excess Syrian labor. Syrians could flow into Lebanon to work in the financial services or construction markets and send back home monthly remittances.<sup>33</sup>

As the 1980s progressed, relations with the Gulf countries turned sour and the inflow of financial support slowed to a trickle. The result was a burgeoning fiscal crisis in Syria. Fortunately enough, however, new oil reserves were found in the north of Syria near Djazereh. The sudden influx of revenue allowed the state to continue forward more or less independently,

at least in the short term.<sup>34</sup>

During his reign, Hafez committed to very little real liberal economic reforms. The only substantial measure taken was Investment Law 10, which reformed the legal and regulatory environment for foreign direct investment in the country. But this was only really just a half measure. As such, Bashar inherited a state that still had relatively all the hallmarks of a closed, almost command economy hindered by a lack of natural resources, which prevented it from becoming a regional player among the strong rentier economies. Assad had been unable to transcend Syria's resource deficiencies by way of the development of a technology sector in his later decades of power due to the country's continued subjugation to the State Sponsor of Terrorism list by the United States. As such, the one real outlet to acquire the means to join the global marketplace quickly eluded him.<sup>35</sup>

Beyond what was part of the orchestration of the popularly perceived character of Bashar, there are indications that he is genuinely in favor of reforming Syria's seemingly moribund economy. Though much like his reaction to the civil movements demanding change, it has become apparent that Bashar will not support a plan for privatization and destruction of trading barriers in one fell swoop. Rather, Bashar seems to prefer what could be termed the Chinese model for reform – a slow enactment of economic policies to stimulate a more robust entrepreneurial sector, a reduction in transactional costs in the domestic marketplace and a slow lowering of barriers for Syrian business interaction at the global level.<sup>36</sup>

Bashar started out his tenure in office by promoting much needed banking reform in Syria by allowing for the establishment of foreign banks in the country for the first time in over three and a half decades.<sup>37</sup> Smaller currency exchange reforms as well as interior free-market initiatives soon followed, but the changes slowed to a trickle, becoming merely nominal gestures.<sup>38</sup> Still the barriers to achieve genuine economic reform, even at a slow pace, are high.

The United States also plays an indirect, though significant, role in the Syrian economy. Four years of increasingly broad sanctions have made American ill will a serious limiting factor to Syrian economic reform. Under the Syria Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act of 1993 (SALSA), the U.S. has imposed a bi-lateral ban on the export of U.S. goods or other goods with a 10 percent or greater composition of U.S. parts. The only exceptions to this are medicine, food and mission-critical commercial aviation supply. Sanctions against the Syrian banking sector fall under the USA PATRIOT Act's efforts to stop terrorism financing. Furthermore, there are sanctions at the individual level targeting figures seen to be interfering

with constitutional efforts in Lebanon, abetting the flow of foreign fighters and/or the supply of materiel to insurgent forces in Iraq or non-state armed groups with a presence in Syria, such as Hamas, Hezbollah or Islamic Jihad.<sup>39</sup>

According to Nabil Sukkar, a former World Banker and current CEO of the Syrian Consulting Firm for Business and Development in Damascus, the effects of Investment Law 10 can actually be seen to be widening. In 2005, the Ba'th party declared support for a transition to a 'market social' economy. The effects of such can be seen in the increased wealth in the country as the country saw between 6-6.5 percent growth in GDP.<sup>40</sup> As such, Sukkar says that while they are certainly a "nuisance," the American-imposed sanctions are far from having their desired effect of crippling the Syrian economy.

While sanctions do adversely affect the country, one of the main reasons that Syria lacks the capacity to reform its economic sectors is that it directly goes against the personal interests of many of the main ruling families of the Ba'th party. Two examples are the Khaddam and Tlas families.<sup>41</sup> The Khaddam family has amassed a fortune in the food processing business over the last several decades. Food processing is one area in which Syria is seen as having a competitive advantage over other Middle Eastern countries in large part due to its vast farming industry and favorable climate. Former Defense Minister Tlas's family has held a virtual stranglehold over the entire Syrian telecommunications sector throughout the years of the Assad family rule. Telecommunications is a particularly sensitive area for any economy to meet the demands of the hyper-information age. In Internet connectivity alone, Syria is among the least connected countries in the region with barely five per cent of the population connected.<sup>42</sup> As a former senior Ba'th party member with ties to the high command of the defense industry, Tlas's family is in many ways untouchable. The system of patrimonial rewards that was started by Hafez to guarantee loyalty has created substantial barriers to entry for any new potential rival to the existing bourgeois class. Though there are signs that these closed circles are beginning to be penetrated. In early 2006, the first private sector Internet service provider, *Aya*, opened; while this will help with Internet proliferation, the same government restrictions remain intact, and intellectual property rights in the country are nonexistent.<sup>43</sup>

Another example of a change can be found in the story of *Al Watan*. As Syria's first privately owned daily newspaper, *Al Watan* is a success story that may herald a new era in Syrian economic reform. After the death of Hafez in 2000, Bashar immediately enacted a new law allowing the establishment of private media in Syria. Waddah Abd Rabbo was quick to return from Paris to seize upon the opportunity. Though all *Al Watan* facilities were in

Damascus, bureaucratic difficulties forced him to conduct business under a French license. Rabbo describes the conditions at first to have been almost unbearable as he was forced to use the State-owned printing presses and continuous death threats kept him switching locations at night. Today, however, there are about 180 licenses for private press operations in Syria, Al Watan will soon be receiving its own printing press and there is almost never a morning that all printed copies of the journal will not be sold within a few hours of publication.<sup>44</sup>

Despite the obvious hurdle of the current sanctions regime against it, Syria also lacks the capacity to move forward quickly with economic reform. An example of which would be the fact that, though the law permitting private banks in Syria was passed in 2001, it took a year to establish a credit committee and another year after that to set-up the regulatory committee.<sup>45</sup> One principle reason behind this, in addition to bureaucratic inertia, is due to the lack of trained technocrats at key levels of government. Again, years of sinecures and handouts have created such a condition. All the same, Syria has recently made some progress toward bridging this gap. One such attempt is the recent accord with France to allow for Syrian bureaucrats to attend France's elite *Ecole Nationale d'Administration* which trains not only most of France's elite politicians and technocrats, but some of other countries in Western Europe as well.<sup>46</sup>

European attempts at integrating the Syrian economy into the broader regional as well as global market place can be seen in the current negotiations with the Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area (EU-MeFTA). The main goal of EU-MeFTA was to begin a process towards "peace and shared prosperity" and "sustainable and balanced economic and social development" in the Euro-Mediterranean Area.<sup>47</sup> Still, efforts to move forward with further EC-MeFTA integration have been stalled by discomfort within the EU's northern European ranks, specifically Germany who sees it as a French-led project outside of the EU aimed at bolstering an independent French powerbase.<sup>48</sup>

## THE IRANIAN SPECTER

In the wake of country's general economic malaise, stopgap measures such as the illicit trade with Iraq in the UN Oil for Food Program provided only temporary relief from the harsh realities the state is faced with when it comes to the economy. Syria is fast becoming a rentier state that is running out of rent. Syria is already a net importer of refined oil. The rising price of oil on the world markets has forced the government to cut back on many of the substantial subsidies it has traditionally provided. The long queues



at gas stations in the run-up to the change in the price of oil are a visible reminder of the pressure the population will feel as inflation begins to take hold in Syria as a result.

As Syria remains under the lock of U.S. bilateral sanctions, its oil reserves dwindle, the Lebanese market starts to shrink and Iraq remains in a state of chaos, one of the means of support for Syria today is Iran. Iran has had a long and complicated relationship with Syria in the wake of the Iranian revolution. Though initially cold, relations started to warm up in the 1990s, when Syria found itself lacking its traditional Soviet arms support in the face of Israel. As such, Syria changed its tactic from strategic parity with Israel, which it attempted to do through the buildup of its conventional armed forces, to one of a sort of balance of fear. In order to maintain this new stance, Syria soon became the host to and supporter of the many non-state armed groups encamped along Israeli borders and within the Occupied Territories, the most high-profile being Hezbollah, Hamas and Islamic Jihad – all of which have offices in Damascus. With no real domestic arms manufacturing capacity, Syria soon allowed itself to become a funnel for Iranian arms to these groups. The conduit had already existed as Hezbollah was always an Iranian supported and funded project; the pathways had simply become clearer and the Syrian state reaped the benefits of having off-loaded the fighting with Israel to proxy groups and gained an ally in Iran as it saw itself becoming increasingly marginalized elsewhere.<sup>49</sup>

The relationship continues today and, as a result of continued Western rejection of Syria, it is more nuanced and solid than ever before. Contrary to most of the Western world and its allies, Syrians do not view Iran as a threat. As its principle ally in the region, Iranian support of Syria can be seen not as a strategic liability, but rather as a strategic asset in the face of what it views as a largely hostile region vis-à-vis Israel on its western border and the United States in Iraq to the east. With each country faced with a regional U.S. blockade in the form of imposed sanctions regimes, increased cooperation between the two in the wake of the U.S. invasion of Iraq is logical.<sup>50</sup> Each state views the other as a necessary ally; Syria gets much needed foreign direct investment from Iran and Iran has an Arab counterweight in a region largely hostile to its every move.

As Nabil Sukkar points out, ties with Iran are becoming stronger and more nuanced all the time with Iranian investment ranging from car manufacturing to the provision of discounted natural gas for the Syrian economy, which will soon face a domestic energy crisis as its reserves dry up. In 2006, Iranian investment in Syria was approximately \$400 million, making Iran the third-largest investor in the country behind Saudi Arabia



and Turkey. This is due to change rapidly.

Currently there is a \$2 billion industrial zone planned for Iranian businesses. With the need for new auto industry projects as well as transportation networks, Iranian companies are moving in to Syria in droves. The recent privatization measures in Syria are certainly compelling for Iranian investors. Recently, officials from both countries announced plans to increase Iranian investment in Syria to approximately \$10 billion over the next five years. As such, Iran is proving more of a buttress to Syrian economic growth. Still, though ties with Iran remain strong and important, they are not sufficient to maintain Syria indefinitely and they certainly do not solve the larger problems the country faces.

While Iran serves as a necessary release valve for the Syrian economy, it is not sufficient for the looming pressures the country faces. Increased strain due to dwindling oil reserves, a booming youth population, rising unemployment and the influx of war refugees all put considerable strain on the Syrian economy. The shadow of these growing problems extends far into the future. Bilateral sanctions from the United States today restrict access to dollar-based transactions, crucial IT components needed to catch up to the information revolution and the necessary room for Syria to maneuver itself into the global economy. While it is a release valve, Iran is certainly not a panacea to Syrian economic woes. Yet, the dilemma of dependence and subsequent prolongation of the Syrian cycle of diplomatic isolation and economic stasis at the hands of Iran remains. It will not be broken easily.

## CONCLUSION

While many in Damascus today will talk about the United States and Israel being the real threats to Middle East peace, they cannot help but admit the pressure of the international pariah status that the country has worked itself into. The ongoing conflict in Iraq has sent about 1.7 million refugees into the country, putting incredible strain upon Syria's socialist system. While the government has pledged to stymie the flow of foreign fighters into Iraq, it should perhaps be concerned with the implications in Syria once these fighters return or decide to turn their gaze upon what they view as an apostate regime in Damascus. Iranian aid in the form of cars and natural gas certainly have sped up the domestic economic motors, but the flow of Iranian arms into Lebanon is the most likely reason that Syria had to bear the brunt of Israeli fighter jets in September 2007. Furthermore, as Iran moves closer to being the world's ninth nuclear power, Syria may want to rethink its contract with the state as it draws more and more global opprobrium.

The lack of response to the Israeli attack last year is perhaps the most telling. While the measured tone of President Bashar al-Assad in his interview with the BBC explaining the lack of Syrian military does not necessarily imply a weakness, it may show the dilemma that Syria has found itself in vis-à-vis its stronger neighbor and its truest ally.<sup>51</sup> Assad stated that Syria “ha[s] its own means of response,” drawing many to conclude an asymmetrical response. The reality could be that Syria wishes to bow out of the military struggle with Israel; Faysal Mekkdad, the Syrian deputy foreign minister recently said in an interview that a return of the Golan continues to be the price for Syrian peace.<sup>52</sup> Perceptions of what has rightfully and not rightfully been occupied by Israel throughout the last four decades continue to cloud the waters of a lasting and legitimate peace between Syria and Israel. A Syrian Golan, he states, has always been the Arab consensus.

In the wake of the Arab summit held in Damascus at the end of March, Syria might do well to listen to the Arab consensus a little closer. One way to do so would be to solidify that Arab consensus by showing its commitment to peace as ardently as it is trying show off its Arab stripes. Another may be for it to diversify its regional and global economic support as a means of weakening the Persian ties that have bound it for too closely to the whims of Tehran.

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39 U.S. State Department, interview with officials in U.S. Embassy Damascus, January 5, 2008.

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# Looking Beyond the Golan Heights

## *Examining the True Impediments to a Syrian-Israeli Peace*

*Khaled Al-Sharikh & James Kennedy*

Aside from Lebanon, which has been in a unique predicament since the start of its civil war in 1975, the only neighboring country that has not yet signed a peace treaty with Israel is the Syrian Arab Republic. Although Egypt made peace with Israel in 1979 and Jordan did so in 1994, Syria has yet to follow suit, and so the two countries technically remain in a state of war to this day. Since the establishment of Israel in 1948, the two nations have fought three major wars and have had several altercations by proxy in Lebanon. Israel and Syria essentially did not communicate between the Six Day War in 1967 (in which Israel captured the contentious Golan Heights from Syria) and 1991, when delegations from the two nations finally met at the Madrid Conference. Since then, the peace process has moved slowly, nearly stalling within the past eight years. While it would be easy to claim that the Golan Heights, which remains in Israeli hands, is the sole cause for the propagation of this international stalemate, in truth the situation is far more complicated. While both the issue of the Golan Heights and Syria's continued support for militant groups and its alliance with Iran may seem like insurmountable obstacles, in actuality, these issues are hardly as impossible to solve as they are made out to be. Instead, the true reason for the lack of a Syrian-Israeli peace is because of the current political climate and the often-overlooked issue of geographical circumstance that make forging a comprehensive peace much more difficult to obtain than it was for Israel to with both Egypt and Jordan.

### **Part One: Assessing the intractability of obstacles to peace**

When it comes to a Syrian-Israeli peace, there is a common belief that there are only two intractable obstacles: the Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights and Syrian support for what Israel considers to be terrorist groups, including Hezbollah and Hamas. While these are indeed difficult issues, they are by no means unsolvable. There is little disagreement that a Syrian-Israeli track to peace would be far simpler than addressing the intricacies of the Palestinian question, since it is simply a territorial disagreement rather than a complex historical conflict involving the sensitive issue of the “right of return” and

the status of holy, coveted Jerusalem. In fact, there have been instances in the past, especially after the 1991 Madrid Conference where peace between the two nations was but a signature away, and particularly at the meeting between Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Syrian President Hafez al-Assad at Shepherdstown, West Virginia in 2000.

In this modern era, where land for peace seems to be the accepted framework, it is the occupation of the Golan Heights that drives this superficial wedge between Syria and Israel. Since its stunning victory in the Six Day War of 1967, Israel has maintained a firm grip over the Golan Heights, which resulted in the extension of Israeli law to the region in 1981, essentially constituting a de facto annexation. Although various UN resolutions, including Resolution 242, have called on Israel to withdraw from this occupied territory, Israel has allegedly kept the Golan Heights for two reasons: the region's militarily strategic location and the water resources of the Sea of Galilee, which provides 15% of Israel's water.

It is true that the Golan Heights is extremely strategic in that it provides an elevated view of Israel, Syria and Lebanon. Indeed, Mount Hermon (or Jabal al- Shaykh) is at the exact point where the three nations currently meet. Prior to the war of 1967, Syria used the elevation of the Golan Heights to shell neighboring Israeli cities, and this shelling was used both as a bargaining tool throughout their negotiations over the demilitarized zone post-1948 and in the buildup to the Six Day War. Mount Hermon also serves as an excellent surveillance outpost since it provides such an elevated view, at a height of around 3,000 ft.

However, the past 40 years have seen great technological advances, especially in the military. In the age of satellites, laser-guided missiles and complete Israeli military superiority over Syria's outdated and deficient armed forces, the Golan Heights in Syrian hands no longer represents a military threat to Israel. Even if Syria were to control the region, it would never dare to invade Israel again because of its incredible deterrent in its excellent military capabilities, including the nuclear weapons which Israel is widely believed to possess (the Israeli government neither confirms nor denies this). Indeed, even the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) Chief of Staff Moshe Ya'alon stated in 2004 that the Golan Heights no longer poses a strategic threat to Israel and that Israel would be better served by a peace agreement with Syria<sup>1</sup>. Syria has even agreed in the past to maintain only a small military presence in the region as long as Israel does the same on the other side. A comprehensive, final peace with Syria would be a boon to Israel's security. This would not only hinder the supply and support for militant groups, but it would also almost certainly provide final borders for the State of Israel over 60 years



after the nation was established, since Lebanon would undoubtedly come in line after its dominant Syrian neighbor. It would also help facilitate peace between Israel and the rest of the Arab world, especially Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, because it would be in line with the Arab Peace Initiative, a plan adopted in 2002 by the Arab League which stipulates that, in exchange for Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories, all Arab states would normalize relations with Israel (however, a solution to the Palestinian question would be required as part of the plan as well). Finally, Syria's pursuit of peace with Israel would drive a wedge between Iran and Syria, potentially robbing Iran of its strongest ally and would further marginalize the Iranian regime. In fact, it could even provide a basis for cooperation between Israel and the Arab world in the face of a common threat in Iran, and further smooth the progress of peace between the nations.

The second issue of contention is frequently ignored, but forms a much bigger obstacle. In a region in which fresh water is a rare commodity, much has been made of the Golan Heights' water resources. The Sea of Galilee currently provides Israel with 15% of its water. The Banias Spring, which originates from Mount Hermon on the Golan Heights, provides approximately 100 million cubic meters of water to Israel a year.<sup>2</sup> Negotiations in Shepherdstown, West Virginia between Prime Minister Barak and President al-Assad broke down over a mere 200 meters on the northeast shore of the Sea of Galilee. Israelis fear that if Syria were to control the Sea of Galilee, it would leave far too much power in the hands of a Syrian regime that has historically been hostile to Israel. This, they argue, means that Syria might attempt to choke Israel through its water supply by polluting the water or placing a dam so that the sea would not flow into the Jordan River.

Prior to the Six Day War of 1967, Syria had indeed attempted to divert the Golan's Banias Spring from Israel, and this was one of Israel's main motivations for going to war. However, any future attempts to do something similar would require approximately two to three years to implement. Considering the proximity of the Golan Heights to Israel's pre-1967 borders, Israel could very easily conduct a surgical strike on any pumps or dams placed on the Banias Spring<sup>3</sup>. However, there would likely be no need for such military maneuvers. The "Rabin deposit," as the proposal made by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1994 to the Syrians regarding the Golan Heights is commonly called, included water-sharing agreements along with an Israeli withdrawal within three to five years and a demilitarization of the region.<sup>4</sup> Agreement over the water resources of the Golan Heights is achievable by giving Syria complete control over the occupied region, while maintaining an outside enforcer, such as the United Nations, to make sure that all aspects of the agreement are



respected. Therefore, this seemingly intractable issue is indeed very solvable and does not pose that strong an obstacle to peace between the two nations. In fact, water-sharing could be a source of co-dependence because Israel has the technology to pump the water while Syria would have control over the water resources.

In response to Israel's occupation of the Golan Heights and Syria's comparative military weakness, Syria has opted to support terrorist groups such as Hamas and Hezbollah as a means of putting pressure on the Jewish state. This has proven quite the thorn in Israel's side, since Hamas is now in control of the Gaza Strip, and Hezbollah was not defeated in the 2006 war in Lebanon as Israel had planned; Hezbollah primarily survives on heavy support, both financially and militarily, from Syria and Iran. The Syrian regime vociferously supports Hezbollah's political movement as part of the March 8 movement in Lebanon, and Damascus hosts the offices of several groups considered terrorist organizations by some, including, until recently, the offices of Khaled Meshaal, the head of the political bureau of Hamas. Syria has also firmly maintained a strong alliance with Iran in order to supply and fund these groups.

Asymmetric warfare has become Syria's only bargaining chip. In exchange for the return of the Golan Heights, peace and the prospect of economic prosperity, Syria has shown that it is more than willing to give up support of these organizations and, vicariously, its relationship with Iran. President al-Assad has said on several occasions that economic prosperity is key to his platform of modernization.<sup>5</sup> With the guaranteed financial windfall that would result from the removal of sanctions implemented by the United States, an increase in foreign direct investment from Western nations, and economic cooperation with Israel, he could finally pursue his economic development and liberalization policies. The issue of Syria's influence in Lebanon is closely tied to its support of terrorist groups since it uses Hezbollah for the purposes of extending its influence. However, just as it was willing to withdraw from Lebanon in 2005 in response to the international outcry resulting from former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri's assassination, Syria would be willing to scale back its influence in Lebanon, if not remove it completely, for the sake of regaining the Golan Heights and economic prosperity. Syria has shown itself in the past to be a pragmatic player willing to alter its policies based on what is in its interests. The secular, Arab nationalist Syrian regime does not have so strong an ideological or religious affiliation with Hamas, Hezbollah or Iran that it would be willing to forego its own interests for their sake. In fact, Israel could even provide an incentive for Syria to rein down on Hezbollah by giving them control of the Shebaa Farms, land which is occupied by Israel,

claimed by Hezbollah and legally, per the United Nations, belonging to Syria. Such a transfer of control would inevitably cause a rift in the axis of Syria and Iran, vicariously diminishing Iran's influence in the region.

An interesting development has taken place in the past few weeks as major regional news outlets, including the Kuwaiti newspaper *Al-Rai* and the Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz*, that Khaled Meshaal of Hamas has relocated from his offices in Damascus to Sudan. On September 2, it was reported that Meshaal had moved to Khartoum at the request of the Syrian government<sup>6</sup>. Hamas

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**Unfortunately, the current leadership in Syria and Israel seems unwilling to take the first steps towards peace, resulting in a diplomatic stalemate.**

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later denied that this had occurred, and further reports have been conflicting. If Meshaal has indeed left Damascus at the behest of Syria, then it is probable that Hamas would not want the news to be widely spread because it indicates that Hamas is losing support from Syria. Syria would not necessarily want to publicize these cut ties either because it would be politically risky to appear as though the regime is neglecting the Palestinian cause. But if Assad did ask Meshaal to move, the action speaks for itself. By distancing itself from the extremism associated with Hamas, Syria is clearly anticipating a major response from Israel, and since Syrian support for Hamas was a major obstacle in negotiations with the Israeli government, he is likely to get one.

## **Part Two: Assessing the True Impediments to Peace**

A peace agreement between Syria and Israel will certainly have to address all of the aforementioned issues; the Golan Heights, water resources, and Syria's support for terrorist groups will make up the bulk of the agreement. As we have demonstrated, these issues, though complex, are in fact completely surmountable challenges. Negotiating teams would have to work hard, but it is likely that both parties could reach an agreement that would be acceptable to both sides. How then can we explain the lack of a Syrian-Israeli peace accord during the past sixty years? The answer is not that the issues are unsolvable, but instead that there has not yet been a time when the circumstances were conducive to a peace agreement.

A successful peace agreement consists of more than a signed piece of paper. While extensive preparation, skillful diplomacy and innovative solutions to intractable issues are all crucial components of successful peace negotiations, there are other *circumstantial* factors that must be considered. We believe

that there are four factors that are of tremendous importance to a nascent peace deal. Firstly, there must be leaders on both sides deeply committed to peace, and they must be willing to take political and tangible risks in the interests of peace. Oftentimes, there must also be a third party to help bring the former enemies together at the negotiating table,. Additionally, there must be mutual respect on both sides, which can be an incredibly difficult thing to achieve when animosity is deeply rooted on both sides. Finally, there should be potential areas of cooperation so that both nations have joint projects and common interests in order to foster communication and growing respect.

### **I. Lack of Leadership Committed to Making Peace**

The importance of having two leaders who truly believe that peace is in their best interests cannot be overstated. There is no doubt that lack of such leaders is playing a large role in preventing any progress toward Syrian-Israeli peace. On both sides of this conflict, we find a clear lack of leadership willing to take the initiative and move the process along towards comprehensive peace. More importantly, those leaders must illustrate that they are willing to make painful compromises for the sake of a just agreement. Although the concept seems fundamental enough, it must be remembered that there are reasons why peace is so elusive, and likewise there are reasons why leaders in conflict do not simply change course and issue declarations of peace. History has illustrated that making such an abrupt about-face can come with great costs, including ending the political career of such a leader, and in some cases, such action results in the death of those leaders.

There is no better illustration of the importance of leadership strongly committed to peace than Anwar Sadat, who succeeded Gamal Abdul Nasser as president of Egypt after Nasser's death in 1970. Although Sadat presided over the surprise attack that started the Yom Kippur War in 1973, he would deliver a speech in the Israeli Knesset a mere four years later. His announcement that he was willing to visit Jerusalem came as a complete surprise, and no one, not even Sadat, was sure of what the response would be. He realized that there was a psychological barrier between Israel and the rest of the Arab world which had to be overcome before a true peace deal could even begin to be discussed.<sup>7</sup> Many in the Middle East condemned this action, and Egypt was expelled from the Arab League after peace was made with Israel because the Arab nations did not approve of this unilateral action, instead believing that peace with Israel should only be made if the Arab nations acted as a unified body. The costs did not stop there, and the entire process ended on a sour note when Sadat was assassinated in 1981 by Egyptian Islamist extremists. Perhaps this has frightened other leaders away from taking such visionary steps, and

unfortunately, the current leadership in Syria and Israel seem unwilling to take the first steps toward peace, resulting in the diplomatic stalemate that has existed for the greater part of Israel's existence.

In many ways, Bashar al-Assad has not yet been able to show his true colors on foreign policy. The Syrian track has not yet been truly pursued since he came to office following the death of his father, Hafez al-Assad, in 2000. Since Hafez had been in power since 1970, almost all previous attempts at negotiating between the two nations went through him, and his strong personality played a role in all of the developments.<sup>8</sup> His son, however, has not had a true opportunity to assert himself. Some are pessimistic that he will pursue a different foreign policy than his father, saying that ultimately, Bashar is the product of the system built by his father, and that he will "protect the core constituencies of the Assad regime."<sup>9</sup> While this may be true, it should also be remembered that Bashar was not groomed his entire life for the post, and was instead educated in London as he trained to be an ophthalmologist. Likely, it is not so much that he shares his late father's vision on every foreign policy issue, but rather that he is merely attempting to maintain stability in Syria. Many say that Bashar wants reform, but that he wants to pursue it at a steady pace in order to prevent chaos from breaking out.

There is, however, one school of thought that suggests that Bashar al-Assad does not actually want to reach a peace agreement with Israel because, some people argue, it is in the best interests of the Alawite regime to maintain a state of conflict with Israel, at least in name. The gaze of Syrians would turn from the Golan Heights to Syria's domestic issues, and a desire for political and economic liberalization would be likely to follow, and this could run contrary to the interests of the current regime. Currently, Syria is spending about 65 to 70 percent of its budget on the army,<sup>10</sup> and although with peace, a substantial amount of this money could be freed up for domestic spending on infrastructural improvement, this would most likely lead to a reassessment of the political situation within Syria. While many feel comfortable immediately throwing this idea into the realm of conspiracy theories, dismissing such an idea, especially in light of the rational actions that Syria has always pursued, would be naïve. Whether Bashar truly desires peace or not, it is safe to say that he is unlikely to suddenly travel to Jerusalem. Such a sudden challenge to the status quo is likely to upset the system and to threaten the stability that the Ba'athist regime has been determined to maintain.

The leadership on the Israeli side of the equation is just as disheartening. The Israeli political system is fickle at best, and since 1988, no political party has managed to maintain a coalition government for a full four-year term of the Knesset.<sup>11</sup> While some argue that these frequent exchanges of power prevent

any one party from dominating the system, it also makes it very difficult to make major shifts in foreign policy. It takes a very charismatic leader to break this cycle and truly try to alter the status quo. The quintessential example of this was Prime Minister Rabin, who made great strides toward peace with both the Palestinians and the Syrians, and, like Egyptian President Sadat, paid for his actions with his life. He was assassinated by a right-wing Israeli who was vehemently opposed to the Oslo peace process.

Unfortunately for the peace process, Ehud Olmert – the current prime minister of Israel, at least when this article was written – lacks the political capital to continue working toward peace with Syria. Olmert's entire tenure as prime minister has been unusual from the beginning. He assumed the post after the death of Ariel Sharon, and has since presided over the controversial war against Hezbollah in Lebanon in 2006, the ongoing situation with Hamas in the Gaza Strip (which has recently tied up a great deal of Israel's military resources), as well as the fallout from the March 2008 shooting at the Mercaz Harav Yeshiva, a Jewish seminary in Jerusalem. Although indirect negotiations with Syria through Turkish mediation have taken place recently and both sides have publicly expressed a desire for peace, it is very clear that Olmert does not have enough credibility or support to mount a true attempt at serious negotiations with the Syrian government.

One might think that it is fortunate, then, that Olmert has announced his intention to resign as prime minister of Israel. However, this may not necessarily be the best thing for the peace process. While Tzipi Livni has defeated the more hawkish Shaul Mofaz in the Kadima Party's internal elections for leader of the party, chances are high that she will be unable to form a stable coalition, necessitating general Knesset elections. This means that the door is wide open for a power shift, and it is very likely that someone with a clear dislike for the current peace process, such as Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu, could soon be at the helm of the nation. Olmert may then have a couple of months before he truly steps down (most likely to face criminal charges for his alleged corruption), and he might very well provide one final push for an agreement with Syria. However, it is unlikely that something as controversial as forsaking the Golan Heights could be achieved before that day comes.

## **II. Lack of a Third Party Committed to Making Peace**

Considering their historically poor interaction with one another, both as partners at the negotiating table and as neighbors, Syria and Israel cannot be expected to reach a total and comprehensive peace agreement independently. Although the role of mediator has occasionally been assumed by other nations



– such as Turkey and France in the current negotiations – the job almost always falls to the United States due to its status as the current world hegemon. In the past, the United States has made honest attempts at brokering peace, such as in the 1978 Camp David summit between Egypt and Israel, which eventually led to normalization of relations between the two nations. It was clear that President Carter was sincere in his desire for peace and that he genuinely wanted to participate in the conference.<sup>12</sup> The United States also managed to bring Syria and Israel to the table before, in the 1991 Madrid Conference, along with Lebanon and Jordan, whose delegation included a delegation of Palestinians. In those days, the reputation of the United States abroad was far more prestigious, and many countries perceived it as a fair mediator.

Sadly, this is simply not the case today. It is clear from the official rhetoric of the current administration of President George W. Bush that the United States does not plan on being an unbiased mediator between Israel and Syria at any point in the near future. Instead of bringing the two countries to the negotiating table, like his father did during the Madrid Conference of 1991, President Bush has instead increased the international isolation of Syria by calling it “out of step” with other nations in the region and by placing it on the Axis of Evil.<sup>13</sup> Under the Bush administration, the United States has backed up this rhetoric with concrete action. In 2003, Congress passed the Syrian Accountability and Lebanese Sovereignty Restoration Act (SALSA) warning Syria to end its support of terrorism and to end its military occupation of Lebanon. Shortly thereafter, President Bush signed an executive order implementing sanctions that severely limited Syria’s ability to import U.S. goods and prevented any Syrian air carrier from landing a plane on U.S. soil. The bill requires the Secretary of State to submit a report to Congress every year about the progress of Syria towards meeting the conditions that SALSA establishes. These grand gestures are unlikely to have any effect other than to continue pushing Syria down its path of isolation. In the meantime, the United States has continued its steadfast support of Israel, explicitly granting Israel the moral high ground, creating a diplomatic hierarchy in which Syria, as a member of the infamous axis of evil, is to be forced to give in to Israeli demands.

Not surprisingly, the perception within Syria is that the United States has no interest in attaining a comprehensive peace agreement between the two nations. Faisal Mekdad, the Syrian deputy foreign minister and the highest-ranking Syrian to attend the now-seemingly ill-fated Annapolis conference of 2007, believes that the actions of the second Bush administration have completely stopped any movement on the peace track.<sup>14</sup> For Mekdad, the main policy of the Bush administration is “that there should be no peace in



the Middle East.”<sup>15</sup> He blames the United States for protecting Israel and for providing weapons to it. He also articulated Syria’s criticism of the Annapolis conference, calling it a last-ditch effort at the end of Bush’s term. To Mekdad and the rest of the Syrian government, it was as if Bush suddenly “remembered that there was something to be tackled in the Middle East.”<sup>16</sup>

As previously mentioned, there have been some attempts at mediation through Turkey recently, with both sides confirming that indirect negotiations have been taking place over the past year, but as of yet, they have not even met at the same place yet, indicating that there is still much ground to be covered. France, under the guidance of President Nicolas Sarkozy, has recently developed a cordial relationship with Syria and has been to a great extent successful in starting to draw Syria out of its international isolation. Sarkozy is also attempting to organize direct Israeli-Syrian negotiations.<sup>17</sup> France has been gaining a lot of credibility on the international scene with Sarkozy’s highly publicized establishment of the Union for the Mediterranean and his apparently successful negotiations with Russia regarding the crisis in Georgia. With this legitimacy and Sarkozy’s charisma, France may very well be able to jumpstart these negotiations. However, a deal would ultimately need United States assistance, as Israel and Syria clearly expect it, and because the United States wields so much power in the region that its help would be necessary. If the United States has any interest in actively promoting and achieving a comprehensive peace deal between Syria and Israel, the first thing it must do is stop issuing veiled threats toward Syria. Such actions have certainly destroyed any legitimacy the United States may have had as an honest peace broker, and it will take years for that image to be rebuilt under the right leadership. If the United States chooses to maintain its polarized view of the world, and treats Syria as a rogue nation instead of as a respected member of the international community, it will find Syria incredibly stubborn in its positions and increasingly resistant to any attempts made at peace.

### **III. Lack of Mutual Respect**

Nations are proud entities as a rule, and this phenomenon seems even more natural in countries in the Middle East. The region was the site of the early development of human civilization, and all its nations are immensely proud of their long histories. Because of this, it is imperative that any nation seeking favorable relations with another nation in the Middle East must show respect, or their attempts at fostering cordial relations will be rebuked. Therefore, it follows that any peace involving any Middle Eastern nation must stem out of true respect. Syria is no exception to this rule, and it will not be forced by Israel into a peace agreement that it does not wish to sign. Neither nation

has ever offered a positive picture of the other, so even such a simple gesture will eventually amount to some tangible, and highly-valued, international respect.

There is a clear lack of respect on the part of Israel toward Syria. It is not necessary to look further than a recent example of Israel violating the sovereignty of Syria. While many details of the event on September 6, 2007 are unclear, a few things are certain. Israeli jets entered Syrian airspace, bombed a facility near Deir ez-Zor, and then ejected fuel tanks over Turkey.<sup>18</sup> After this was revealed to the world, both sides were conspicuously silent, although a number of theories emerged in the Western media over the following days, with explanations of the target ranging from “weapons destined for Hezbollah militants”<sup>19</sup> to “a nuclear facility constructed in Syria with North Korean aid.”<sup>20</sup> Although the identity of the target is still not clear today, what is clear is that there was a violation of Syrian airspace without explanation, which is not an action that any party truly interested in peace would undertake.

This was not the first time that Israel has violated Syrian airspace and

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attacked targets on Syrian soil. In 2003, Israel launched its first airstrike against Syria in 20 years when it hit what it claimed was a terrorist training camp only 10 miles from Damascus.<sup>21</sup>

As if that were not threatening enough, Israeli planes struck even closer to the Syrian consciousness when warplanes buzzed President al-Assad’s palace in the coastal city of Latakia in 2006.<sup>22</sup> Both of these were in response to terrorism within Israel and were intended to serve as warnings against Syria aiding militants who attack civilians, but ultimately these serve no purpose other than to escalate tensions between the two countries. These attacks have been in conjunction with numerous examples of inflammatory rhetoric from Tel Aviv, often in the form of thinly veiled threats. In 2004, IDF Chief of Staff Ya’alon said that countries that support terrorism “cannot sleep quietly at night,” and then went on to mention Syria as one of those countries.<sup>23</sup> Ceasing such blatant violations of sovereignty would be a good start for a nation that claims to desire peace.

However, not all of the blame should be placed on Israel. Syria also does not treat the state of Israel with any respect. First of all, it does not even officially recognize Israel, and there is nothing more immature in the realm of international relations than not recognizing that another country exists, especially when said country has been around for sixty years. Secondly, Syria

has utilized inflammatory rhetoric of its own on numerous occasions. In 2003, in response to the aforementioned attack on the suspected terrorist training camp, then-Foreign Minister Farouq al-Shara – currently the vice president – warned Israel not to carry out any more attacks and hinted at a possible military response, saying that “[Syria has] many cards that we have not played. Don’t forget that there are many Israeli settlements in the Golan. I am not exaggerating but I am describing things as they might happen.”<sup>24</sup> Clearly such statements are completely counterproductive; as it is understood that Syria would never strike against Israel, statements like these will only give Israel more legitimacy in its own military actions that may violate Syrian sovereignty in the future. If reports that the target attacked by Israel in Deir ez-Zour was a nascent nuclear facility are accurate, this would be yet another ill-advised move on Syria’s part. Not only did Israel display Syrian weakness by attacking a target 10 miles from Damascus without a response, but it also confirms the views of Israeli and American hawks that Syria threatens the stability of the region. This serves only as an obstacle to the return of the Golan Heights. Additionally, Syria’s unconditional support for Iran, which has made a habit of making virulently anti-Israel statements, is also counterproductive.

It should be clear that military strikes do not aid the peace cause in any way. Syria is a very proud nation, and it will not subject itself to a peace that is dictated to it. President al-Assad will not accept an agreement that humiliates Syria because it would weaken his international image and the his regime’s control within Syria. Every bomb dropped has the potential of setting the peace process back. The complementing “fighting words” that come out of both Tel Aviv and Damascus may seem like little more than just words, but they have the potential to hinder the peace process if they are used without any regard as to their effect. If peace is to be achieved, it must be reached at a negotiating table, and grow out of respect, not out of fear for further military retaliation.

#### **IV. Lack of Areas for Cooperation**

Most people who foresee an eventual peace deal between Syria and Israel believe that it will be a “cold peace,” meaning that there will be a formal cessation of hostilities and a complete diplomatic recognition of both sides, but little more. While it is not impossible for two countries to make a “cold peace” that requires no further interaction, it is far more likely for peace to develop as a result of repeated interaction on both an official and unofficial level. While official interaction receives more attention, unofficial interaction can be an overlooked asset. If two countries naturally have numerous areas

for cooperation or collaboration, these are likely to translate into personal interactions that will bring the states closer together.

A clear example of this is the situation between Israel and Jordan. The validity of the peace treaty that was signed in 1994 was greatly strengthened by the fact that the two nations had a long history of interaction and had numerous potential realms for continuing cooperation. The two countries had always been inexorably linked; they share a 148-mile long border and mutual concern for Jerusalem, as well as having assisted each other with the difficulties of governing the West Bank.<sup>25</sup> There have been numerous documented occasions in which there was high-level communication between the two nations, and it is even said that Jordan warned the Golda Meir government twelve days before the Yom Kippur War of 1973 broke out that a sneak attack was planned.<sup>26</sup> More relevant to this discussion, however, are the minor projects that the two have undertaken jointly.

Even before the Yom Kippur War, there were low-level exchanges between the two nations. In fact, as early as the 1960s, Israel and Jordan were cooperating over one of the most precious resources in the region: water. Israel invented modern drip irrigation technology in the 1960s. The value of this technology is that it saves approximately 30 to 50 percent of water used in irrigation when compared to conventional systems. Although developed in the Negev Desert by an Israeli company called Netafim, it was sold to Jordanian businessman Sharrif Nasser for US\$36,000. What is even more remarkable is that Sharrif Nasser's nephew was none other than the late King Hussein of Jordan.<sup>27</sup>

There have been numerous other examples of interaction between the two nations at higher levels, most of them taking place long before the peace treaty was signed in the 1990s. In 1970, during the Jordanian Civil War, Israel sent supplies to aid the government.<sup>28</sup> There has also been a joint effort to capitalize on the Dead Sea's mineral deposits, and recently there has even been talk of making an airport straddling the border, to be named the International Peace Airport.<sup>29</sup> Although such interactions are not exactly necessary for peace, it is clear that they do ease the transition period from two countries being enemies to being good neighbors. The problem is that there are fewer areas for cooperation between Israel and Syria than there are between Israel and Jordan.

First of all, the border between Israel and Syria is decidedly smaller than that of Israel and Jordan. If Syria regains the Golan Heights (which will be assumed here because it is unlikely that peace will materialize otherwise), the two would share a border of less than 50 miles. This immediately restricts the number of projects that can be undertaken jointly. The geography of this border is also relevant; while Israel's border with Jordan includes the desert

and the Dead Sea, the Israeli-Syrian border would be mostly either green fields or tumultuous rocky terrain.

A more important problem is the lack of large population centers near the border. The closest city to this border on the Israeli side would be Tiberius, with a population of about 40,000; there are no comparable Syrian cities close to what would be the border between the two nations. In comparison, the area comprising the Israeli city of Eilat and the Jordanian city of Aqaba is home to more than 130,000 Israeli and Jordanian inhabitants. As a result, this area has been where most cross-border exchanges have taken place, even before official peace. The waters of the Gulf of Aqaba (on which both cities lie) had been jointly patrolled to prevent terrorists from entering Eilat, the two airports monitored each other's communications and exchanged information to prevent crashes, and there was even collaboration over mosquito spraying so that the mosquitos would not take refuge on whichever side was not sprayed.<sup>30</sup>

Syria and Israel do not enjoy such geographical blessings. There is, however, a potential for some cooperation over the use of water in the region. Mount Hermon, the source of water for the Jordan River and thus the Dead Sea, is located on the border of the two nations, and its water resources could be the foundation of a mutually beneficial partnership. Syria has gone from conflict to cooperation over water before. For many years, Turkey and Syria had sour relations with each other, fueled by a disagreement over who possessed the Hatay province on their border. Turkey used its control of the Euphrates as leverage in that disagreement. However, the situation has since warmed, and now, the two nations even cooperate over distribution of water from the Euphrates River.<sup>31</sup> However, it currently seems far more likely that Israel will continue to control the Mount Hermon watershed, instead of sharing it with a nation with whom it is technically still at war.

The importance of areas for cooperation cannot be overstated. If used wisely, they can lead to a de facto peace, which brings official peace that much closer. While Jordan and Israel had no shortage of areas for cooperation before and after their peace in 1994, the situation is very different from that of Syria and Israel, which do not have such a large realm of possibilities. Sadly, this means that there will be little Syrian-Israeli contact, and this will make sustainable peace much more difficult to achieve.

## **Conclusion**

It seems that in any given week, the media blows hot and cold on the prospects of peace between Syria and Israel. News agencies will one day report inflammatory rhetoric, and the next day will discuss the possibilities of peace



negotiations in the near future. This shows that the two nations are currently in limbo, stuck between a state of war and a state of peace, and at any given time, either of them appears to be within reach. While the violent nature of the history of the region makes it easier to believe that we are always closer to war than peace, it is unlikely that a conventional, direct war would break out between Syria and Israel. No matter how slow, the momentum between the two nations has been away from a true confrontation and closer to eventual reconciliation. Many in Syria and in Israel know that the seemingly irreconcilable issues are in fact quite solvable. Occasionally, for instance with the mediation attempts of France, the momentum appears to grow, but as has happened in the past, it is entirely possible that it will slow down once again as one or both sides apply the brakes. The reason why it has been so slow is because of the unfortunate political circumstances that have not as of yet proven favorable to an agreement. This is not to say that any peace agreement achieved would be based entirely on luck; a substantial amount of work, both at the negotiating table and in preparation, is required in order to create the right conditions for agreement. However, there are certain factors that make peace more attainable, and when they are met, it will make a lasting peace achievable. The lack of leadership and a third party dedicated to peace, as well as the lack of mutual respect and of areas of cooperation, need to be remedied if a lasting peace between fierce enemies is ever to be achieved.

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# The Case for Economic Reform in Syria

*Victoria Gilbert*

Syria was once at the crossroads of a global network of trade where goods on camels came from the east to be traded in Damascene markets for goods brought from across the Mediterranean. It is said that the Prophet Mohammed even brought a caravan to the lands of Syria before he heard the call to spread the message of God. Cities once thrived on the taxes placed on ancient traders, and crusaders built fortresses in order to watch over the trade routes below. Now goods pass from east to west by plane or ship, and the overland trade routes have been abandoned. While Syria is still at this geographical crossroads, the importance of those crossroads has waned, leaving it in an economic lurch. The nation utilized its oil wealth as a means of ensuring prosperity during the second half of the twentieth century, but Syria can no longer depend on the rapidly dwindling supplies available. The nation must now put its heart into the goal of reform or be left behind by the burgeoning global economy.

The current economic situation in Syria is not conducive to optimism. Syria faces high unemployment, especially among the young and the urban populations.<sup>1</sup> The growth rate of the Syrian population has put increasing pressure on the job market and will continue to do so for years to come.<sup>2</sup> A high population growth rate slows the expansion of the economy, dilutes any benefits of growth, and only increases the number of the poor in society, which exacerbates present inequalities. Not only does it increase concerns about poverty, but the so-called “youth bulges” have historically been associated with increased levels of violence. In nations struggling to expand their economies to accommodate a growing number of young people, internal strife is a very real concern as disenchanting young people find violent means to express their displeasure with their situation.<sup>3</sup> With a growing number of radical groups moving into neighboring Iraq, the government must be aware of the danger of leaving its young people without employment. This only exaggerates how imperative it is for Syria to focus on the growth of its economy.

The labor force is generally unskilled, yet some improvements have been made in recent times. Under the reign of Bashar al-Assad, the son of Syria's previous dictator, President Hafez al-Assad, a number of private universities

have been permitted to open, offering new educational opportunities to the Syrian people. Non-governmental organizations have also begun to take route in Syria, offering young people greater opportunities to obtain experience in a working environment.<sup>4</sup> While austerity measures put into place under the reign of Hafez al-Assad reduced spending on public education, the younger Assad has made efforts to put greater funds into Syria's educational system.<sup>5</sup>

Investment, especially foreign direct investment, has also proven problematic for Syria over the last several decades. The economy has been intensely regulated, making investment complicated and slow because of the choking bureaucracy. Political unrest within the country and uneasy relations between Syria and its neighbors have also discouraged potential investors. However, this climate of unrest cannot be changed quickly; therefore, other means will have to be considered for financing Syrian development in the immediate future.<sup>6</sup> Recently there has been an increase in investments in Syria from other nations in the Arab world, yet these investments have generally been in the real estate sector. As such, these investments neither strengthen the development of the Syrian economy nor enhance its GDP.<sup>7</sup>

Another noteworthy dynamic from a policy perspective is that of American sanctions. There are specific items which America allows to be traded with Syria. The list includes medical supplies and equipment, spare parts and safety components for planes, infrastructure for information technology, and agricultural goods. However, any other goods made in the United States or comprised of components that are more than 10% American cannot be traded with Syria. Investments and money transfers cannot be made to Syria, and the United States has also placed sanctions upon a group of six Syrian residents and citizens. Largely, these sanctions have proven to have very little effect on Syrian life and have certainly not succeeded in their aims of changing Syrian political behavior. In the modern global economy, one nation's sanctions have only a limited impact, as any goods obtained from one country can almost certainly be acquired from another nation that is willing to trade. Many goods can also be smuggled or bootlegged. Yet sanctions have had effects on companies like Syrian Air. The nation's main commercial air carrier currently flies a fleet of antiquated Russian airplanes which are in need of replacement for safety reasons. However, replacing commercial airplanes today generally means buying jets from Airbus or Boeing. Boeing is an American company, while Airbus planes consist of approximately 40% American components.<sup>8</sup> Besides affecting air carriers, the main impact of American sanctions has been on Syria's reputation. Putting Syria on America's "will not buy" list has not only prevented foreign direct investment coming from the US but also has deterred states friendly to the United States from

investing. Overall, the impacts of US sanctions are limited in scope but are still problematic for the Syrian economy and could be ameliorated with a rapprochement with the United States.<sup>9</sup>

From the perspective of natural resources, Syria currently faces a number of constraints which will probably not ease in the near future. Water is a precious commodity in the area, and water supply is going under ever greater stress as the demands of growing local populations increase. Syria is a downriver riparian of the Euphrates River, upon which it is very dependent. Water projects built by Turkey on the Euphrates have had an impact on the availability of water in Syria, which has no means of coercing Turkey into any kind of water agreement. When tensions with Turkey were high, there were concerns that Turkey would cut off the water supply to Syria, yet Turkey never adopted this tactic and tensions between the two states have now eased. In the southern part of the country, much of the regional water supply is controlled by Israeli-occupied Mount Hermon.<sup>10</sup> While renowned Syrian economist Nabil Sukkar is faithful that the Golan Heights and the mountain will one day be returned, he also believes such a return will probably have to contain a water agreement which guarantees the Israeli territories with a portion of the water from the mountain. The Golan itself is a valuable resource, particularly from a farming perspective. Not only does it contain the wealth in water from Mount Hermon, but the land in the area is volcanic and has always been conducive to farming.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, in Syria's dealings with Turkey as well as future agreements with Israel, Syria will need to be prepared to share access to water.

Another resource that has a profound influence on Syria's current economic condition is oil. This rapidly vanishing resource has kept Syria's economy healthy on a macroeconomic level since the 1990s.<sup>12</sup> Revenue from non-oil sources have not been able to cover the level of government expenditures, showing that the government has been dependent on oil money as a source of public spending.<sup>13</sup> This is no longer an option for Syria and therefore it must attempt to restructure its economy without oil revenue available as a buffer to assist Syria's citizens during the restructuring process. Not only will oil money be unavailable as a social spending buffer, but it will also not be available for use on development projects in Syria. Therefore, to assist development and restructure the economy, Syria will probably have to borrow large quantities of money.<sup>14</sup>

Another recent development in the Syrian economy has been the arrival of thousands of Iraqi refugees in two waves. The first wave generally consisted of individuals who were better off financially. In some ways, this first group of arrivals helped boost the Syrian economy as refugees spent their savings

on Syrian goods and services. The second wave has proven to be much more of a burden. Members of the second wave of immigrants came in 2006 as a result of increasing sectarian violence in Iraq. Many left their homes under duress and brought little, if anything, with them. Generally, they were poorer than the first wave, and they have been willing to take lower-paying jobs. This is problematic for Syrians trying to compete for jobs with these refugees in a labor market stricken by unemployment. The lack of employment has made it impossible for some refugee families to make ends meet, while others have run out of the savings they were living on; many families have returned to Iraq.<sup>15</sup> Yet many have stayed, pressuring the Syrian economy. The influx of capital brought in by the acquisition of a new population has led to inflation in Syria, particularly in the costs of food and housing. The price of an apartment is four times as high as the level prior to the refugee influx, and food prices have risen approximately 40%. Another concern is the strain the refugees have placed on the public services offered by the Syrian government. Elementary school class sizes have increased drastically as refugee families enroll their children in the local public schools.<sup>16</sup>

Some attempts at reform have been made by the government as it tries to gradually shift from a planned economy to more of a free-market economy. One aspect of reforms has been granting greater freedoms to the fledgling private sector of Syria. The wife of Bashar al-Assad recognized Syria's need for entrepreneurs and assisted in the establishment of Syria's first NGO, the Syrian Young Entrepreneurs Association (SYEA). SYEA provides programs for young people, assisting them in finding employment, enhancing their employability, providing education and creating opportunities for young people to create jobs. The association also provides loans, including microloans, and training on entrepreneurship to encourage young Syrians to start their own businesses in Syria. By starting businesses, Syrians not only provide jobs for themselves but also can create jobs and be part of the solution to Syria's unemployment problems.<sup>17</sup> Presently, those Syrian businesses that do exist tend to be in low-risk sectors as there is a lack of incentives in the Syrian economy for the creation of businesses in more high-risk sectors that produce valuable goods.<sup>18</sup> Many factors continue to inhibit the creation of a stronger private sector through entrepreneurship. Starting a private enterprise requires a large amount of start-up capital, which is difficult to obtain in an economy with a dearth of investment. Many also feel that the playing field is far from equal and that there is unequal access to information, opportunities, financing and expertise. There is also a general lack of information, especially in the realm of statistics. As such, there is a lack of reliable information upon which Syrians can make business

decisions.<sup>19</sup>

There are many ways in which Syria could attempt to improve its economy, and by strengthening its economy, the nation could engage in greater economic interactions with other states and take advantage of the global economy. Some Syrians are hopeful about the nation's ability to attract investors in the future. Some believe that national promotion will help, while Bouthaina Shaaban, the Minister of Expatriate Affairs, believes increased investment in Syrian development by expatriates as a possible harbinger of future trends.<sup>20</sup> A key part of developing a more efficient economic system is the removal of subsidies and a greater reduction in the guidelines that currently inhibit economic transactions. While progress has been made in reducing the level of restrictions onto the Syrian economy, these reforms are not enough to inspire the economic efficiency which could make Syrian businesses competitive globally.<sup>21</sup> However, any economic reforms, according to economist Nabil Sukkar, will have to be accompanied by reforms within the government. Otherwise, attempts at establishing a freer economy and privatizing sectors of the economy that are currently public will only lead to more corruption.<sup>22</sup> It has been witnessed in many countries switching from a planned to a market economy that public businesses which are transferred to private hands are often given to those who are in some way tied to the government, and in the end, benefit those already in power. Many problems with previous attempts at reforms have involved the reforms' slow rate of implementation as the new codes are slowly enacted by the state bureaucracy.<sup>23</sup> The state suffers from an immense bureaucracy which is overstaffed and inefficient.<sup>24</sup>

However, in taking steps to amend the current bureaucracy and make the economy more efficient, the government must remove the high subsidies put into place by the government. Subsidies in general create inefficiencies within the economy, yet removing them must be done cautiously. Removing the subsidies will not be a popular move for the government to enact. After many years, the people of Syria have come to expect the government to provide housing loans, put subsidies on basic commodities, and maintain low gas prices.<sup>25</sup> It is possible that their removal would be so unpopular as to lead to domestic instability.<sup>26</sup> It is therefore likely that Bashar al-Assad will maintain many of these staple subsidies for that reason. For example, the removal of subsidies on agricultural goods would probably kill the livelihood of small farmers and seriously hurt large-scale farmers.<sup>27</sup> As such, a gradual approach to their removal must be taken. While Syria's lack of revenues may inhibit the nation's ability to make changes gradually, as it could have done while still taking in oil revenues, it may be forced to borrow



money or cut other government expenditures. Greater political reform will be needed before greater economic liberalization can take place. Historically, security threats (or claims of existing threats) have been employed as a pretext to discontinue reforms on the part of the government. Especially considering the US invasion of Iraq, the government has an even greater pretext for claiming that there are threats to Syria's security.<sup>28</sup> Other obstacles which stand between the current president and economic reform exist in the old guard of the Syrian government. Many of the top officials in the Syrian government have retained their positions since the regime of Hafez al-Assad and are opposed to drastic economic changes in the country, as they retain the more socialist elements of the Ba'athist ideology. Not only are they resistant to changes in the system, but there is also concern over how the Syrian people would handle changes to the current system.<sup>29</sup>

Syria's plans for reform could exacerbate current problems and lead to social unrest. The government's attempts to reduce its size during the 1990s led to an increase in the number of poor people in Syria and widened the existing gap between rich and poor. Public spending on education has decreased with government cutbacks, and the combination of greater poverty with a decrease in the level of education has led many young people to drop out of school to support their families. Others who live on the brink of poverty are often provided for by family members or by privately run welfare programs. While this reduces the level of severe poverty in the nation, the growing inequalities and cutbacks in government services make the Ba'athist regime seem socialist only in ideology and not in practice. Fear that this situation will drive away supporters of the Ba'athists or lead to social unrest has been the reasoning for many Syrian leaders to resist economic change or endorse its slow implementation.<sup>30</sup> While Syria may be in need of economic reform in order to attract investment and spur growth, reform cannot happen overnight. Should policy changes be made too quickly, any attempts at encouraging investment will be made pointless by social unrest which will drive away potential investors.

It is important to realize that the current administration has not been idling away the last eight years. Bashar al-Assad has frequently talked of his commitment to economic reform, and many attempts at reform have been made, including the privatization of the banking system. Yet there are areas in which the state has resisted making any changes. One of these areas of resistance has been the privatization of many parts of the public sector, a move strongly opposed in general by the ruling elite of Syria. While some cited a fear of social unrest as a pretext for maintaining the inefficient dinosaurs of public production, others have cited security concerns. As long

as Israel remains a potential opponent to Syria, the government, it is argued, must maintain the ability to provide for basic goods during a war. While the threat of Israel may be a popular excuse for resisting change, a more primary concern would be the loss of the public sector as a tool for advancing those who support the Ba'athist leadership. Not only has privatization been resisted, but there are still no means in Syria for preventing the exploitation of power or for making sure jobs are done well within the Syrian government. A prime example of this is the cousin of Bashar al-Assad, Rami Makhlouf, a business mogul in the Syrian economy. While his businesses may seem well-run and modern, he has been allowed to hold a number of monopolies and has historically taken advantage of his ties with the Syrian government in his business transactions.<sup>31</sup>

Some Syrians making their way in the nation's small private sector believe tourism is the business which Syria should look to for prosperity in the future. They believe Syria's wealth of history and culture could potentially draw millions of visitors, provided the government makes efforts to promote Syria abroad as a destination worth seeing. It could also provide job opportunities for Syria's small skilled workforce as well as its larger unskilled labor force.<sup>32</sup> But while promotion is necessary for enticing visitors, it seems doubtful that tourists will come to Syria in droves until greater political stability is achieved.<sup>33</sup> Syria should consider its image abroad if it wishes to cultivate a tourism industry, as many visitors will be deterred by the image of Syria as an authoritarian state which provides refuge to terrorists.

Syria could also take advantage of its abundance of unskilled labor by forming greater economic partnerships with nations that are more abundant in capital. Historically, Iraq has fit this description, and, should stability return to that state, Syria and Iraq could take advantage of each other's strengths.<sup>34</sup> This situation highlights the necessity of peace for economic cooperation and prosperity. Without stability, internally or externally, Syria will be unable to take advantage of the comparative advantage of its neighbors. Its economic well-being over the last fifty years has been closely tied to its political relations with its neighboring states. Good relations with the other Arab states as well as Turkey have led to periods where many Syrians have worked abroad, items have been traded, and aid has been received by Syria. Bashar al-Assad has made concerted efforts to improve regional relations, and this should prove beneficial for the Syrian economy.<sup>35</sup> The ongoing war in Iraq, however, will prevent Syria from taking advantage of that potential partner and will probably be an impediment to the Syrian economy for years to come.

Peace and regional cooperation will be important for Syria as it attempts to

move forward with its economic reforms. The prosperity of the state depends on it as it looks to its neighbors as trading partners and as potential sources of investment. Syria has much to offer its capital-abundant neighbors as it has an abundance of labor. It is not a nation faced with overwhelming poverty or a dearth of opportunities. It is a middle-income country about half of the way on the road to development, and is one that has a lot of potential. Changes will have to be made for the nation to avoid falling into the tier of poorer states and also to prevent civil unrest at the hands of the jobless, young masses. The Syrian government will have to pay now by making reforms, or pay later when the nation's economic situation sours. It is in the interest of the regime and Syria as a whole for the choice to be changing now.

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# “A World of Shifting Sands”

## *Will Oil States Lead the Clean Energy Revolution?*

*Daniel Enking*

“The World Future Energy Summit is no less than a summit for the future of the world itself.”<sup>1</sup> This was the feeling that seemed to radiate through the thousands of energy ministers and business executives that gathered in the Abu Dhabi Conference Center on January 21, 2008 for the start of the first annual World Future Energy Summit, or WFES. As the conference attendees took their seats for the opening keynote speech, the excitement was further elevated by a big-screen video depicting the proposed Masdar Development, a completely sustainable city powered entirely by renewable energy. But it wasn’t until the first-ever life-size hologram, projecting the image of Prince Charles onto the stage, began to speak about his personal commitment to promote sustainable energy that a real sense of awe rippled through the audience. “[If we don’t change the current energy system] it will simply mean the extinction of the human race, rather than the end of the world,” said the Prince’s brother, the Duke of York, who spoke shortly after the Prince. “If our design is for destruction, then we are doing great – if not, then what is that design?” said world-renowned architect and author of *Cradle to Cradle*, William McDonough. Some speakers, however, had a more optimistic tone. “We think that the oil-producing nations can work together to ensure a safe future for our environment,” said His Excellency, Mohammad Ahmad Al Bowardi, the Secretary General of the Abu Dhabi Executive Council.

The largest of its kind to date, the World Future Energy Summit brought over 3,000 people to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) for three days to showcase and debate the technologies that many believe will ultimately replace the current global infrastructure of fossil-fuel energy that drives modern civilization and development.<sup>2</sup> There are many forces pushing the world in this direction. As Shane Bush of Standard Chartered Bank put it, “The twin drivers of climate change and energy security have risen to the top of the political agenda across the world over the past two years.”<sup>3</sup> The once-marginal theory of peak oil has become a mainstream idea in many countries. Rapid economic development is forcing countries like China and India to look for new energy sources to fuel their industrial growth. Many countries and world leaders have begun to take up this cause in the name of international cooperation and planetary well-being.<sup>4</sup>

Yet underlying this altruistic global call for change that was the theme of the World Future Energy Summit is a puzzling paradox. Not far away from the city of Abu Dhabi lies the Persian Gulf, home to 26 of the world's 40 super-giant oil fields and half of the world's remaining reserves.<sup>5</sup> As the fourth-largest producer of oil in the world, the UAE has grown in less than 40 years from a land of warring desert tribes to a regional center of trade and commerce, boasting two world-class cities.<sup>6</sup> Oil is what drives the UAE's development, giving it a strong interest in maintaining oil's primacy as a global energy source.

And yet, the central focus of the World Future Energy Summit was the government-backed \$15 billion Masdar Initiative, the largest investment in renewable energy made by any country in the world.<sup>7</sup> While most Middle Eastern oil producers have followed the US and China in stalling global agreements to limit carbon emissions and promote clean energy, the UAE has suddenly catapulted itself to the forefront of the clean-energy movement. In contrast, it would seem that a country like the US could benefit much more in the long term from the use of sustainable energy, as it is highly dependent on imported oil and has massive potential to generate cheap, domestic energy from renewable sources.<sup>8</sup>

The UAE, however, is not on a goodwill mission to save the planet from the harmful effects of fossil fuels. This government has a strategic and economic interest in becoming a hub for renewable energy research and innovation. The Masdar Initiative may have a ripple effect across the Middle East, motivating other oil-producing nations to jump on the bandwagon and, ironically, causing the largest wave of global investment in renewable energy to come from oil states. At the same time, it should push the US and China away from the backward energy paradigm that they currently cling to. In order to understand the motivations of each country and their implications, we must first examine all of the interests at stake.

The worldwide push for the use of clean energy and the subsequent shift in UAE energy policy leading up to the first World Future Energy Summit is the result of a number of culminating forces. Energy from burning fossil fuels has driven worldwide economic development for the past two centuries. This has resulted in a buildup of carbon dioxide emissions in the atmosphere that, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), is greater than anything the world has experienced in the last 420,000 years.<sup>9</sup> While there has been much debate in the political sphere as to whether or not these emissions are responsible for global climate change, an overwhelming consensus has emerged from the world's leading scientists that climate change is indeed being



caused by human activity.<sup>10</sup>

This buildup has caused global temperatures to rise by about 1.08 degrees Fahrenheit thus far, and could cause an additional increase of 2.52 to 10.44 degrees in the next century.<sup>11</sup> The IPCC's fourth assessment report warns that on our current path, climate change could cause massive melting of the Greenland and Antarctic ice sheets by the end of the century.<sup>12</sup> Already, climate change has begun causing storms to intensify, and rainfall to dramatically decrease in some areas and to increase in others.<sup>13</sup> The IPCC has also predicted that the effects of climate change could cause as much as a 5.5% reduction in world GDP by the end of the century.<sup>14</sup>

At the same time, the use of fossil fuels for the past two hundred years is leading the world toward the depletion of these resources. In the 1960s, Shell geologist M. King Hubbert predicted that the rate of US oil production would peak and begin to decline between 1965 and 1970. Hubbert's theory was ridiculed until US oil production peaked in 1970.<sup>15</sup> Since then, it has been predicted by many of the world's leading geologists that the peak in world oil production will occur between 2010 and 2020, followed soon after by the peak in world gas production.<sup>16</sup> Once the rate of oil production begins to decline, supply will not be able to keep up with demand and oil prices will increase even more dramatically than they have in the last few years.<sup>17</sup> Essentially, the era of cheap oil that has fueled rapid economic growth throughout the developed world will come to an end.

Many skeptics of peak oil point to the fact that more and more oil is being discovered each year. Technological innovation, they argue, will allow us to continue discovering new oil and to come up with new, inexpensive ways to extract it.<sup>18</sup> In the 1970s, the world saw an increase in oil discovery in response to the oil shock of the 1970s caused by the OPEC embargo and the US production peak. The same thing could happen again, the skeptics argue. However, while discoveries have increased slightly, the overall trend for discoveries is also downward. While increasing world demand has warranted a discovery of around 22 billion barrels of oil a year to keep pace with production, discoveries have only been around 8 billion barrels a year on average over the last decade.<sup>19</sup>

These economic and political pressures caused by peak oil and climate change come at a time of rapidly increasing worldwide demand for energy, mostly from the two Asian giants – China and India – and other developing nations. In fact, world energy demand is expected to grow 55% by 2030.<sup>20</sup> China is bringing two new coal power plants online every week.<sup>21</sup> As China's standard of living increases, the demand for cars and therefore gasoline is also increasing at an alarming rate. The Indian conglomerate Tata has just come out with a design for the cheapest car in the world, which will allow the average Indian family to own

a car for the first time, greatly increasing demand for gasoline.<sup>22</sup> While many say that citizens of developing countries have a right to achieve the standard of living enjoyed in the US, it may come at the cost of dramatic increases in global carbon emissions and in the world price of oil as demand goes through the roof.

The resounding call that was sounded at the World Future Energy Summit for a global shift to the use of clean, sustainable energy would seem to be the ideal solution. For the time being, however, fossil fuel is the cheapest way to achieve growth, and China and India will not give that up any time soon. In fact, the complex network of oil, gas and coal dependence that is rooted in the global economy will, for all the forces working against it, be a tough one to crack. At the center of this network is the global oil infrastructure and the fact that two-thirds of the world's oil is concentrated in the Middle East.<sup>23</sup> While prices of renewable energy are rapidly decreasing and becoming competitive with fossil fuel, it will still be some time before they are competitive enough to completely overtake the current system.

In addition to the culmination of these forces, the oil-power dynamic that has been played out over the last century is vital to understanding the current conditions in the Middle East and why the UAE's new direction is so unorthodox for the region. Oil first became important as a strategic resource during World War I when vehicles such as tanks and planes began to back the armies that fought on the ground. As was remarked at the time, "The Allies floated to victory on a sea of oil."<sup>24</sup> In anticipation of dwindling domestic oil supplies, Britain and the US began major oil explorations in the Middle East soon after.<sup>25</sup> With the introduction of the Ford Model T just a decade earlier, oil was becoming a mainstream commodity and the role of oil in western economies for the next hundred years began to be solidified.<sup>26</sup> After World War II, it was clear that Britain was in relative decline as a world power, and the major US oil companies, known as the Seven Sisters, took on the majority of the oil exploration and production activities in the Middle East.<sup>27</sup> The economic boom in the US after the war and the creation of the national highway system tied US economic prosperity and oil even closer together.<sup>28</sup>

In the early 1970s, however, dramatic changes began to occur that would set the stage for the current era and the energy challenges we face today. In 1973, the combination of the US oil production peak and the rise of Arab nationalism led the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) to dramatically raise world oil prices for the first time. Simultaneously, the governments of the Middle East, which had already begun to nationalize their oil industries, rapidly accelerated this process, decreasing US and European influence over the region.<sup>30</sup> This was the first time the cartel was able to assert its power on the global economy, and its impact ripples across the world to this day. The oil

crisis of 1973 turned into a global energy crisis, leading US firms into a frenzy of exploration for new oil supplies around the world.<sup>31</sup> Although much of the US's interests in the Middle East were divested, the region continues to grow in strategic importance as world oil supplies dwindle.

Just a few years earlier, the global environmental movement took off with the first celebration of Earth Day. It was motivated by the increasing hazards of pollution throughout the industrial world. The early 1970s also marked the beginning of concerns about the increased buildup of carbon dioxide emissions, which, with the onset of the oil crisis, led the US and other countries to truly invest for the first time in renewable energy research and development.<sup>32</sup> Incidentally, it was around this time that the seven tribes on the Gulf Coast near Qatar successfully united to form the UAE, which gained its independence from Britain in 1971.<sup>33</sup>

Although the crisis of the 1970s soon dissipated and the world sunk back into its old habits, oil continued to play a critical role in the economic, social and political development of the Middle East. The new oil export payments that Middle Eastern countries began to acquire after the 1970s have created tremendous wealth throughout the region, leading to rapid economic development. In 1950, Saudi Arabia was still a largely nomadic society; its largest city maintained a population of about 50,000 and there were no paved roads throughout the entire country. Today, Jeddah – its largest port – has a population of 1.5 million and has become a world-class city. The country is covered with multi-lane, paved highways connecting hundreds of cities and towns.<sup>34</sup>

The discovery and exploitation of oil in the Arab world has also led to a consolidation of power in the national governments of the Middle East. In most Arab countries, political parties were abolished by the 1960s, and authoritarian rule characterized most regimes.<sup>35</sup> These governments have fallen victim to the bureaucracy and corruption often caused by excessive oil rents, a phenomenon called the resource curse or “Dutch Disease.” In such a case, the discovery and exploitation of a valuable resource like oil causes the currency of the country in which it is discovered to significantly increase in value, effectively making the country's other exports uncompetitive on the world market.<sup>36</sup> The large amount of oil revenue that the government collects also displaces the need to collect taxes, making the government less accountable to its people. However, many of the Arab states still produce significant benefits for their populations through massive welfare programs. This “rentier pact,” or “ruling bargain” as it is often called, has led, for the most part, to political stability.<sup>37</sup>

Nowhere have these trends been more pronounced than in the UAE. Of all the Middle Eastern countries, the UAE has managed to achieve the most rapid and impressive growth and modernization. The two most prominent

emirates, Dubai and the capital Abu Dhabi, have respectively become large industrial and commercial centers. The country has also achieved an impressive per capita income of \$55,200.<sup>38</sup> As the last Arab state to gain its independence, the UAE came into being at a time of increased concern about the long-term sustainability of oil production. This, combined with its unique economic development as an established center of trade with a capitalistic society similar to that of the West, hints at why the leaders of the UAE have had the foresight to do things differently.<sup>39</sup> Rather than letting the oil rents be used inefficiently, the government of Abu Dhabi began investing its revenues in a sovereign wealth fund – a fund of financial assets that is controlled by the state. Since 1976, this fund has grown to become the largest of its kind today, with a value estimated at around \$625 billion. In fact, the emirate now makes more money from this investment than it does from selling oil. Many other Arab states began investing their oil revenues soon after, either as a sovereign wealth fund or internally.<sup>40</sup>

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**Once the rate of oil production begins to decline, supply will not be able to keep up with demand and oil prices will increase even more dramatically.**

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Another policy that the UAE has pursued from the start is a push for economic diversification in order to combat the effects of Dutch Disease. While oil and gas sales still account for 30% of the country's GDP and 45% of its exports, the diversification effort has met with some success.<sup>41</sup> When, in the early 1980s, the world price of oil dropped considerably from the peak it had reached during the oil crisis of the 1970s,

the UAE's GDP decline, at 34%, was low compared to the GDP decline of the other Gulf states.<sup>42</sup> Abu Dhabi has managed to expand its heavy industry and manufacturing sectors, especially the aluminum industry. Dubai has become a regional center for tourism, financial services and trade. In fact, Dubai's impressive economic growth and diversification, combined with dwindling oil reserves, has caused it to become the first net oil importer in the Middle East. The fact that Abu Dhabi is still one of the largest oil producers in the world shows the stark contrast within the UAE between Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Each emirate has pursued development quite differently.<sup>43</sup>

As the 21st century begins, the issues of climate change, peak oil and energy security have begun to resurface on the global agenda. This revival has been led by the economic expansion of China and India, the approaching world oil production peak and the increasingly visible effects of climate change on the global environment. The first international action to combat these forces was the Kyoto Treaty in 1997, in which many world leaders committed to achieving

substantial carbon dioxide emissions reductions before 2012. However, this measure has been highly ineffective.<sup>44</sup>

The World Future Energy Summit and the launch of the UAE's \$15 billion Masdar Initiative came at a crucial time, right after world leaders met in Bali to determine the next steps after Kyoto expires in 2012.<sup>45</sup> The Masdar Initiative is positioned to make Abu Dhabi the world center for research into the most innovative new energy technologies. It consists of several components; first is the Masdar Institute, a graduate school devoted purely to energy research. This institute will also network with other leading institutions around the world to collaborate on energy research. Second, a large portion of the Initiative's funds are set aside for investment in new energy companies and technologies in order to encourage these enterprises to base their operations in the UAE; third is a large push for carbon dioxide reduction projects, supported by the Kyoto Protocol's Clean Development Mechanisms (CDM); finally, at the center of the Initiative is Masdar City, a six-square-mile free-trade zone that will be home to the Masdar Institute as well as office and lab space for the energy companies that choose to come to the UAE. The city is designed to be a model of sustainable development for the world, powered 100% by renewable energy and having many other sustainable aspects.<sup>46</sup> As the CEO of Masdar, Dr. Sultan Jaber, said in his speech to the conference to sum up the weight of the Masdar Initiative, "If we are to meet the energy challenge, then we must be bold."

Given the current state of the world energy infrastructure and the history of the UAE, there are several reasons that might explain why the UAE has made such a bold move. As an oil-producing nation partially responsible for a large amount of global carbon dioxide emissions, this may be an attempt by the government to market itself as "green." In a world where environmental responsibility is being looked at with an increasingly close eye, this may be a smart tactic.<sup>47</sup> But if the government is concerned about its environmental image, the country has many other initiatives to take care of this, such as its CDM projects or Dubai's mandate to make all new buildings in the city green. None of these come close to the scale of the Masdar Initiative. The UAE has other goals in mind.

Many governments around the world, especially those of developing countries, are concerned about climate change and the effects it will have on the livelihood of their citizens. Rising sea levels, droughts, floods and temperature changes all have a significant effect on people's productivity and health. Again, however, this does not seem to add up for the UAE. With the government already trying to find ways to change the harsh desert climate that sees little rainfall or agricultural productivity, shifts in world water distribution from climate change might even help the UAE.<sup>48</sup>

With Dubai – one of the most productive emirates – becoming a net oil



importer, the country may be looking for new sources of energy for domestic use. This is supported by Abu Dhabi's recent agreement with France to build two nuclear reactors in the UAE. Indeed, the government of Dubai has also mandated a 15% renewable portfolio standard for the emirate by 2015. However, while renewable energy sources may prove a useful supplement to the current energy makeup, the government of Dubai does not expect them to be a serious source of energy anytime in the near future because of the high costs.<sup>50</sup> If Dubai doesn't expect renewable energy to play a significant role, even though it is facing an energy shortage, it doesn't seem probable that the oil-rich Abu Dhabi will either.

While Dubai has done fairly well in diversifying its economy, Abu Dhabi is still very oil dependent. Growing the renewable energy sector, then, would seem like a good opportunity to follow in Dubai's footsteps. This is the most logical explanation for the UAE's change, of course; however, it goes farther than simply defying the resource curse. By positioning itself to be a hub for clean technology innovation and putting significant investments into the companies that are creating these technologies, Abu Dhabi is setting itself up to be a "technology exporter."<sup>51</sup> Unlike oil, renewable energy is a domestic industry by nature and its products cannot be as easily exported or distributed worldwide. With current global trends pointing toward a potential shift in the global energy framework away from oil in the next fifty years, the UAE is making a bet that will allow it to remain at the forefront of the energy industry.<sup>52</sup>

The only reasonable doubt that can be thrown at this idea is the fact that despite calls for renewable energy, many experts believe that oil is still in a position to dominate the global system for another century.<sup>53</sup> The UAE and other Arab states then stand to make astonishingly high profits from the rising price of oil for many years after the global production peak before other fuels start to replace it. If the UAE government is a profit-maximizing entity, it will do whatever is in its best financial interest. For the government to suppress the technologies that are developed within its borders until all its oil fields run dry does not seem out of the question.

For almost a century, the Middle East has played a vital role in shaping the energy industry worldwide and it will continue to play that role for many years to come. If other Middle Eastern countries follow the example of the UAE, they may be able to play a significant role in shaping the character and timeframe of a likely world transition toward renewable energy sources. Although the UAE has the biggest advantage, with the largest sovereign wealth fund, other Arab states have the capacity and the incentive to do the same. Both Kuwait and Qatar have sizable sovereign wealth funds of \$213 billion and \$60 billion, respectively.<sup>54</sup> Saudi Arabia, which in the past has invested its oil revenues internally, recently

announced a plan to create a sovereign wealth fund larger even than the UAE's, projected to be around \$900 billion.<sup>55</sup> Many in the Middle East, however, see their current prosperity as only temporary, as illustrated by the Saudi Arabian saying, "My father rode a camel, I drive a car, my son will fly a plane, his son will ride a camel."<sup>56</sup> Such an investment in the future of energy would ensure that this prosperity will be sustained for centuries to come. Multinational oil companies like British Petroleum (now Beyond Petroleum), Shell and Chevron have already made similar investments in research and development into renewable technologies in order to ensure that their control over the flow of energy around the world is maintained as well.<sup>57</sup>

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is likely to be characterized by a struggle for energy between great powers. With China and India taking a greater interest in Middle Eastern oil, as well as the continued efforts of the United States to strengthen its control over the region, this struggle is already beginning to take shape. The US has the ability to prevent this tug-of-war across the Middle East by tapping its vast domestic renewable resources and making its own investment in clean energy.<sup>58</sup> As Lord Brown put it in his address to the World Future Energy Summit, "We are in a world of shifting sands, and in that world, [global players] need stable points." The UAE has ensured that it will retain a stable point far into the future. Who will follow its example?

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**In fact, Dubai's economic growth, combined with dwindling oil reserves, caused it to become the first net oil importer in the Middle East.**

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# Health Inequality Between Jewish and Arab Israelis

*Jessica Herrmann*

The inequality in Israel can be seen as easily as looking at the differences in the physical communities where Arabs and Jews live. The distinctions in the layout of the streets, the traffic patterns and the general density of the towns is clear to any outsider. In taking a closer look at the area of health, paying specific attention to the health care system and the cultural differences between the communities, I found a variety of explanations for the inequality. The problems stem from causes as distant from health as the electoral system and as broad as the general inequality in Israel aside from health. Not only were the difference in the health status and the reasons for this gap important, but the opportunity that solving this problem provides for producing higher levels of social capital in the state and a more unified society is of the utmost importance in creating peace. I will continue by looking at the general situation in Israel, the various explanations for this disparity, and conclude with my own explanation of how decreasing the health disparity can be a positive step toward a peaceful resolution of the current situation.

In beginning to understand the situation in Israel, there must be a realization of the major characteristics and goals of the state. Israel defines itself as a Jewish democracy, which has often created controversy in that the non-Jewish population of the country is growing in size and does not see itself being treated equally. In addition, Israel's priorities lie in its identity as a Jewish state, its Zionist ideology, and the priority it places on its nation's security. These three main concerns of the state are a direct result of the original arguments for the founding of the nation and its history as a nation constantly fighting for its survival. Israel was created as a homeland for the Jewish people after the Holocaust. It was meant as a place of refuge for the Jews from anti-Semitism, based on the Zionist belief that the Jews could never be fully assimilated into other states as a result of these anti-Semitic attitudes. From its formation, Israel has faced hostilities from its Arab neighbors and from the Palestinians who lived in Israel before the Jewish people were given the land for their own state.

Today, Israel continues to face both an internal and an external conflict.

The internal conflict is against the Arab Israelis who are fighting for equal rights and a role in the government and who are fundamentally opposed to the State of Israel. The external conflict is with the Arabs living outside of Israel, many of whom are fighting to destroy the nation. As a result of the external conflict, internal tensions between Jewish and Arab Israelis are extremely high. Arab Israelis tend to support the Arabs outside the state, which makes them Israeli citizens who support outsiders seeking to destroy Israel. Assad Ghanem, the former director of Sikkuy: The Association for the Advancement of Civic Equality in Israel and a professor at the University of Haifa, stated that “Palestinian Israelis are seen as a security threat because they reject the Jewish state,” which results in low levels of trust between the two groups. This low level of trust has a multitude of effects on the Arab Israeli population, from discriminatory laws to difficulty in obtaining outside funds. These issues will be addressed in greater detail later.

As a result of the state’s fundamental preference for its Jewish citizens that comes from defining itself as a Jewish state and the view of the Arab Israelis as a security threat, the State of Israel has had a large inequality between these two groups. This inequality has grown over time. The Gini coefficient for Israel in 1982 was .222.<sup>1</sup> This increased to .327 in 1985 and to .369 in 2002.<sup>2</sup> In addition, the percentage of Israelis living below the poverty line “grew to 21.1 percent”<sup>3</sup> during this time, and within this population of individuals living below the poverty line, 50 percent of them were Arab, a highly disproportionate number given that the percentage of the total Israeli population that is Arab is approximately 20 percent.<sup>4</sup>

Sikkuy created The Equality Index as a means to measure the inequality in Israel. The overall Equality Index for 2006 was 0.2845.<sup>5</sup> This number is on a scale from negative one to one, where zero is perfect equality. Numbers closer to negative one show preference for Arab Israelis, while those numbers closer to one represent a preference for Jewish Israelis. Therefore, a number of 0.2845 “points to a clear and salient gap in favor of the Jewish public.”<sup>6</sup> This aggregate Equality Index is a result of “assigning a weight to the five aggregate indexes in the field of education, health, social welfare, employment and housing.”<sup>7</sup> The largest of these five indexes is the Social Welfare Index, which is valued at 0.4418 for 2006.<sup>8</sup> This number is calculated by taking into account the expenditure on social welfare for each group, the workforce and employment of both Arab and Jewish Israelis, and the poverty rates for both groups.<sup>9</sup> This value for the Social Welfare Index “expresses substantial inequality between Jews and Arabs.”<sup>10</sup> These indexes, along with the Gini coefficient, appear to show a society where inequality is clear to all of the citizens. However, when asked if there was a general realization of



the inequality within the state, Dr. Itzhak Zaidise, a practicing physician and professor at the University of Haifa, replied that “some [Israeli citizens] don’t see it.”

There are a variety of explanations for the inequality within the nation. Ilan Saban, a professor of congressional law at the University of Haifa, described three main reasons: discrimination, differences in the economic power of local authorities, and family resources and the ability to provide for oneself or one’s family. He stated that there is governmental discrimination in the allocation of funds and the provision of services, which can begin to be seen in looking at the previously mentioned Social Welfare Index. Inequality is seen in a variety of sectors in Israeli society, including the division of land, the educational system and the electoral system. I focused on the inequality in the health system. The persistent inequality in the health care system and in access to care in Israel is especially concerning because of the implementation of the National Health Insurance Law in 1995, which was meant to increase equality between Arab and Jewish Israelis by providing universal health insurance to the citizens of the state. There are a variety of explanations for the continuation of health disparities within the nation even after the law was enacted.

One of the recurring arguments for the disparities between Arab and Jewish Israelis in their health statuses is that Arab Israelis tend to live in rural areas while Jewish Israelis are more heavily concentrated in cities. “Nearly half of Israeli Arabs live in rural areas,”<sup>11</sup> which has a number of adverse consequences on the health of Arab Israelis. The first problem that living in rural areas causes is that there is less access to medical services. There are fewer health clinics and specialists in rural areas because the demand for the services is significantly lower, given the smaller population size. In an interview with Ronit Endevelt, a professor at the University of Haifa who also works with Maccabi Healthcare Services, she explained that while Maccabi will have health clinics in small villages, they will not provide the same services as those in larger cities because the people do not demand these services of the health provider at a high enough rate.

In addition, she argued that Arabs in rural areas still have a more traditional view of what is aesthetically attractive in a woman’s physical appearance. This traditional idea of beauty favors more robust women than does the modern view. Professor Endevelt argued that Arab Israelis living in cities are more heavily influenced by the modern desire for slimmer women and as a result Arab Israelis in more densely populated areas are more likely to be concerned about their weight. They are then more inclined to eat healthier foods and to exercise as a means to maintain a slimmer figure. These result

in positive health outcomes. This also applies in the opposite direction, so that Arab Israelis in rural areas are more likely to prefer heavier-set women, and so the obesity rates in these areas are higher. Because of the disparity in the number of Arab Israelis living in rural areas, the overall obesity rates for this sector of the population are higher.

The higher obesity rate is also the result of differences in eating and exercise separate from the personal desire to be a certain weight. Arab Israelis tend to eat sweeter foods, especially sweet desserts, and to eat foods with more fats. Professor Endevelt added that the Arab Israeli community has recently worked to be modernized and, as a result, they have started to eat fatter foods and to drink sweeter fruit drinks that come from the modern society. She argued that they did not always understand the health implications of these modern treats. Mohammed Badarni, the director of the Arab Children Friends Association, a non-profit organization focused on increasing the education of Palestinian youth in Israel and the Occupied Territories, said that Arab Israelis know which foods are healthier and what they should eat, but that they cannot afford the more expensive, healthier foods.

He stated in our interview that the differences in nutrition are a “matter of financial ability, not education.” The nutritional differences have created high rates of obesity in the Arab Israeli community. However, it is important to note that the educational attainment of women in a community has been seen to have a direct effect on the health of the women themselves and the children they raise. Miri Cohen, a professor in the Faculty of Social Welfare and Health Services at Haifa University, explained in an interview that within the group of Arab Israeli women she studied, she found a higher attendance rate in health programs for women that had higher levels of education.

Ruth Katz, a member of the Department of Human Services and a professor in the Faculty of Social Welfare and Health Studies, both at Haifa University, stated in an interview that another implication of Arab Israelis living in towns with Jews, thus tending to be more modern, is that the women are more likely to receive higher levels of education. This would have a direct impact on their health status and could be another argument for how the segregation of the two populations has created inequality in their health statuses. In addition, Arab Israeli women exercise less than their Jewish counterparts. Professor

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**It is important to note that the educational attainment of women in a community has a direct effect on the health of the women and their children.**

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Endevelt's explanation for this is that because of traditional Muslim values, Arab women are not allowed to go out by themselves at night and so cannot walk around their neighborhoods the same way that the Jewish women can. This limits their ability for physical activity.

The issue of traditional values in the Arab community has been a common argument for the disparity between the two groups. It has caused some of the previously mentioned differences between Arab and Jewish Israelis, such as lower levels of education and less freedom to walk around their neighborhoods in order to increase levels of physical activity, as well as making it harder for Arab Israeli women to visit doctors. Because Arab Israeli women cannot travel on their own and many Arab Israelis live in rural areas, Arab Israeli women have less access to health clinics than Jewish Israeli women. Professor Saban argued that there are things that can, and should, be done by the country to better accommodate the cultural problems that Arab Israelis face. He said that the "government needs to understand the situation" in order to provide more assistance.

Additionally, women have high levels of modesty as a result of their traditional values, and this is a possible issue in their ability to visit male doctors. It is unclear whether this has a significant impact on the number of doctor visits that Arab Israeli women have. Dr. Zaidise argued that modesty issues are no different in the Arab Israeli community than in the Orthodox Jewish community, and that the number of female Arab doctors is increasing, which will provide Arab Israeli women with doctors they would be comfortable seeing. He continued by explaining that not only are the number of female Arab doctors increasing, but that over 50 percent of all medical students are now women. Professor Cohen made the case that in times of important medical conditions, having to go to a male doctor would not inhibit an Arab Israeli woman from seeing a doctor.

She did, however, argue that traditional views of diseases caused a difference in the two groups. Professor Cohen conducted her own research on breast cancer screening differences between Arab and Jewish Israeli women and found that many Arab Israeli women feared breast cancer screenings because they did not think there was a cure for the disease, and they thought that if they found out they had cancer, their husbands would no longer love them or take care of them. This is resulting in later detection of breast cancer in Arab Israeli women, making it harder to treat and lowering survival rates. She did argue that these views were in the process of changing. Professor Endevelt expressed a similar opinion in looking at why some Arab patients do not get treatment for health problems. Part of the reason for this was a fear that people will view them differently if they have a disease. It is bad for

the family if a member has a disease, and because many Arabs live in small communities, all of the community members will know if an individual goes to the doctor frequently, which would be a possible sign of being unhealthy. Professor Endevelt also reiterated Professor Cohen's point in saying that by the time the Arab citizens see a doctor, it is too late and the disease can no longer be treated or the survival rate is lower.

An important and unique aspect of the Arab Israeli situation is that Arab Israelis do not serve in the country's military, while their Jewish counterparts are required to participate. This can result in differences in income between otherwise equally productive workers that are Jewish and Arab because "military service is still an important requisite for many positions of power and importance in Israeli life, as well as for certain welfare benefits, and non-Jews are effectively shut out from them."<sup>12</sup> Professor Saban explained that military service allows Jewish Israelis to receive better jobs because it provides an opportunity for networking and is also an important life experience that can show positive personal characteristics. If Jewish Israelis spend time in the military, they learn lessons that will help them to be more productive employees, such as organization or leadership, and so are more likely to be hired.

There are a variety of other reasons that Arab Israelis tend to be poorer than their Jewish counterparts. Sandy Kedar, a professor at the University of Haifa who has focused his research on property rights, explained that in 1948, when Israel was founded, there were still many Palestinians living on the land; those Palestinians who left were the richest, and, in general, those who remained in the state tended to be part of the rural, poorer population of Palestinians. This means that the group of Arab Israelis in the nation today descended from the Palestinians that had received less education and had acquired fewer resources to pass on to their children.

In addition, the women in Arab Israeli communities tend to work less than Jewish Israeli women because of cultural norms. Vered Kraus, a professor in the sociology department at the University of Haifa whose focus has been on educational and occupational mobility among women in the labor market, stated in an interview that in her research, she found a low labor force participation rate for Israeli Palestinian women – approximately 20 percent.

The difference in the economic statuses of Arab and Jewish Israelis is an important factor in the health disparities between the two communities. As previously mentioned, Arabs represent 20 percent of the Israeli population, but make up over 50 percent of those Israelis living under the poverty line.<sup>13</sup> Their lower economic standing forces them to purchase cheaper, less nutritious foods, the argument made by Badarni. In addition, it makes it

harder for them to pay for the travel expenses to go to a health clinic or hospital, especially based on their concentration in rural areas. Poorer individuals live in worse housing, whether it is located in an area where there is a higher risk of disease, or if the houses themselves are decrepit and create an increased danger for the people living in them. The current co-executive director of Sikkuy, Ali Haider, said that cell phone towers, which can cause cancer, tend to be located in Arab communities, thereby increasing the risk of Arab citizens having health problems. Dr. Zaidise supported this argument, saying that Arabs do live in riskier areas. Lower economic status also means lower educational attainment, the health implications of which were discussed earlier.

The connection between income and health is not unique to Israel or the Arab population in Israel. Dr. Zaidise was sure to note that throughout the world, one can see that a lower income produces a lower health status because poorer individuals tend to be less well-educated and have more children. This can be seen in Israel, where Arab Israelis have one of the highest birth rates in the world. In the 1990s, “Muslim women in Israel [gave] birth to an average of 4.7 children, compared with an average of 2.7 children for Jewish women.”<sup>14</sup> Professor Katz explained that the larger families come from lower educational levels (especially for the women), more traditional values and possibly the fear of losing a child as a result of the conflict. As previously mentioned, the connection between lower income and poorer health is not unique to Arab Israelis, but common to all groups with lower economic standing. However, in Israel this connection between health and wealth is exacerbated by the National Health Insurance Law.

The National Health Insurance Law, according to Dr. Zaidise and Professor Cohen, is not discriminatory. Professor Cohen explained that the law is equal for all. She added that the way the services are given and the treatments are also equal between Arab and Jewish Israelis. Professor Saban went so far as to say that the National Health Insurance Law is “one of the good things in Israeli society.” The inspiration for the law came from the socialist foundation of the Israeli nation, which had communal living environments. Jonathon Yovel, a professor at the University of Haifa who focuses on human, economic and cultural rights, made a point of discussing the socialist past of the nation. He stated that overcoming inequality was an impetus for the state. This desire to “overcome inequality” can clearly be seen in the basic principle of the National Health Insurance Law.

Ariel Bendor, a professor in the Faculty of Law at the University of Haifa who specializes in constitutional law, argued in an interview that the discrimination is “not from a legal view,” but that the main reason for the



disparity between the two groups is a result of the “gap between law and practice.” Ghanem agreed that the “question is not just formal law, but how it is implemented.” Professor Bendor supported the previously mentioned view that because of the current state of war, many Jewish Israelis suspect Arabs as not being good citizens. A main reason for this suspicion is that Arab Israelis do not have the animosity towards Israel’s enemy, namely the Palestinians, that is expected of Israeli patriots. Haider expanded upon this belief by saying that “Arabs always need to prove themselves as honest” and as “part of the country.” As a result of this common perception of the Arab Israelis, when laws are put into practice, they are not done so equally because Arab Israelis are not seen as equal citizens.

Ephraim Sneh, the former minister of health who established the National Health Insurance Law, frequently noted that the problem is not the law, but rather the decrease in public spending for the law that has occurred since 1996. This decline in spending caused an increase in the private spending of individuals from 24 to 33 percent. Dr. Zaidise also made a point of discussing the increase in private spending in the health care system. He stated that the new rate of private spending, 33 percent, is one of the highest in the Western world. This increased cost for obtaining services disproportionately harms the Arab Israeli community because of Arab Israelis’s lower incomes. This makes receiving health services more expensive, and has created a larger gap between the health statuses of Arab and Jewish Israelis.

It is interesting to note that while the majority of the preparatory research I conducted faulted the National Health Insurance Law with increasing the disparities between Arab and Jewish Israelis in terms of their health status, this was not necessarily the view of all of the individuals I interviewed. The most interesting case where a group’s literature countered this argument was in Sikkuy’s 2006 Equality Index report. In the health section of the report, it is written: “The value of the Health Index of 2006 is 0.2076, thus indicating inequality between Jews and Arabs, in favor of Jews. The Health Index is lower than the indexes of education, employment and social welfare. It can be assumed that national health insurance for all citizens of the State of Israel constitutes an important factor in reducing the disparity.”<sup>15</sup> This is especially notable because Sikkuy’s specific mission is for the “advancement of civic equality” and they work to produce an unbiased view of the situation by including two co-directors, one Jewish and the other Arab. However, Sikkuy did not do any research into how the National Health Insurance Law could possibly be changing the disparities between the two groups. This statement is made, but not backed by any evidence other than the fact that the Health Index is lower than all other indexes they calculated in 2006.

Part of the reason for the large effect of the change in the funding of the National Health Insurance Law is that the Arab Israeli community tends to be more dependent on the Israeli government for public services than the Jewish Israeli community. Haider stated in an interview that it was the responsibility of Arab Israelis, as a minority in the state, to liberate themselves by working together for dialogue in the state. He said that the younger Arab population has this new attitude. He continued by saying that the Arab Israelis must rely on themselves and “must know and understand their rights and viable strategies to receive these rights.” Haider said that this will be the only way that the Arab Israelis will have the ability to define the problem and suggest solutions. Professor Cohen argues that some of the difference in educational attainment between Arab and Jewish Israelis is a result of the fact that Jewish Israelis will invest their own money into education, while Arab Israelis expect the government to provide these services for them.

There are a number of possible explanations for why Jewish Israelis are more likely to provide personal funding for public services. Part of this can be that Jewish Israelis tend to have a higher economic status, making it possible for them to donate more money for these goods. In addition, Israel was founded under the principal of auto-emancipation with an emphasis on the need of the Jewish people to not depend on others for services but to support themselves. This concept can still be seen in the State of Israel today, as Israel is unwilling to depend on others for matters regarding its security. This philosophy created a sense of necessity in providing all public services within the Jewish community instead of depending on outside funding. Finally, Jewish Israelis receive large amounts of funding from outside organizations, such as the Jewish National Fund, which can go to providing better schooling and opportunities to Jewish Israelis. In contrast, Arab Israelis do not receive the same outside assistance because it is harder for Arab Israelis to receive money from Arab countries because of the security concerns of the State of Israel of terrorist funding from Arab countries.

There is also less funding that goes to Arab Israelis from Arab countries because Arab Israelis are well-off relative to their Arab counterparts in other countries, so the funding is more likely to go to Palestinians in the Occupied Territories or refugees in Jordan, according to Haider. As was previously mentioned, the Jewish and Arab Israelis are highly segregated, so when Jewish communities acquire funding for health or educational facilities, these do not spill over to Arab Israelis. The majority of the residential and social segregation is due to desire and consent from both sides, according to Professor Moshe Semyonov, who teaches at Tel Aviv University in the Department of Sociology and the Department of Labor Studies, and even

the seven integrated communities in Israel are actually segregated within the cities. This high level of segregation creates even higher disparities between the services available to the Jewish Israelis who are more self-reliant and the Arab Israelis who depend more heavily on the Israeli government.

However, in declaring that Arab Israelis are more dependent on the Israeli government and that they need to become more self-reliant, it is important to note the differences between the two communities. Professor Saban explained in an interview some of the distinctions that must be made between the two. One of the most important distinctions has already been mentioned: Arab Israelis have a lower economic status than Jewish Israelis so they do not have the funding to provide for their own communities in order to have better public goods. Professor Saban also mentioned that the Arabs are not as unified as the Jewish people because the Arabs distinguish between the Palestinian Israelis, the Palestinians in the Occupied Territories and the Palestinians in Jordan. In contrast, there is a stronger connection between Jewish Israelis and Jews living outside of Israel because they “see themselves as one people.” Because of these reasons, it is not fair to argue that Arab Israelis should be able to support themselves in the same way that Jewish Israelis can.

Not only are Arab Israelis argued to be more dependent on the Israeli government, but because of the electoral system in Israel, Arab Israelis have less power in determining the policies of the nation. In the Israeli system, every citizen votes for a party list. All party lists that obtain at least two percent of the ballots are given seats in the Knesset, the Israeli parliament. The number of seats a party receives is proportional to the number of votes it receives. Because Arab Israelis now make up over 20 percent of the population of Israel, it would be expected that they would have a proportional number of representatives in the Knesset. However, “the Arab public is politically fragmented and has consistently failed to unite behind a single list,”<sup>16</sup> making it harder for Arab parties to receive the necessary percentage of the vote to receive seats in the Knesset. There are also a number of Arab Israelis who refuse to vote because of their resentment of the state, which can be seen in the difference in voter turnout. Arab Israelis have had an average voter turnout around 70 percent, while Jewish turnout is approximately 10 percent higher.<sup>17</sup>

The result has been few Arab Israeli representatives in the Knesset. Proof of this can be seen “in the 1996 elections [where] only eleven Arabs were elected to the Knesset, as opposed to the fifteen to sixteen that could have been elected if Arab voters all mobilized behind Arab lists.”<sup>18</sup> In addition, “no Arab has ever served as a cabinet minister ... there are no Arab members

of the Israeli Supreme Court or the Security and Foreign Affairs Committee, and no Arab has ever chaired any Knesset committee, directed any state-owned enterprise, or directed a government bureau – including the branch of the ministry of Religious Affairs that handles Arab communal and religious interests.”<sup>19</sup> Without political power to make policies that are favorable to their cause, Arab Israelis are unable to have a substantial effect on the policies of the state. This means that they are unable to put pressure on other parties to form a health system that would be favorable to Arab Israelis. Arab Israelis have not been able to take advantage of their growing numbers to pressure the government for equal rights because they are not unified behind parties and so do not have proportional representation in the Knesset.

This lack of representation in government bodies is just one factor that has created an Arab Israeli population that does not see itself as a part of the greater Israeli nation. The national identity found in almost all other countries is not present in Israel. Ghanem explained in an interview that in Israel, there is no civic nationality. There is no common feeling about the citizens of Israel that “we are the Israelis.” A clear representation of this is that “there is no ‘Israeli’ nationality. On ID cards, nationality is defined as either ‘Jewish’ or ‘Arab.’”<sup>20</sup> Arab Israelis feel excluded from the nation because of the Jewish symbols that represent Israel. These include the Israeli flag, which has the Star of David on it, and the fact that all Jewish holidays are national holidays. Don Pertz and Gideon Doron write in their book *The Government and Politics of Israel* that “Arabs feel like outsiders. Little in the Israeli collective and symbolic memory is Arab; there are no new street names, postage stamps, monuments, national holidays, or heroes, and there is very little common history. The state is Jewish, built by Jews for Jews.”<sup>21</sup> In speaking with Arab Israelis while in Israel, each defined him or herself differently, but all saw their Arab or Palestinian background as superior to their position as citizens of Israel, and not one of them declared themselves as simply “an Israeli.” Haider gave a number of examples of the terminology used to describe this group. He included in this list the Arab minority, the Palestinian minority, and Israeli Arabs.

An important reason for why Arab Israelis do not define themselves as primarily Israeli citizens is not just the Jewish ideology and beliefs seen in the Israeli government, but the fact that the Arabs in Israel see themselves as marginalized and second-class citizens. Professor Saban elaborated on this issue in saying that Jewish Israelis tend to be monolingual, whereas Arab Israelis tend to be bilingual, speaking both Arabic and Hebrew. During the British Mandate, both Arabic and Hebrew were formally declared as the national languages of the state. It was stated that “any statement or

inscription in Arabic on stamps or money ... shall be repeated in Hebrew and any statements or inscriptions in Hebrew shall be repeated in Arabic;”<sup>22</sup> however, in Israel today, not all written materials are in both languages. Haider stated that in hospitals, some of the information is written only in Hebrew, and not in Arabic; this can inhibit Arab Israelis from receiving important information.

One of the major issues in the Israeli legal system is that there is no Israeli constitution, which means there is not a set document to explain the rights of the citizens. In place of a constitution are a set of what are called Basic Laws. The only Basic Law that even possibly addresses the social rights of individuals is the Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty. Dr. Amnon Reichman, a professor in the Faculty of Law at the University of Haifa whose specialization is in constitutional law, explained in an interview that the Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty leaves a lot of gray area in terms of what rights should be granted to citizens. Professor Bendor agreed with this point and added that there is debate about whether social rights are even included in this law. The law states, “The purpose of this Basic Law is to protect human dignity and liberty, in order to establish in a Basic Law the values of the State of Israel as a Jewish and democratic state.”<sup>23</sup> It is unclear which social rights fall under the umbrella term of “human dignity,” and there is no definition as to what constitutes a violation of the right to human dignity. The lack of clarity makes it possible for social rights to be under provided to certain groups, specifically the Arab Israelis. Professor Bendor said that he was unsure whether the inclusion of social rights in a written constitution would even help the situation. In addition, he was skeptical of whether social rights would be included by the Knesset in a new constitution if and when it would be written.

Arab Israelis do not receive equal treatment compared to Jewish Israelis both in laws and in social and economic rights. Professor Jonathon Yovel explained in an interview that Israel has actually put into place a law through which Palestinians from the Occupied Territories that marry Arab or Jewish Israelis cannot move to Israel. Either the Israeli who has married the Palestinian from the Occupied Territories must move into the Occupied Territories, where the living standard is significantly lower and there are fewer job opportunities, or the married couple cannot live together. This law was put into place due to “security” concerns, according to Professor Yovel, but it “crosses the line for democracy” in defining separate rules for Arab and Jewish Israelis and in separating these families.

This law is exacerbated by the Law of Return, which allows any Jewish person in the world the right to become a citizen of Israel, without knowing



Hebrew or having any real connection to the state. In addition, the family member of any Jewish Israeli is given the right to become a full citizen of Israel (excluding a family member that is a Palestinian living in the Occupied Territories, as described by the aforementioned law). This means that the Israeli laws fundamentally allow Jewish Israeli families to be unified as Israeli citizens, while Arab Israeli families, who would be more likely to have family members in the Occupied Territories, are not given this same right. It is the combination of these laws and unequal social and economic rights that create a feeling of marginalization in the Arab community.

From my research, I would argue that the key to creating a more united Israel and a decrease in the resentment of Arab Israelis toward the nation is to improve the social and economic rights of Arab citizens – specifically the access to health care. As the size of the Arab population is continuously growing, due to high birth rates, the Israeli government will be forced to deal with the issue of being a Jewish democracy where a growing minority, which could possibly become the majority, is not Jewish. Equality in rights that are the most basic to human beings, such as health, would be a means of increasing the unity in the country without forcing the Israeli state to give up its identity as a Jewish democracy. Haider said that for those Palestinians that became Israeli citizens and are currently living in Israel, their main goal is to remain in the state and receive equal treatment. He finished the interview by declaring, “We are customers and this is our right as customers for equal treatment.”

This argument for social and economic rights producing unity was backed by Professor Saban. He stated that increasing social rights will increase trust between the two groups. He added that in order for the “collective Palestinian minority to take [its] Israeli identity seriously, [it has] to be provided with [a] manifestation of ability to achieve dignity in the state.” The Arab Israelis need to feel as though they are a part of the country, not second-class citizens. Social rights will produce the sense of belonging within the state without producing resentment within the Jewish community.

Because of the structure of the electoral system in Israel, the provision of rights to Arab Israelis is hard to come by. However, social rights, especially access to health services, do not threaten the state or cause Israel to go against its basic value of security. Rather, the provision of health services will improve the security of the nation because it will decrease the internal resentment of Arab Israelis. Professor Saban showed support for this view. He stated that providing rights does not have to result in the destruction of the Jewish democratic paradigm of the state.

Arab Israelis do not wish to leave Israel to live in an Arab country or a

Palestinian nation if it were established in the future. Most of the explanation for this is that the economic opportunities and public goods in Israel are superior to those in the surrounding Arab countries. Professor Alan Dershowitz of Harvard Law School writes in his book, *The Case for Israel*, that “opponents of Israel tend to emphasize the disparity between Israeli Arabs and Jews, while hardly mentioning how much better Israeli Arabs fare than their counterparts in the Arab states.”<sup>24</sup> He continues by specifically looking at the Israeli health care system, which he says “dwarfs that of its neighbors,”<sup>25</sup> and that the National Health Insurance Law, in providing universal health insurance to all citizens, has “helped to raise the life expectancy of Israeli Arabs to well above that of Arab neighbors and to drive their infant mortality rates to well below.”<sup>26</sup> However, although the Israeli system has improved the Arab Israelis to a health status above their Arab neighbors, the disparity within the state is still an important issue. Because Arab Israelis do not wish to leave the nation, they must be treated as permanent residents who deserve equal rights. The Arab Israelis are not an issue that will disappear, even if there is a Palestinian state to which they can move, and the greater the disparity between Arab and Jewish Israelis, the more tension there will be between the two groups.

An important issue in determining the means of decreasing resentment by increasing equality is in the definition of equality. Professor Bendor said that a written “constitution would not be able to clear up the gray area in terms of what equality is” because equality cannot be defined. However, Dr. Reichman explained that it is possible to define equality in three different ways. Equality can be equality based on need, equality based on giving each person the same amount (every person gets \$1 and so the system is equal), and equality with respect to contribution (so that the more funds a community raises, the larger the amount of government funding that community receives). Dr. Reichman argues that the Israeli system is based on this second definition of equality where each citizen receives the same amount.

The problem with this current system is that not all of Israel’s citizens need the same amount of care. As I have already argued, the Arab Israeli community has a greater need for health services as their life expectancy is lower than that of their Jewish counterparts, and they have cultural norms that inhibit their ability to achieve a higher health status. In order to create a more peaceful community, equality in Israel should be based on providing each individual with the means to reach an equal health status. This will make the citizens feel as though they are equally respected and cared for because they will see their current health status as equal to that of all other citizens. Providing the same governmental funding when the Jewish Israelis

have a higher health status and are receiving more outside funding than the Arab Israelis means that the Arab Israelis will continue to lag behind in health indicators. Equality in governmental funding will not produce the desired result of creating a more peaceful society.

I strongly support equality in health services and access to care as a means to create a more peaceful, united society in Israel. Arab Israelis should receive more funding than their Jewish counterparts because they receive less outside funding than their Jewish counterparts and have more health issues as a result of their cultural and educational differences. Health education should be a main goal of the Israeli government, in order to provide information about healthy eating habits and the importance of exercise. In addition, the public

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**In order to create a more peaceful community, equality in Israel should be based on providing each individual with the means to reach an equal health status.**

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spending for the National Health Insurance Law must be increased back to its original level in order to make the National Health Insurance Law more effective in creating an equal system. The foundation for health equality has been set out through the National Health Insurance Law; now, the government must follow through by making it possible for the law to be effective. This means building more

clinics in rural areas to treat Arab Israelis who live in these locations. A new effort has been made to reach citizens living in these areas. The Israel Council Society has created mobile clinics which travel through the locations that have less access to health services. Professor Cohen explained this new program and stated that it is a growing trend in Israel. These are the types of services that must begin to be provided at a higher rate.

An equal health status in both groups will create the ability for a variety of other forms of equality. Equal health will allow both groups to be equally productive. This could potentially open new opportunities for employment. In addition, increasing the life expectancy of Arab Israelis could provide them with the ability to pass on more wealth between generations. Professor Semyonov explained in an interview that the lower life expectancy of Arab Israelis means that they have less time to accumulate wealth over their lives, which results in a smaller inheritance for their children. This is exacerbated by the larger family sizes in Arab communities, which cause the inheritance to be divided into more parts, providing each child with even less.

The reverse is also true, that equality in other areas will result in greater equality in health. Equal levels and quality of education will result in better

eating habits and a lower smoking rate in Arab communities. I would argue that a decrease in the physical segregation of the two populations would also have a strong impact on the health disparities. Arab Israelis that live in mixed cities tend to be healthier because they are influenced by the more modern lifestyle and the popular desire to be healthier. In addition, the increased funding for Jewish Israelis from outside sources creates better health facilities in Jewish towns; however, towns with Arab and Jewish Israelis would also be able to benefit from this additional funding. This will create access to better care for Arab Israelis. And not only will a decrease in social and economic disparities result in a more unified community with less violence, but Dr. Zaidise also argued that peace would be an important step toward creating more equality within Israeli society.

As a result of the knowledge I gained by interviewing a variety of individuals in Israel who had a diverse set of opinions on the topic, I have come to the conclusion that equality in health is an important stepping stone for equality in a variety of other areas and for a more united society. Because health issues do not force the Israeli governmental to begin to tackle the larger issues of the state's identity as a Jewish democracy, it is a less controversial way to begin to move the Arab community forward. Any type of equality will have the effect of making the Arab citizens feel as though they are a respected and important part of Israeli society. Once they no longer see themselves as second-class citizens within Israel, Arab Israelis will begin to identify themselves as "Israelis", not just "Arabs in Israel". Arab Israelis self-identifying as Israeli citizens is a necessary step in creating a united Israel that works toward peace.

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1 Asher Arian, *Politics in Israel: The Second Republic* (Washington D.C.: CQ Press, 2005), 80

2 Ibid.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Sikkuy, *The Equality Index of Jewish and Arab Citizens in Israel* (Haifa, Israel, 2007), 18.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid., 17

8 Ibid., 68

9 Ibid., 69

10 Ibid., 70

11 Don Peretz and Gideon Doron, *The Government and Politics of Israel* (USA: Westview Press, 1997), 11.

12 Arian, *Politics in Israel: The Second Republic*, 326.

13 Ibid., 80

14 Don Peretz and Gideon Doron, *The Government and Politics of Israel*, 56.

15 Sikkuy, *The Equality Index of Jewish and Arab Citizens in Israel*, 48.

16 Alan Dowty, "Arabs in Israel", *The Jewish State: A Century Later* (LA, CA: University of California Press, 1998), 195.

17 Don Peretz and Gideo Doron, *The Government and Politics of Israel*, 59.

18 Ibid., 60

19 Ibid., 276.

22 Ibid., 31.

23 Basic Law: Human Dignity and Liberty (1992) <http://www.mfa.gov.il>

24 Alan Dershowitz, *The Case For Israel* (Hoboken, New Jersey: John Wiley and Son, 2003), 223.

# To Be an Arab in Israel

*Hana Agha*

During the Hezbollah-Israeli war in 2006, two rockets launched by Hezbollah landed in the city of Nazareth, a city home to 65,800 Arab citizens of Israel. Two young Arab children, aged 9 and 3, were killed in the attack, but the reaction of their mother to the attack stood in stark contrast to the predominant reactions of Jewish Israelis. Instead of condemning Hezbollah for killing her two sons, the funeral was filled with slogans denouncing Israel's war actions and naming the children victims of Israel's aggression.<sup>1</sup> On the one hand, right-wingers in Israel claimed it was an illustration of the disloyalty of the Arabs to Israel, and verification that their presence constituted an internal threat. On the other hand, the Arab citizens of Nazareth claimed they had never wanted to be dragged into such a war, and that Israel disregarded the wishes of its Arab citizens in its decision to invade Lebanon. Nazareth was not warned by sirens, unlike Jewish Israeli towns, and there were no bomb shelters constructed there – evidence of the state's neglect of its “second-class” citizens.<sup>2</sup> The debate on how the Israeli government should view its Arab citizens has been gaining momentum ever since.

A more striking aspect for some was a picture accompanying *The New York Times's* news article, which showed the bed the two boys shared with their older sibling in a dingy room. The socio-economic status of the Arabs in Israel shows great disparity in relation to the Jewish-Israeli population. Fifty percent of the population living below the poverty line is Arab, and Arabs consistently rank in the lowest educational levels and living standards. Such a disproportional affliction of poverty has led many academics to accuse the Israeli government of pursuing policies which benefit the Jewish community at the expense of its Arab citizens. The initiation of the war against Hezbollah, the expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza, and Israeli treatment of Palestinians in the occupied Palestinian Territories (OPT) clearly reflect a political slant towards the interests of its Jewish population. Yet, the Israeli Declaration of Independence states that it is a “Jewish and democratic state,” implying equality for all its citizens as the foundation of the state. The debate will continue, but soon, by sheer demographics, the state will be forced to answer the existential question of whether it will remain a “Jewish state” serving Jewish interests despite the fact that by 2020, 36% of



its citizens will be Arab.<sup>3</sup> Through various statistical compilations, reports on discrimination, essays, and interviews with academics in the subject of Arab-Jewish relations in Israel, I shall seek to paint a more detailed picture of what it means to be an Arab in Israel, economically and socially, and what the Arabs' existence means to the foundations of Israel.

These are the questions which, a year and a half after Hezbollah's rockets fell, brought me to a house in Nazareth that was within sight of the spot where the rockets landed. After conducting field research on the socio-economic status of the Arab minority in Israel, I have chosen to include in this report a general overview of some of the factors which I found revealing on the topic of inequality.

### EMPLOYMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

“The government was an ally of the traditional forces of underdevelopment [toward the Arab sector].”

*-Professor Vered Kraus, Haifa University<sup>4</sup>*

The Arab economy can be described as being completely dependent on the Jewish-Israeli economy, and this fact has not occurred naturally but rather through the purposeful underdevelopment of the Arab sector throughout the history of the state. These have been achieved through mechanisms such as the distortion of Development Maps and Priority Zoning Maps to benefit cities with Jewish majorities, and the lack of funding toward improving the infrastructure of the Arab sector. Funding from external sources, as well as land owned by Jewish organizations, completely circumvent Arab localities, and military service is also used in discriminating against the Arab labor force.

Nothing illustrates the sharp contrast of the living standards of Arabs and Jews than a walk through Nazareth and Nazareth Illit, or Upper Nazareth. According to a report published by Adalah: The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights on legal violations of the Arab minority's rights in Israel, Nazareth was home to 60,000 people when the survey was conducted in 1998, and its land area was 16,000 dunams.<sup>5</sup> Nazareth Illit had a population of 40,000 and its land area was 40,000 dunams.<sup>6</sup> The state limited Nazareth's ability to expand by setting a small jurisdiction since the creation of the state, but allowed neighboring Jewish towns such as Nazareth Illit to expand. Clearly this has an important socio-economic effect, as the inhabitants of Nazareth are crowded into poorly planned infrastructure. Road accidents are a continuous occurrence due to the narrow and winding streets, and

children are often seen playing in the streets due to the lack of public parks and empty space. The children's advocacy group Beterem estimates that Arab children are 2.7 times more likely to die in an accident of some kind than Jewish children.<sup>6a</sup> One example of how poorly planned the roads are is one incident in which three youths were hit in succession by a car, and all three passed away. The plans for building housing to serve Jewish communities and Arab communities show a marked discrepancy as well: In 1995, the government allocated funding to build 32,529 apartments to specific Jewish localities, but only planned to build 2,377 apartments in Arab towns. In 1998, 23,000 apartments were designated to be built, not a single one servicing an Arab neighborhood.<sup>7</sup> According to The Sikkuy Report 2006, an annual report issued by an NGO which monitors the equality of Jews and Arabs in Israel, "the total land allocated for employment in Jewish communities is 5.5 times higher ... for industry, 6.1 times higher ... The severe shortage of land for employment has dire ramifications in various areas: the level of participation in the work force, the unemployment rate and the amount of commuting."<sup>8</sup>

The mandatory military service in Israel is also manipulated as a way to discriminate against the Arab population, since, with the exception of the Arab Druze minority and some Bedouins, Arabs do not serve in the army. There are several benefits to serving in the military, such as greater housing loans, partial exemptions from state-run occupational training courses, and preferences in public employment, educational loans, and even on-campus housing, as we shall later examine. Although benefits are usually used in democratic states to compensate those who serve in the military, the problem here is that there are several benefits which go above and beyond what is legislated, from which the Arabs are completely excluded. For example, certain courses at universities are given a minimum age to enter, benefiting soldiers who finish at around 21 years old, but negatively affecting 18-year-old Arab students enrolled in university. Discrimination based on race and national origin is explicitly forbidden in the Equal Opportunity Law, but this law does not effectively protect against the discrimination of Arab Israelis precisely because of "neutral" criteria for jobs such as the completion of military service. In the daily Israeli newspaper *Ha'aretz*, a position for a lawyer in the Registrar of Associations Office was advertised, and military service completion was one of the criteria. Clearly, there is no connection between the completion of military service and the ability to perform the job. As Professor Noah Lewin-Epstein<sup>9</sup> of Tel Aviv University said in our interview, "... law firms, for example, don't employ Arabs," and therefore, highly educated Arabs earn lower returns on their incomes since they have

to operate in “economies of scale,” meaning restricting their business to the already-poorer Arab sector.

The division of Israel into ‘national priority zones’ designates certain zones which are eligible to receive tax incentives for industrialization, grants, educational programs and other socio-economic benefits. Although the zoning maps are continuously shifted, very few Arab towns have ever fallen into the priority zone, and the changes in plans very often do not reflect socio-economic needs. To bring us back to the Nazareth/Nazareth Illit example, a decision issued by the government on February 15, 1998 removed ‘priority status’ from all Arab localities labeled as such. Under the new plan, Nazareth Illit was afforded national priority status, although Arab Nazareth is one of the poorest Arab localities per capita in the country. Arab municipalities already receive a very small share of the total state budget, especially when compared to the government funding allocations to the Jewish settlements in the Occupied Territories. Whereas settlements were granted 2,910 NIS per settler, Arab towns got an average of 1,540 NIS in the 1998 budget.<sup>10</sup>

A unique situation occurs in Israel, where Jewish institutions and organizations play a crucial role in the financing and policies of the state, and they acquire a quasi-governmental status. The problem is that the power these institutions are given allows them to have nationwide outcomes without the democratic responsibilities of the state towards its citizens, through what is known as the World Zionist Organization Law. Institutions such as the Jewish National Fund, the Jewish Agency and the World Zionist Organization have been steadily accumulating land in Israel since before the state’s foundation in 1948. While these organizations’ responsibilities include the promotion of cultural and religious activities, the main aspect in which they affect the Arab communities is their role in the promotion and development of new Jewish rural and urban settlements. The funding of strictly Jewish development projects have allowed a great disparity to occur between the rural and urban Jewish and Arab communities. Whereas newly formed Jewish communities enjoy a number of basic services such as modern buildings, recreational spaces and several basic services courtesy of the Jewish Agency, to this day approximately 16% of Arab communities are not connected to a public sewage network. Raw sewage from the Jewish town of Dimona in the Negev runs through neighboring Arab villages, posing an extreme health threat in the cases of unrecognized Bedouin villages, as they are not even connected to a water system, and drinking-water tanks travel through open waste to get to the villages. A more dramatic and startling picture of inequality amongst citizens possessing the same passport is

difficult to find in the “democratic” developed world. In the historic case of Kaadan v. the Israeli Land Agency, an Arab Israeli family tried to purchase a house in the Jewish town of Katzir and was denied entry on the basis that the Jewish Agency funded the settlement and would not rent to non-Jewish families. The Kaadan family filed a petition to the state on the basis that, seeing as the State of Israel owns 93% of the land, the government should not allow the Jewish Agency to discriminate against a group of citizens based on national origin. The state rejected this petition on the grounds that the Jewish Agency’s actions were legal on the basis of the WZO Law. The case was then brought to the Supreme Court, which ruled in April 2000 that it was illegal to not allow the Kaadan family to move to Katzir, because government land was publicly owned and leased to the Jewish Agency, and there was no effective parallel Arab organization developing Arab lands in the same fashion.<sup>11</sup>

The presence of a “security threat” clause in Article 42 of the Israeli legal framework offers a loophole in which employers are given the discretion to discriminate legally based on the nationality of the employee: “... It shall not be considered discrimination if the character or nature of the task, or consideration of State security to

prevent a person from being sent to, or engage in, some particular work.” This is a good illustration of how the events that occur outside of Israel affect the population within Israel, and the implementation of collective punishment in the name of state security. However, in Israel we can see that there is an excessive

misuse and gross misapplication of “security” in a racist and discriminatory manner. One documented case study gave some revealing insight on this subject; 48 manufacturing facilities were surveyed,<sup>12</sup> and it was found that only 26 of them employed Arabs, even though the majority of the facilities were in close proximity to Arab towns. No Arabs were in managerial positions and only six held jobs in professional and technical services. Even though they were important to the functioning of the factory (in one-fifth of the factories, over half the labor force was Arab), the majority worked as skilled craftsmen or unskilled operatives and laborers. The explanation for this from the officials was that the Arabs did not have sufficient levels of education, but that doesn’t explain why they were absent from office-clerical

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**In Israel, we can see that there is an excessive misuse and gross misapplication of “security” in a racist and discriminatory manner.**

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positions, nor does it explain the difficulty of finding employment among educated Arabs. Twelve out of the twenty-six firms expressed reluctance in employing Arabs in professional and managerial jobs. The firms that did not employ any Arabs cited security reasons as their main excuse, and although some did in fact produce for the military, a tolerable excuse, others claimed their proximity to “sensitive industry facilities” was a security liability and therefore they could not employ Arabs. However, in one case, the cited “sensitive industry facility” itself employed Arabs. A more modern example is the refusal to hire Arabs in technological computer industries by several factories, both international and Israeli.

The government is supposed to set the precedent for anti-discriminatory employment measures for its Arab minority and provide an example to private employers. However, the low percentage of Arabs in governmental offices in proportion to their percentage in the population reflects a dismal initiative by the government to integrate the Arab labor force positively in the economy. Less than 5% of the 50,000 government office employees are Arab, and only 0.5% of the managers of governmental offices are Arab (three out of 641).<sup>13</sup> These excessive figures demonstrate a state-sponsored discrimination against Arabs, especially at the managerial level, and present an institutionalized discrimination against its own citizens.

A subject we need to touch on is the absolute dependence of the Arab economy on the Jewish economy. Since the Arab population is overly represented in lower-income jobs, and since it is underrepresented at the managerial and executive levels, as well as in the professional job industries (such as lawyers and professors), it is not difficult to see how the Arab labor force has become a source of cheap labor to fuel Jewish industrial growth. The absence of investment in cultivating and industrializing the Arab sector means that professionals must commute to work in the Jewish sector to earn reasonable wages for their services. It also means that the Arab sector has been transformed almost exclusively into a consumer for entirely Jewish-Israeli products. The economy is split into ethnic lines, with Jewish Israelis occupying the higher-income jobs and dominating the production center of the economy, whereas the Arab Israelis constitute the lower-income job-holders and are consumers of Jewish goods.

All of these factors have resulted in a lower socio-economic status amongst Arabs, and this is reflected in several statistics. Arabs are more likely to work as commuter workers in Jewish sectors, often taking jobs that pay a lower salary. For example, statistics compiled in the Sikkuy Report show that in 2006, the percentage of Arabs working in the construction industry was 4.5 times higher than the percentage of Jews working in the construction



industry. On the other end of the scale, the percentage of Jews employed in the banking industry was 3.7 times higher than that of the Arabs employed in the banking industry. The poverty rate amongst Arab families was 1.86 times higher than that of Jewish families, and incidence of poverty in Arab children was 2.2 times higher than that in Jewish children. This is due to the higher birth rate amongst Arabs, but reflects a disturbing trend in the future: There will be more Arabs below the poverty line unless drastic measures are taken to better finance the Arab sector. Although the Israeli government adopts several measures to lessen the effect of poverty in families, the Sikkuy Report shows us that measures such as the transfer of payments and using direct taxation meant to alleviate poverty help the Jewish community twice as much as the Arab community. Transfer payments and direct taxation lift 44% of Jewish individuals out of poverty, but only help 18% of Arab individuals in this way. We can clearly see a better government effort at alleviating poverty amongst its Jewish citizens than amongst its Arab citizens.

#### LEGAL DISCRIMINATION: A FEW SAMPLE CASES FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF HAIFA

During my interview with Advocate Orna Cohen in the legal clinic Adalah, I was asked which university was hosting our stay. After I replied that the University of Haifa was hosting our group, she stifled a small laugh and said, “Oh, that’s the worst one of them all!”

Universities all claim to be the safe haven of intellectual life, where liberal thought and pluralism dominate. However, I was very surprised to learn about cases that were raised by Adalah on behalf of Arab students against the university that was hosting us, on the grounds of ethnic discrimination; I believe that these cases provide a deep insight into how the system of discrimination works in Israel in ways that would not have been understood without ground research. There are several factors in facilitating the process of discrimination against a minority, the first of which is the presence of a large disconnect between the liberal faculty and the more conservative administration, and the second of which is the desire of the institution to be seen favorably through the eyes of the majority – in this case, keeping in mind the wishes of certain factions of Jewish-Israeli society, especially in the context of escalating regional conflict.

The first example is a petition on behalf of a female Arab student who was denied housing because she had not accumulated a certain number of “points” which would guarantee her university housing. This student was not able to rent an apartment of her own because, like many other female

Arab students, cultural and economic restrictions imposed on her ability to rent housing alone. However the main issue was not the fact that she was not eligible for housing, but that the university was awarding a significant percentage of the points needed to those who had served in the military, namely the Jewish-Israeli student population. The amount of points accumulated through military service allowed Jewish-Israeli students to enter the housing lottery with 35-41% of the points necessary for obtaining university housing, giving them a hugely unfair advantage over Arab students. The Supreme Court ruled that the University of Haifa had acted in a discriminatory way to its Arab student population, and seeing as this was the first court ruling that military service acted in a way that discriminated toward the Arab student population, this was seen as a significant step toward adopting a more pro-equality stance.<sup>14</sup>

The views of Advocate Orna Cohen may come as a surprise at first, seeing as several members of the University of Haifa pointed out that the university enrolls the highest number of Arab students in the country. The percentage of Arab students in the university is approximately 25% (the largest population ever enrolled to date), but considering that the population surrounding the university is 50% Arab, this number is insignificant and may reflect a discriminatory policy. “Haifa University is afraid of [being] seen as an Arab university, which would make it less appealing to many Jewish people nation-wide,” explained Advocate Cohen. Considering that the segregation is so solid that most Arabs and Jews do not interact until the university level, the misconceptions of attending an “Arab university”<sup>15</sup> could be a major deterrent to Jewish applicants.

Another testament to the University of Haifa’s stifling of Arab student political freedom is the fact that the university has several times disciplined its Arab students for protests as mild as two individuals sitting with a sign noting the activities of the Israeli Army in the OPT. According to a publication co-authored by Advocate Cohen, “In many ways, the streets of Haifa offer greater legal support for freedom of speech than the campus of Haifa University. Outside of campus, a permit is needed to demonstrate only when more than 50 people participate in an open space ... On campus however almost any political activity requires a permit.”<sup>16</sup> In my interview with Advocate Cohen, she gave me an example of an incident which almost went to court. The issue was the banning of a brochure, made by the Arab Students Committee of Haifa University (a group which the university has yet to endorse), by the dean of students and the subsequent suspension of two Arab students. The brochure had statements like “George Bush is a cowboy” protesting the war in Iraq, and called the student government

elections at the university racist and stupid. Adalah sent a petition on the students' behalf; the university had been planning to go to court until its legal counsel advised it otherwise. Advocate Cohen read out loud a fax she had just received on behalf of the university. The part which caught my attention was that, after allowing the publication to go through and lifting the suspension, the university still insisted that it "had the right to decide which publications will go through and the right to punish students who abuse their right to distribute material."

## CULTURE

It is an understatement to say that the Arab citizens of Israel suffer from cultural discrimination. In a state that places the word "Jewish" before "democratic" when describing its identity, Arab Muslim and Christian cultures are treated in the best of times as secondary cultures, and in the worst of times as representations of the nation's enemies. Entirely absent from the country is a historical narrative of one-fifth of the population. Their religious and cultural inclinations are neglected and need to be preserved through external charities, rather than state or government institutions. In the context of such a volatile political atmosphere, the consequences of dismissive actions by the Israeli government are dire.

The naming of Israel's Arab citizens as Arab Israelis carries weight with many of the actual citizens of the state, because several of the Arab academics we interviewed emphasized the importance of naming the citizens Palestinian Israelis, Arab citizens of Israel, Palestinian citizens of Israel or Palestinian Arabs. This underlines a sentiment held by some that the Israeli government employed the term "Arab Israelis" to drive a wedge between the Arabs inside Israel's 1948 borders and the Palestinians outside them. In one of my interviews, the interviewee laughed when I said Arab Israelis, and replied, "There is no such thing as an Arab Israeli; there are no true Arab citizens of Israel yet. It is a Jewish state. We are Palestinian Arabs."<sup>17</sup> The sense of the alienation of the Arab community of Israel was palpable, and this was due in large part to the negligence and suppression of Palestinian culture and history. From 1948 onward, from the Palestinian perspective, there was and still is a complete discarding of the Palestinian narrative of the founding of Israel. Despite the "new historians" emerging from the Jewish-Israeli academia acknowledging the fact that atrocities were committed against the Palestinian people, the Israeli government continues to pursue policies that strongly deny the existence of such a narrative.

There is no mention in any history book in the Israeli educational system

of the Palestinian side of the history of the state. Children in both Jewish and Arab schools learn about the history of the Zionist movements and of the history of the Jewish peoples of Europe, and learn Hebrew as a requirement. The historical narrative of Palestine is treated as a negligible part of the Ottoman Empire, and children learn nothing of the achievements of the Palestinian-Arab culture. In Jewish schools, Arabic is mandatory between 4th and 10th grades, but it is taught as a foreign language, meaning that by the time of graduation, most have not mastered even an elementary understanding of one of the two official languages of the state, and of one-fifth of the state's population. Arab children learn from a young age to treat Israeli authority with suspicion and mistrust, because what they learn in school runs counter to what their personal family history tells them and what their parents ingrain in their identity as a Palestinian Israeli. The Israeli state's insistence on employing such a one-sided cultural dialogue results in the affirmation of Arab Israelis' historical conceptualization of the Jewish state as an entity that aims to remove them from history books and deny them any effective role in Israeli society.

The surface image of Israel to the outside world denies the existence of an Arab identity or delegates it to an idea of "villages". The Arab co-director of Sikkuy, Dr. Ali Haydar, mentioned in his interview that he was from an Arab "village" whose population was later revealed to be at least 11,000 people. The adoption of diminutive terms to describe the Arab settlements seems to be one wishful way of reassigning the Arabs of Israel to the minor roles they occupied demographically in 1948. The vast majority of the Jewish-Israeli professors we interviewed mentioned the "demographics" of the situation as one of the major concerns, if not the major concern, of the Israeli government and public. A prevalent theory among Israeli intellectuals, it seems, is that the Arab culture in and of itself promotes large families. In interviewing Professor Ruth Katz of Haifa University about her research into the Israeli family structure, she quoted one of her studies that documented the birth rates of Arab families and how the Arab culture was the main factor in the high birth rates of the Arab population. Upon being asked what the control group was for her thesis that proved it was culture and not socio-economic status, Professor Katz stated that the control group consisted of "Arab immigrant groups in America,"<sup>18</sup> as opposed to a suggestion made in the interview that a measure of an urban Arab group, such as Arabs living in Amman whose birth rate is declining, may have been a better control group. This is symptomatic of an attitude in Israeli academia of treating the Arab population in Israel as an immigrant group, rather than an indigenous minority – something which contributes to the polarization of the Palestinian

movement both inside and outside of Israel.

More examples of cultural discrimination include the allocation of street names and official symbols; they pertain to the Jewish culture in particular, in complete negligence of the Christian, Muslim, Druze or Arab symbols which are also, by democratic law, meant to be integrated into Israeli society. There is funding for cultural institutions that further the study of Jewish heritage, such as the High Institute for Hebrew Language, but no such laws promoting the funding of an institute for Arabic language, history or heritage. In one famous case, there was a petition to the Ministry of Education for funding a cultural festival, since the ministry's responsibilities include funding cultural and artistic events and institutions, but the petition was rejected on the grounds that the students were planning to use Christian music in the festival. The rejection was based on the claim that the state was not obliged to support institutions which played Christian music.<sup>19</sup>

The proposals from several Jewish-Israeli Knesset members and public speakers to incorporate Arabs into national military service are culturally insensitive. Arab Israelis have expressed strong opposition to it because it would be done under the military branch of the Israeli government responsible for what they consider atrocities in the Occupied Territories, and many would not like to see their youth conscripted and working under such an organization.<sup>20</sup> Some share the view that it is an ongoing effort of the "Israelization" of the Arab youth, meaning that as opposed to the inclusion of the Palestinian Arab culture and expressing sensitivity to the fact that Arabs sympathize toward their brethren in surrounding nations, the military would try and make them lose their Arab identity and heritage. Several Arab citizens have proposed an alternative kind of "national" service that would cater exclusively to the Arab community, and one University of Haifa student in particular told me of her proposal for a "Palestinian national service" where Arab students could serve their communities. I asked whether she ever expressed her proposal, and she explained that "there is no way the Israeli government will allow a service that would not serve the good of Israel, meaning the Jewish people". However, as of January 2008, a council was established to create an alternative national service to serve the Arab and ultra-Orthodox Jewish communities, but it has received limited media attention and has yet to create a policy. Hopefully, this will prove to be a committed step in the right direction.

Although Arabic is an official language, most street signs, with the exception of streets in Arab communities or highways near Arab communities, are written in Hebrew and English, although English does not enjoy the special and equal status of being an official language. The use of Arabic in courts



and laws, as permitted by law, is often neglected, and in the cases where it was brought to the attention of the Supreme Court, the Justices framed their decision on the validity of using Arabic as a “free speech” right, and not in terms of its special status as the second official language. It is continually marginalized and treated in terms of being a secondary language although there is no legislature dictating such terms. Surveys show that Jewish Israelis perceive Arabic as useless and unimportant, and in one survey of 386 citizens aged 20-70, only two expressed their desire to learn Arabic, and even then only as a third language after Hebrew and English.<sup>21</sup>

University entrance exams and placement tests are given exclusively in Hebrew, disadvantaging students whose mother tongue is Arabic. The fact that all higher-education institutions teach only in Hebrew leads many Arab students to institutions abroad, and upon their return, many find difficulty in passing qualifications exams, also given exclusively in Hebrew, even if the students plan to pursue a career servicing the Arabic-speaking population exclusively. The absence of an initiative from the Israeli government welcoming an Arab university is deeply troubling, as it discourages the kind of Arab cultural and intellectual climate that could very well cater to the needs of integrating Arab students properly into the Israeli system, economically, socially and politically. It would be difficult to think of a way that a higher-education institute catering to the needs of a professional Arab labor force, fostering higher-level philosophical and political thinking as well as providing an environment in which students can explore their Arab heritage in an academic manner, would seem detrimental to the Israeli state. Instead, Arab philosophical learning is significantly difficult to reach, while negative, crude and uneducated banter is easily accessible.

There exists a deep-seated suspicion by Israel's Arab community of the Israeli government; the issue of the “divide and conquer” strategy of the Israeli government kept resurfacing with a wide range of interviewees throughout my days in Israel. One went so far as to ask us to confirm whether or not we were from a “Zionist organization from America that is visiting on a propaganda mission.” Other academics pointed to more credible reasons for their animosity and suspicion of the Israeli government, such as the history of land expropriation, confiscation and violence. This suspicious nature would not and should not surprise most people who do research on this subject; however, what is normally neglected in some studies of the Arab-Israeli attitude toward the government is that this suspicion is not alleviated through the adoption of an ultra-nationalistic, Zionist education in public schools. It is alleviated through a cooperative dialogue of mutual understanding, the recognition of the wrongs of the past and an acceptance

of the positive aspects of both cultures in the present.

## SEGREGATION AND SOCIETY

It has already been mentioned that segregation in Israeli society is so deep that youth do not normally interact with those of other nationalities until entrance into universities, and even then it is usually limited to what occurs in the classroom. Even in mixed cities, there are rigidly maintained “Arab” and “Jewish” neighborhoods, and the support for such segregation comes mutually from both sides. However, there have been some significant attempts by Arabs to try to move in to the better-serviced, more modern Jewish part of the city; the majority of such attempts are efficiently blocked through mechanisms similar to the ones used in the aforementioned Kaadan case of 1995.

The use of the Jewish nature of the state to effectively block the mixture of Jewish and Arab neighborhoods adds a new dimension to the idea of segregation. In the famous *Bourkan v. Minister of Finance* case, the Supreme Court decided to block an Arab-Israeli citizen from buying a house in Old Jerusalem. In defense of the decision being blatantly carried out due to the buyer’s nationality, the court used the logic that the apartments built in Old Jerusalem were made to benefit Jews due to the historical discrimination against them during the time Jerusalem was controlled by Arabs. The tying in of past discrimination against Jews and the collective punishment applied to the Arab buyer on the basis of his nationality seemed to fit in to the court’s logic at the time. Segregation, in the eyes of the state, benefits the state’s Jewish character, and therefore it is worth undermining the democratic nature of the state. An interesting argument presented for segregation on the Palestinian side, however, lies in the fact that assimilation into a Jewish neighborhood would ultimately mean losing the Arab identity, since it would be the assimilation of the minority into the majority. The discrimination in housing loans to Arab citizens of Israel is another mechanism for furthering segregation, as the state grants larger loans to those who have completed the military service. A married couple who earns less than the average wage and has served in the military is eligible for a housing loan of 118,000 NIS, whereas a married couple who earns less than the average wage but has not served in the military receives 78,700 NIS.<sup>22</sup>

Two other incidents which stress the blurring of the Jewish nature of the state and segregation are the plans of Judaizing the Galilee region and the settlement policies of Judaizing the Negev. Professor Sandy Kedar, a member of the University of Haifa’s Faculty of Law who specializes in the

human rights of the Bedouins of the unrecognized villages of the Negev, claims that although Jewish outpostings into the lands is against international and Israeli law “ ... the policy is ethnic or racial demographic, [in other words,] spread as many Jews as possible to Judaize the land. Now they have to be more secretive about such aims, citing security reasons such as fears of the Bedouins forming a belt from the West Bank to Gaza, because people are more organized: There’s the Regional Council for Unrecognized Villages and documentation of human rights.”<sup>23</sup>

A living example of how segregation works is in the old city of Acre. The old port used to be one of the most formidable and challenging castles in the world, protecting the entire city night and day. Now, it is one of the dirtiest and poorest neighborhoods, its residents living in makeshift homes amidst the castle’s ruins. It bears a shocking resemblance to certain parts of Cairo, Egypt. Originally, it was intended for Jewish immigrants after its conquest in 1948, but government tax benefits skipped over the area into neighboring ones, and therefore, most of the Jewish inhabitants who could leave left. The Arab inhabitants moved in, and in 2001, it had been the most mixed city in Israel. Now, there’s talk of changing the municipal boundaries once again to better “shift the demographic balance” – in other words, to maintain the Judaization of Acre, since its Jewish inhabitants are not going to remain in a city where they do not feel dominant.<sup>24</sup>

## ETHNOCRACY

“The existence of the State of Israel as the state of the Jewish people does not deny its democratic nature, just as the Frenchness of France does not deny its democratic nature.”

*-Justice Shamgar, Israeli Supreme Court*

In the declarative clause of Israel being a “Jewish state and a democracy” there comes an inherent riddle under which an alphabet soup of theories has come to power to try and understand what kind of state that phrase entails. One theory that was advocated by many Israeli intellectuals persists; one of these intellectuals is Dr. Asa’d Ghanem, the former co-director of SIKKUY and one of the drafting members of the document “The Future Visions of the Palestinian Arab Citizens of Israel”. The theory seems to most accurately portray the general viewpoint the Arab Israeli minority has of its ruling system. In an ethnocracy, the minority is ruled over by the majority, and its rights are not equal. There are some mechanisms of democracy entitled to the minority, but the full effects are not equal. Furthermore, the mechanisms

of the state are manipulated so as to benefit the majority as well as perpetrate an unequal division of power.

The above-mentioned quote is one which is frequently called upon to demonstrate that it is possible to have an ethnocentric democracy. Having an ethnocentric democracy, however, is not the issue facing Israel today. The “Frenchness” of France does not contain within it an inherent means of excluding an indigenous minority within a state; Christians, Muslims, Druze, Jews, Africans, Vietnamese and others have been incorporated into the French definition and, as such, enjoy equal rights and an uncompromising participation in a full democracy. Granted, France is not without its problems regarding minorities; however, it does not define itself on ethnic or religious lines. The emphasis of the Jewishness of Israel, rather than the Israeliness of Israel, gives a rigid, cultural and national basis to the state that inherently excludes one-fifth of its population and discriminates against it in order to better cater to the “Jewish” character of the state. Since the indigenous groups of Israel involved some non-Jewish populations, the adding of the Jewish character clause builds in an inherent fifth column upon itself in the form of a demographic threat. No matter what the Arabs do, what promises they make, what future plans they have, the Jewish character of the state will be threatened in 60 years’ time, when the majority of its population is not Jewish. Professor Lewin-Epstein remarked in our interview that “the Israeli government took on a policy of purposefully under-developing the Arab sector,” and the reasoning which I have found best to explain this is that the Jewish nature of the state plays a major role in pitting the Arabs as natural enemies. Even though the Arab Druze population serves in the army, and participated in the war in Lebanon in 2006 against its Arab brethren, their socio-economic status has not improved very much, and is dismal in comparison with the Jewish population of the state. No demonstration of loyalty from the Arabs will lead to equality as long as the state emphasizes its Jewish character over its democratic values.

Israel is an ethnocratic state because it discriminates by law against its Arab minority, meaning not all its citizens are equal before the law – the basic foundation of any true democracy. There are two prime examples. The first is in the Law of Return, which stipulates that any Jew from any corner of the world has the immediate right to Israeli citizenship. Palestinian refugees do not have this right and are forced to go through selective criteria and other complicated procedures to obtain their citizenship. Only “present absentee” Palestinians were granted citizenship, as contradictory as that statement appears, which refers to Palestinians who were in Israel when it was declared a state, and more. This is a law which discriminates by ethnicity purely for

the benefit of the Jewish community of the state and worldwide.

The second example is that immigration law discriminates in the fact that spouses of Jewish-Israeli citizens are granted citizenship immediately, and the process is through a different mechanism than that for spouses of Arab-Israeli citizens. This means that, once again, the two groups are treated differently just for their ethnicity. On this issue, I would like to bring to light the case that Adalah brought to the Supreme Court concerning the applications for citizenship of Palestinian citizens of the West Bank with Arab-Israeli spouses, due to its ability to shed light on several key points. After the acquisition of Palestinian lands in the 1967 war and the consequent freedom of movement between the territories, there began to be many inter-marriages between West Bankers and Arab Israelis due to common culture and affinity. Applications for citizenship began to flood the immigration

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**The government discriminated against an entire ethnicity of families by not allowing family unification, or by selective processing.**

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offices, but the process was complicated and required a long processing time, during which citizens could apply for a temporary residency permit to be with their families until naturalization took place.

A suicide bombing then occurred in 2002 within Israel, and the attacker turned out to be from the West Bank city of Jenin. All applications for citizenship,

temporary residence and visiting status were frozen and the borders were closed as the immigration office began reviewing all applications for security reasons. All new applications for citizenship were stopped in May 2002. Adalah went to the Supreme Court on the grounds that this violated the human right of family unification, as well as on the administrative level that the office had no right to freeze laws. The Supreme Court responded that with the “rolling terror” there was no way to differentiate between people, so they all had to be collectively discriminated against. This proved to be an economic disaster as well as a human rights one, because many of the West Bankers were in Israel on temporary residence permits or visitor permits to be with their families and therefore could not work. “I had people calling me on the phone, newly-wed mothers asking me, ‘Orna, I want to have a baby right now, is it the right time, should we have a baby now?’” said Advocate Cohen, remembering the emotional aspects of the case. “Families were separated with no knowledge of when they would be able to see each other again.” Many moved to the West Bank and lost their health and social benefits as Israeli citizens. The facts were few that the immigration office had made a



good decision, because 26 out of 1,000 were allegedly implicated in the case, meaning that they had “helped in some way”. An example of such help is in the finding of an application of one man who may have rented a hotel room that may have housed the terrorist. Only a fraction of a percentage were found with anything to do with the whole matter at all, and in the meantime the government discriminated against an entire ethnicity of families by not allowing family unification by faster processing of some applications, or being more flexible in its amnesty regulations. “Security is a flexible term in Israel,” and all too often it is twisted toward collectively punishing the Arab Israelis.<sup>25</sup> The temporary law was put into place indefinitely, and the petition to the Supreme Court was overturned in May 2006.

### THE VISION FOR THE FUTURE

All of these factors have given an overview of the general situation and the mechanisms that cause it. One thing that they all illustrate is that not only is the current situation unsustainable, but that a new situation has to be decided upon soon, preferably before the demographic bomb detonates. The Arab-Israeli population had been living in the shadow of its Jewish brethren for a long time, being pulled out from behind it occasionally during various Arab-Israeli conflicts to be scolded. Now, after sixty years of Israeli rule, it seems as though the Arab populations of Israel have learned to use the numbered tools of democracy given to them to their advantage, and have learned somewhat to manipulate the system from within. The glass ceiling is still there, as the statistics show, and no matter how high it rises, it will inevitably be shattered; whether it is peaceful or violent depends on many factors, but mainly on the achievement of equality and democracy under the Israeli government.

As opposed to having an inclusive vision of the state, the Jewish character of the state provides an exclusive vision, labeling one ethnic and culturally dominant group as one basis of the state, and the other as the “demographic threat” that challenges the other group. In a highly militarized society such as Israel, this leads to human rights disasters, especially in the militarily volatile nature of the Middle East. The Palestinian Arabs will give up their vision of an Arab Palestine, but only after the Jewish Israelis lay down their arms and give up the idea of a Zionist-Jewish state. It is a complete delusion to believe that democracy and equality can exist when the very definition of a state depends on excluding one-fifth of the population from the system. When simply being born an Arab means you are more likely to die four years younger, twice as likely to be living in poverty, twice as likely to drop out of high school,<sup>26</sup> twice as likely to get convicted for a crime and twice as likely

to get harsher punishments for the same crimes,<sup>27</sup> you do not *feel* alienated by the Israeli government – you are.

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1 Ezra HaLevi, "Nasrallah Apologizes for 'Martyring' Arab Children in Nazareth," *Israel National News*, <http://www.israelnationalnews.com/News/News.aspx/108072>

2 An Arab municipal worker, Muhammad Awsy, stated "This is just another example of how the Arab sector is neglected". The Israeli daily newspaper The Ha'aretz responded that it was because Nazareth was never believed to be a Hezbollah target. Source: Greg Myre, "In an Unlikely Target for Rockets, Mourning and Pleas for Peace," *New York Times* July 21, 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/21/world/middleeast/21nazareth.html>

3 Dr. Thabet Abu Rass, "Land, Planning, and Housing Policy of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel" *The Future Vision of the Palestinian Arabs in Israel*, The National Committee for the Heads of the Arab Local Authorities in Israel, page 16, <http://www.arab-lac.org/tasawor-mostaqbali-eng.pdf>

4 Professor Vered Kraus (Professor of Sociology at University of Haifa and co-author of *Promises in the Promised Land*) in discussion with the author, January 8, 2007.

5 The populations of Nazareth and Nazareth Illit were estimated to be 65,800 and 43,600 respectively by the Central Bureau of Statistics-Israel in 2006. I was unable to find details regarding the land area of the cities recently. Adalah: The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel. *Legal Violations of Arab Minority Rights in Israel: A Report on Israel's Implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination*. Published by Adalah, Israel, March 1998: 59

6 1 duman = 1,000 sq. meters

6a <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/987243.html>

7 Adalah, 60

8 The Sikkuy Report 2006: *The Equality Index of Jewish and Arab Citizens in Israel*, edited by Advocate Ali Haidar, Jerusalem-Haifa 2007, can be accessed online at <http://www.sikkuy.org.il>

9 Professor of Sociology and co-author of *The Arab Minority in Israel's Economy*.

10 Adalah, 90

11 While details of the court case can be found online at <http://www.adalah.org>, an editorial on the piece appears under "Press Releases" which points out the shortcomings of the ruling: mainly the fact that the Supreme Court made it very specific to the Kaadan family, and was not an opening to an era of integration nor an indication of changed government policy, as many in the Israeli and international media made it out to be.

12 This study is referred to in *The Arab minority in Israel's Economy: Patterns of Ethnic Inequality* by Lewin-Epstein and Semyonov, cited as (Wolkinson: 1989).

13 Adalah, 92. 3.402 NIS = 1 US dollar, according to the Bank of Israel's website on Sept. 23, 2008. <http://www.bankisrael.gov.il/eng.shearim/index.php>

14 Haneen Na'amneh, et. al. v. Haifa University Official Adalah press release available at <http://www.adalah.org/newsletter/eng/jul-aug06/1.php>

15 This fact was cited to me by multiple Arab and Jewish students, professors and other inhabitants of Israel

16 Orna Cohen and Rangwala Tawfiq, "Rights on Campus: Palestinian Students, Political Space, and Haifa University" *Adalah's Review* Vol 2, Fall 2000- Land. Adalah the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel.

17 Himmat Zoubi (Mada al-Carmiel Research Organization) in discussion with the author, January 2008

18 Professor Ruth Katz (University of Haifa) in discussion with the author, January 9, 2008.

19 Adalah, 66

20 <http://www.haaretz.com/hasen/spages/972609.html>

21 Adalah, 69

22 Based on information from ACCHRI 1995, gathered in the Adalah report pg 61

23 Professor Sandy Kedar (University of Haifa) in discussion with the author, January 9, 2008

24 Lily Galili and Ori Nir, "For the Jews, Acre's Arab Flavor Is Already Too Much" *Journal of Palestine Studies*, volume 30, 3, University of California Press: 2001: 91-100

25 See the Adalah case file available online at <http://www.adalah.org/eng/famunif.php>

26 Statistics compiled from Sikkuy Equality Index 2006

27 Studies in the Adalah report have shown that an Arab with no criminal record is twice as likely to be convicted as compared with a Jew in that same status; and an Arab with no criminal record is twice as likely to be sentenced to jail time as compared to a Jew with the same status. Pg 28 of the report.

# The History of the Muslim Brotherhood

## *The Political, Social and Economic Transformation of the Arab Republic of Egypt*

*Michelle Paison*

We in the West find it incomprehensible that theological ideas still inflame the minds of men, stirring up messianic passions that can leave societies in ruin. We had assumed that this was no longer possible, that human beings had learned to separate religious questions from political ones, that political theology died in 16h-century Europe. We were wrong.<sup>1</sup>

Islam is no longer exclusively a religion, but an ideology that provides a total framework for all aspects of political, social, economic, and cultural life in the Muslim world. Although Islam has continuously demonstrated the theme of resurgence throughout its history in response to the internal and external forces that challenge Muslim faith and society, the assertion of Islamism has strongly reemerged. Discontent is evident through the gradual movement towards Islamist ideology, whether or not the idea of Islam strongly resonates among the populous. Individuals, despondent from the suppression of alternatives from oppressive regimes, look towards change. Organizations, such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, provide clear examples of the greater trend developing throughout the region of the Middle East and North Africa. The political power and social influence held by the Brotherhood capitalizes on the Arab Republic of Egypt's failure to support its peoples. Subsequently the dissatisfied population turns to a movement that has the ability to provide the necessary services for survival; Islamism. This increasing development is pushing moderate, mainstream Islam into the realm of radicalism through means of desperation.

Part of the emergence of neorevivalism, the Muslim Brotherhood, established by Hassan al-Banna in 1928, saw the Islamic community at a critical crossroads and insisted that Muslims would find strength in the total self-sufficiency of Islam.

Our duty as Muslim Brothers is to work for the reform of selves, of hearts and souls by joining them to God the all-high; then to organize our society to be fit for the virtuous community which commands the

good and forbids evil-doing, then from the community will arise the good state.<sup>2</sup>

The Muslim Brotherhood initially began as a twofold movement for the reform of both the individual and social morality.<sup>3</sup> Through its considerable political significance the Brotherhood broadened its goals and grew in strength and number through the support of the populous in order to challenge the secular leadership within The Arab Republic of Egypt.<sup>4</sup> A Sunni religious movement, the Muslim Brotherhood stresses that Islam is a comprehensive ideology for personal and public life, and subsequently the foundation for Muslim state and society. These principles provide the community with the basic services for a healthy livelihood, while remaining consistent with the teachings of the faith. Using revivalist logic they called for a return to the Qur`an and the *Sunna* and the practice of the early community to establish an Islamic state and system of government through means of preaching the unity of *din*, religion, and *dawla*, the state. According to the principles of the Brotherhood no distinction is to be drawn between religious and secular law, or the citizen and the believer thus establishing a single state and society governed by Islam.<sup>5</sup> Through the creation of various organizations such as medical clinics, hospitals, charitable societies, cultural associations, and schools the Muslim Brotherhood is able to display the ways in which Islam fits into the structures of everyday life.<sup>6</sup>

The founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hassan al-Banna, provided an organization that prepared people with means of political expression as well as a positive direction towards social advancement through Islam. The movement called attention to the notion that a society devoted to salvation produces virtuous citizens willing to relinquish individual gain to the collective group. This allowed the finest people to emerge as societal rulers, justifying the individual's attainment of power through the belief that one is merely serving the greater good of Islam and its peoples.<sup>7</sup>

Born in 1906 within the providence of *Buhrya* in Egypt, Hassan al-Banna was raised in a strict religious setting.<sup>8</sup> Despite the fact that his father was an *Imam*, Banna held an early interest in Sufism and was a member of the *Dhikr* circle as well as the *Hasafiyyah* Sufi Order until his departure for Cairo, Egypt in the year 1923.<sup>9</sup> Egypt, the most populated nation in the Arab world, was an intellectual center that set a precedent for the remainder of the third-world nations as the first to experience sustained modernization and Westernization post-colonialism.<sup>10</sup> Hassan al-Banna was deeply impacted during his training in Cairo at the *Dar al-Ulum* upon witnessing the un-Islamic practices that were ramped in his nation's capital.

No one by God knows how many nights we [Banna and comrades] spent reviewing the state of the nation... analyzing the sickness,

and thinking of the possible remedies. So disturbed were we that we reached the point of tears.<sup>11</sup>

After graduating from the *Dar al-Ulum* in 1927, Banna embarked on a teaching career in the state school system while simultaneously fostering ideas for a collective action in the service of Islam. Banna vowed to become “a counselor and a teacher” giving himself to both children and adults in order to teach the “objectives of religion and the sources of their well-being and happiness in life.”<sup>12</sup> In reaction to the secular movement of Westernization, Banna aspired to provide an alternative path to modernization and material development. Throughout the centuries that were molded around colonialism, promoters of modernization assumed that science, technology, urbanization and the prospect of education would “disenchant” the charmed world of believers.<sup>13</sup> However,

[l]iberalism and Western-style democracy have not been able to help realize the ideals of humanity. Today these two concepts have failed. Those with insight can already hear the sounds of shattering and fall of the ideology and thoughts of the liberal democratic systems... Whether we like it or not, the world is gravitating towards faith in the Almighty and justice and the will of God will prevail over all things.<sup>14</sup>

Adhering to the prospect of God’s omnipotence, Hassan al-Banna together with six friends founded *Al-Ikhwān al-Muslimoon*, the Muslim Brotherhood, in the year 1928. The Brotherhood took the oath to be “troops [*jund*] for the message of Islam...brothers in the service of Islam; hence, we are the Muslim Brothers.”<sup>15</sup> The group emulated modern, political components, incorporating these ideals slowly into the rise of Islam. This task was made easier through use of the various outlets the movement controlled including its own youth groups, schools, and media, all of which focused upon improving the aspects of society that Banna demanded change from.<sup>16</sup> Banna assumed the title of the *Murshi-e-Aam*, or Supreme Guide, the highest position within the organization. The membership of the Muslim Brotherhood is arranged in hierarchal order where roles and responsibilities are skillfully allocated in order to implement Islamic order in Egyptian life.<sup>17</sup>

In the year 1932 the Muslim Brotherhood’s headquarters were moved to Cairo in order to include a larger cross section of Egyptian society intending to incorporate civil servants, urban leaders, students, and peasants. Hassan al-Banna’s philosophy revolved around establishing credibility within the diverse masses. He emphasized the idea that God, Allah, demands that his followers step away from the developing trend which calls for believers to



surrender to humility or accept a submissive role out of despair; “For when we work for mankind in God’s way, we work harder for ourselves, we are for You and no one else, Beloved, nor shall we ever be against You, even for a day.”<sup>18</sup> Banna stressed the concept that when mankind accepts defeat and mistreatment, Allah is the one who is truly being mistreated. This assertion targets the group of individuals that yearn for God’s blessings and salvations; Muslims. Banna aimed to steer Muslim society away from the aspects of society that added stress to the relationship between Muslims and God, which he defined as:

...the civilization of the West, which was brilliant by virtue of its scientific perfection for a long time, and which subjugated the whole world with the products of this science to its states and nation, is now bankrupt and in decline. Its foundations are crumbling, and its institutions and guiding principles are falling apart. Its political foundations are being destroyed by dictatorship: and its economic foundations are being swept by crises.<sup>19</sup>

Hassan al-Banna aspired to mend these failures grounded in Western ideology through the straight path of Islam.

Realizing the impossibilities of merging the consensus of all Muslims in the major points of contention within both religious and the societal life, through use of the Muslim Brotherhood, Banna strove to discover the sociological aspects that are imperative to uphold the existence of the faith. Believing that the concept of *jihad*, the internal and external effort to secure the future of the faith, is a religious duty that every Muslim has responsibility in performing, Banna painted an image of a society in which all members live moral and righteous lives under the banner of Islam:

We believe that Islam is an all embracing concept which regulates every aspect of life, adjudicating on everyone its concerns and prescribing for it a solid and rigorous order it does not stand helpless before life’s problems, nor the steps one must take to improve mankind... There he will understand what the Qur’ān is about and, we will see right there the mission of the Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>20</sup>

The Muslim Brotherhood promised to provide the Egyptian society with the means necessary to stand independently, without the influence of the West, through the use of Islam and the path that God provides.

Hassan al-Banna was not only critical of the West and the debilitating ideals it deposited upon the Arab and Muslim world, but also of the state of the third-

world and its inability to create its own successes. Banna called upon the message of the Muslim Brotherhood to relieve the East from this tumultuous relationship:

The disease afflicting these Eastern nations assumes a variety of aspects and has many symptoms. It has done harm to every expression of their lives, for they have been assailed on the political side by imperialist aggression on the part of their enemies, and by factionalism, rivalry, division and disunity on the part of their sons. They have been assailed on the economic side by the propagation of usurious practices throughout all their social classes, and the exploitation of their resources and natural treasures by foreign companies...while through imitation of the West, the viper's venom creeps insidiously into their affairs, poisoning their blood and sullyng the purity of their well-being...But God and the believers will not tolerate this. Brother this is the diagnosis which the Brotherhood make of the ailments of this *Umma*, and this is what they are going in order to cure it of them and to restore it is lost health and strength.<sup>21</sup>

The rejection of Western imperialism directly paralleled the development of the movement's rapid growth, indicative of the Brotherhood's popularity. Within twenty years the group's membership totaled two million people and the movement had established approximately 2,000 branches across the country.<sup>22</sup> The organization, and centralized pyramidal structure of the Muslim Brotherhood, attributed strongly to the successes of the movement. The group "reinterpreted Islamic history and tradition to respond to the sociohistorical conditions of the twentieth century."<sup>23</sup> This continued extension of the network and its connections to religious, district, and local organizations and institutions further propagated the movement and its ideals, propelling the Muslim Brotherhood headfirst into the future of the state.

On February 12, 1949, Hassan al-Banna was assassinated by the secret police in broad daylight on the overpopulated streets of Egypt.<sup>24</sup> After Banna was killed, the leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood landed in the hands of competent men such as Hassan al-Hodaybi who was elected as *Murshie-Aam* of the movement. The Brotherhood chose an outsider, the respected judge al-Hudaybi, to succeed Banna in order to prevent a single faction from dominating the group.<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, one of the most important men within the movement, as well as one of the most influential men of his time, was Sayyid Qutb.

As Hassan al-Banna is viewed as the founder of the movement that is the Muslim Brotherhood, Sayyid Qutb is considered to have been the creator of its dogma. Qutb influenced the minds of the peoples through his

writings, which are considered to be essential reading to discuss any aspect concerning the Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>26</sup> Qutb was born in 1906 in the district of Egypt called *Assiut* and began his official education at *Tajhizia Darul Uloom*, a secondary school in Cairo. He completed his education at Cairo University in 1933 where he earned a bachelor's degree in education.<sup>27</sup> Upon his appointment as the inspector of Schools in the Ministry of Education he embarked upon the study of the modern system of education and traveled to the United States. This visit proved to be a catalyst in Qutb's life as he encountered "the dreadfulness of materialism". Returning to Egypt in 1945, he joined the Muslim Brotherhood. His brilliant work began to be noticed as early as 1952 when he was placed in charge of the movement's Department of Propagation of the Message and was the editor-in-chief of the official journal of the Brotherhood called *Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimoon*, or the Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>28</sup>

Utilizing his position as editor, Sayyid Qutb publicly opposed the Anglo-Egyptian Pact that Gamal Abdel Nasser, the first president of the Arab Republic of Egypt, entered into with the British government in July of 1954. The military reacted to Qutb's opposition statements by banning *Al-Ikhwan al-Muslimoon* in September of that same year.<sup>29</sup> The conflict that arose concerning the movement's official journal frightened the military and authoritarian regime who began to fear that the movement's influence on the masses would corrode its own chance of remaining in power. The following year, in 1955, Sayyid Qutb was arrested and sentenced to fifteen years in prison where he wrote some of his most influential works including *Fi Zilal al-Qur'an (Under the Shade of the Qur'an)*, a commentary compiled under the extreme suffering he encountered within the Egyptian prison system.<sup>30</sup> Released at the request of the former president of Iraq, Abdus Salam Arif, only to be imprisoned again, Qutb was hanged August 29, 1966, along with two other prominent Muslim Brotherhood leaders, Muhammad Yuseuf Awash and Abd al-Fattah Ismail. Qutb's death occurred shortly before the publication of his book *Ma Alim Fil Tareeq (Milestones)*, which is still read as an invitation, calling the people to a revolution in the name of Allah against all of those who suppress His will.<sup>31</sup>

Despite the tremendous loss suffered by the Muslim Brotherhood upon the death of Sayyid Qutb, his writings remain influential to this day. His most prominent, and well-read works are those concerning a *jahil* (ignorant), society, unjust "because their way of life is not based on submission to God alone."<sup>32</sup> Such societies are a result of man's exploitations of his fellow man. Islam is a religion which advocates "a universal declaration of the freedom of man from servitude to other men and from servitude to his own desires."<sup>33</sup>

Those living a *jahilyyah* lifestyle, namely in a state of ignorance, seek power through domination and mistreatment of others. Therefore, as Sayyid Qutb prescribed within his powerful writings and Hassan al-Banna epitomized through example, Islam must fight against this society from two fronts: the individual and the collective.

At the individual level, one is called to purge from within all the evil that influence mankind because “[o]ur primary purpose is to know what way of life is demanded of us by the Qur’ān ... We must free ourselves from the clutches of *Jahili* traditions and leadership. Our mission is not to compromise with the practices of *Jahili* society, nor can we be loyal to it... Our foremost objective is to change the practice of this society.”<sup>34</sup> At the collective level the fight against evil must continue through Islamic movements such as that of the Muslim Brotherhood. Such a struggle is legitimized through the idea of *Jihad*, promoted by Banna and Qutb, for Islam is:

a declaration of the freedom of man from servitude to other men and as such it recognizes that conflict is essential in human interaction for the *Dar al-Islam* (House of Islam) is the place where the Islamic state is established with the implementation of the *Shariah*. The rest of the world is *Dar ul-Harb* (House of War) with which Muslims can have only two relations: either to have peace with it on the basis of a contractual agreement or be at war with it.<sup>35</sup>

Providing this juxtaposition makes the notion of rebelling against what is considered to be “evil” a simplistic notion that further permeates the “us” versus “them” mentality so prevalent within the colonialist society. This mindset capitalizes on the resentment of the rising regime and further propagates the movement through community involvement.

Gamal Abdel Nasser overthrew Egypt’s constitutional monarchy in a military coup on July 23, 1952.<sup>36</sup> The Free Officer’s movement opposed the British occupation in the Arab Republic of Egypt and called for the end of foreign domination that controlled Egyptian politics, economy, and culture. Nasser remained in power from 1954 to 1970.<sup>37</sup> Nasser initially emphasized the shift towards “Authoritarian-populism,” an ideology that emerged during the era of decolonialization in the region of the Middle East and North Africa as a product of a nationalist reaction against imperialism.<sup>38</sup> The Muslim Brotherhood played a prominent role in overthrowing the monarchy of King Farouk in conjunction with the Free Officer’s Revolution. Based on their efforts the Brotherhood soon began exerting pressure on Nasser’s regime to implement Islamic order and uplift society from the morass of indignity and subjugation that were the vested interests of the imperialism from which

they successfully seceded.

The Muslim Brotherhood provided a considerable amount of support to the revolutionary current running through the country. The movement was originally welcomed into the revolution due to the prominence Banna placed on liberating the country from the quagmire of humiliation established through Egypt's suppression. However, the group became one of the revolution's main victims after being officially outlawed as an opposition party when a member of the Brotherhood attempted to assassinate Nasser in the year 1954. This single action was the first significant challenge the group faced, thus providing the Brotherhood with momentum in order to propel the movement into the forefront of the political landscape.<sup>39</sup>

By the mid-1950s, all independent political groups were prohibited. Those that survived the repression were forced underground, limiting their access to the general public. Although Nasser claimed to represent the oppressed *sha'b*, or people, a disproportionate amount of state resources and funding were channeled into the urban, educated youth. Nasser believed this demographic population to be the greatest threat to his regime; therefore, he reasoned that appeasing them would sedate political efforts.<sup>40</sup> Attempting to ease the frustrations of the deprived youth, Nasser utilized the ability of the authoritarian regime to generate powerful disincentives for political participation. Based on the reality that efforts are futile within such demanding regimes and imprisonment is probable, why is the high-risk activism demonstrated through the labors of the Brotherhood attractive?

While the tangible entity of the Brotherhood was purged by Nasser, the ideology of the movement remained. Not to be annihilated by the means of torture, imprisonments and executions, the members of the Muslim Brotherhood endured. After Nasser's death on September 28, 1970, his successor Anwar Sadat reversed several of his predecessor's policies. This included the act of solidifying his hold on the popular power by reaching out to Islamists by releasing many from prison. The Brotherhood acted on its temporary freedom and in its attempt to unify the nation created a new slogan: "Religion is for God and the Nation is for all."<sup>41</sup> This statement concentrated on the movement's upward mobility and functioned to aid Sadat in his quest to utilize religion as a means toward reaching the people. The Muslim Brotherhood would remain illegal, but individual members were granted limited access to the public sector if they agreed to renounce the violent overthrow of the regime. This included the ability to form Islamic Societies and the right to run for election to parliament.<sup>42</sup>

Under Sadat's regime, the Muslim Brotherhood consolidated its position and embarked upon a phenomenal reemergence that Sadat continued



to use to his advantage, thus beginning a process of “de-Nasserization.”<sup>43</sup> Sadat declared Nasser’s rule as “the reign of materialism and atheism.”<sup>44</sup> Regardless of the fact that Sadat was as opposed to the Islamic movement as his predecessor, he sought the help of the Brotherhood to legitimize his rule in order to combat the left-wing opposition and pro-Nasser groups. By 1972, tremendous pressure had been placed on Sadat by the movement for the Islamization of Egypt. The movement coveted the imposition of *shariah* penalties in cases of crimes such as adultery and theft. The rising tide of Islam could no longer be contained. Fearful of losing power, Sadat began to arrest and ban official publications, such as *al-Dawa*, for publicly criticizing his regime. The government proceeded to take control of over 40,000 privately owned mosques; all prayer leaders were required to register with the state, which prohibited Friday sermon without clearance from Ministry of *Waqfs*, or Religious Affairs.<sup>45</sup>

The late 1960s to the early 1970s proved a turning point in the spread of religious revivalism. Religion became a visible force for several reasons; Muslims began to experience a loss of identity powered by a sense of failure. Exemplified through the 1967 war, the Middle East was in a state of decline despite its independence from colonial rule. “What has gone wrong in Islam?” it was asked; and in searching for an answer, it was concluded that Islam had not abandoned Muslims, but it was the Muslim people who had failed Islam. Muslims must return to Islam, to the straight path that Muhammad had established in the seventh century. The newfound sense of pride and power that developed from the Arab-Israeli War, the oil embargo, and the Iranian Revolution of 1979 led to a quest for a more authentic identity rooted in an Islamic past.

The Muslim Brotherhood continued to capitalize on the notion of Islam as a force. Movement leaders began to publicly promote a greater amount of values and commitments as the basis for political action. The massive ideological practice was designed to capture the hearts and minds of political recruits through the use of *da’wa*. This “call to God” promotes the new age activists’ conception of Islam. *Da’wa* claims that the duty of every Muslim lies in the participation in reforming the Islamic society.<sup>46</sup> This concept was made successful within the sociopolitical environment of *sha’bi* neighborhoods, where crowded apartment-style building lined the narrow, unpaved streets of the city. Islamic activism concentrated its efforts at institution building. Activists’ outreach focused around these particular neighborhoods based on the need for aspects of societal advancements, such as adequate schools, hospitals, and youth clinics, that were insufficient or simply not being provided by the regime.<sup>47</sup> Although the individuals that professed the *da’wa*

generally lacked any kind of formal religious training, the interpretation and profession concerning the idea of Islam as a viable force for change was infinitely appealing to the people of the religion. Revolving around the idea that believers must begin by reforming themselves, the movement would expand into the reformation of society. The Muslim Brotherhood began to cover broader sectors of the city and embarked upon enlightening fellow Muslims on the responsibilities that Islam has to the community.

The form of recruiting that the Muslim Brotherhood most frequently utilized was intimacy. By reaching out to friends and family structures, a foundation of familiarity was established. Islamic recruitment is based on pre-existing societal ties while at the same time fostering a new kind of solidarity based on shared values.<sup>48</sup> Such values were propagated through individual attention and recruitment, and were used to establish a parallel means of involvement through the use of Islamic institutions. The Muslim Brotherhood spread Islamism through lectures, lessons and various media, including books, newspapers, magazines and tapes. The most important source of effective transmission, though, remained the Islamic mosque. The Brotherhood highlights that the religion of Islam calls for individuals to assume responsibility for the condition of the *umma*, or community. The mosque was viewed as the ideal setting to establish the belief that the full application of Islam is possible only through the establishment of an Islamic state.<sup>49</sup>

The setting of the mosque demonstrated valuable features that aided in the Brotherhood's objectives. Amidst the prayer of the elders and the intense devotion made visible through attendance, the religion provided unity within the community. The believer could readily conform to the conviction that only through the return to Islam can the Muslim society regain the power to confront the suppressive regime. The gathering space the mosque provides bestows sanctuary to various age groups that seek its influence. The Brotherhood called for Muslim youths to place themselves in an atmosphere where they will be constantly reminded of the rewards and punishments of the afterlife. This was accomplished through evening prayer and Friday services. As *Duties of the Muslim Youth*, a pamphlet by Dr. Magdi al-Hilali, says, "The afterlife will influence his world and concentrate our concerns into one united concern, and that is the fear of the Day of Judgment."<sup>50</sup> Aiding in the advancement of Islamic principles were several brilliant techniques including the production of pamphlets; the thirty to sixty pages of Islamic rhetoric were designed to be read in a single sitting. These brochures employed Hassan al-Banna's original speeches, which converged the concept of how a full commitment to Islam would translate into practice

and would reform society.

The various pamphlets targeted the youth and called for the transformation of the present generation into a “generation characterized by a sense of Islamic belonging and adherence to its principles.”<sup>51</sup> The practice of pamphlet distribution proved so effective, confirmed through a sizeable popular uprising, that the group carried on a “full scale pamphlet war with the government, printing and distributing as the occasion arose.”<sup>52</sup> The government acknowledged the danger that lay within the pamphlet: the threat of application of Islamic principles to the totality of an individual’s life. Upon the individual’s submission, the Brotherhood became equipped to spread the message to others, extending the faith to peers, and completing the seven stages set forth by the teachings within the pamphlet. Demonstrated through the presentation of the *da’I*, or one who presents the *da’wa*, Islamist movements make it an obligation to reform society.<sup>53</sup> As *Duties of the Muslim Youth* explains, “Human nature is intent on self-aggrandizement and vanity and love of the world and hatred of death, on greed and lustful desire and envy. This God has asked us to struggle against it.”<sup>54</sup> Islamist outreach designed and proceeded to change the direction of the youth by promoting new values, identities and commitments. The Muslim Brotherhood influenced not only how the individuals within the faith path of Islam should pursue their goals, but instituted what their goals should be. The movement thus began to facilitate change through the implementation of a Muslim society utilizing programs in education, charity and social activities.

Transferring religious beliefs through a well-defined system broadens the scope of religious authority and redraws the boundaries of a political community. Islamist movements adhere to the belief that all modern socio-political ideologies, being man-made, elevate the sovereignty of the individual over the Divine and therefore cannot succeed in forging a truly just society. As Ray Takeyh and Nikolas Gvosdev put it, “The influence of Islam is determined by the fact that this religion is in essence a national phenomenon ... insofar as the bulk of the population are Muslims, it is only natural that the influence of Islam on the sociopolitical life ... is significant.”<sup>55</sup> Islamism sees itself as a complete and total ideology rooted in the Islamic experience and the desire for a spiritual renewal. Although morality is an essential component of any religious influence, Islamism is geared towards political action. Takeyh and Gvosdev go on to say, “Islamism is the sum total of intellectual, economic, cultural, and political activities which spring from the comprehensive Islamic viewpoint, in order to support them in theory and apply them in practice in all spheres of life with the objective of establishing a new political and cultural identity”<sup>56</sup>.

The military officers that seized power in Egypt in the year 1952 guaranteed advancements within the Egyptian society, including complete national sovereignty, economic growth and social justice. These demands required political unity and consensus throughout the community of leaders. Fearing resistance to the political programs at hand, the Free Officers dissolved all political parties by the following year. The Muslim Brotherhood was originally exempt from this ruling due to its status as a “non-political,” religious association.<sup>57</sup> Beginning in the 1970s and accelerating into the 1980s, a significant change took place regarding the political orientation of the educated youth in Egypt. The Islamist movement began calling for political freedom and social justice by promoting opposition activism within universities. As its approach materialized, the movement then spilled into wider arenas of public life.<sup>58</sup> Islamic activism assumed the role of gradual institution building, which channeled citizens into opposition politics. The authoritarian power had previously silenced its youth by the stringent economic, political, and ideological principles incorporated by the Nasser regime. The end of Nasser’s era was marked with economic recession, military defeat and political crisis, providing the Muslim Brotherhood with the ideal setting to parade into the political scene. The formerly silent population found its voice through the reaction against the regime’s failures to deliver what had been promised to it, and it found its means of rebellion through the movement of the Muslim Brotherhood.

The most significant aspect of revivalism since the late 1970s is that it had become part of moderate, mainstream life within society. The cry for Islam was met by the educated and the uneducated, the young and the old, the peasants and the professionals, women and men. Islamism serves as a catalyst for change. Islam provided a sense of identity as well as a common set of religious-cultural values and legitimacy that effectively mobilized the population to revolt. By the mid-1980s, the Muslim Brotherhood, still the largest organization of the Islamic movement’s reformist wing, submitted a list of candidates in the election for leadership within the country’s national professional associations and succeeded in gaining a controlling majority on the boards of several associations.<sup>59</sup> The prospect for mobilization found within the victories of these individual members seemed conducive to the concurrent revolt of a large number of graduate students who found themselves blocked from upward mobility. Lack of promised jobs was a primary reason for this support. However, the frustration of the youth did not automatically give rise to Islamic activism. The reason Islamist groups were able to assemble themselves into the political arena in a semi-open authoritarian regime proved to be the language of political theology which

enabled millions to pursue the goal of sheltering the whole of humanity under God's authority.<sup>60</sup> Muslim leaders had used Islam as a political instrument over the centuries, and the political scene of the twentieth-century world of Islam was no different.<sup>61</sup>

Nevertheless, the argument remains that Islamism is a hollow ideology, capable of formatting rebellion and channeling unrest and popular support but fundamentally flawed in terms of providing a workable template for governance.<sup>62</sup> Radical Islamism certainly destabilizes and disrupts a society by utilizing violence and terror. Its ideologies are ineffective concerning its long-term objectives. Such groups are unable to wield enough power in order to construct viable political and economic institutions based solely on their utopian views of Islam. In the popular mindset, Islamism can be any application of Islamic principle to social or political life. The fundamentalist or Islamist label has been "attached to groups as diverse as Hamas, in Israel/Palestine; Hizbollah in Lebanon ... the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Jordan and Syria."<sup>63</sup> Radical Islam is a distinct political force that provides an idealistic message that rejects the status quo and employs violence to further its political and social agenda. Understanding the differences between the ideology behind Islamism and the vehement practice found within fundamentalism is one of the most urgent intellectual and political tasks of the present time. The case of contemporary Islam is "suffused with anger and ignorance as to be paralyzing. All we hear are alien sounds, motivating unspeakable acts. If we ever hope to crack the grammar and the syntax of political theology," we must educate ourselves in the variants that separate radical Islamism and Islamist creed.<sup>64</sup> Where radical movements have taken control, their authority is increasingly being undermined by a crisis of legitimacy based on their inability to deliver on the promise of a just and fair society. However, the Muslim Brotherhood, as a moderate "extremist" movement, possesses the facilities to seize control over the modern state and construct an effective alternative to the present model of governing. The Brotherhood proved themselves capable in meeting both the political and economic problems faced by the Muslim world, including the tribulations of lack of economic development, the need to modernize the infrastructure, and the desire to extend the basic social and political freedoms.<sup>65</sup>

Gamal Nasser did not deny Islam a place within the political structure of his regime. The former president of Egypt attempted to gain the support of pious Muslims by incorporating Islamic precepts into his governing ideology:

We are endowed with a spiritual force and faith in God and a sense of



brotherhood, which fit us to open a chapter in the history of mankind like that chapter which our forefathers opened 1,300 years ago. Why should we not once again give the world a message of peace and mercy, of brotherhood and equality.<sup>66</sup>

Nasser incorporated the concept of Islam into his “pan-Arabist” ideology. The perception behind Arab nationalism brought the president into direct encounter with Islamism. The president evoked the religion of Islam as the common bond between individuals concerning both historical and religious commonalities, which played a role in shaping Arab unity. Nonetheless, the Muslim Brotherhood “opposed Nasser’s Arabism as an anti-Islamic attempt to draw distinctions within the *umma*” and it criticized the lack of attention to classical Arabic, the language of the Qur’ān.<sup>67</sup> Despite his attempt to exploit the group’s tenets, Nasser continued to suppress the Brotherhood and its rising power and influence over the people of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

The authoritarian regime closely monitors the activity of the legal opposition parties, preventing them from developing into effective vehicles of political representation and thus challenging the existing power. When the reign of Nasser came to an end, Sadat implemented the 1977 Political Parties Law, excluding parties based on class, religious or regional affiliation. This action was performed with the unstated intention to curb the two groups with the greatest capacity for political mobilization and the greatest capacity to be overwhelming threats to his regime, the Nasserists and the Muslim Brotherhood.<sup>68</sup> The populace’s reaction demonstrated in response to this ruling is accredited with Egypt’s transition to a multiparty system. The distrust stemming from the confining nature of the government lasted until Sadat’s successor, Hosni Mubarak, exhibited the commitment toward expanding the freedom of opposition parties, whose number expanded to thirteen by the mid-1980s. Despite remaining banned, the Muslim Brotherhood was allowed to partake in the 1984 and 1987 elections under the Wafd and Labor parties or as independent candidates.<sup>69</sup> Nonetheless, the multiparty system created by Nasser’s successors did not generate the extent of freedom necessary for the Brotherhood to enhance its political ideologies through the current regime. Due to the stipulations and restrictions that the party continued to endure, it turned to an extensive list of professional associations to stimulate its political advance.

In 1984, the Brotherhood infiltrated the country’s political system through what it referred to as the “Islamic Trend.” The Islamic Trend is a comprehensive group that represents the overarching political and social

philosophy of the religion.<sup>70</sup> The Brotherhood began entering a series of elections as an organized bloc beginning with the Doctors' Association election. Shortly thereafter, the group ran a list of candidates in the Engineers', Dentists', Scientists', Pharmacists' and Journalists' Association elections, among others.<sup>71</sup> The growing support for the Islamic Trend was not the simple result of election-day maneuvers. Its successes were primarily due to the new relationships forged by Islamists on the periphery and then sustained by Muslim Brotherhood leaders as elected association officials. The proliferation of these grassroots societies attempted to institutionalize the Islamic movement through legal and formal organizations.<sup>72</sup>

Changes wrought by the Islamic leadership, upon its initial occupation of a seat majority on the associations' executive boards, were both practical and symbolic. The former style of leadership had changed; the public was presented with an approachable group serious about its well-being. Simultaneously, the Egyptian government sought to co-opt the Brotherhood by complying with several of its demands. In 1985, the National Assembly agreed to revise Egypt's legal secular code. This development would bring the country toward compliance with Islamic law by imposing censorship guided by Islamic ideals on the media and expanding the program of religious education in the nation's schools.<sup>73</sup> Two years later, in 1987, the Islamist Alliance, comprised of the Muslim Brotherhood, the Labour Party and the Liberal Party, was formed to contest elections within Egypt, developing an active role as the major opposition party.<sup>74</sup> These two factors concurrently contributed to a growing Islamization of political dialogue within Egypt, leading to future successes in the various elections and a greater amount of public involvement.<sup>75</sup>

Egyptian society is formally depicted as a culture of alienation, and the absence of public opinion data may be the hardest form of evidence proving the political estrangement present. This setting of extreme alienation is an outcome of continual low voter turnout in parliamentary elections as well as a general lack of popular affiliation with established, approved parties. This trend of laxity adds to the discernment that the Egyptian political ethos has increasingly been characterized by isolation, defeatism and indifference. However, alongside the increase in the Brotherhood's popularity emerged an increasingly heightened, receptive populace. The people responded positively to the nature of the Islamist message within the political sphere. This massive increase in participation is indicative of the Egyptian society's perception of morality as the savior of a population within a state of decline. As leaders of large public institutions, the Islamic Trend officials utilized their high status and continued to cultivate and maintain a relationship with

government ministries and local government authorities in order to provide strong Islamic influence within the state discussing issues important to the general public and their future. A young engineer expressed his view during the Engineers' Association election in 1991:

I voted for the Islamic Voice. They are the only [political] trend in the elections -- either you elect them or you elect individuals. The communists and the leftists are in general not accepted. I support the Islamic trend, as especially the *Ikhwan*, because they are moderate, far from extreme, and they have a future-oriented point of view.<sup>76</sup>

The Brotherhood vowed to enforce this public accountability through the application of religious law. Rather than a straightforward emphasis on jobs and other material benefits, the idea behind lasting change through religion resonated powerfully in this process of outreach.<sup>77</sup> The outreach proved to be a success, based on the hold that the Muslim Brotherhood gained within the Egyptian people's daily lives through social, business and educational networks. The movement emerged from the 1980s as a leading force in Egyptian society; the thousands of professionals within the associations that connected to the Muslim Brotherhood "volunteer[ed] their time providing social, educational, and health services for the poor through private voluntary organizations" in order to further implement themselves within the infrastructure of the Egyptian people.<sup>78</sup>

In contrast to the valuable advantages made available by the Brotherhood, the multiparty system that was created by Nasser's successors could not offer effective representation of the country's educated youth. Most graduates did not become involved in political affairs. In contrast to the dominant pattern of political attention, a surprising majority of graduates became active in the minority wing of the Islamic movement. The Muslim Brotherhood possessed the ability to aggregate citizens' newfound sympathies and channel them into electoral campaigns at national-level organizations. The Professional Associations gave the Brotherhood activists an opportunity to hone their leadership skills and broaden their base of support.<sup>79</sup>

Against the backdrop of a seemingly out-of-touch military bureaucratic state, the Islamic Trend portrayed itself as the successor to a more human and responsive political tradition that would be traced back to the exemplary rule of the rightly guided caliphs of the first Islamic state.<sup>80</sup> The Islamic Trend was a servant of public interest; "a state within a state."<sup>81</sup> The movement was creating new models of political leadership and community involvement on the ground that it was "creating islands of democracy in a sea of dictatorship."<sup>82</sup>

This viewpoint sought to slowly build a parallel society, based on Islamic ideals, by the power of example through infiltration of the various systems and networks that reached out to the majority. The group became closer to the political center within the state from the bottom up. Islamic mobilization on the periphery was not subject to centralized coordination and control within the government. The Brotherhood's move from the periphery to the center of governmental politics enhanced the movement's political influence; however, it also exposed the organization and its leaders to new risks.

The question surrounding the degree of connection between the acts of mobilization and significant political change varies, remaining an inconsistent aspect in the search for societal involvement and government compliance. In Egypt, state entitlements began to lose value, and society's outreach for organization developed a migratory tendency toward "nonpolitical" groups and organizations. This erects the ideal setting for the production of collective political action. The Muslim Brotherhood is viewed as a "proto-party," meaning that it has the ability to form a secure bridge between individuals that mobilize on the periphery and the electoral competitions close to the political center, thus becoming an effective mode for leadership and a viable source to revolutionize the Egyptian community.<sup>83</sup> Muslim ruling classes have sought to safeguard their power and privileges through the dated influence of colonialism, neo-colonialism, and imperialism. The Brotherhood seeks to implement changing policies despite the internal political corruption and decadence that plagued the Muslim world. The movement aspires to reduce the power of the ruling elite and the characteristics that it associates with control. The Brotherhood vows to transcend the superpower hegemony that keeps the Muslim world divided through the one force that remains free in spite of its misuse: Islam.<sup>84</sup>

By the early 1990s, Egypt's professional associations remained among the major sites of Islamic political experimentation. The continual, overt support of the populace enabled the Muslim Brotherhood to reach its height in 1994. The growing trend of political moderation began to be displayed through the government's attempt to channel the movement rather than repress it. Mubarak's regime began taking tentative steps necessary to permit the growth of Islamization and its permeation into the country's legal and educational systems.<sup>85</sup> Remaining true in form to the constant changing values that characterize the delicate relationship between the government and the movement, Mubarak's regime detained 81 of the Muslim Brotherhood's leading activists in 1995.<sup>86</sup> This increased risk involved with Islamic activity created a powerful deterrent to the movement, which enabled the government to once again monitor the movement and manipulate the group's activity

within the state.

The governing body made an attempt to transform the Brotherhood's image from that of a moderate and responsible group pursuing the greater good of humanity to that of a radical, violent organization by televising the court trials of the accused members of the movement.<sup>87</sup> Also acting as an obstacle was that the arrests prevented some of the group's most prominent members from running in the ongoing local elections. Despite the obstacles involved with the government's negative media campaign to repress the Brotherhood, the movement demonstrated its force by winning seventeen seats in the lower parliament in the 2000 parliamentary elections. Coincidentally, this happened to be the same number of seats won by all other opposition political parties combined.<sup>88</sup> The Muslim Brotherhood currently maintains the largest opposition bloc in the parliament.

Islamic movements like the Brotherhood cannot be compared to other nationalist political movements. They do not claim to seek power and position as an end but rather as a means of attaining the objective of the total transformation of state polices through use of the religion of Islam.<sup>89</sup> The achievement of the Brotherhood's political independence was accompanied by the rise of authoritarian regimes making promises to deliver the masses from a long history of expulsion by the foreign elite set up by one-party political systems. The programs launched by state-led development in order to generate and repair economic growth and improve living standards through high levels of political and ideological conformity were met with uninspiring reactions alongside the Brotherhood's continued successes.<sup>90</sup> Political theology possesses a powerful attraction to the Egyptian people. Its breadth in all aspects of daily life aids in the introduction to different ways of thinking about the conduct of human affairs. This comprehensiveness recovers the nature of the individual soul and its effect on society as a whole. In order to escape the destructive fervor of subsisting regimes, political theology centers around the existence of God. "Millions of people in the Muslim orbit believe that God has revealed a law governing the whole of human affairs and this belief has shaped the politics of important Muslim nations and also the attitudes of a vast number of believers."<sup>91</sup>

The Brotherhood exists in part because of its commitment to seeking a fundamental change in both existing political and social instructions. The Muslim Brotherhood's activity also falls into the realm of social movements. These movements can be defined as "collective challenges based on common purposes and social solidarities, in sustained interaction with elites, opponents and authorities."<sup>92</sup> Such associations are contained within Social Movement Organizations (SMOs). SMOs provide institutional resources



for collective action and protest, linking members through organizational structures.<sup>93</sup> The development of the movement begins, once again, by reaching out towards the periphery, referring to social, cultural, and economic groups, as well as institutions and networks, that enable citizens to participate in various aspects of public life. A misleading division of the government on which the Brotherhood continuously focused was the existing institution of education. Although Nasser and his regime provided priority to universalizing primary education and eradicating illiteracy, they ignored the ever-increasing problem of the lack of higher education. The country's growing need for manpower, in order to keep up with the rapid state-led growth, required implementing effective social change through the education system. Islamism exploded onto the global scene in the wake of the failures of other ideologies, such as nationalism, in order to attempt to solve the social and economic ills of Muslim society.<sup>94</sup>

By 1964, the regime began a program offering a free university education. The program began by establishing an institute policy guaranteeing every university graduate a government position. At the time the policy was implemented, it subsisted to fill exiting gaps within the government and was not meant to become a permanent fixture in the social planning of the regime.<sup>95</sup> In 1966, the economy entered into a period of retrenchment due to the Arab-Israeli war. Graduates became frustrated with the government's lack of fulfillment in the area of promised jobs.<sup>96</sup> With the guarantee to combat poverty and provide full employment, the Muslim Brotherhood assured a basic social standard of living and promoted mutual aid and assistance among Muslims. By the late 1960s, a drastic increase was seen among the activity in the underground Islamist cells. Political activism at the university level slowly began to reappear. These groups made vague pronouncements, such as the idea of redefining the education system. These assertions served to mobilize the masses but did not have the foundation to effectively reshape the economy.<sup>97</sup> Even so, "[a] privatized economy is consistent with classical Islamic economic theory and is well-established protection of market and commerce. The Islamist parties have been among the most persistent critics of state restrictions on trade and measures that obstruct opportunities for middle-class entrepreneurs."<sup>98</sup> Therefore the moderates, who believe in peaceful means and acceptance of democratic principles, established the present force within the ranks of the Islamist social and economic change. The moderates joined the ranks of the Islamist movement, escalating the greater influence of Islam as a feasible power within Egypt.

By the early 1980s, the expectation for the promise of employment was waning. The educated youth's hope for the government to follow through on

its agenda decreased after witnessing the failure of the regime to deliver on its pledge of job opportunities. The government was no longer able to absorb all of the eligible youth within the framework of administrative positions. Unwilling to rid of the program completely, the regime lengthened the time between graduation and appointment until the waiting period approached 10 years.<sup>99</sup> This large misgiving forced individuals, graduating with college degrees, to accept jobs traditionally associated with a different social class. The ensuing discontent produced a “new middle class,” or so-called “lumpen elite,” characterized by white-collar employment and middle class lifestyle. This class of society eventually became the main base of support in the Islamist movement.<sup>100</sup>

The overextension of the Egyptian state system of populist entitlements was originally designed to increase the power of the state. In turn, it actually created an “aggravated constituency available for mobilization by Islamic groups.”<sup>101</sup> Because of Egypt’s rapid expansion of the education system in the late 1970s, the number of workers entering the labor market with both intermediate and university degrees increased from 400,000 to 500,000. Despite the fact that the number of graduates increased by 7.4 percent each year between 1976 and 1986, the labor force only grew 2.2 percent.<sup>102</sup> The government continued to attempt to turn out government jobs for graduates, this time by decreasing the wages of current government employees, which fell more than 55 percent, between 1973 and 1987.<sup>103</sup> This forced the existing employees to hold second or even third jobs to provide the necessary means for survival. The upheaval generated extreme displeasure among the populous and created a desire to look elsewhere for an establishment that would effectively serve basic needs. In an attempt to engage the inhabitants of Egypt, this “rule of law” in effect amplified the political alienation through the inability to secure economic development and job creation.<sup>104</sup>

The state’s continued unresponsive nature in dealing with the problems of chronic underemployment offered an opening to the Muslim Brotherhood to capitalize on the misfortune of the people of Egypt who were suffering both at the hands of the economy and at the government’s unwillingness to mend the matter.<sup>105</sup> The aftermath of the Gulf War affected the Egyptian economy further by eroding the average Egyptian’s living standard by a significant 20 percent inflation rate while the budget deficit remained at approximately 18 percent of the gross domestic product.<sup>106</sup> Egypt’s external debt doubled during the decade between 1980 and 1991, to cover over two thirds of the country’s gross national product, which at the time was \$40.6 billion. In 1991, the Supreme Council of Universities created a more difficult standardized testing system in an attempt to reform the government

program for employment after education. The new test constricted the level of the institution into which an individual would be accepted based on his performance. Although this served to lessen the percentage of individuals obtaining the highest-level degree, the core pillars of the existing system, including free education and guaranteed employment, remained intact.<sup>107</sup> Nasser left a legacy that included the appealing prospect of free higher education and guaranteed employment. He promised the country a new, developing middle class. Nevertheless, the faulty programming of the regime produced a dissatisfied society whose grievances Islamist groups converted into political advantages.

The idea behind the community turning towards the Brotherhood for individual advancement creates a parallel unit to that of the government; this counterpart is called the Islamic sector. This sector encompasses a largely independent, competitive component based around the progression of cultural, religious, and service-oriented aims of Egypt. The philosophy behind the Islamic sector was propagated during the late 1970s, through Sadat, self-described as the “believer president.”<sup>108</sup> Sadat aimed to utilize Islamic legitimacy through the means of spreading Islam as a path towards unity as projected by the Brotherhood. However, Sadat’s reign ended in an attack on the Islamic movement as a whole due to their rise in popularity. The Brotherhood’s status made the president wary of their increasing power within the state. Sadat’s error forced President Mubarak to attempt to accommodate the nonviolent, mainstream Islamic movement as a means of “defusing tensions and consolidating his own position.”<sup>109</sup> This was done through the use of the Islamic sector in order to reach out to the people and satisfy their requests. Through the sector, the government was able to make use of the Islamic movement by way of offering the disenfranchised youth an idiom of dissent and a sense of community. A 1993 United States National Intelligence Estimate predicted, “Islamic fundamentalist terrorists will continue to make gains across Egypt, leading to the eventual collapse of the Mubarak government.”<sup>110</sup> The Islamic sector was predicted to be the mode of transportation to this long-term goal of independence.

The Islamic sector is divided into three general categories utilized by the Muslim Brotherhood. These areas include purely religious establishments such as the private mosques; society-enhancing organizations such as the Islamic voluntary associations, which include welfare societies, cultural organization, health clinics, and schools; as well as for-profit commercial and business enterprises such as Islamic banks and investment companies.<sup>111</sup> Countrywide, the Muslim Brotherhood runs 22 hospitals, and it has schools in every governorate in Egypt. The organization additionally runs numerous

care centers and training programs for the unemployed. “We work in both rural and urban areas ... The goal is to reach out to the most marginalized people in society.”<sup>112</sup> The sector used each of these separate entities to permeate its movement within the society of Egypt. Its message could be propagated through the subtle arena of advancement that provides the populous with elements necessary to achieve success. Despite the physical establishments that encompassed the Muslim community, the Islamist economic programs were limited to slogans such as “God will provide” and the “Qur’an will feed the hungry.”<sup>113</sup> Both vague and meaningless, the obscurity of the sayings was indicative of the ability the Brotherhood possessed to provide a path towards the actual progression of the Egyptian economy. Unfortunately, the formation of political ideology was equally muddled at this time. Despite the group’s efficiency in providing social welfare services, Islamic law merely offered powerful symbols in the life of the majority of Egyptians. Regrettably, the group had yet to address pertinent, critical issues to the progression of the state such as political empowerment, corruption, or one-party rule.

After being propelled from the working relationship with the government in May 1995, the Muslim Brotherhood released a statement in response to President Mubarak’s accusation that “violence is always an integral part” of the movement’s methods.<sup>114</sup> The Muslim Brotherhood insisted that it “is in no way involved in violence and denounces all forms of terrorism, calling on those who commit the sin to return to the correct path of Islam.”<sup>115</sup> The Brotherhood has made extreme efforts to obtain legitimacy as a peaceful political actor within the state.<sup>116</sup> This peaceful means of control provides an explanation for the successes of Islamic outreach. Such accomplishments can be found though the set of diplomatic, external conditions that proved to be conducive to the movement. This included the passive act of targeting experiences and beliefs of graduates for recruitment purposes. Recruitment revolved around the credibility and effectiveness of the movement’s agents, as well as modes of transmission and reinforcement through intensive, small-group solidarity.<sup>117</sup> The Muslim Brotherhood stressed the idea of change by persuasion, through the acquisition of a cohesive force of passionate individuals committed to the development of Islam as a means of change. The effective nature of this notion is seen fully through early involvement:

The Islamic groups get to the students now when they are young - in preparatory school and in high school. They get to them when they are young and impressionable, telling them this is *haram* (forbidden)

and that is *halal* (permitted).<sup>118</sup>

Pursuit of the youth and recent graduates is necessary in order to promote the idea of civic obligation as the goal of the Islamist message. The obligatory nature behind the Islamic message was bolstered by the culture of alienation present in Egypt. The Muslim Brotherhood acted as an alternative to political and societal advancement; “The appeal of Islamic ideology was magnified under socioeconomic conditions in which conventional routes of self advancement were blocked.”<sup>119</sup> The movement of recruitment that supports the basic structure of the Muslim Brotherhood provides an emphasis on social justice and gives the Egyptian society a voice to display the moral outrage that resonates amongst present-day society.

The main result of recruitment within the Islamic outreach program was to expedite new forms of social interaction at the local level. “Through preaching good citizenship and national pride, economic good sense and the proper length of a gentleman’s beard; ethical questions transformed society.”<sup>120</sup> The Muslim Brotherhood assisted in societal advancements by providing their “supported public” with the organization of Islamic seminars, plays, and public prayer sessions; “Why waste time going to a film, when we can go to the mosque and take religious lessons?”<sup>121</sup> Reaching out to the youthful populous by providing such amenities, as well as continuous support on the community level, caused expectations regarding education, career advancement, and material wealth to diminish along with the graduates’ feelings of disappointment and frustration. Although not all societal pressures were alleviated, the religious ideology that surrounded the movement provided an outlet for the frustration and inadequacies of the current living situation; “We struggle but we regard it as a test of our faith.”<sup>122</sup> In many ways the Islamic outreach programs shifted the blame from government officials onto the morality of present society.

The Muslim Brotherhood established that contemporary problems were not the result of government resources, but of societal values. Islamic outreach reshaped popular political culture by altering the individual’s relationship to the authoritarian state; “The committed Muslim is not afraid of anything except God.”<sup>123</sup> The Islamic movement offered a “solution” that extended to the most basic human needs through lessening the frustrations associated with the regime and promoting life goals through Islam. The constant call to every Muslim to contribute to the task of Islamic social and political reforms produced a more aware society focused around extensive issues. However, the mobilization also created a counter-society detached from the mainstream social and political order except that of Islamic inspired ideals.<sup>124</sup> The access to public expression of opinion shaped the



members of the movement and produced an interest critical to continued involvement. This led towards the “micro-mechanisms of mobilization,” or the appeal to the recruits and their participation through benefits. Such benefits include the obtainment of a visa or job, the emotional satisfaction from the formation of a bond of trust with like-minded individuals, or the simple factor of having an arena to voice opinions. “By introducing new values and developing new repertoires of personal and collective action, movements can pave the way for broader instances of citizen engagement in public affairs.”<sup>125</sup> Islamism was embraced by many as a “way of navigating the shoals of modernization,” for it appealed to the pride that had dominated much of the world.<sup>126</sup> This theory suggests that Muslims would reenter the Islamic Golden Age, attracting those followers currently despondent with the current situation and gaining additional members and support through the want for social development and modification.

Egyptian society reaches out to the Islamically motivated schools, hospitals and banks, considering the government of President Hosni Mubarak, of the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP). The NDP shows signs of weakness and ineffectiveness through means of social services.<sup>127</sup> Mubarak’s regime has proven adept at thwarting foes that would challenge the president’s rule. Egypt has changed its constitution to allow the opposition to contest presidential polls, yet a ban remains on religious political parties. Despite the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood is outlawed as a political party in Egypt, its candidates, allowed to run as independents to evade the constitutional ban on religion-based parties, gained a fifth of the seats in the 2005 parliamentary election.<sup>128</sup> According to many political observers, the Brotherhood’s devotion to social work was the primary strength behind its remarkable results in the parliamentary elections that were held in late 2005. The group captured 88 seats in the People’s Assembly, up from the mere 15 seats occupied by members of the movement in the outgoing assembly.<sup>129</sup> The government produced constitutional amendments billed as reforms in response to the Muslim Brotherhood’s recently released political program, the first comprehensive document outlining the group’s policies on social, economic, and political issues. These amendments were constructed to quell the group from advancing any further. The government’s desire to contain and weaken the movement is alarming to the idea of democratic change in the region. Given the popularity of the Muslim Brotherhood, real democracy in Egypt will not thrive unless the group gains a seat at the political table.

As the country’s largest political organization, the Muslim Brotherhood’s electoral assent in Egypt’s professional associations and transformation into a major Islamist political force links the social and cultural proximity from

the Islamic Trend more closely to the government. The dialogue concerning the new political programs and social services are attached to a platform limited in detail and inundated in the call to return to the righteous morals and Islamic accountability missing from Egyptian life.<sup>130</sup> The Brotherhood recently levied its power to allow business hours to be interrupted for prayer. This small act does more than bolster religious ideals within the workplace. The physical act of praying creates equality among all present as every employee from the manager to the janitor stand in a single line facing Mecca in unity with Allah. This proves that the Muslim Brotherhood understands that successful ideology requires a resonated message, credible messengers, and effective mechanisms of transmission leading to the implementation of Islam in the public sector.

Recent government detentions and legal changes have attempted to neutralize the Muslim Brotherhood, the country's last surviving major political movement, even further. At the age of 79, Hosni Mubarak is preparing his son Gamel to be the top contender for his successor. Mohammed Mahdi Akef, the current supreme guide or highest leader of the Muslim Brotherhood, stated that "[t]yranny has reached unprecedented limits from any previous regime."<sup>131</sup> However, Mohamed Abdel-Fattah Oman, a lawmaker from the ruling party, provides a contrasting viewpoint saying, "[t]he Muslim Brotherhood represents the framework for future violence."<sup>132</sup> Muslim Brotherhood officials estimate that the party includes approximately 200,000 members, 167 of which remain in prison. Among those presently imprisoned include the political architects behind the Brotherhood's surprise success in 2005, which placed the movement's political division on the path towards changing the regime peacefully. In order for a stable future, the Brotherhood needs to maintain the success found within the 2005 parliamentary election, which brandished 75 percent of the candidates set forth by the Brotherhood as elected officials, despite the amount of tempering by the governing body.<sup>133</sup>

Although the state has proven adept at thwarting the foes that challenge the rule of Hosni Mubarak, the Muslim Brotherhood—Mubarak's main surviving opponent—ran as independents and gained over a fifth of the total seats in the 454-member parliament.<sup>134</sup> The group remains legally banned under the nation's 24-year-old Emergency Law, which severely limits political activity in Egypt. It is also constantly under heavy pressure with over 500 of its members having been imprisoned and six of its leaders on trial under emergency laws in military courts, facing charges of money laundering and terrorism.<sup>135</sup> Despite this fact, the group is presently a significant force in the state of Egypt.<sup>136</sup> Based on the government's fear concerning the Islamic rise

to power, the regime has been displaying severe crackdowns in recent days as the Brotherhood continues its attempt at “cleansing the existing political order.”<sup>137</sup> Most recently, this included the arrest of a Muslim Brotherhood official, Khairat al-Shater, the No. 3 leader in the Muslim Brotherhood hierarchy. At 3 A.M. during the summer of 2007, military officials broke open the door of al-Shater’s home to arrest the individuals inside. “The Brotherhood are good people. ... We believe in peaceful change and the regime is crushing us.”<sup>138</sup> These so-called “dawn visitors” have played a decade long cat-and-mouse game between the Egyptian state and the world’s oldest Islamist organization. The concept that the most populous Arab country is oppressed by an authoritarian regime with little hope for significant change is frightening for any person who desires a democratic change in the Middle East and North Africa.

The Muslim Brotherhood has consistently attempted to position itself as a moderate force in Egypt political life. Despite the continuous ban since the year 1954, the movement has provided the country with clinics, youth camps, and other services that have earned the organization support among the poor and provided a civic model for armed violence-based Islamic movements such as Hezbollah and Hamas. The Muslim Brotherhood draws political support among Egypt’s middle class through its continuous, dominant presence in technical and professional unions. As the movement aims to establish a greater amount of political power, Mubarak’s regime has responded with constitutional amendments, which focus around the Brotherhood in order to quell the movement’s stronghold within the governmental sector in the upcoming election bid. Mubarak’s age makes the matter more urgent, as a change in power could result in the dominance of Islam over a weak regime.

A key factor in the recent revisions is that since making peace with Israel in 1979, Egypt has been the No. 2 recipient of U.S. foreign aid.<sup>139</sup> Contrasted with the 1970s, when Egypt’s crumbling socialist economy had been battered by recent wars with Israel, the country is now a capitalist success story consistently widening the wealth gap.<sup>140</sup> Although Mubarak allowed other candidates to challenge his reelection bid, Egyptian leaders “feel that democratization means that they will leave their chairs and leave their positions, and they are not able to pay this cost.”<sup>141</sup> Nonetheless, Habib denied that the Muslim Brotherhood had any desire to lead the country after Mubarak, as “presidential candidacy is not on our agenda.”<sup>142</sup> However, Hassan al-Banna consistently discussed the Muslim individual, the Muslim family, and the Muslim society, as well as the society in which a Muslim government can be formed.<sup>143</sup>

The Muslim Brotherhood is larger than a political party. It currently performs the activities of the Islamic call including involvement in politics and economics as well as social and cultural issues.<sup>144</sup> The political-party program established by the Muslim Brotherhood was distributed in late September 2007. The program was initially issued among a group of politicians and intellectuals to offer their views and to comment on its content. The program gives rise to questions concerning the group's political agenda.<sup>145</sup> The idea behind raising a political party occurred when the group decided to fight the People's Assembly elections in 1984.<sup>146</sup> Resurfacing again in 1989, the notion behind establishing a political party was discussed "when the Shura Council, which is the highest body of the Muslim Brotherhood, met and adopted a decision to establish a party."<sup>147</sup> The plan was reiterated in the early-1995 Shura Council meeting as a means towards establishing a power strong enough to secure the release of the large number of members confined in prisons, detention centers, and military courts. The latest attempt occurred in mid-January 2007, when Akif announced the Brotherhood's existing intention to establish a political organization. Many critics view the program as a retreat from the party's ideology. They believe that the platform shows a tremendous amount of regression in comparison to the series of documents previously issued by the movement, including their document on reform issued in March 2003. These inconsistencies increase the possibility of the Muslim Brotherhood coming under wide-scale attacks from various angles in the coming age.

The Brotherhood's goal is to implement "religious" functions within the state for morality to prevail. Using the values concerning "zeal and protection of religion," the group strives to protect the future of the Islamic state and secure the practice of religious rights. The movement has threatened to remove any factors that interfere with their objectives.<sup>148</sup> Emphasizing the sacred image of the Brotherhood while simultaneously endorsing political practice creates a double standard that could potentially harm the group's credibility.<sup>149</sup> Also dangerous to the growth of the program is the use of certain terms implemented within the platform. More than once within the program, the Brotherhood uses the phrase "Islamic state." This is an elastic term that arouses numerous doubts regarding the Brotherhood's stance on the nature of the relationship between the nation-state and the "theoretic state."<sup>150</sup> The ambiguous usage of this expression leaves room for the Brotherhood to implement rulings through the use of diverse methods.

Despite the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood clearly laid out its political endeavors, it neglected to formulate a well-defined and clear stance surrounding the issue of the equality of the individual within Egyptian

society. Based on Islamic ideology, it is the nature of the party to establish the principle of citizenship focusing around the idea of non-discrimination. The Islamic *shariah* states that no form of intolerance should take place between citizens based on their race, sex, or religion. Under the Brotherhood's political program the Egyptian people would choose rulers in a nature that integrates pluralism. The nation, *umma*, would act entirely as the source of authorization in regard to the appointment of leaders. Although the Brotherhood supports the right of the people to elect the members of the government, the program claims that non-Muslims lack the knowledge of the faith that should be present within such positions. Therefore, non-Muslims should be exempt from this task. This notion is stated in a clear circumvention of the principle of absolute equality, which was earlier approved and supported by the program.<sup>151</sup>

In addition to the issue surrounding voting, the Supreme ruler is also an exception to the laws of equality. The program deems it necessary for the leader to be a Muslim male because “seven or eight million Egyptians will have no right to assume the post of the president” based on religious differences or gender.<sup>152</sup> The special section within the political program entitled “Issues and Problems” disengages from the symbolic notion of “accommodating women in that section,” and instead views them as “problems ... for the stance of the movement concerning the eligibility of women to assume the post of head of states appears to be in line with the historical stance of the movement which categorically rejects it.”<sup>153</sup> According to the Brotherhood, religious and military duty “contradicts with her nature.”<sup>154</sup> The established blueprint continues to contradict itself by recognizing the “equality between men and women in terms of their human dignity” and then warning against burdening women with obligations that go against “their social and other humanitarian roles.”<sup>155</sup>

Not only does this detailed political platform bar women and Christians from becoming Egypt's president, but it also establishes the idea of appointing a board of Muslim clerics to oversee the government—an element similar to that of the Islamic state. This step of the program calls for the formation of a branch of religious scholars who will be chosen in national election to advise both the parliament and the elected president. The platform affirms that the parliament will hold the faculty to overrule this board. However, this power is void when concerning issues backed by “proven texts” of Islamic *shariah* law, another vague phrase that could be applied to a wide range of issues, creating another regime controlled by one man or authority.<sup>156</sup> President Mubarak has publicly vowed to perpetually prevent the Muslim Brotherhood from operating as a political entity, for he believes that the implementation



of Islam into the nation of Egypt would be an “assassination to the civic state.”<sup>157</sup>

The retreat from modernity established through this platform dismayed pro-democracy activists within the region. Numerous individuals had cautiously supported the Brotherhood in hope that its members were becoming more moderate. This optimism was based on the group’s prior claim that it was indeed a reform movement, vying for a democratic playing field and an end to the autocratic rule of the Mubarak regime.<sup>158</sup> Issam al-Aryan, one of the Brotherhood’s leading members, stated that the Egyptian people “need a multi-party system which governs by the will of the people,” a phrase constantly reverberated by the members of the movement.<sup>159</sup> This proclamation bounces off the disagreeing ideas found within the political program.

To enact the Brotherhood’s political program, the group must acquire a legal and constitutional license for the party. This proves difficult on several levels. Most significantly, President Mubarak’s refusal to grant political status to the movement is a substantial obstacle. However, within the state’s constitution, political parties have the right to be established by all Egyptian citizens. Second, “His eminence the guide said that [the Brotherhood] would not apply to the Political Parties Affairs Committee because this committee is unconstitutional.”<sup>160</sup> The Brotherhood established a political program in order to create a party with the knowledge that the government must approve this party. Why embark on a journey one is unwilling to finish? Regardless of whether His eminence wishes to request the right to institute the party, the regime will not let the Brotherhood found a political party based on more than Mubarak’s logic but also because “anything the government suspects has a popular base and which might have foundations among the average Egyptians will certainly be rejected, especially if such a party depends on Islamic principles.”<sup>161</sup> The movement insists that it “will certainly preach the genuine concepts of Islam but will not force anyone to wear the *hijab* or any other costume.”<sup>162</sup> Steven Cook, an expert on Egyptian politics at the Council on Foreign Relations, believes that the Brotherhood has “clearly embraced the procedures of democracy, but it’s unclear that they have internalized the principles of democracy,”<sup>163</sup> thus limiting the extent of the movement’s effective nature within the Arab Republic of Egypt. To fully envelop the idea of democracy equality must be prioritized.

During the late summer months of 2007, Muhammad Habib, the first deputy guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, suggested that there had been significant progression in the “developments involving the Muslim Brotherhood Movement in Egypt and the unprecedented differences

between this movement and the Egyptian authorities, as well as the idea of establishing a new political party and many issues connected with the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.”<sup>164</sup> It is still apparent that the government desires to contain and weaken the movement. This is evident through the regime’s actions in establishing recent constitutional amendments. Although the amendments are billed largely as reforms, they transparently are intended to stop members of the Brotherhood from advancing any further in their political aspirations before the upcoming election for the upper chamber of parliament.<sup>165</sup> The continued, aggressive roundup of the members of the Muslim Brotherhood creates a stronger desire to publicize the political program. This program is indisputably the first truly comprehensive document that the Muslim Brotherhood has produced throughout the 77-year history of the association. In it, the movement outlines its policies on social, economic, and political issues.

The decision to draft this program is the result of a change in the relationship between the movement and the state.<sup>166</sup> The Muslim Brotherhood officials realize that within the current environment of the state, the group has zero chance of becoming a political party. The numerous constitutional amendments, adopted earlier this year, are viewed as a direct attempt to isolate the Muslim Brotherhood further from the formal political system. Habib says the movement will be “cautious” and absorb the government’s pressure “like a sponge. ... We organize in a manner that if certain individuals are arrested there are others to run the program.”<sup>167</sup> The increase in arrests, in conjunction with the degree of Mubarak’s control, is becoming increasingly dangerous to the Brotherhood. “It is true there is corruption in this country, and that there is a link between wealth and power,” stated Mustafa al-Feki, of the ruling National Democratic Party, “but the link between politics and religion is more dangerous.”<sup>168</sup> This justifiable statement reveals the concept that a religious state could indeed present a greater threat to the public than does the authoritarian regime. One must question the extent of responsible power that the Brotherhood can offer the public. The Muslim Brotherhood’s headquarters is littered with posters saying, “Allah is our goal, the Messenger is our leader, the Qur’an is our constitution, Jihad is our path and death in the service of Allah our highest hope.”<sup>169</sup> Has the Muslim Brotherhood, however, truly crafted a political program that can be implemented beyond the slogan “Islam is the solution”?

The majority of Islamists’ primary concern is to stimulate a moral, social, and political renewal of the Muslim community. “Under these oppressive, tyrannical regimes, little hope is left for the future. So, we wish to see the continued growth of human rights, the development of civil society and

the prevalence of peace, which ultimately will assure the future of Islamic movements.”<sup>170</sup> The citizens within the Islamic movement reject the issue of violence and are committed to a strategy of incremental reform through legal channels. Islamists aim to employ religion to guide modern society towards the collective return to religion. Equally important in recognizing and understanding the quest for the restoration of Islam is to prevent confusion of Islamists with traditionalists. Islamists do not automatically assume that a rejection of modernity and a return to pre-modern Muslim society is the solution. The Muslim Brotherhood embraced technology since its founding and functions as a “modern-style party organization, using schools, youth groups, news media, national congress, and social service provision to mobilize hundreds of thousands of active members.”<sup>171</sup> The rise of the movement in response to local conditions of political, social, and economic exclusion must be understood on its own terms and not grouped with Islamic militants and their ideals.

Islamic movements are categorized by their call to *jihad*, which again is comprised of two critical parts. Although it is recognized that the struggle to fight against the unrighteous should be met by all pious and faithful Muslims through non-violence, the more important aspect of *jihad* remains to be the inner struggle. The effort to live one’s life entirely through the implementation of Islam is upheld as the most important piece of the Islamist movement. This facet must be assumed before continuing the endeavors of the *da’I* through the recruitment process. The progression of gradual increase in the process of bestowing Islam from the individual- to the community-level stresses the necessity of the person to first obtain fullness within Islam. Simultaneously, *jihad* capitalizes on the immorality of the authoritarian regime and its inability to control the state apparatus. The failure of government programs, due to lack of integrity, should be met by the labors of society to reform it. The anger of the people is reflected in the rise of a frustrated system of education and underemployment, which creates a shift towards Islamism as a chance for survival.

Oppression and frustration are motivating thousands upon thousands of individuals to join the surge represented by the rise of Islamism. The consistent swell of Islamism resides behind the terms “cultural identity” and “political economy.”<sup>172</sup> The cultural identity of the Muslim is currently threatened by various ideals concerning democracy and private enterprise. One could argue, “the rise of Islamic activism is a reaction to the domination of Muslim societies by the West.”<sup>173</sup> As Western influence pervades into both the economic and political domains of Muslim societies, it consequently affects Islam’s cultural domain. Through Islamism, Muslims are attempting

to reclaim their Islamic heritage as a positive and authentic source of identity and value. Political economy concurrently leads individuals to blame the authoritarian regimes, who have dominated the region since the process of decolonization. The regime failed to provide economic growth, social equality, and political rights.<sup>174</sup> The rise of activism, in both cases, is portrayed as a collective protest against the conditions that prevail in much of the Muslim world. Islamist movements, such as the Muslim Brotherhood, often begin as broad-based coalitions dissatisfied with the status quo. The use of Islam is employed as a vehicle of mobilization to create a just Islamic order, assisting in the renewal of societal values. The failures of the Muslim world are intrinsically linked with Westernization, economic modernization, socialism, nationalism, and the oppressive, authoritative nature of the majority of governing bodies in the area. When searching for a means to provide stability in a region of discontent, commonalities surface among diverse groups of individuals through acceptance of basic principles, such as Islam.

The Islamic strategy must constantly be marginalized. In order to gain public support Islamism is forced to regulate its stance, thus bringing in moderates who may not adhere strictly to the beliefs within Islam. Nevertheless, these individuals so desperately crave change that they are willing to achieve it through any means that proves effective. The Islamic legacy is dedicated to “legitimizing the political (and economic) power of that class or elite which happens to be in control” and responds to the secular movements within the Muslim world.<sup>175</sup> Hassan al-Banna maintained that Islamic societies could only overcome their social, political, and economic problems by returning to the earliest source of the Islamic tradition. He called for the return to the Qurʾān and the *Sunna* of the Prophet as the primary sources for the reestablishment of an Islamic system of government.<sup>176</sup>

There’s a pretty slogan, “Islam is the Solution” [*al-islam huwa al-hall*, the campaign slogan of the Muslim Brotherhood] I say in all frankness: Yes, Islam is the solution to all political, economic, and social problems. But it demands calm, reflective planning and is far from application until we have calmly, rationally ascertained the means we desire.<sup>177</sup>

The involvement of the moderates aid in legitimizing this logic and guide the direction of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Two scholars on opposite ends of the political spectrum, Daniel Pipes and Edward Said, came to a similar conclusion concerning their observations

of the Muslim world: Radical Islamism, although it will continue to inspire militant opposition and terrorist attacks, cannot provide a working, alternative model for organizing society. Islamism is inherently weak and has generally not fared well within the various places where it has been used to attempt to acquire power.<sup>178</sup> Islamic movements have been most successful as opposition forces. By implementing religious ideology on the surface level, Islamist parties speak of legitimacy yet do not possess the means necessary to produce the promised just and moral order. In order to uphold political power they must secure the compliance of the populations they hope to govern, by generating a stronghold that will remain secure while producing positive outcomes.

The Muslim populace is not calling for a utopia, but merely an open political and economic system through an “Islamic Awakening.”<sup>179</sup> Seeking to balance reverence for Islamic values with the individual’s desire for self-expression, the Muslim Brotherhood embraces the limits on personal freedom consistent with the notion of preserving community stability. “Even though an Islamic democracy will resist certain elements of post-Enlightenment liberalism, it will still be a system that features regular elections, accepts dissent and opposition parties, and condones a free press and divisions of power between branches of the state.”<sup>180</sup> The separation from an unclean, sinful world reinforces the worldview that it is not merely the radicals that are fighting for a new Islamic order. With such an attitude of disdain for the realities of modern life and the traditional forms of Islam, the traditionalists are rarely the majority even among Islamists.

To understand the present conflict in the Middle East one must come to know the origins of Islam. Through scholarly and media sources the Western misconception categorizes Islam as radical. If Islamist groups remain, though, suppressed individuals will attempt to utilize extremist principles in order to remain within the political sphere. Subsequently, the ideas projected by the West will be realized. As seen through the example of the Muslim Brotherhood, conventional followers of Islam will be forced into the category of Islamists in order to achieve the changes necessary for survival. The important question to consider is one that democracy fears: is the link between wealth and power less dangerous than the link between politics and religion? The future of the Middle East is clouded by this tentative relationship. “All we have is our own lucidity, which we must train on a world where faith still inflames the minds of men”<sup>181</sup>. Respect for pluralism is all one can hope for.



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# **U.S. – Israeli Relations in the Future**

## *A Response to The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*

*Amit Paz*

### PURPOSE

In September of 2007, Professors John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, esteemed academics and prolific members of the realist school of thought of international relations, co-authored a book denouncing the unparalleled and unconditional support the United States gives to the State of Israel. In their book, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, they argue that the “Israel Lobby” has a “stranglehold” on American foreign policy and that the lobby’s disproportionate influence is directed at passing policies that are against the interests of the United States<sup>1</sup>. The authors build their case by disputing the popular consensus that supporting Israel is beneficial to the United States from the perspective of moral and strategic considerations.

The purpose of this essay is to show that support for Israel should not be dismissed based on the moral and strategic criteria proposed by Professors Mearsheimer and Walt and that American support for Israel is still in the best interest of the United States. This will be done by first demonstrating that America’s commitment to its founding principles helped it gain the power and prestige it enjoyed throughout most of the post-WWII era. Next, I will argue that America squandered its power and sullied its reputation by enacting foreign policies that went against America’s core ideologies. Finally, I will show how Israel complements the American ideological framework, specifically in the context of Israel’s 2006 war with Hezbollah.

### HISTORICAL CREDIBILITY

The United States was founded upon the principles, ideals and beliefs of freedom, justice and equality, which serve as the foundation of the principles of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Looking at America from the perspective of international relations, American foreign policy was remarkably non-interventionist for most of its history. By the end of World War II, however, America was the most powerful nation on earth; it could not be challenged economically and the only potential threat

militarily came from the Soviet Union. Just as perilous, the Soviet Union presented the United States with an antagonistic, ideological alternative.

The postwar balance of power was completely bipolar. Despite its economic and militaristic advantages, the United States had more than enough to worry about as the Soviet Union gobbled up Eastern Europe, and communist parties seemed poised to take power in several other European countries. In order to craft and extend its new hegemonic role in the world, the United States had to make its stand. President Harry S. Truman understood that in order to do this, he had to convince people worldwide that the American way of life was superior to the socialist experiment. Therefore, unexpectedly, America's strongest weapon in its arsenal became its ideals which laid in the foundation of freedom for all. American hegemony relied on it being perceived as the noble, gentle giant as opposed to the Soviet savage.

America garnered worldwide respect and admiration because it was the first superpower in history to bear heavy economic and human costs in its efforts to promote democratic ideals and secure freedom for the oppressed, while gaining marginally less in strategic benefits. America came to be viewed as a nation that stood for something greater than self-interest, whether or not it was acting according to strategic considerations. It can be noted that for the most part, actions taken by the United States in the name of its favorite cause *célèbre*, freedom, have also produced strategically beneficial results. For example, President Truman pledged hundreds of millions of dollars to Turkey and Greece as part of a foreign policy shift that became known as the Truman Doctrine. Obviously, such a move was intended to curb Soviet influence in the region, and this was in the strategic self-interest of the U.S. However, the precursor to this strategic position was based on the fact that American ideology is fervently against the Soviet credo, and a repression of the Soviet Empire would be both in the strategic interests of the United States and in accordance with its moral obligations and interests. Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) said during his recent campaign to capture the presidency that "Americans have understood their duty to serve a cause greater than self-interest,"<sup>2</sup> and during the Cold War this belief took form mainly through a policy of opposing communist regimes wherever there was a threat of their coming to power. The implications of such a policy sometimes meant that the U.S. had to ally itself with rulers who were about as evil as the communists it was trying to contain. This is clear upon examining the third wave of democratization that swept Africa, Latin America and parts of Europe during the 1970s. Contrary to the belief that newly decolonized nations unleashed from years of authoritarian rule, or recovering European nations who were trying to rebuild their societies, would emulate America's



political and economic institutions and become more democratic and liberal, some instead embraced revolutionary movements and extreme left-wing governments that were financed by the Soviet Union. Unfortunately, staying the course in opposing any communist expansion sometimes meant allying with brutal dictators and corrupt regimes such as Suharto in Indonesia, Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines and Augusto Pinochet in Chile<sup>3</sup>. As an extension to the Truman Doctrine, the U.S. government was committed to protecting any country from external aggression, even proclaiming and actually financing internal armed coups against possible communist regimes, such as in Guatemala and Nicaragua during the 1980s. This meant that on many occasions, due to the context of the Cold War and Soviet advances, the U.S. even propped up several dictators and governments that acted in ways opposite to the principles the U.S. endorsed. Such is the game of international politics; in order to stop a larger threat, countries must do things they are not proud of in order to best serve their strategic interests. This does not mean, however, that choosing between the lesser of two evils is a complete deviation from American ideological or moral obligations regarding its foreign policy.

## THE SQUANDERING OF AMERICAN POWER

With the collapse of the Soviet Union came the demise of one of the most fearful foes America had ever faced. To most Americans, the world seemed much safer and they felt they no longer had a need to serve as the world's moral police. The conflicts in Somalia in 1993 and Kosovo in 1998 convinced many Americans that it was time to focus on domestic issues. Many saw little reason to intervene in the internal affairs of Third World countries if it wasn't to stop the spread of communism. The delicate balance between prosperity and security was shifting. America was the only superpower in the world; the Soviet threat was gone and with it the greatest threat to freedom worldwide and at home. President George H. W. Bush and the Democratic Congress advocated that it was time for the U.S. to capitalize on its "peace dividend," a term used to describe the economic benefits of reducing the military budget in order to focus on issues needing the most attention on the home front.<sup>4</sup> The guns versus butter argument struck people as a legitimate reason to stop mediating every squabble on the globe and concentrate instead on fixing crumbling bridges, remedying a broken educational system and advancing a lagging economy at home.

Throughout the 1990s, America restrained itself in actively championing ideological principles, especially when circumstances did not dictate strategic

importance. The rhetoric was as strong as always, but real action seldom followed the grand speeches made by American presidents calling for robust democracy and freedom worldwide. The genocide in Rwanda could have been mitigated if not prevented had America forcibly intervened; however, since the small African country held little or no strategic value to American interests, the grisly massacres were allowed to take place. One can see the effects of such an attitude in the current situation in Darfur. It is shameful that the American government does not reclaim the beacon of hope and justice that it has upheld for many decades, long one of the greatest sources of American hegemony and legitimacy.

Increasingly, American strategic interests are inextricably linked to economic prosperity, paralleled by a sense of indifference to uphold human rights. This means that whereas in the past, the U.S. would assist other nations for reasons that included a genuine concern for the rights of its peoples, nowadays, the U.S. is more concerned about securing its own economic interests. This is mainly a result of the disappearance of the main ideological threat that was the Soviet Union. A side effect is that today, it is much harder for the U.S. to claim ideological hegemony, especially in light of foreign policy errors committed in the past few years which have squandered American power, weakened the American economy, stretched out American military forces and caused a debilitating blow to American leverage, influence and credibility. Strong allies, apprehensive to criticize the U.S. in the past, now openly and vociferously attack U.S. policies. A sense of mutuality and cooperation, always a cornerstone of successful American foreign policy, has all but vanished in the eyes of many of America's past key allies. A prime example of such a situation occurred in 2005 when the U.S. urged Turkey not to attack the PKK, a terrorist-separatist group fighting for Kurdish independence which conducted raids on Turkish territory from bases located in the northern, mountainous region of Iraq. Normally, the U.S. would not relent to an offensive terrorist organization and would not advise its allies to do the same, especially considering the dangerous strategic risks posed by a Turkish capitulation to Kurdish hostility, but since such an attack would potentially cause further destabilization in Iraq (which in turn would harm U.S. interests), the U.S. strongly pressed the Turkish government not to respond with force. The Turkish government did not heed the American advice and instead chose to invade, albeit with quite little success.

The sense that America is losing the moral high ground is evident in America's handling of the "War on Terror." Some of the loudest protests over American operations in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere have been in response to American actions that do not coincide with the stated American

mission. Evidence of torture at the Abu Ghraib prison, the execution of Iraqi civilians in Haditha by U.S. Marines, and the lengthy internment of suspected terrorists in Guantanamo Bay and other rumored secret prisons are all elements of an American policy involving tactics befitting brutal autocracies, not the most enlightened, freedom-loving country in the history of the world.

It is important to realize that incorporating moral and ideological considerations into its foreign policy is in the strategic and moral interests of the United States. America won the world's admiration for sticking to what it believed in and lost it when it deviated off course. In order for America to be a legitimate, credible world leader, it must adhere to its founding principles which for the past six decades have inspired nations and peoples across the globe to embrace the presence of American benevolence.

## HOW ISRAEL FITS THE IDEOLOGICAL EQUATION

Following the argument that moral and ideological considerations should be weighed when formulating foreign policy, it follows that support for Israel can be assessed, at least in part, based on moral standards. Professors Mearsheimer and Walt's book, *The Israel Lobby*, argues that in the case of U.S. support for Israel, the moral argument does not hold based on their claim that Israel is not morally superior to its enemies and that therefore, support for Israel should not be based on its moral high ground. It is perplexing that Professors Mearsheimer and Walt use ideological and moral standards in their case against Israel in the first place because they are "prominent figures in the realist school of international relations, which discounts international law, human rights, and other legal and moral concerns in foreign policy."<sup>5</sup> Realists don't believe that moral justifications should be part of foreign policy calculations because morals are beyond the scope of strategic interests. Therefore, one has to wonder why they include such reasoning if, according to their stated school of thought, these criteria do not play a part in their considerations.

Before debating why Israel is presently considered to be an ideological ally of the United States, let us examine the reasons behind initial U.S. support for the State of Israel. There are several strategic factors that historians cite as to why Truman, the U.S. president at the time, immediately recognized the newly established State of Israel. Some have proposed that Truman saw in his support for the Jewish state a chance to capture Jewish votes in the upcoming presidential election, that he was influenced by the Israel Lobby, or that he wanted to create a foothold in the region in order to halt

Soviet advances. While there might be truth to these arguments, they are not sufficient to explain the full scope of the president's decision; Truman's inner circle has proclaimed that he would never sacrifice long-term national goals for the sake of short-term political expediency.<sup>6</sup> Those who knew him best would say that "[his] pro-Israel outlook 'was based primarily on humanitarian, moral, and sentimental grounds, many of which were an outgrowth of the president's religious upbringing and his familiarity with the Bible.'" <sup>7</sup> Truman strongly believed, in light of the continuing spread of communism, that a world based on Judeo-Christian values would finally bring some sort of stability and peace opposed to the imposing evil he saw in communism. Furthermore, through his meetings with Zionist leaders, Truman was reassured that the State of Israel would be a democratic nation founded on principles similar to those articulated in the U.S. Declaration of Independence. The fact that Truman was aware of the ensuing wrath that recognizing Israel would trigger in the oil-rich Arab nations bolsters the claim that his move was done in light of moral considerations. It is a logically and analytically weak argument that Truman would sacrifice Arab oil for Jewish votes, but it is not inconceivable that Truman would act in a way that even the State Department advised against when he firmly believed that such an act was in the moral and therefore strategic best interests of the United States. In fact, Truman said that he would "handle this problem not in the light of oil, but in the light of justice."<sup>8</sup> Professors Mearsheimer and Walt fail to recognize that today, the ideological commonalities between Israel and the United States form the basis for the American consensus on a foreign policy that emphasizes unconditional commitment to Israel, not, as they maintain, the ability of the Israel Lobby to falsely convince Congress that supporting Israel is still in the best interests of the United States.<sup>9</sup>

In order to back up their argument that American support should not be based on moral claims, Mearsheimer and Walt bring up numerous points regarding supposed Israeli immoral actions that go against American values and hence require that America reconsider its support for a country that is not, in fact, ideologically or morally similar to the United States. Their arguments regarding the "dwindling moral case" against Israel include assertions that the early leaders of the Yishuv (the Jewish community before the establishment of Israel) agreed to the 1947 Partition Plan which divided Palestine into separate Jewish and Arab states because they secretly recognized this was the first step in conquering the whole of Palestine. Other contentions include evidence of abuse of Arab minority rights, the continuing occupation of Palestinian territories, accusations that Israel was at fault for its failure to reach final peace talks at the 2000 Camp David

summit due to an unsatisfactory peace offer, that Israel cannot claim the moral high ground in its ongoing battle against Palestinians in the occupied territories, and finally, that the creation of Israel itself involved a moral crime against the Palestinians.

While it is true that some elements of the early Zionist movement, members of the Revisionist faction led by Ze'ev Jabotinsky, advocated the creation of a Jewish state within the boundaries of "Greater Israel," a synonym for the biblical lands that once comprised Israel and Judea and Samaria, the bulk of Zionist leaders, among them Theodore Herzl and Chaim Weizmann,

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**Truman was reassured  
that Israel would be  
a democratic nation  
founded on principles  
similar to those of the  
United States.**

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called for a modern, Western-oriented, liberal democracy, preferably in Palestine. It should also be noted that these Revisionist organizations were dismantled by the Ben-Gurion government, as they were his political opponents and he saw their ideology as a threat to the stability and unity of the fledgling country. Mearsheimer and Walt also claim that there was some sort of conspiracy to take over all of Palestine in the long run based

on quotes that are often taken out of context. For example, the authors use a quote by Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion to make it seem that he was in favor of removing the Arab population in Palestine by "brutal compulsion"<sup>10</sup> when, in fact, the quote originally meant to say that because removal of the Arab population would require "brutal compulsion," it should not be "part of our programme."<sup>11</sup>

Regarding Arab minority rights and the Palestinian question, Mearsheimer and Walt misinterpret the situation as a matter of morality when in fact both are factors of the obsession Israel maintains regarding its own security. Just as the United States sometimes deviated from its moral positions in order to secure more important strategic goals, Israel also acts in ways contrary to principles articulated in its own Declaration of Independence in order to secure what it considers vital strategic and security objectives. Due to this, though Arabs enjoy the same political rights under the law as Jews do, their civil rights are not the same as those guaranteed to Israel's Jewish citizens, while the rights of Palestinians living in the occupied territories are even more limited than those of Arab Israelis. This problem can be linked to security matters – Israel's enemies are mostly Arab with the exception of Persian Iran, so there has been and continues to be a constant suspicion



among Israelis of their fellow Arab citizens vis-à-vis dual loyalty among Israeli Arabs. The recent terrorist attack by an Arab living in East Jerusalem who possessed an Israeli identification card (he refused Israeli citizenship but his ID card gave him unrestricted movement in Israel) is evidence of why many in Israel still have qualms about where Arab Israelis' loyalties lie. Some have even balked at the idea that the notion of an Israeli Arab exists – they contend that they are simply Arabs who live in the State of Israel due to unwanted circumstances outside of their control.

The occupation of Palestinian territories is also a matter of security. This essay will not delve into the question of whether the occupation is or ever was in Israel's best security interests, but it should be noted that the Gaza Strip and the West Bank were conquered in a war, much like the Philippines, Guam, Puerto Rico and parts of the western United States were acquired. The difference between those cases and the Israeli scenario is that Israel continues to occupy a foreign people, while the U.S. annexed the lands it conquered and forced the lands' inhabitants to become citizens. Israel will never annex the Gaza Strip or the West Bank because the integration of such a large, hostile, Arab population would threaten the identity of Israel as a Jewish state. A few morally disparaging aspects of this situation is that the Israeli government bears responsibility for creating desperate humanitarian conditions and for continuing to build and expand settlements in the occupied territories, despite U.S. opposition.

Mearsheimer and Walt's assertion that the 2000 peace summit at Camp David, held by President Bill Clinton at the end of his term, didn't follow through because Israel's offer was less than satisfactory is factually incorrect. This has ramifications in that it creates an image of Israel as a country intent on sidelining Palestinian rights to their own viable country, when in fact Israel's proposal was generous enough that Prince Bandar of Saudi Arabia told Arafat that not taking the deal would amount to a "crime against the Palestinian people."<sup>12</sup> Bruce Reidel, a chief negotiator on the Israeli team, Dennis Ross, chief negotiator for the American team, and even President Clinton have all put the blame for the failure of the peace talks squarely on former Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat. Mearsheimer and Walt's analysis is incorrect because they base their argument on a map that reflected the Palestinian view of what their future state would look like, when in fact, the final draft that was rejected by Arafat included a contiguous Palestinian state in 95% of the West Bank, and all of the Gaza Strip, with a Palestinian capital in East Jerusalem.

Mearsheimer and Walt are completely incorrect when they attempt to equate Israeli defensive military operations with Palestinian resistance

tactics. Mearsheimer and Walt fail outright to recognize the difference between “deliberately targeting civilians and inadvertently killing civilians while targeting terrorists who hide among them.”<sup>13</sup> The point they overlook is that there is a moral, qualitative difference between “unintended wrongs and purposeful wrong.”<sup>14</sup> In one instance, Mearsheimer and Walt simply list the number of Palestinians and Israelis killed during the second Intifada, concluding that Israel killed 3.4 Palestinians for every one Israeli killed.<sup>15</sup> Their statistics overlook the fact that Israeli military operations carried out in response to deliberate Palestinian attacks on civilian targets with the intended purpose of killing as many civilians as possible, including women and children, are legitimate, rightful uses of force to defend the citizens of Israel. On the other hand, Mearsheimer and Walt lightly condemn Palestinian terror tactics while giving them some legitimacy, saying that “[t]his behavior is not surprising ... because the Palestinians have long been denied basic political rights and believe they have no other way to force Israeli concessions.”<sup>16</sup> The analytical technique used by Mearsheimer and Walt implies using even-handed qualitative standards to compare two parties that have behaved very differently. Their argument would be the same as saying that the crimes committed by Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda deserve the same level of condemnation as “collateral damage” that are a result of American bombing campaigns on al-Qaeda strongholds.

Finally, Mearsheimer and Walt close their argument by claiming that the creation of Israel in the first place was a “moral crime” against the Palestinian people.<sup>17</sup> As Harvard Law School Professor Alan Dershowitz puts it, “The authors invert cause and effect by presenting the creation of the State of Israel, without any historical context, as the *cause* of a great crime, rather than the *reaction* to one.”<sup>18</sup> Without trying to explain the history behind the founding of the state or the implications of the Holocaust on the Jewish people, Mearsheimer and Walt opt instead to concentrate on the “crime” Jews committed by trying to safeguard their future survival in a state of their own.

Professors Mearsheimer and Walt’s argument that the U.S. has no special responsibility to Israel based on the fact that Israel itself is not morally up to par with American standards is a weak one that should not determine the extent of American commitment to Israel.

## ISRAEL AS A STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE

“Instead of being a strategic asset, in fact, Israel has become a strategic liability for the United States,”<sup>19</sup> Professors Mearsheimer and Walt argue. In addition to dismissing Israel as a moral ally, they claim that an intensive

commitment to Israel is not in the best strategic interests of the United States. Included in their rationale for this assertion is the fact that Israel's greatest strategic value as a deterrent to Soviet expansion is no longer relevant, that Israel was a liability and not an asset during the 1991 Gulf War, that Israel is not a true partner in the War on Terror, and most importantly, that unequivocal American support for Israel is the main reason behind global anti-American sentiment that fuels the wrath of terrorist organizations.<sup>20</sup> The authors' analytical argument, however, is substantiated on random quotes and figures as they attempt to make their claim against Israel. For example, Mearsheimer and Walt use a quote from Osama bin Laden's 1996 fatwa titled "Declaration of War Against the Americans Occupying the Land of Two Holy Places," that blood spilled in Palestine is the result of an "American-Israeli conspiracy," to conclude that bin Laden's "most prominent grievance" against the United States is its support for Israel<sup>21</sup>. However, it is widely known that the American presence in Saudi Arabia prompted bin Laden to begin planning Sept. 11. Another example includes discounting the claim that Israel is an essential ally in confronting rogue states such as Libya, Syria and Iran based on the fact that those countries' total population and GDP do not come close to those of the United States, and thus, these countries pose no threat to the United States and do not require any assistance from Israel.<sup>22</sup> This is not a logical argument; al-Qaeda is an organization that includes merely thousands of members and has access to a very limited funds, unlike the resources available to rogue states that sponsor terrorism, yet it still managed to inflict the most deadly attack on American soil in history.

Mearsheimer and Walt fail to recognize Israel as a legitimate strategic asset. For example, they overlook the fact that, in addition to containing Soviet influence, Israel kept radical Arab regimes in check, with the most notable examples being the Israeli support given to the United States and Jordan during an impending Syrian invasion of Jordan, and the Israeli bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor in 1981. Indeed, after the first Gulf War, then-Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney thanked the Israelis for taking care of the Iraqi nuclear reactor before the threat could materialize into something worse, and though it has not yet been verified, the same might be said of the recent raid on a suspected future nuclear reactor in Syria in September 2007.

Regarding the 1991 Gulf War, Mearsheimer and Walt claim that Israel posed a threat to the unity of the international coalition due to Arab threats of breaking the coalition if Israel joined. It is true that in addition to dissuading Israel from sending its own troops as part of the coalition, the U.S. also pressured Israel not to respond to Scud missile attacks during the

war in order to prevent dissent amongst Arab members of the coalition. The fact that Israel acquiesced was because the U.S. has a special relationship with Israel, not despite it; in this case, U.S.-Israeli relations were in the best interests of the U.S. Irrespective of this so-called “liability,” Israel contributed to the war effort by providing the U.S. with military equipment such as more effective missiles for U.S. B-52 bombers, pilotless drones for reconnaissance missions, and mobile bridges for the Marine Corps.<sup>23</sup>

Concerning the War on Terror, Mearsheimer and Walt dismiss the rationale of an alliance based on fighting a common enemy by claiming that they are fighting the enemy for different reasons. While this might be true, it does not mean that Israel and the U.S. cannot work together to combat the same enemy. Highly important to both countries is Israel’s ability to develop

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**The authors’  
analytical argument  
is substantiated  
on random quotes  
and figures as they  
attempt to make their  
claim against Israel.**

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advanced military technologies which assist the U.S. in its campaigns in Iraq and Afghanistan<sup>24</sup>. Israel is credited with inventing the Arrow missile defense system which would protect against incoming aerial attacks. Israel contributes to the common effort to fight terrorism by advising the U.S. on matters with which Israelis have much more experience: interrogation tactics, special operations and close fighting

in urban areas.<sup>25</sup> Also, Israel provides the U.S. with invaluable intelligence, especially human intelligence, concerning the very same enemies they face.

Finally, Mearsheimer and Walt assume that once the U.S. stops supporting Israel, Islamic fundamentalists would have no reason to hate the U.S. with such ferocity. This assumption is both naïve and incorrect. Terrorists would simply use other excuses for continuing their attacks on the U.S. regardless of American support for Israel, such as the presence of American troops near the holy cities of Mecca and Medina, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and accusations of neo-Imperialist ambitions in the region.

In fact, bin Laden was primarily motivated by the presence of American troops in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia, recall, had asked the United States to defend the Arabian Peninsula against Iraqi aggression prior to the first Gulf War. So it was America’s ties to and defense of an *Arab* state — from which fifteen of the nineteen Sept. 11 hijackers originated — and not the *Jewish* state that most clearly precipitated Sept. 11.<sup>26</sup>

## SUMMER 2006: ISRAEL VS. HEZBOLLAH

“It did not make strategic sense for the Bush Administration to back Israel’s disproportionate response to Hezbollah’s provocations, and there was also no compelling moral case for supporting Israel’s conduct,”<sup>27</sup> say Professors Mearsheimer and Walt regarding Israel’s summer offensive against Hezbollah. It should be evident, however, that in this case, the U.S. was justified in providing consistent military and diplomatic support to Israel. Hezbollah guerrillas invaded Israel, kidnapped two soldiers and killed eight more, and then began to bombard and shell northern Israel with indiscriminant rocket fire. Clearly, Israel was defending its country and its citizens; undoubtedly, Israeli security was threatened. Barry Posen argues, “Security traditionally encompasses the preservation of a nation’s physical safety, the country’s sovereignty and its territorial integrity, and its power position – the last being the necessary means to the first three.”<sup>28</sup> Israel’s position of power was threatened by an Iranian-backed, non-state actor which was encroaching upon Israeli territory and sovereignty. By supporting Israel, the U.S. showed that it was not going to capitulate to terrorist aggression, that indeed such provocations should be confronted head-on, as opposed to previous signs of weakness in similar situations, such as after the 1983 bombing of the Marine barracks in Lebanon which caused the death of 241 Americans. Principles of sovereignty, national security and territorial integrity are liberal positions based on John Locke’s teachings, which the U.S. Constitution is subsequently based on. It would be ideologically and morally hypocritical not to support an ally whose natural rights had been violated. Mearsheimer and Walt also claim that it would be immoral to support Israel because of the proportion of civilian deaths it caused compared to its own casualties. The U.S. is faced with the same dilemma when it receives intelligence that either Taliban fighters in Afghanistan or insurgents in Iraq are fighting in civilian areas; Hezbollah fighters do not wear uniforms as they do not operate from established military bases. They are enmeshed in the civilian population, thereby forcing Israel to kill civilians; this advances Hezbollah’s cause by arousing sympathy on the international scene and by managing to recruit younger generations to the cause against Israel. Mearsheimer and Walt even mention that large weapons munitions were stored in “caves, homes, mosques and other hiding places.”<sup>29</sup> Hezbollah’s goal, on the other hand, is to inflict as much damage as possible and kill as many Israelis as possible, deliberately and indiscriminately. U.S. support for Israel despite controversial missions that sometimes result in large numbers of civilian



deaths, such as the shelling of Qana in 2006, should not be used as reasons to cut off U.S. support for Israel because such incidences are sometimes the tragic consequences of war in populous areas, as the U.S. military knows all too well. Indeed, Israel's response was unexpectedly iron-fisted, but as Dan Gillerman, Israeli Ambassador to the UN, stated, "To those countries who claim that we are using disproportionate force, I have only this to say: You're damn right we are. Because if your cities were shelled the way ours were, if your citizens were terrorized the way ours are, you would use much more force than we are using."<sup>30</sup> It is the position of this essay that the U.S. should consider ideological principles in matters of foreign policy and that in this case, supporting Israel is tantamount to sticking to American principles and that sticking to American principles coincides with adhering to America's moral and strategic interests.

Regardless of their moral case, their strategic argument regarding the American position during the war is also faulty. Despite the fact that Israel was acting in self-defense, it was the focus of worldwide condemnation, partly because other major powers do not consider Hezbollah to be a terrorist organization but a political and social one. As such, by siding with Israel diplomatically, unlike the rest of the international community, the U.S. would appear strong and decisive in its mission to reduce the power of a radical, militant organization in the region. It would also work to counter Iran's influence via Hezbollah. By providing military aid to Israel, it would also avoid having to face a stronger enemy in the future. Indeed, "former U.S. Secretary of State Alexander Haig once described Israel as the largest and only unsinkable U.S. aircraft carrier in the world"<sup>31</sup> because of its ability to carry out American interests. The most significant cost of U.S. support for Israel during the war was a rise in anti-American sentiment in the region, which was already present in an overwhelming amount. It is mistaken to say that the benefits of avoiding further inflaming the Muslim and Arab world are worth the costs of abandoning Israel as a strategic ally.

## GRIEVANCES

Israeli interests are not always the same as American interests, and there have been cases where both the United States and Israel acted in ways that are in conflict with the notion that the two countries share an unbreakable bond. Israeli settlements are perhaps the best example of this kind of situation. The U.S. has always adamantly opposed the construction of settlements on Palestinian lands, while Israeli officials have always maintained that settlements were and continue to be in Israel's security interests. Today, it is

rather obvious that settlement expansion is one of the more egregious acts, if not the most egregious act, that continue to inflame Palestinian passions. In this case, I support harsh U.S. criticism and real action, including a freeze on financial aid to Israel as long as settlements continue to be expanded, and a deal on withdrawing from those settlements in the context of a larger peace initiative. It is important to note that allies may have divergent interests, but this is not reason enough to break ties or strain relations. Israel must realize that it cannot continue the settlement policy, and U.S. action can influence that decision. Nevertheless, Mearsheimer and Walt use cases where Israel has acted in defiance of American interests to conclude that Israel is a “dubious ally” that cannot be trusted to fully cooperate with the United States.<sup>32</sup> One of their examples is that during the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s, at a time when the U.S. was arming Iraq before the Iran-Contra affair, Israel supplied Iran with a significant amount of arms. Israel, however, should not be expected to act in ways that threaten its very existence. This occurred while Israeli intelligence had already confirmed Iraqi advances in the realm of nuclear power; thus, Israel would naturally want Iran to defeat a belligerent, hostile Iraq that repeatedly made threats to annihilate Israel. Another example that still conjures sour memories is the case of the Israeli spy Jonathan Pollard, who tried to “steal spy-camera technology from a U.S. firm” in 1986.<sup>33</sup> Israel defended itself, claiming that it was not spying *on* the U.S., only spying *in* the U.S.

These are real cases and they should not be overlooked; however, they are rare and their consequences do not involve dire threats to either country. Therefore, while such cases should be noted, they should in no way imply that there exists a pattern or a firm tendency for Israel to act in ways that constitute its alliance with the U.S. as “dubious” or “disloyal.”

#### TYING IT ALL TOGETHER: U.S. STRATEGY AND THE WAR ON TERROR

It would be of optimal importance to incorporate a lasting alliance with Israel as part of the U.S. strategy on the War on Terror and as part of its broader foreign policy. Neglecting Israel would mean ignoring an ideologically aligned ally in a highly important strategic region. Abandoning Israel would embolden terrorists to continue aggressive operations, not lessen their anger. The United States should support Israel from a moral perspective because Israel shares and acts upon the same principles the U.S. espouses, and it should support Israel from a strategic point of view because the special relationship between the two countries is beneficial for both. It

should be clear that the benefits of supporting Israel far outweigh the costs.

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# A Guide to Preparing International Arab-Israeli Summits

*Ian Matthew Bomberg*

On November 27, 2007, Arab, Israeli, Palestinian and U.S. delegations met, alongside representatives from the international community, in Annapolis, Maryland, with the hope of reviving a peace process that had laid dormant for seven years. Both sides hoped to embark on a path toward peace that would eventually lead to the creation of an Arab-Palestinian state by 2011 – a state that would enjoy peaceful bilateral relations with the neighboring Jewish state of Israel. While Israeli and Palestinian officials are now currently holding meetings in pursuit of this goal, there are many other actors in the peace process that greatly affect its outcome – in particular, the United States. The United States has been the crucial third-party actor in each of the three former Israeli-Arab peace conferences, including the first Camp David summit in 1978, the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference, and the second Camp David summit in 2000. During each of these conferences, the United States played a powerful role in facilitating negotiations between the sides.

This paper will begin by presenting a guide to direct U.S. actions in any future U.S.-sponsored Israeli-Arab peace summit. The paper argues that: (1) U.S. negotiators should prepare extensively before the summit, (2) all countries with vested interests, including Arab delegations, should be included in the summit and (3) throughout the negotiations at the summit, the United States must take the foremost leadership in bridging divides between the parties. This paper will examine these ideas along with their counterarguments. It will also discuss the extent to which each of these factors played a role in the success of the last three conferences. Even though each summit differs in its eventual success, these summits provide illustrative and crucial insights into the proper U.S. role in diplomacy.

## METHODOLOGY

While there have been additional Israeli-Arab conferences in the past, only the three aforementioned conferences will be discussed due to their crucial difference from the others. Camp David I, Madrid, and Camp David II are unique in that they served as the starting point for new negotiations between

Israel and Arab delegations.

The 1978 Camp David summit began the process that eventually led to the 1979 Israel-Egypt peace treaty; the Madrid Conference began bilateral negotiations between Israel and Jordan, Israel and Syria, and Israel and the Palestinians; and the 2000 Camp David summit revived the stalled Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. These conferences differ from the 1993 Oslo meetings, the 1998 Wye River negotiations, and the 2001 Taba summit in that each of those conferences acted as follow-up meetings based on advancing a peace process that had already begun at an earlier summit. Because these meetings were secondary negotiations, rather than founding talks, they will not be discussed here.

Discussing founding negotiations is crucial in the present day, as the peace process has stalled for the past seven years. While the U.S.-sponsored Annapolis summit in late November 2007 has revived Israeli-Palestinian bilateral negotiations, it is too early to assess its success. Only after months or even years will scholars be able to truly assess the possible achievements of the summit. Consequently, this paper will not discuss Annapolis itself, but instead will focus on each of the former conferences. These summits highlight the need for the United States to facilitate negotiations between Israel and the surrounding Arab states.

#### EXTENSIVE PREPARATION BEFORE THE SUMMIT

A U.S.-sponsored summit can only be successful if the American leadership undertakes extensive preparation beforehand. This paper defines “extensive preparation” as a long-term commitment to serving as a mediating party between the sides, which includes but is not limited to shuttle diplomacy, ministerial negotiations, and research of divisive issues. The United States must follow these steps in preparation for a summit, because the summit itself cannot begin the negotiations; each side must already demonstrate a willingness to work together. In addition, this preparation will educate the administration as to what issues it can be forceful on, and what issues will not be compromised.

There are critics who argue that the United States should not prepare extensively for negotiations; instead, they say that it must respond to improved diplomatic relations between the opposing sides. These critics believe the United States must wait for the two parties to be willing to cooperate before the administration begins to facilitate negotiations. A vocal proponent of this ideology is Martin Indyk, a former U.S. ambassador to Israel and director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP) from 1982-1990. In



1988, WINEP produced a report for the White House which stressed that the administration should only respond to, instead of initiating, dialogue. Kathleen Christison accurately characterizes the report, stating, “ ... the report was a blueprint for inaction. Concluding the United States should shun efforts to achieve a rapid breakthrough, the report urged the administration to engage in a drawn-out ‘ripening process’ that would gradually create an atmosphere conducive to negotiations.”<sup>1</sup>

While this argument correctly identifies the willingness of the two sides to cooperate as a prerequisite for negotiations, the argument ignores the need for the United States to aid the cooperation process between the parties. Christison moves on to explain the reality of the ripeness argument, stating, “ ... [it] holds that the United States should do virtually nothing to move the peace process along until the parties themselves are ready.”<sup>2</sup> The subsequent conferences discussed in the paper each demonstrate the faults in the “ripeness” argument. These events highlight the need for the United States to prepare extensively before a summit. If the United States had not lain the foundation for these conferences, they likely would have never taken place, and accordingly the past breakthroughs in the peace process might never have come about. In other words, the two sides cannot do it alone. At least one longtime U.S. official eventually changed his opinion and came to this conclusion, as William Quandt states: “[Jim] Baker [Secretary of State, 1989-1992], who had always maintained so firmly that the United States could do nothing until the parties were ready, finally recognized that, while the United States could not make peace for Arabs and Israelis, only the United States could get them started.”<sup>3</sup>

## **Camp David I**

From September 5-17, 1978, Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin and U.S. President Jimmy Carter met on the grounds of Camp David to seek a resolution to the Israeli-Egyptian and Israeli-Palestinian disputes. This meeting came about only after extensive preparation on the part of President Carter and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance. Beginning in 1977, Vance made multiple trips to the Middle East, and in addition, Carter sent five personal letters to the Israeli and Egyptian leaders. As the summit approached, President Carter asked the National Security Council to prepare profile reports of the Israeli and Egyptian delegations in order to familiarize himself with the negotiating parties.<sup>4</sup> He also requested that the State Department identify the divisive issues between the two parties and construct compromise solutions which he could present at the conference.<sup>5</sup> This preparation demonstrated the administration’s willingness

to spend a great deal of time laying the groundwork for the summit. Carter and his team met numerous times with Israeli and Egyptian officials while also taking the time to prepare themselves for inevitable disagreements.

This preparation came to fruition during the twelve days at Camp David as the two sides were able to formulate an agreement. Carter understood where each leader would eventually have to make concessions and did not allow setbacks and frustrations to break down the process. By the end of the conference, the two sides had produced two documents, “A Framework for Peace in the Middle East” and “A Framework for the Conclusion of the Peace Treaty between Egypt and Israel.” The latter document eventually led to the forging of the Egypt-Israel Peace Accords on March 26, 1979. This document, signed on the north lawn of the White House, has led the two countries to live relatively peacefully, side-by-side, for over 28 years.

### **Madrid Peace Conference**

While the 1978 Camp David summit led to the framework of an Israeli-Egyptian peace accord, the Palestinian issue was ultimately left unsettled. It would take another twelve years before the sides would meet to attempt to resolve the issue. Again, the United States acted as the primary third-party negotiator and facilitator. In October 1991, delegations from Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the Palestinians, led by the U.S., met in Madrid, Spain to create further frameworks for negotiations. Similar to the first Camp David summit, the United States prepared thoroughly for this conference – a preparation that was crucial to its success.

This work began in March 1991, just weeks after the end of the Gulf War. Between March and October, Secretary of State James Baker made eight trips to the Middle East, and President George H.W. Bush sent personal letters to the Egyptian, Israeli, Jordanian, Saudi Arabian and Syrian leaders.<sup>6</sup> Baker spent countless hours in his meetings with officials from each of these countries while at the same time meeting with individuals with links to the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). Initially, Israel was hesitant to join an international conference as it believed that joining would place undue pressure on Israel to make painful concessions.<sup>7</sup> Baker’s tireless efforts, however, eventually persuaded each of these countries to send a delegation because “[i]n his talks with leaders in the region, Baker urged each one not to be responsible for the breakdown of the peace process. He made it clear that he was prepared, in his words, to leave the ‘dead cat on the doorstep’ of the intransigent party if the talks failed.”<sup>8</sup> The United States used its newfound influence after the Gulf War to encourage each of countries to participate in the conference.

While the summit lasted only three days, it was nonetheless successful, as it created bilateral and multilateral negotiations between Israeli and Arab participants. These separate negotiations eventually led to the signing of the Oslo Accords in August 1993, which represented the first mutual recognition between Israel and the PLO. In addition, the conference led to the signing of the Israel-Jordan peace treaty in 1995. Finally, the conference led to five multilateral working groups for security cooperation, refugees, the environment, water distribution and regional economic development. If Bush and Baker had not put forth extensive efforts in persuading each of the countries to attend, the likelihood of these successes would have decreased greatly.<sup>9</sup>

## **Camp David II**

Even with the successes of Madrid in 1991 and the Oslo process that began in 1993, an independent Palestinian state had not been created by the turn of the century. President Bill Clinton finally sought to conclude a framework for an Israeli-Palestinian final status agreement by July 2000. From July 11-25, Clinton met with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat at Camp David in hopes of forming a final settlement between the Israeli and the Palestinian leaderships.

Unlike his predecessors, Clinton chose to forego high-level diplomacy in preparation for the summit. During June and July, then-U.S. chief negotiator Dennis Ross along with Chairman Arafat both expressed their desire to postpone the summit in order to narrow the large gaps between the sides.<sup>10</sup> Clinton, however, preferred to stick to the schedule. As a result, Barak and Arafat entered the summit with important issues largely unsettled.<sup>11</sup> Much of the first two weeks at Camp David was spent on negotiating basic issues, such as the removal of roadblocks within the Palestinian territories and determining post-settlement bilateral security arrangements. These issues were easier to negotiate than the final status issues because each delegation's constituencies would be more willing to accept compromises on these arrangements. The negotiating teams were primarily concerned with the final status issues of Jerusalem, borders, refugees and settlements. The discussions of secondary issues unfortunately took up a great deal of time, which forced final status negotiations to be continually delayed. Even in the last days of the summit, the critical issues had not been discussed at great lengths. By the time the summit had concluded, the sides had been unable to come to an agreement over these key issues.

There were many factors that led to the breakdown in talks, including Barak's difficult bargaining style, Arafat's unwillingness to give up a greater

percentage of land to Israel, and many others.<sup>12</sup> However, the United States' lack of preparation cannot be overlooked; William Quandt describes: "If there were a criticism that seemed valid, it would be ... that so little time in the preceding seven years had been used to lay the basis for the substantive discussions of the issues [final status issues] that finally came in focus at the summit. Clinton's penchant for relying on all-nighters had perhaps served him well in the past, but not this time."<sup>13</sup> Clinton had pushed for the summit as a last resort, but had not adequately prepared for negotiations.

#### START WITH EVERYONE WITH A VESTED INTEREST

In addition to extensive preparations, the United States must include all countries and organizations with vested interests in the summit itself. In the past, these representations were often limited to regional Arab countries, such as Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Syria. This group has now expanded to include the entire Arab world, along with international organizations such as the International Quartet on the Middle East, the United Nations and the International Monetary Fund. Each of these delegations benefits from a resolution to the Israeli-Arab conflict, and thus has an interest in bringing the two sides together.

There are critics, however, who claim that a conference, inclusive of Arab states, will place undue pressure on Israel to make dangerous concessions; "Israel ... saw in a UN-sponsored conference a venue in which the world tribunal would impose an unpalpable settlement on Israel."<sup>14</sup> In addition, critics argue that Israel will be unable to concede to the demands of the international community, which will inevitably lead to an outbreak in violence. These pundits cite the beginning of the second Intifada as a direct result of the failure of Camp David II. These ideas can be seen through the words of former Washington bureau chief for Haaretz newspaper Nitzan Horowitz; when asked about the possible outcome of Camp David II, he stated, "There is great fear, at least in Israel, from break of violence and bloodshed if there is no agreement." He continued, "This is why there is really a heavy burden on both Arafat and Barak to reach an agreement, because otherwise, there is going to be bloodshed."<sup>15</sup> Horowitz believes that renewed violence is more likely than a negotiated settlement in the post-conference period.

Horowitz, similar to other critics, chooses to focus on the dangers of including outside countries while ignoring the numerous potential benefits. In terms of Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, a Palestinian state will be dependent on international foreign investment to improve its judicial system, support the budget of Palestinian Authority (PA) and improve internal infrastructure.<sup>16</sup>

Israel will also rely on foreign aid to the Palestinian government, because the PA must be able to carry out its own security measures to protect its own people and to prevent attacks on Israel. A summit must include outside countries, consequently, in order to protect both Israeli and Palestinian interests.

Israel also shares security concerns with neighboring Arab states. These countries, in particular Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, no longer threaten the destruction of Israel; instead, they are themselves threatened by the growth of internal radical Islamic groups, international terrorist organizations and the Iranian regime.<sup>17</sup> Charles Kupchan, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institute, states, “A truculent Iran poses a potent obstacle to developing a cooperative security order for the Gulf. If the regime in Tehran continues its belligerent rhetoric and proceeds with its nuclear program, the GCC would have to focus on collective defense against Iran instead of focusing on the collective security of the region.”<sup>18</sup> Times have changed – the Arab world no longer calls for the destruction of Israel, but instead these countries fear their own political survival. These states have a vested interest in participating in international conferences as they hope to reap its benefits; as Quandt states, “A solution to the Palestinian question will not guarantee a moderate political order in the Arab world, but it could be a positive development.”<sup>19</sup> Once a peace treaty between Israel and the Palestinians is signed, the rest of the Arab world will be able to forge diplomatic ties with Israel,<sup>20</sup> after which these states will be able to negotiate more beneficial arms agreements with Israel and the United States, similar to those of Turkey and Egypt. In 2005, Turkey signed a \$200 million arms agreement with Israel, while in 2007, the U.S. finalized an agreement that will provide Egypt with \$13 billion in economic assistance over ten years.<sup>21</sup>

## **Camp David I**

At the first Camp David summit, the United States, Israel and Egypt were the only negotiating partners. Even without the participation of regional Arab states, the opposing sides were able to commit to a framework agreement that eventually led to a full peace treaty. While this sequence of events appears to imply that the inclusion of regional countries in summits is unnecessary, a deeper study of the consequences of the summit reveals new information.

The 1979 Israel-Egypt peace accord benefited the respective nations greatly; however, the agreement produced additional repercussions. In the end, the Palestinian question remained unsolved and Egypt was suspended from the Arab League in 1979. Granted, any explanation of differing outcomes from Camp David is purely speculative, but it is nevertheless necessary to more



deeply examine the conference. To begin, the conference did not include delegations from Jordan or from the Palestinians. These countries had previously criticized the notion of a diplomatic summit; however, a stronger U.S. effort to include these countries may have produced results; as Quandt states, “ ... some significant mistakes could have been avoided and a serious bid for Jordanian and Palestinian involvement in the peace process might have been made in 1978. Their rejection of Camp David had not been immediate, total, or inevitable.”<sup>22</sup> If these delegations were included, there would have been a greater likelihood that serious negotiations could have begun over the status of the Palestinians.<sup>23</sup> Including Jordanian and Palestinian delegations in the negotiations would not have undoubtedly solved the Palestinian issue, though their inclusion could have offered more of a chance for a solution. As a result of the exclusion of these countries, Egypt could only make limited headway on the Palestinian issue.

While the treaty resulted in the improvement of Israeli-Egyptian relations, it also led to the suspension of Egypt from the Arab League in 1979. The Arab League, which had sought a peace agreement with Israel just two years earlier, criticized Egypt’s decision to negotiate unilaterally with Israel. The League thought that Egypt had ignored the plight of the Palestinian people and had taken advantage of the situation to improve its own interests. It is impossible to predict whether Israel and Egypt would have been able to form a peace agreement if other Arab states were included in the negotiations; however, the United States could have made more of an effort to enlist support from these governments. If regional governments saw that Egypt – the leader of the Arab world at the time – was embarking on the path toward peace with Israel, these other countries might have similarly followed suit. If the other governments were not willing to follow Egypt’s lead, it would not have any worse effects on Israeli-Egyptian negotiations as Egypt’s actions would have already brought about political fallout in the Arab world. On the other hand, multilateral efforts by the United States could have motivated other regional governments to follow Egypt’s lead. This is not to say that an Israeli-Egyptian peace was not a desirable outcome in and of itself; however, it is to say that the Middle East will remain in conflict as long as the Palestinian problem remains. Therefore, Egypt could have been used to influence the decision of other regional governments.

### **Madrid Conference**

In contrast to the trilateral meeting at Camp David, regional Arab states played a crucial role in the Madrid Conference. This summit included delegations from countries that were both allies and enemies of the United

States during the Gulf War, which lent credibility to the conference. The United States did not exclude its rivals from diplomatic negotiations; instead, President Bush and Secretary of State Baker parlayed its success in the war into persuading countries to work toward peace. Though various states held longstanding disagreements with Israel, these countries had mutual security and economic concerns that motivated them to work together.

In terms of security, the idea of an existential conflict between Arabs and Israelis no longer existed. From 1973-1991, a period of nearly 18 years, there had not been a single large-scale conflict between Israel and the Arab countries. Each of these countries was primarily concerned with continued internal violence and external threats emanating from Iraq and Iran. If the threat of Arab-Israeli violence were lessened, these countries would be better equipped to confront their respective problems. The United States capitalized on these mutual interests by discussing points for possible military cooperation; as Quandt states, "On May 29, the administration launched a proposal on regional arms control. This, it seemed, was designed to appeal to Israelis by drawing several Arab states, such as Saudi Arabia, into discussions on limiting arms control."<sup>24</sup> These countries realized that a regional arms control agreement would serve their own interests and were therefore willing to cooperate. By the end of the conference, thirteen Arab states, Israel and a Palestinian delegation had formed the Arms Control and Regional Security (ACRS) working group.<sup>25</sup> In addition to the ACRS, four other multilateral working groups dealing with refugees, the environment, water distribution and regional economic development were developed. Israel and the surrounding Arab countries shared mutual concerns over decisive issues and were willing to work together to solve them.

While the importance of the multilateral working groups cannot be overlooked, the symbolic presence of all the parties attending the conference may have been Madrid's biggest success; as Quandt states, "No one could ignore the symbolic presence – and therefore political – importance of the parties' sitting together at the negotiating table. And for the first time in recent history, the Palestinians were present, speaking on their own behalf."<sup>26</sup> The traditional view of an existential conflict between Israel and the Arab countries had ended. In its wake, Madrid left the realization that each of the parties had a vested interest in working together toward a common goal – peace.

Finally, it is important to highlight that Madrid was the first occasion where Palestinians represented themselves. Israel had ultimately accepted the idea that the Palestinians could not be dealt with via neighboring governments. The Palestinian problem would have to be negotiated directly with Palestinian

representatives, who looked out for the best interests of their own people. The summit had created an environment in which the Israeli government, the Palestinian people and surrounding Arab governments seemed willing to work together toward peace.

## **Camp David II**

These common interests were ignored during the second Camp David negotiations as the U.S. chose not to engage neighboring Arab countries. The U.S., Israeli and Palestinian leaderships believed that the Israeli-Palestinian bilateral negotiations, which had begun at Madrid and continued through the Oslo process and 1999 Wye River summit, would serve as a solid foundation, and therefore, support from the regional governments was not needed. By 2000, each of the parties believed that the time was ripe to begin final status negotiations. The United States, however, chose not to call upon other countries in helping the two sides come together.

Using Camp David II as a case study to examine of the role of outside countries in an international summit can only be speculative, due to the absence of the these countries at the summit. As a result, this paper will not examine this theory at great lengths in terms of Camp David II. However, it is important to highlight Chairman Arafat's comments in the final days of the summit. In "The Camp David Papers," Akram Hanieh quotes Arafat as saying, "Jerusalem is not only a Palestinian city ... it is also an Arab, Islamic and Christian city. If I am going to make a decision on Jerusalem, I have to consult with the Sunnis and the Shi'a and all Arab countries. I have to consult with many countries starting with Iran and Pakistan, passing by Indonesia and Bangladesh, and ending with Nigeria."<sup>27</sup> In these last days, the final status negotiations, which included a discussion of the fate of Jerusalem and its holy sites, had finally begun. These negotiations would ultimately fail for many reasons, including the underlying problems of the absence of outside Arab delegations. While Arafat may have exaggerated the list of countries that had a direct claim in the negotiations, his basic message could not be overlooked: Outside Arab states have a stake in the peace process and cannot be ignored. These countries need to be included in negotiations as they have the ability to assist with or detract from the peace process.

### U.S. CRITICAL ROLE IN BRIDGING DIVIDES

America must be willing to play a role in bridging divides between the negotiating parties. This paper defines "bridging divides" as: (1) the United States actively participating in negotiations by drafting compromise proposals

between the two sides and (2) the United States using its strong influence to help form agreements. To be an active participant, the United States must be at the center of negotiations, instead of allowing the two sides to negotiate between themselves. In each of these cases, the United States cannot overtly support one side and criticize the other.

Critics argue that these actions place undue pressure on the negotiating parties and could lead to the acceptance of undesirable agreements. This idea was illustrated by Congressman Mike Pence (R-Ind.) in a discussion with Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert after the recent Annapolis conference. Pence asked Olmert “... [if the conference] put Israel under undue pressure to offer concessions which would not be in her long-term strategic interests.”<sup>28</sup> At the heart of Pence’s question is the underlying assumption that the United States pressured Israel to begin negotiations with the Palestinian delegation, which might ultimately lead to future problems for Israel. Similar to other critics, Pence believes that the two sides should be able to negotiate agreements on their own terms, if so desired, but the United States should not force leaders to accept unwise policy decisions.

The strength of this argument comes into question after examining the past inabilities of the opposing sides to carry out independent negotiations. William Quandt describes the need for a mediating party “... between Israel and its neighbors to help overcome deep distrust and historically rooted antagonism.”<sup>29</sup> He goes on to describe the need for the United States to place pressure on the two sides, as he states, “... negotiations require strategic thinking. Much more is involved than simply encouraging reluctant parties to talk to one another. Real influence has to be wielded in order to get Arabs and Israelis to modify their positions.”<sup>30</sup> Instead of looking at the possible problems resulting from U.S. pressure, as critics often do, there are many possible benefits for the negotiating sides’ ability to adhere to U.S. proposals. Quandt goes on to describe these benefits: “And the United States, with its vast economic and military resources, can help to change the calculus of benefit and risk for the parties of the conflict by making bilateral commitments to them.”

## **Camp David I**

Quandt accurately describes the inabilities of the two sides to negotiate an independent agreement, and the key role of the United States during Camp David I:

“For Egypt and Israel, it is fair to say that peace was possible, but not inevitable, after the 1973 war ... Left to themselves, they would probably not have found their way to agreement ... The U.S. role became crucial

because both Egypt and Israel wanted American involvement and hoped to win Washington to their point of view.”<sup>32</sup>

During the first Camp David summit, President Carter successfully mediated between the two sides. From the first day of the summit, it became clear that the two sides would not be able to negotiate directly. As a result, Carter structured the negotiations so that he and Secretary of State Vance would meet separately with the Israeli and Egyptian leaders to formulate nonbinding drafts. Carter, Vance and an American delegation would then create a single compromise draft for the two sides. The leaders would return to their separate delegations with these new drafts, discuss possible disagreements with the American proposal, and formulate new proposals. This process was carried out over the following twelve days. This method of negotiations highlights the need for America to serve an active role in negotiations; America cannot always stand on the side and hope the negotiating parties can form their own agreement.

In addition to their participation in the negotiations, Carter and Vance wielded American influence at certain points. During the negotiations, Israel sought \$3 billion in aid to construct new airfields in the Negev desert, of which \$800 million would be in the form of grants, while Egypt requested \$1.5 billion in military aid over the subsequent three years. Carter chose not to sign these aid agreements until the Israeli and Egyptian leaders agreed to a final peace treaty, after which he signed off on both agreements.<sup>33</sup> Carter’s decision motivated the two sides to work together, and highlighted the benefits of pressuring the two sides at certain points; “Carter ... had been much more willing to take stands on substance ... He did not hesitate to use fairly blunt pressure to get them to budge from positions that he judged to be unreasonable.”<sup>34</sup> While Begin and Sadat would eventually be the ones to sign the final peace treaty, they could not reach these agreements on their own. These leaders needed both the support and motivation of the United States.

### **Madrid Conference**

During the subsequent ten years following the Israel-Egypt Accords, the United States remained largely absent from the region. However, the Gulf War in 1991 presented a new set of circumstances in the Middle East. The Bush administration would not pass up this newfound opportunity and would go to great lengths to renew negotiations between Israel and the Arab states.

The Palestinian and Israeli leaderships entered into the negotiations hopeful for a renewal of the peace process. Yet two key obstacles stood in the way: continued Israeli settlement construction in the West Bank and the



Gaza Strip along with the PLO's refusal to recognize the State of Israel. At this point, the U.S. stepped in to break the political deadlock. In May 1991, the Israeli government had requested \$10 billion in American loan guarantees to help with the absorption of Soviet immigrants. The administration was hesitant to provide these funds as they would, in part, go toward expanding settlement construction in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. President Bush and Secretary of State Baker decided to use this request as a tool for leverage. Quandt describes this joint effort as he states, "Appearing before a House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on May 22, Baker labeled Israeli settlement activity a major obstacle to peace. Bush echoed this view the following day."<sup>35</sup> The administration then conditioned the \$10 billion loan agreement on a pledge by Israel to halt its construction of new settlements.<sup>36</sup> This hurt the Israeli government, and in particular Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, in the eyes of its people. Shamir was unable to overcome a continued barrage of criticism, and by June 1992, Shamir's Likud government suffered a dramatic defeat in the polls. Yitzhak Rabin's Labor party, one that pledged to end new settlement construction, reclaimed power in Israel for the first time in fifteen years. Shortly after Rabin was elected, the U.S. Congress approved the \$10 billion in loan guarantees. While the delay in the loan guarantee was not the sole reason for the fall of Shamir's government, it played an important factor in the Israeli elections. Christison describes aptly the role that the United States played in the Israeli elections: "The Israelis [voted out Shamir's Likud government] when they realized that there were limits to U.S. aid."<sup>37</sup>

In terms of the PLO's recognition of Israel, Bush and Baker chose to use their role as mediators to change the stance of the PLO. In 1991, there existed various Palestinian political and terrorist organizations; however, the PLO held the broadest and most widely recognized support among the Palestinian people. Therefore, the organization demanded that it be able to represent its own people. Still, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin would not negotiate with the PLO as it did not recognize the state of Israel. Baker negotiated an agreement between the two sides in early 1991 which complied with both sides' demands. The agreement followed that the PLO representation would be disguised through a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation with the Palestinians all coming from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and thus exiled PLO leaders in Tunisia would not be able to participate. The PLO agreed to this structure, as the organization was allowed to choose the list of people from the territories that would be their disguised representation.<sup>38</sup> This assured that the voice of the PLO would be heard in the discussions. Israel also agreed to this solution as they could claim that it was not directly negotiating with the PLO. The ability of the two sides to come together came

as a direct result of the efforts of Secretary Baker. If the United States had stood on the sidelines, it is less likely that Israel and the Palestinians could have negotiated a framework for the conference. Instead, the U.S. played an active role in negotiations, which helped the two sides to work out their differences.

## **Camp David II**

The administration's active role in the peace process diminished over the course of the 1990s as a new emphasis was placed on the Oslo process of incremental negotiations. However, by June 2000, Clinton believed that the time was ripe for the two sides to reach a final agreement. Clinton summoned Barak and Arafat to the Camp David retreat in a repeat of the 1978 summit. Clinton, however, would play a much different role than Carter did in the negotiations.

While any explanation of the summit's failure is only speculative, it is nevertheless important to examine Clinton's role in either helping or hurting the negotiations. Unlike Carter, Clinton did not encourage the two sides to draft proposals. Instead, Clinton relied on informal verbal agreements as the basis for progress. Later in the summit this negotiating format detracted from the process as Barak and Arafat were hesitant to commit their proposals to paper.<sup>39</sup> Clinton also failed to put pressure on the two sides to come together; as Quandt states, "[Clinton] had avoided taking stands on many of the most controversial issues, urging the parties to reach compromises but hesitating to put forward an American plan ... but it was unclear if his more conciliatory manner would be enough to budge the parties from their firm positions."<sup>40</sup> The absence of a strong mediating party hurt the leaders' ability to reach agreements. While both sides desired the common goal of an independent Palestinian state existing next to the Israeli state, the sides seemed unwilling to make the needed concessions. If Clinton had put forward American proposals and used his influence to bridge divides between the two sides, there could have been a greater chance for success.<sup>41</sup> Ultimately, however, Barak and Arafat would have to be the ones making concessions and signing the agreement.

## CONCLUSION

The United States' economic and military global hegemony places it in a unique position of being able to facilitate negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbors. The United States has, at times, successfully carried out its role as a third-party negotiator, while at other moments has failed to structure

productive diplomatic conferences. The outcomes of these meetings largely resulted from the extent of U.S. preparation before the conference, decision to include or exclude countries with vested interests in the conference, and actions as a mediating party during the negotiations. If the United States desires to make future progress in the Arab-Israeli peace process, it must learn from both its success and failures in the 1978 Camp David summit, 1991 Madrid Conference, and 2000 Camp David summit. In addition, it must examine the changing nature of the Middle East in the 21st century and take advantage of new opportunities that arise. Following a dual approach of learning from the past and adapting former policies to the present offers the greatest opportunity for the United States to successfully broker a final Arab-Israel peace accord in the future.

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# **It's Not Rocket Science**

## *America's Future and the Need for Interagency Cooperation*

Based on an interview with Gregg Nakano

*David Mou*

When one meets Gregg Nakano, one does not realize that the soft-spoken Inspire Fellow at Tufts' Institute for Global Leadership (IGL) and mentor of the IGL's Alliance Linking Leaders in Education and the Services (ALLIES) has nearly a decade of field experience dealing with reconstruction and stabilization operations – as a uniformed officer in the United States Marine Corps, as a disaster response coordinator in the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and as a civilian in the private sector. Gregg served in Kuwait and Iraq during both invasions, first as an infantry platoon commander and then as a civil-military liaison officer for USAID. He was also deployed as part of the Special Purpose Joint Task Force Los Angeles and helped coordinate operations between the United States Marine Corps and the Compton Police Department during the Rodney King riots; supported the United Nations (UN) damage assessments after the earthquake in Bam, Iran; and facilitated the coordination of humanitarian assistance as the USAID liaison officer to the United States Central Command (CENTCOM) in Afghanistan in the wake of the 2001 invasion.

In the one-on-one conversations I had with Gregg, we talked about interagency cooperation and the role of the United States in an increasingly chaotic world. Drawing from his past experiences, he shared why interagency cooperation must be at the center of any reconstruction and disaster response missions that the United States undertakes, and how this relates to his work with ALLIES.

ALLIES is an undergraduate-led initiative started in 2006 that creates a bridge for shared understanding between future civilian and military leaders by developing educational, training and internship opportunities. Founded with the idea that a rift still exists between the civilian and military populations of the United States, ALLIES seeks to address this disconnect at its earliest stages. It is focused on developing programs for civilian university



student and military academy cadet interaction and engagement at the undergraduate level.

Why ALLIES? There are three logistics parameters to any mission; **good, fast, and cheap**. “You cannot have all three at once,” Nakano said. “You can have any two at one time, but you cannot have all three. Initial White House estimates for the cost of the war in Iraq were around \$50-60 billion.<sup>1</sup> Once we pinned ourselves to having it **cheap**, then we had to give up **good** or **fast**. When we wanted it **fast** and we’d already pinned ourselves to cheap, then you know it’s not going to be **good**. Today we are going for **good** and **fast** but the results will not be **cheap**.” The recent change in strategy focusing on good and fast results in Iraq will require an enormous investment in American blood and treasure. After five years in Iraq, the most recent estimates place the cost of the war at over \$600 billion<sup>2</sup> with over 4,000 casualties. That is 10 times more than the original estimated cost and four years longer than we wanted to be there.

“When you are talking about someone who is doing development work,” Nagano said, “you are talking about somebody impacting thousands of people’s lives in a disaster response or famine situation. If you are a diplomat at the policy level, you are potentially affecting the entire country. That’s millions of people’s lives. So if our country is investing all this time, energy and resources on training someone, do we want to spend it on a person who is shooting a weapons system that has a reach of maybe 5 km? How many people is that going to impact? Is that impact going to be enduring in a positive or negative manner? How does that help us for the long-term reconstruction process? How about rebuilding the peace or positive relations with other nations? Do you want to focus your efforts on the person who is going to destroy stuff or the person who is going to build stuff? That’s a choice we make.”

Sun Tzu, author of the 6th-century B.C.E. military strategy classic titled “The Art of War,” wrote, “Know your enemy, know yourself and you will never fear defeat in a hundred battles.”<sup>3</sup> This principle of warfare is still applicable today, not only for the military’s combat operations in Iraq but also for the whole range of engagements that the United States government undertakes, including reconstruction, stabilization and disaster response operations.

When asked to comment on the transition between the Office of

Reconstruction and Humanitarian Assistance (ORHA) to the Coalition Provisional Authority, Nakano explained, “I was not in Iraq when Bremer was there. I left in May 2003,” but in the lead-up from February until May 2003, he worked in the interagency Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) that was charged with coordinating the U.S. government’s response to the situation in the wake of the invasion. “It wasn’t that there was no plan,” he said. “It’s that everyone had a plan and it wasn’t coordinated in a hierarchical manner ... We were in a hotel compound just outside of Kuwait City. ORHA had people in the same compound as the DART. But because leadership in Washington, Secretary of State Colin Powell and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, were having communication challenges, it translated down to the operational level. Those on the ground merely followed their example.”

This lack of interagency communication was mirrored in the L.A. riots where, Nakano said, “the Marines and the National Guard were called in to respond after the state governor called a state of emergency. Why? Because the mayor and the chief of police, like Powell and Rumsfeld, had not talked to each other in months.<sup>4</sup> Issues of overtime pay for police and the extraordinary legal measures weren’t done so they had to call in the Marines and the National Guard.” The failure of leadership at the top to communicate amongst themselves translated to similar failures on the ground.

Nakano made a parallel to America in 2001. “In fact,” he said, “in the months and weeks before 9/11, the warning lights were going red, but internally, because of lack of interagency communication, we had planes hijacked and casualties greater than that Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Operators on the ground had the information that something was going to happen. It was not that we didn’t have the information ... it was that we didn’t share information internally with our own partners in the U.S. government.” We failed in “knowing ourselves.”

DART’s training is of particular importance and remains a unique case of interagency cooperation because it was the first time the United States did the full range of safety and security training for diplomats, economists and development specialists into a post-conflict war zone at this size and scale since the Vietnam War. “The challenge was that throughout the Cold War, development assistance and the interagency process had become more stove-piped, hampering the ability for members within each of the individual agency, department, and organization to communicate because of lack of familiarity with one another’s agencies,” Nakano said. Basically, people from different government agencies were being sent into Iraq without knowing the roles, responsibilities and capabilities of their counterparts.

If the United States government is going to send in civilians and other agencies into a war zone, it has to adequately prepare them. The DART training was targeted to address just that, and its focus was on safety and security. “There were some challenges in helping individuals who have never been in a combat zone or had not imagined themselves working in a post-combat or disaster site, to reformat their conceptions of what was normal or the conditions they would be operating in,” Nakano said. “Many had not grown up or been exposed to environments where there wasn’t running water, there wasn’t electricity, let alone where people might want to kill them.”

This civilian outlook was the exact opposite of the military mindset of how to train soldiers. Members of the military, he said, have “a mindset of danger, one where people are going to be trying to kill them, and their main mission is to overpower, overwhelm, kill, destroy and eliminate the enemy.” That being said, there was resistance on the side of the civilian agencies in undertaking these sorts of training evolutions for their personnel.

“There were significant numbers who did not understand the reason why we – meaning USAID Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance and specifically the Military Liaison Unit – why we would want to train people in defensive driving, train people how to recognize that they were being tailed or why we thought we needed to invest the money in purchasing or building bulletproof civilian vehicles so that we could get around the country,” he said. “Or why we would need to ensure that the vehicles that we were building were fully outfitted with a communication suite that allowed us to talk not only within country or within the region but internationally on the fly.” What was simply common practice and normal operating conditions for the military required an entire shift both in culture and capabilities on the civilian side that unfortunately had enormous costs associated with them.

“Those in the Department of Defense are used to operating in post-conflict environments and they understood that if you can’t talk to your people, you are cut off and isolated from them ... and this will make you vulnerable,” he said. “They build those capabilities into their budget structure. The civilian disconnect is compounded by the fact that, typically, development specialists and diplomats only go into areas that are already secured.” A combination of mixed security protocols and an enormous need for civilian sector skills that had been untapped necessitated interagency cooperation from the highest levels of government down to individual interactions on the ground.

Despite the challenges and resistance within various agencies, the DART interagency training moved forward. It included courses such as defensive

driving, environmental awareness, basic first aid, hostage preparation, etc. These seemingly essential skills for anyone entering a war zone proved to be revolutionary and became the basis for some of the pre-deployment training that the State Department and USAID now require of personal preparing to deploy to Iraq or other hot spots.

Before the DART program was created, there was no joint interagency training of its kind readily available within the U.S. government. Not only did the DART course instill basic survival skills into government personnel that were being deployed into Iraq, but it had added incentives that made it mutually beneficial for all involved. Benefits included intangibles that proved to be integral when operating in dangerous conditions.

“I’ll use the driving course because that’s the simplest one,” Nakano said. “There was a person from Treasury, a person from State sitting in the car with someone from USAID and we were all getting the same training. That’s useful in itself because besides learning how to back out, how to do a J-turn, or where to hit a car if it is blocking you, you end up talking about what you do in your day job. ‘Why are you here? What’s your role going to be when we go in as a reconstruction team? How do we work better together?’ Those things are nice to work out in a non-threatening situation with a nice hot shower, a warm meal and dry clothes rather than meeting the person for the first time either on the disaster site or in a hostile environment where you don’t know the person and you are supposed to trust him. High-stress, high-risk environments are usually not conducive for building trust.”

The DART training proved to be one example of how future interagency cooperation could be built. But this new paradigm for interagency training structure will require more than a few training sessions here and there if the United States plans on operating in the demanding environments that exist today. The process of education and training must be institutionalized along three levels: basic, intermediate and professional.

The first level would consist of a baseline introduction where everyone learns the general threats that one may face on the ground. This may include anything from mentally preparing oneself for a hostage situation to learning basic first aid to using simple common sense. For example, Nakano said, “When in a very poor country, don’t whip out your expensive multifunction cell phone or flash your super-high-speed laptop and start using them late at night in a bar or café because you won’t own it for very long.” Basic first aid would include exposing the wound, cleaning it, applying pressure on a deep wound, and learning not to rip off the bandage when it becomes soaked through, but rather put on a new one and reapply pressure. Also, all

personnel being deployed into areas of conflict need at least a basic crash course on how to conduct oneself outside the comfortable familiarity of the United States.

The intermediate level would build upon the basic level, and probably 20-30% of those being deployed would need this sort of training. If one uses the analogy of medical training, the beginning level would be basic first aid, which everyone needs; the intermediate level would be the next step and equivalent to the more in-depth skills like that of an EMT (Emergency Medical Technician). This may include cardiac defibrillation, controlling severe external bleeding, preventing shock, treatment of bone fractures, immobilizing the neck to prevent further spinal damage, etc. This sort of on-site rapid response would serve as a stopgap until the patient is evacuated or medical professionals arrive.

The third and highest level of this training would be the professionals. People who have essentially dedicated their entire lives to gaining specific expertise and who practice their vocation every day – doctors, pilots, Army Rangers, engineers. About 5% of those deployed to a conflict situation should have these certifications.

The challenge for the government is that in order to develop a “**good**” training program, it is unlikely that it will be also be **fast** and **cheap**. Even if the civilian agencies are funded and staffed at a level which would allow the development and institutionalization of top-notch training programs, there is always the time constraint. While the basic course would be fairly easy to implement and could be as short as 8 to 40 hours of training, more technical intermediate training could easily extend beyond one to three months. Finally, to train people at a professional level, the government would need to allocate the same resources for diplomacy and development assistance as it does for educating and training its professional military. Diplomats from the Department of State and development specialists from USAID would have to be afforded career paths that would nurture their growth from college, like the military service academies, to retirement, meaning continuous training and education opportunities.

Both in natural and man-made disasters, time is of the essence. But if we want to ensure that the response will be **fast** and **good**, we must realize that developing this capability will not be **cheap**. The United States’ current allocation of funding provides \$11.2 billion for the Department of State,<sup>5</sup> \$18.8 billion for USAID<sup>6</sup> and \$651.2 billion for the Department of Defense.<sup>7</sup> Given that US taxpayers will spend over \$680 billion this year on our foreign policy, the question is not whether to spend more money, but how



to maximize the allocation of those generous resources. With the need to address widespread global poverty, a crumbling energy infrastructure, lack of health services, the threat of global pandemics, environmental pollution and global warming – things that are not readily solved with tanks, submarines, bombers or missiles – one wonders if now is not a good time to readjust the funding to the three pillars of our foreign policy: Diplomacy, Development, and Defense.

Even if the United States government cannot change its budget allocations, institutionalizing interagency cooperation would allow the various sectors of the U.S. government to overcome the insulated nature of each agency and encourage trust that will effect better results on the ground. Leaders who encourage interagency cooperation must be coupled with a national emphasis on public service.

Democracy is about the people. Even if you have all the money and time in the world, without people, nothing will get done. To accomplish this, we need to create internships for the next generation of public servants who would like to become diplomats, development specialists and even soldiers in spite of the increasing challenges that the United States faces.

“Besides the training and education,” Nakano said, “what I feel is useful is giving the next generation of professionals as many opportunities as possible to actually see the environment that they are going to be working in ... You may think that a fighter pilot is the coolest thing in the world, but if the first time you fly is in flight school and now you find out that you throw up when the plane is inverted, you’ve wasted a significant amount of your time. If you want to be a doctor and you go through pre-med and med school ... and the first time you see blood you faint, you’ve wasted a lot of time.

“So in my mind, the earlier and more complete an internship can be in getting the real deal of what it is, one, we can help people pre-select, and two, from the institutional standpoint it helps you get rid of the toads, because you may have a guy who loves being a fighter pilot, can do the loop-de-loop, can take the 10Gs but is completely unsuited due to intellectual capacity or maturity level to be a pilot.

“So if you want to improve the system, those are the three things you need to do: education gives people the information; training, let them practice the information they’ve acquired; and internships let them test their level of expertise based on the education and training that they have received. And then the host organization will determine whether or not they are a suitable match down the road.”

“The reason I am so taken behind the idea of ALLIES,” Nakano said, “is because we are trying to build the education, training and internships [that] civilian students would otherwise never have. They are given the chance to better understand what their government does, how it does it, and the military’s role within it, so that, as citizens, they can make informed decisions that will strengthen a participatory democracy that actually represents the will of the people. I am not saying we would have stopped going into Iraq. I think if the general education of the average American was such that we understood completely what the Constitution says, and we understood the history, relationships and interests of Iraq and the United States, we probably could have found a more efficient, effective and economical means of accomplishing the exact same thing we are trying to do, with less bloodshed on both sides. Less expenditure of resources and less destruction of infrastructure. Know yourself. Know the enemy. I don’t think any of this is rocket science...”

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3 Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, Translated by Lionel Giles, 1910. Chapter 3, 18.

4 William W. Mendel, “Combat in Cities: The LA Riots and Operation Rio,” (July 1996)

5 U.S. Department of State, “International Affairs FY 2009 Budget,” (February 4, 2008)

6 USAID, “Budget Fiscal Year 2009,” <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/budget/cbj2009/101416.pdf>

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