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Islamic Fundamentalism in the Northern Tier Countries

An Integrative View

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Prepared for the
Under Secretary of Defense for Policy

RAND

PREFACE

This report is the capstone to a series of reports analyzing Islamic fundamentalism in the Northern Tier countries—Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. Four reports analyze each of the countries in turn, and this document, the integrative study, seeks to establish common patterns and characteristics in the experience of all those states with fundamentalism.

The series includes:

- *Islamic Fundamentalism in Afghanistan: Its Character and Prospects*, by Graham E. Fuller (R-3970-USDP).

- *Islamic Fundamentalism in Pakistan: Its Character and Prospects*, by Graham E. Fuller (R-3964-USDP).

- Forthcoming research by Sabri Sayari and Nikola Schahgaldian on fundamentalism in Turkey and Iran.

- This report.

The purpose of the studies is to examine the phenomenon of Islamic fundamentalism: its origins, its historical basis, and its relationship to the political, economic, and social institutions of each country. The studies attempt to answer a series of specific operational and policy questions regarding the likely character of fundamentalist policies in those countries—excluding Iran, which is already a fundamentalist regime—were Islamic radicals to come to power. The role of Iranian influence in each of the countries is also examined. Finally, the studies examine the implications for U.S. policy and the possible options the United States might exercise in its relations with those countries in the future.

Although this study limits its scope to the Northern Tier countries, its conclusions are of relevance to other countries in the Muslim world.

The research was conducted within the International Security and Defense Strategy program of RAND's National Defense Research Institute, a federally funded research and development center sponsored by the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Joint Staff. It was prepared for the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, and it should be of interest to members of the U.S. defense and foreign policy communities concerned with the Middle East, U.S. relations with Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan, U.S. support for the Afghan mujahidin, and the future of Islamic radicalism in the Islamic world in general.

SUMMARY

Radical Islamic fundamentalism has taken power in only one country in the Muslim world to date: Iran. Not only is Iran's ideological vision Islamic, it is also uniquely Shi'ite, and it goes so far as to involve the clergy in the day-to-day running of the state. It is unfortunate that the main American experience with fundamentalist Islam has come via Iran and its Shi'ite supporters in the Persian Gulf and Lebanon, for this particular Iranian form carries with it a great deal more specifically Iranian political baggage than merely Islam. Iran is a country historically possessed of a unique sense of grievance and paranoia toward the West, stemming in part from its experience of heavy-handed domination at the hands of Western—especially British and Russian—imperialism. These grievances have been heightened by Shi'ite theology and a sense of historical martyrdom.

But the character of Islamic fundamentalism does not need to parallel the Iranian form in all respects. The United States has already had much experience with Saudi Arabia—a fundamentalist Islamic regime in many ways—and with Pakistan, where former President Zia ul-Haqq's Islamization campaign introduced a strong measure of Islamic ideology and religious austerity into the economic, political, and social aspects of life. Both of these countries have maintained good relations with the United States through the process.

The studies in this series conclude that radical Islamic fundamentalism is unlikely to come to power in the three remaining states of the Northern Tier: Turkey, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. Although the political, economic, and social conditions of these countries are all very different, a number of common factors suggest that Islamic fundamentalism, or "Islamism" as it is more accurately termed, faces considerable obstacles in coming to power.

But even though Islamism may not actually come to power, the studies also indicate that it could exert considerable influence over the character of politics and policies in these countries, most of all in Pakistan and somewhat less so in Turkey.

OBSTACLES TO AN ISLAMIC TAKEOVER

Among the key obstacles to a takeover of power by radical Islamist forces in all three countries are the following:

- The lack of any single charismatic leadership in any country.
- The modest electoral showing of Islamic parties in free elections (Turkey and Pakistan).
- Opposition of the military to Islamism in power (Turkey and Pakistan).
- Serious divisions among the ranks of Islamists, including over the issue of how Islamic law should be implemented.
- Objection by Shi'ite minorities to the imposition of Islamic law—because it will invariably be Sunni law and signify Sunni religious domination over them.
- Competition to radical Islam from other political movements and trends, especially the left.
- Limited Iranian (Shi'ite) capability to sharply affect the evolution of Islamic politics in Sunni countries.

FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO THE GROWTH OF ISLAMISM

Despite Islamism's poor prospects for actually coming to power in these countries, Islam is likely to play an increasing role in the political, social, and economic arenas, rendering it a force that will have to be reckoned with by any government that comes to power in those states. Among the factors contributing to the growth and influence of Islam, we can note the following more generalized characteristics:

- The role of Islam as a native cultural vehicle for dissent, for the expression of nationalist grievances against the West, and as a legitimizing instrument for opposit'on to oppressive domestic rule.
- A general trend for Islam to be strong among the lower middle class (petty bourgeoisie), a class growing in salience in the Muslim world as it assumes a greater role in the economy and society at large.
- The tendency of Islamic organizations and parties to focus on social welfare work, including education and health, in societies where the stress of urbanization increases needs in this area.

- The role of Islam as an anchor for values and as a source of solace for those caught up in the trauma of the urbanization process.

- The increasing tendency of Islamist groups to turn to modern political instruments shunned by the traditional clergy, such as political parties and the use of the media, for influence.

- The impact of the growth of democracy, which has given the Islamists greater opportunity both for the expression of their political views and for election to national parliaments and city governments.

- The increasing influence of Islamists in the education system and the growth of Islamic schools, producing more students exposed to Islamic views.

- The modernist character of Islamist leadership, which, in sharp distinction to the traditional clergy, has received Western-style secular education, usually in such technical areas as engineering or medicine; this leadership perceives modernization and the use of technology as essential to the power of the modern Islamist state.

In these terms, it is probable that the role of Islam in the state will become more important in Afghanistan and Turkey, will diminish somewhat in Iran, and will remain a major force in Pakistan. In utilitarian terms, Islam is too politically powerful and emotive as a force for any political system to ignore.

ISLAMIST INFLUENCE IN NORTHERN TIER STATES

Despite the many common features in the Islamist experience noted above, each of the Northern Tier countries under discussion differs sharply from the others in the character of its contemporary political situation.

Turkey

Turkey is a strongly secular state. Indeed, Turkey's modern secularism has almost anathematized it to the Islamists: once it had been the center of world Islam under the glorious Ottoman Empire, only to turn secular in the 1920s and abolish the very position of Caliphate, or leader of the Islamic faith—a post which to this day has never been resuscitated in the Muslim world. Turkey is thus at one extreme of

the religious spectrum in the Muslim world. Turkey has also had a fairly functioning democracy over the past 40 years.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan is in a state of complete fluidity following the defeat and withdrawal of the Soviet Army; its Islamically oriented mujahidin movement is currently floundering and probably will not be able to seize power militarily, as once expected. Because of the uncertainty of the military situation in Afghanistan and the lack of any political unity among the Islamic mujahidin parties, any prognosis on the future of Islam in Afghanistan is extremely difficult to make now. One thing is certain, however: the mujahidin consider that their victory over the Soviets, regardless of international aid, was a victory of Islam over the Soviet Union. "Islam is a superpower," as the mujahidin say. The more radical of the Islamist mujahidin groups, furthermore, have a long history of active opposition to communism in Afghanistan, going back to the late 1960s; they are not about to give up their struggle now, regardless of what other political settlements or accommodations may be reached in the interim. If the mujahidin are able to defeat the Kabul regime and come to power, they will unquestionably establish an Islamic republic. But the mujahidin almost surely will not be able to remain united, and the Islamists will be unable to control the country any more firmly than past Afghan regimes, including the communists, have been able to do. Any Islamic republic that might ever come into existence in Afghanistan will not replay the virulence and xenophobia of Iran, nor will it devote itself single-mindedly to opposition to the United States as Tehran has done.

Pakistan

Pakistan is unique in the modern world, a state whose very raison d'être in 1947 was to be a homeland for Muslims in the Indian subcontinent. Its Islamic character is central to its very existence and functioning, even today. Islam has also served as an instrument of political legitimation for a number of its leaders, especially former President Zia ul-Haqq. But despite his very active "Islamization" campaign, even Zia refrained from comprehensive implementation of Islamic law as the basis for the state and, as a military officer, opposed permitting the clerics or Islamists to come to absolute power in any case. Pakistan has additionally been considerably influenced

by events in Afghanistan and the victory of the Islamist mujahidin over the Soviet Union—a victory achieved with key Pakistani support. Pakistani and Afghan Islamist groups have close links to each other, and each could considerably influence the strength of the other if one of them were to come to power. The political situation in Pakistan is also undergoing a period of transition since the unanticipated death of Zia in 1988, the holding of almost unprecedented free elections in late 1988, the unprecedented accession of a woman prime minister, Benazir Bhutto, into power (and opposed by the Islamists), and her subsequent loss of power in the elections of 1990. The future political role of Islam in Pakistan is thus also in a period of uncertainty.

THE ISLAMISTS IN POWER

Should the Islamists attain power in Turkey, Afghanistan, or Pakistan, the regimes would be unlikely to take the extreme xenophobic positions of Iran, but they would share certain broad characteristics:

- All would be antipathetic to Western cultural influences, which Islamists view as lacking moral foundation and marked excessively by individualism, consumerism, sexual license, moral relativism, and secular values.

- All would oppose a major American presence in the country, although normal, correct relations would not be excluded; they would also oppose any U.S. military presence in the region, including the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean.

- All would oppose military ties with the United States, although each might, faced with a severe security problem (Pakistan in particular), turn to it for the purchase of weaponry. Turkey's NATO ties would be abolished.

- Economic ties with the world would remain much the same, but Turkey would almost certainly forgo membership in the European Community.

- All would be concerned with opposing "imperialist influences" from both East and West and would be extremely prickly about issues of national sovereignty.

- All would devote greater policy attention to the welfare of Muslims around the world, with particular emphasis on Muslims in India, the USSR, Palestine, Malaysia, and the Philippines.

- All would be active in "North-South politics" and the non-aligned movement—to the extent that that movement retains significance in a post–Cold War world.

- Unless the USSR were to regress to the ideological and expansionist policies that typified it under pre-Gorbachev rule, the Northern Tier states will probably be more relaxed about the USSR and will improve their ties with it. Islamists will view the USSR in general as less of a cultural threat to the Islamic world than the United States.

- Iran would lose a great deal of its prominence as a leader of the Muslim world and would probably encounter significant regional rivalry with its neighbors for the role of Islamic leadership.

Terrorism

Terrorism against the United States from Islamist policies in the Northern Tier countries is less likely than was the case with Iran; it could crop up, however, under specific situations in specific countries:

- Terror could certainly not be ruled out in Turkey if U.S. relations with Turkey were to undergo a rocky period. Key issues of friction could spring from serious disagreements within NATO, especially relating to the Greek-Turkish balance, human rights (especially relating to the Kurds in Turkey), or rejection of Turkish membership in the EC, or from U.S. efforts to engage Turkey in policies against Muslim states of the region. Terror against the U.S. presence in Turkey was active at one point during the period of "anarchy" in the 1970s, although it came almost exclusively from the left. It revived again during the Gulf War. An Islamist campaign against the United States under periods of severe national stress and friction with the West cannot be ruled out, especially if the U.S. presence in Turkey became a volatile issue in itself.

- The Afghans did not turn to international terror during the whole decade of struggle against the USSR, and there are likely to be few issues of genuine conflict with the United States in the future—short of a major U.S.-backed Pakistani confrontation with an Islamist Afghanistan, an unlikely contingency.

- Pakistan could move in an extremist direction, with mob action or terrorism against the United States, in the event of serious deterioration of relations over a strong U.S. tilt to India, nuclear proliferation, or human rights. While Pakistan does not have

today a clandestine terrorist-oriented Islamist organization, violence has often been a feature of Islamist-supported anti-American agitation in the past.

U.S. POLICIES

There is not a great deal the United States can do specifically to influence the course of Islamic politics in the Northern Tier other than to observe national and Islamic sensitivities. Islamist tendencies tend to be stimulated by adversity, but they are not exclusively dependent upon that factor. Islam need not be a negative factor in general in the politics of those countries; it is only in its more extremist forms of political expression that it has strongly threatened American interests and lives.

U.S. confrontation with Islamic states anywhere can obviously have a bearing on Muslim world attitudes toward the United States. The continued festering of the Palestinian situation is one such issue, and solving it would serve to reduce at least one of the more salient conflicts in the Muslim world. The Gulf War also generated Islamist opposition to the U.S. military campaign against Iraq, most notably in Pakistan, but the reaction never got out of hand.

U.S. policymakers will need to remain sensitive to Islamic sentiment within these countries. But while such a statement is easy to make, it is harder to implement. Latent reservoirs of anti-U.S. feeling exist in many parts of the Third World, and especially the Muslim world, based on a complex syndrome of grievances, many or most of which are not of American doing but for which the United States attracts censure simply because of its size, its wealth, its broad international presence, its pervasive official, private, cultural, and commercial influence, and its role as "cent : of the capitalist world." Some of this latent hostility cannot be overcome. U.S. policymakers and diplomats should remain sensitive to the Islamic element within Muslim societies, gauge its growth, and avoid assuming that the often pro-U.S. attitudes of the Westernized elites in power are representative of a country as a whole. Indeed, when power shifts abruptly out of the hands of one group into another, there can be unpleasant surprises if we have systematically ignored the views of an important segment of society not in power at the time. The United States will always have to live with the presence of many of these Islamist groups within these countries; we must recognize and accept that their views will inevitably constrain both U.S. policies and the acceptability of U.S.

policies to the non-Islamist elite. To ignore these views and ride roughshod over them, or even to support local leadership that does the same, may bring highly negative and unforeseen returns in the future.

U.S. assistance to Muslim countries will clearly help improve attitudes. But we also know from experience that such aid, however well-intentioned and valuable, can be seen as heavy-handed cultural intervention when it assumes too high a profile in the life of a country. Under such circumstances, aid can become the spark for Islamist opposition.

In the end, democracy is probably the most effective instrument to prevent the growth of virulent Islamist forces. In countries such as Turkey, Egypt, and Tunisia, where Islamist parties have had to compete in open elections, espouse positions, and articulate a clear set of potential policies, such parties have received only a limited, but nonetheless significant, portion of the vote. Suppression generally serves to strengthen the radicalism of Islamist parties and groups and to increase their appeal to oppressed citizenry. Islamists are forced toward greater moderation and acceptance of democratic processes when they are required to compete in open elections.

Islamism is not inherently democratic in outlook, but its leadership recognizes that the movement has suffered deeply at the hands of totalitarian or authoritarian regimes around the world, making democracy a much safer and preferable system of government, even if it is not explicitly Islamist in character. U.S. support for democracy—a long-term policy goal that has sometimes suffered under the choices imposed by the Cold War—is the most effective instrument for helping deradicalize Islamic extremism.

The United States must above all avoid becoming paranoid about Islam. The Islamists occupy only a part of the whole spectrum of Islam. Other moderate Muslims in these countries find much to admire about the West, as well as much to criticize. They wish to maintain ties with the West. But to the extent that there are "objective" anti-American feelings for various reasons in different segments of Muslim societies, there will invariably be some Islamic expression of that hostility, which would in any case be expressed through some vehicle or other. This reality will not disappear, and the United States must learn to live with it while working over the longer term for the alleviation of the most serious problems of long-range economic, social, and political development of the Third World. We are well equipped to do so; our greatest weakness is perhaps our

occasional heavy-handedness or cultural insensitivity in doing so, owing to the sheer weight and exuberance of our culture and society.

In the end, we are talking about the problem of limiting extremism rather than limiting the idea or political expression of Islam per se, which does not at all have to assume extremist or anti-U.S. form.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION

This overview of Islam in the Northern Tier draws upon the RAND studies of Islam in the countries that make it up: Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. Those studies set out to examine the phenomenon of Islamic fundamentalism: its origins, its historical basis, and its relationship to the political, economic, and social institutions of each country. They attempt to answer a series of specific operational and policy questions regarding the likely character of fundamentalist policies in the Northern Tier countries—except for Iran, which already has a fundamentalist regime—if Islamic radicals were to come to power. They also examine the role of Iranian influence in each of the countries. The studies lastly explore the implications for U.S. policy and the possible options the United States has in shaping its relations with those countries in the future.

This report, although an overview, is much more than a summary of key findings from those studies; it attempts to take a broader look at the phenomenon of Islam as a political force in diverse respects: Islam and the democratic process, Islam versus the United States and the USSR, Islam and ethnicity, Islam and the left, and Islam as a political force overall. This overview cannot be comprehensive in all respects, but it does identify many of the most important, politically salient features of political behavior and relationships in the Northern Tier region.

While the conclusions are based primarily on the Islamic experience in the Northern Tier countries, they also hold considerable relevance for the Islamic experience in many other countries as well.

Readers interested in looking at closer details of political Islam in Northern Tier countries should refer to the original country studies, their footnotes and bibliographies. This overview does not explicitly reference the original studies, two of which--Afghanistan and Pakistan—were written by this author

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2. FUNDAMENTALISM AND ISLAMISM

THEOLOGY VERSUS IDEOLOGY

The term *fundamentalist* came into common parlance to describe a seemingly new breed of Muslim thinking that began to attract international attention in the 1970s, even though its roots go back several centuries. But "fundamentalism" is an unsatisfactory term, suggesting as it does a strict reversion to the institutions of a medieval or even early Islamic state. This more recent phenomenon is better termed *Islamism*, suggesting not so much theology as an ideology whose implications are not at all old-fashioned, but thoroughly modern. Islamism has driven a major gulf between the traditional mullahs or Islamic scholars ('ulama) and the new "Islamists." The two groups often coexist uneasily. While the mullahs or 'ulama are usually the educational product of traditional Muslim "madrasahs," or theological schools, the Islamists emerge from modern secular universities in the Middle East and abroad, and more often than not they have received technical or scientific education as engineers, doctors, and technicians. Unlike traditional Islamic scholars, they are less interested in the pursuit of traditional Islamic learning than in the establishment of a modern society that lives according to Islamic law and precepts. Their movement is profoundly political, one that attempts to bring about a new Islamic state dedicated to the creation of an Islamic society that facilitates the conduct of an upright, Islamic life at home and that safeguards the political, cultural, and religious integrity of the Islamic state within the international order.

The traditional clergy often see the Islamists as a direct threat to their own interests, since the Islamists generally do not envisage a major role for the clergy in the operation of the state. Indeed, Khomeini's Islamic republic, in which the clerics actually conduct the day-to-day affairs of state from the highest level, is seen as a distinct aberration by nearly all Sunnis and a high proportion of Shi'a clergy, even in Iran. For the Islamists, the state must be dedicated to the political, economic, and social goals of Islam, but the state does not require the clergy itself to fulfill its goals. Fundamental debate over this issue is certain to emerge again in Iran in the future as it did in the early days of the Islamic republic.

As noted above, Islamist views and the establishment of Islamic republics do not necessarily have to fit into the Iranian pattern that

has been such a particular nemesis for the United States. Indeed, the problem for the West is not whether a given state is Islamic in its domestic structure so much as what that state's foreign outlook is and how radical a turn it takes. The radical Islamism we see in Iran represents an overall policy of extremist action that has direct bearing on the interests of the United States and the West. The Iranian experience has been unique: even without Islam, the chances are that any post-Shah nationalist regime would have contained many aspects of hostility to the United States.

ISLAM AS A REPRESENTATIVE OF TRADITIONAL CULTURAL AUTHENTICITY VERSUS WESTERNIZING MODERNISM

If fundamentalism and Islamism have been able to fill ideological vacuums left by the failure of other ideologies, Islamism enjoys the special benefit of working within the framework of cultural authenticity of the Islamic world. All Third World societies face the encroachment of Western views on their political, economic, social, and cultural values and traditions. Islamists, notably in Iran, have declared that modernization need not mean Westernization. On the other hand, it is difficult for modernization to come in many other forms, simply because so many of the norms of "modernized" life first evolved and took concrete form in a Western milieu. The process of modernization and Westernization is thus by definition dislocating and often alienating. Yet Islamism draws from traditional values and cultural material in a way recognized by Muslims as culturally authentic. The cultural vehicle of Islam will retain powerful attraction in the face of "imported" values. It also stands in stark contrast to the culture of the Westernized elites and can be employed as an instrument against any elite that steps outside the native tradition.

3. ISLAM AND THE NORTHERN TIER COUNTRIES

This study specifically encompasses the political challenge of Islam in all of the Northern Tier countries: Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. Yet in purely Islamic terms, each of these countries is strikingly unique.

- Turkey is the first Muslim country to have overwhelmingly embraced secularism—as far back as the 1920s. In Islamist eyes, Turkey bears the special stigma of having abolished the institution of the Caliphate: the office of religious leadership over the entire Muslim world. Islam now no longer has any formal religious leadership anywhere. For the same reason, Turkey also enjoys unusual respect from secularizing elements in the Muslim world who see Turkey as a model in the process.

- Iran is the first modern Muslim country to establish an Islamic theocracy as the basis of its government; Iran is also the only Shi'ite state in the world.

- Afghanistan enjoys the unique distinction of having inflicted defeat on the army of a modern superpower, in a decade-long Islamic jihad or holy war fought almost exclusively by Islamically oriented guerrilla groups.

- Pakistan is the first state in the world to be founded on purely religious grounds. Islam is the very raison d'être of Pakistan, carved out of British India as a homeland for the subcontinent's Muslim population. Islam is central to Pakistan's own sense of identity.

In geopolitical terms these countries enjoy particular importance, bordering as they do (except for Pakistan) on the underbelly of the USSR. They have borne the brunt of Russian and Soviet power projection southwards over the centuries. None of these countries are part of the larger Arab world; linguistically each is distinct from the others (apart from some overlap into Afghanistan). They thus share this quality of diversity that sets them apart as a group of important, individually distinct countries. Yet, because these countries lack natural linguistic, cultural, or ethnic allies, they have tended to look to each other as "natural" partners simply because they constitute a Northern Tier alongside the USSR and do not "belong" elsewhere.

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The Russian challenge has helped various of these countries to band together politically over the past several decades, starting with the 1937 Sa'dabad Pact, or Treaty of Non-Aggression, comprising Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, and Iraq (Pakistan did not exist at that time). In 1955, Turkey, Iran, and Iraq formed the Baghdad Pact of Mutual Cooperation. That pact's successor, CENTO, consisted in 1959 of Turkey, Iran, and Pakistan, along with the United Kingdom. These same three Northern Tier countries established the Regional Cooperation for Development in 1964, resuscitated after the Khomeini revolution as the Economic Cooperation Organization. There is thus a historical perception of shared common interests despite cultural and linguistic diversity.

This examination of the Northern Tier countries emphasizes distinctive features and problems that will affect the future of Islam there. The inquiry in particular looks at several important sets of issues:

- What is the historical character of the Islamist movement in these countries? What are the key political events that shape its character today? What are the sources of strength and weakness that the movement demonstrates?

- What course will Islam take in its future development in these important states? What policies might Islamists adopt if they came to power? What precedents and experiences undergone might suggest possible courses of development for Islam in other Muslim countries in the future?

- What is the significance of these developments for U.S. interests? For regional politics as a whole?

ISLAM AS A UNIFYING OR DIVISIVE FACTOR

Islam's Unifying Effect

Islam focuses on the establishment of the Islamic state as the highest expression of the Muslim religious community. Islam is not interested in ethnicity as a unifying concept; indeed, in Islamic terms, ethnicity is not an appropriate basis for statehood: Islam should supersede narrow ethnic interests. For this reason, leaders in many of these countries see an important and positive role for Islam as a unifying factor within the country. Afghanistan and Pakistan, and to a lesser extent Iran and Turkey, are multiethnic states, potentially or actually threatened with separatism. Islam provides potential ideological glue to bind them together:

- Pakistan has no other unifying ideology.
- The Afghan mujahidin clearly sense that Islam is the source of their strength in their anti-Soviet, anticommunist resistance and must be the unifying element to create a new, more unified Afghan state in the future—downplaying the traditional dominance of the Pashtuns.
- Even secular Turkish leaders, with only a relatively minor ethnic problem to date, appreciate that Islam can be a generally unifying factor in relations between Kurds and Turks in the future.
- Iran under the Ayatollah has constantly preached the basic unity of Islam and its unifying role in Iran. The Ayatollah furthermore carried a message of universalistic Islam to all Muslims; despite that, other Muslim countries have nonetheless not been able to overlook Iran's basically Shi'ite character.

Islam as a Divisive Force

Although Islam should serve as a fundamentally unifying principle among ethnically diverse populations, attempts to implement Islamic law and establish an Islamic state in fact often prove divisive. Rigorous implementation of Islamic law requires moving away from general religious principles into the realm of the very specific, concrete legislation, the details of which can create considerable disagreement.

- Shi'ite minorities in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Turkey all fear implementation of Shari'a law because it is based on the Sunni legal corpus. Faced with such circumstances the Shi'a would prefer to live in a secular state altogether, where their own rights would be better protected.
- Sunni minorities living under Shi'ite law in Iran have the same problem. In Pakistan there has even been disagreement among the many different Sunni groups and sects over the specifics of Islamic law; resolution of the issues has often provoked more division than unity.

IRAN AS A REGIONAL ISLAMIST INFLUENCE

Iran is perceived by all three of its Northern Tier neighbors as a country of major political, economic, and cultural importance. Since the establishment of the Islamic republic, however, Iran's intrusive religious policies have created negative feelings in each of its neighbors, whereby Iran is perceived to be flagrantly interfering in their internal affairs. Iran's Islamic crusading has been accepted with some degree of tolerance because no neighbor has wished to see its relations with Iran seriously deteriorate. Pakistan and Turkey have also feared Iran's vulnerability to Soviet influence or control in the event of internal disorder or collapse, and this has softened their responses to Iranian meddling. Nonetheless, in its new ideological clothing, Iran is broadly perceived by its Northern Tier neighbors as posing a greater problem than it ever has before in this century—a problem to be managed and, hopefully, finessed. Real armed conflict with Iran is seen as extremely unlikely, and unnecessary. Still, no other member of the Northern Tier constitutes this kind of challenge to all its neighbors—especially now that a Soviet-dominated communist Afghanistan is no longer on the scene.

- Iran has boldly proclaimed the necessity for Islamic government throughout the Islamic world.

- Iran has criticized the close security ties between Pakistan and Turkey on the one hand and the United States on the other; Turkey's membership in NATO has regularly been castigated.

- Iran has pointedly refused to pay homage to the tomb and memory of the father of modern Turkey, the great secularizer and Westernizer, Mustafa Kemal Ataturk. Such a visit is de rigueur for visiting foreigners, and omitting it is an act deeply offensive to most Turks. Iran's clerics reserve a key place for Ataturk in their demonology.

- Iran has stirred up trouble to a limited extent among Turkey's Shi'ite (or Alevi) population. Iran has intervened in a Turkish political dispute over the right of female university students to wear Islamic headdress, banned by the Turkish courts.

- Iran has pointedly involved itself in inciting disorders among Pakistan's Shi'ite community.

- Iran supports the Shi'ite minority Hazaras in Afghanistan, whose own political goals in the country are not broadly supported by any of the Afghan Sunni mujahidin.

Whatever political stresses and strains exist in Iran's three Northern Tier neighbors, we conclude that Iran is extremely unlikely to constitute a model for radical Islam in the region. Iran is Shi'ite, lending the Iranian revolution Shi'ism's particular mindset of victimization, xenophobia, and a sense of martyrdom in confronting the world. Sunni Islam, even in its more radical forms, presents a rather cooler, less apocalyptic character.

ISLAM AS A TARNISHED POLITICAL FORCE IN THE STATE

While Islam as a religious *ideal* is above reproach, its concrete application into specific policies by the state at the hands of fallible man can often produce negative results. The very political prominence of Islam in the last two decades has created greater demands and expectations of an Islamic order; if that order's policies fail to deliver, the appeal of Islam in politics will be tarnished. Islam as a faith will not suffer, but the ability of politicians to conjure with it will markedly diminish. We are already seeing signs of the wane of its appeal as a political blueprint.

- In Iran, political Islam has already developed a host of negative associations directly related to the unpopularity or failure of many of the regime's policies—whether they are "Islamic" or not. Invocation of Islam will increasingly elicit cynicism from many Iranian citizens who see Islam employed for purely "political" purposes.

- In Pakistan, the dominant Punjabis have often used Islam to invoke blessing on a political status quo that enjoins large ethnic minorities from expressing ethnic or regional feelings because it would violate Pakistan's "Islamic" character. Here too, many resent what they perceive as the abuse of Islam for political reasons.

- In Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Turkey, Shi'a minorities actually prefer a secular state where there can be no imposition of Sunni Islamic doctrine upon them. Similarly, in Iran, Sunni minorities resent the imposition of Shi'ite law upon the entire country.

- In Turkey, many segments of the population, especially the Ataturkist elite, perceive Islam strictly as an instrument for political exploitation of the masses to turn them against the secular, Westernizing trend of Turkish politics. Invocation of Islam is highly divisive in this capacity. The same views also exist, to a

lesser extent, among the Westernizing elites of Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan.

PROSPECTS FOR A COORDINATED REGIONAL ISLAMIST FOREIGN POLICY

There is a small possibility that the Northern Tier countries could all move in the direction of increased adherence to Islamic principles. Turkey could become more Islamic-oriented if it fails to gain acceptance into the European Community, or if membership in the EC proves disastrous or traumatic, or if continuing Kurdish problems create human rights problems for Turkey in the West and the United States. Afghanistan could well have an austere Islamist government within the next year if the Islamic mujahidin should overthrow the Kabul regime of Najibullah. Pakistan could develop somewhat less cordial relations with the United States in the years ahead as well, especially if nuclear issues should force a break with the United States and the Indian threat should somehow diminish. Under such circumstances, the whole region could develop a broader foreign policy agenda that would not be pro-Western. It would most likely draw upon the Iranian slogan, "Neither East nor West," and, in the case of Turkey and Pakistan, would loosen or withdraw from formal military ties with the United States.

Islamic-oriented foreign policies hardly need involve a move toward terrorist actions against the United States, but under circumstances of deteriorating relations, extremists could undertake actions against the U.S. presence in their countries designed to weaken or eliminate it. All these states would express strong opposition to intimate U.S. ties with Israel, particularly with regard to the unresolved Palestinian issue. These countries could move toward a less dependent economic relationship with the West, possibly turning to greater autarky. There would be stronger advocacy for the "South" on most "North-South" issues, including debt, multinational corporations, ecology, raw materials, and so forth. All four states would probably come under greater influence from the foreign policies of the Arab world, but traditional geopolitical rivalries with specific Arab states would not vanish even under increased Islamic solidarity. Pakistan and Iran in particular would show a greater interest in ties with Southeast Asian Muslim countries. These possibilities for cooperation are hardly meant to be definitive, but rather suggestive of the kinds of cooler relations that might develop toward the United States and the West if the Northern Tier countries were to move toward some greater coordination of broader Islamist international issues.

ISLAMIST POLICIES AS A MODERNIZING FORCE
WITHIN TRADITIONAL CULTURE

Despite the popular Western association of Islamic fundamentalism with retrogression and a move away from modernization, the Islamist movements in one sense are contributing to an overall process of political modernization that can have a long-range positive net effect on Muslim societies. Religious interests used to be expressed primarily through the 'ulama as a class; members of this group functioned either as voices of Islamic orthodoxy from within theological schools or as councilors (when sought) to secular rulers. Local mosques did perform some social functions relating to local welfare and education, but usually in a community rather than political sense. The Islamists, on the other hand, have been intent upon expressing Islam in political terms, aiming at mobilizing the population for political purposes expressed through political parties or movements. These activities have brought larger segments of the population, especially women, into the political process.

- In Pakistan, for example, even though the Islamist Jama'at party takes a conservative position on women's roles within society, the Jama'at maintains an active women's wing that has brought traditional women into the political mainstream for the first time.

- In Iran during the Khomeini movement against the Shah, many women became politically engaged through the Islamist movements.

- Turkey likewise has seen Islamist parties active in involving women in politics, despite their innate conservatism toward women's issues.

As noted above, the participation of Islamic parties in the political process as a whole, especially under conditions of some degree of democracy, has served to modernize the traditional and religious segment of society more than might otherwise have occurred without religious parties. This in turn has had effects in the areas of ethnic diversity, education, and social class.

Islamist Discouragement of Ethnicity

The Islamist movement plays a potentially important role in the development of Muslim states in helping diminish internal conflict based on ethnic diversity. In each of the Northern Tier countries,

ethnic diversity poses problems that are exploited by both leftist and nationalist elements. Islamist parties, on the other hand, strongly oppose ethnicity as a basis for the foundation of any state. In this sense the Islamist movements are an integrative force within the political process and society as a whole.

Many Indian Muslim groups actually opposed the establishment of Pakistan itself—most notably the Islamist Jama'at—because it meant a division among the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent. Even today, Pakistani Islamists lend no support to movements seeking ethnic political advantage or separatism, a position that has hurt their standing in elections where ethnicity plays a major role.

In Afghanistan, the Islamists more than any other group have striven to downplay or ignore the ethnic element that has featured so long and so prominently in Afghan politics and society. While even the Islamist parties have not been able to avoid some ethnic and regional orientation, they disavow this factor as playing any major role. Ethnicity will always remain a factor in Afghan politics, but it has come under direct assault by the Islamists more than by any other group— except perhaps the communists, who themselves did not remain exempt from ethnic orientation in the two-way division of the party into Khalq and Parcham.

Ethnic politics plays no overt role in Turkey, which, by Middle East standards, is a relatively homogeneous state. The Kurds are the single largest ethnic minority, but politics based on Kurdish ethnicity is forbidden. Islamists in any case would take a nonethnic approach to this issue and strongly oppose any breakaway tendencies. In Iran as well, Islamist politics militate against the expression of ethnically based political movements.

Islamism thus plays some kind of integrating role throughout the Northern Tier. As noted above, in the case of Pakistan, ethnic and regional groups sometimes accuse the dominant Punjabis of exploiting Islamic principles of unity in order to suppress legitimate regional and ethnic aspirations. Indeed, Islam can always be exploited by the state to this end. But in a region where the need to overcome regionalism and ethnicity is strong, the ideological approach of the Islamists has been to strengthen the unity of the state.

Islam and the Education System

Education has had varying effects in contributing to the growth of Islamic trends. There has been a general perception in the region that the old system of Islamic education is obsolescent and losing ground to contemporary education systems. The old Islamic curriculum was focused almost exclusively on traditional theology and Islamic law. It ignored most contemporary science and any study of the West or Western languages. Islamic educators have recognized that they will not be able to compete with modern secular education if their own curriculum is not reformed and expanded.

In Pakistan the process of Islamization has produced some move toward fusion of the two approaches. Nearly all secular schools and universities are now required to provide instruction in Islamic history, culture, and religion for everyone. On the other hand, traditional religious schools are moving to include secular subjects.[1] In neither case, however, would Islamic studies be subjected to Western-style rational historical analysis.

To whatever extent Islamic education increases under policies imposed by Islamists, the process would seem to move inevitably in the direction of the Pakistani experience: general education curricula will devote more time to Islamic studies, but religious education will include more secular material. The net effect is a greater modernization of traditional religious curricula.

Turkey provides an interesting example of the effects of an increase in Islamic education. Turkish politicians recognized as early as 1945 that Islamic beliefs, which were banned from political expression under the secularization policies of the Ataturk era, represent an important constituency that the ruling party of the country could not afford to alienate. Religious schools were allowed to increase sharply. As a result, a far greater percentage of the population has received religious education, which inevitably has strengthened Islamist politics. The growth of religious schools in Turkey, responding directly to public desire, has thus contributed to the revival of Islamic sentiment in Turkey. The Turkish case is nonetheless special in that Islamic revivalism emerges from a period of repression that has no clear parallel in any other of the Northern Tier countries. It is hard to gauge whether Turkish Islam is simply returning to a more "normal"

[1] John L. Esposito, "Islam: Ideology and Politics in Pakistan," in Ali Banuazizi and Myron Weiner (eds.), *The State, Religion and Ethnic Politics: Afghanistan, Iran, and Pakistan*, Syracuse University Press, Syracuse, New York, 1986, pp. 364–365.

level or whether the religious schools have in fact spurred interest in Islam well beyond what it might otherwise have been.

Tentatively, one might conclude that two distinct and countervailing processes are under way in the region: On the one hand, greater willingness to tolerate Islam (Turkey) and state moves for Islamization policies (Pakistan and Iran) have enabled the expression of Islamic beliefs to develop and impinge upon politics. On the other hand, secular education is making more inroads upon traditional Islamic education—surely an inevitable long-term trend. While increased study of religion need not hinder an overall trend toward greater secularization of society, the increased role of secular education will have a profound and irreversible influence on traditional Islamic views and outlooks.

Islam and Class

One of the most important—and most complicated—aspects of the growth of Islamist tendencies in the Muslim world is the relationship between Islamism and social class. Further research on this topic is important because of the implications it has for the longer-range prospects of Islamic fundamentalism as a whole. Key questions arise: What classes tend to be attracted most to Islamist views? Are those classes on the ascendancy, or is their social-political-economic impact declining? Does future economic and social development suggest that these classes and their views will grow stronger with time? Is there a point in the social and economic development of a Muslim state at which a rising curve of support for Islamist views might start to decline? Are there any general "laws" in the rise and fall of Islamist groups? Unfortunately, to date, only a few very tentative responses can be given.

Most observers believe that Islamist views tend to be strongest among the petty bourgeois class, a growing class in most countries in the Middle East and one that is instinctively drawn back to its native cultural roots as it faces the frustrations of modernization and economic/political hardship.[2] The petty bourgeois class sees in Islam

[2]In writing of social change and fundamentalism in the Arab world, Hisham Sharabi writes: "The petty bourgeoisie's rise to dominance resulted from two main developments: the population explosion of the 1940s and 1950s, which accelerated the movement to the cities and augmented the ranks of the urban petty bourgeoisie; and the seizure of power by petty bourgeois army officers and political party leaders during the post-World War II era." See Sharabi, *Neopatriarchy: A Theory of Distorted Change in Arab Society*, Oxford University Press, New York, 1988, pp. 8-9.

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its "native roots" as opposed to the "foreign" Western values espoused by the intelligentsia and much of the elite.

- In Iran, the Westernized elites of the Shah were clearly a target of the clerical regime.[3] The "bazaari" or lower-middle-class merchant was strongly supportive of the regime. The lower classes or "dispossessed" still have a considerable stake in the redistributive policies of the Islamic republic.

- In Pakistan, the key social elements of support for General Zia ul-Haqq and his "Islamization" campaign came from "bazaar merchants, artisan guilds, urban biraderi [religious brotherhood] leaders and small industrialists" apart from the clergy and religious leadership.[4]

- In Turkey, the lower middle classes, artisans (esnaf), and peasantry who have migrated to the city have been among the chief supporters of the Islamist parties.

Of greatest consideration is the overall *trend* and dynamic of support for the Islamists. In Pakistan at least, the trend has been in the direction of *strengthening* the influence of those classes most supportive of Islamist policies. According to one study, these trends include the following:

- Urbanization, which brings more of the peasant and small-town-based lower middle class into urban settings where they are more easily mobilized and thus able to exert greater influence in the electoral process.

- An increase in the number of students and student-age youth who are inclined to support Islamist policies.

Sharabi goes on to state that "Islamic fundamentalism emerges in the midst of this moral and political decline as the true ideology of salvation for the frustrated, alienated petty bourgeois mass and its proletarian extension. For the first time in a hundred years, fundamentalist Islam has found its appropriate class vehicle. The uprooted petty commodity producers and distributors and the proletarianized small bourgeoisie, rather than being propelled forward toward secular or revolutionary radicalism, are pulled back to their religious roots." pp. 135–136.

Another key observer, Abdallah Laroui, argues that "it is the culture of this [petit bourgeois] class, rather than anything inherently Islamic or Arab, which leads to the rejection of the dialogue with the West." See Leonard Binder, *Islamic Liberalism: A Critique of Development Ideologies*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1988, p. 337.

[3]"A sizeable component of Khomeini's clerical support came from those associated with the petite bourgeoisie who were suspicious of the educated classes, distrustful of the liberal intellectuals, and eager to increase their own power and prestige." Binder, p. 354.

[4]See Phil Jones, *Religious Leadership and Politics in Pakistan*, The Orkand Corporation, Silver Spring, Maryland, 1988, p. 1.

- An increase in literacy and education, which provides the Islamists with a public that has growing interest and ability to understand such issues.

- The growth of the traditional bazaars into larger markets with greater economic clout for this class that supports the Islamists.

- The emergence of the 'ulama-entrepreneur who is skilled in the use of the media and modern communications and in establishing international Islamic contacts that will help the Islamist cause.[5]

These developments, in Pakistan at least, suggest that the longer-range trend is toward increased strength for Islamist politics. What we cannot determine is what other factors may eventually come into play that might offset a leaning toward religious politics by the developing lower middle class. At some point in the social development and evolution of a particular class, an increased interest in more middle-class values, or bourgeois secular values, may emerge to offset earlier religious trends. The social dynamic of each country will differ. Of all the Northern Tier countries, Turkey is the most politically and socially developed, hence trends toward an increase in Islamic politics might be expected to peak there first.

In the other countries, extraneous factors exist that make it more difficult to determine longer-range social trends.

- Iran would probably follow the Turkish path of social development from a decade or so behind, although the establishment of clerical rule there greatly complicates Iran as a future model for the growth of Islamism out of power. In Iran, as we have noted, lower classes and many lower-middle-class elements already see their interests tied to the regime. Support or opposition to the Islamic government will thus depend more on the political interests of each class vis-à-vis the government than on ideology itself.

- In Pakistan, an overall Islamic environment that is uniquely Pakistani tends to strengthen the influence of Islamist policies. It will be far more difficult for Pakistan ever to pursue strongly secularist policies.

- In Afghanistan, the primary political dynamics currently are (a) anticommunist and (b) tribal and regional. Class-oriented interests have yet to emerge strongly, and the military role of

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[5]See Jones, pp. 2-3.

the mujahidin, their commanders, and their parties will play the major role in the outcome of the future political struggle.

The Factor of State Control over the 'Ulama

Islamism is a modern phenomenon founded on a political basis largely outside the ranks of the traditional 'ulama. Nonetheless, the existence of an 'ulama independent of state control is still a critical factor in the political power of Islam. The power of the 'ulama will have considerable influence over the strength of the Islamist movement in any country.

- Of the four Northern Tier countries, only Turkey has successfully eliminated the power of the 'ulama as an independent class, dating from Ataturk's secularizing reforms in the 1920s. This deprives the 'ulama of an important financial base and directly cuts into its weight against the state.

- In Iran, the Shah had only partial success in eliminating the clergy from financial power and independence, and under the Islamic republic the clergy, of course, controls the state mechanism altogether.

- In Afghanistan, the power of the 'ulama has yet to be determined, as the struggle between the old communist regime and the mujahidin awaits resolution. The traditional 'ulama had already lost a great deal of its power to the state before the communist seizure of power. If the Islamists come to power in Afghanistan, they still may not seek to strengthen the power of the traditional clergy, since it could serve as a rival to Islamist state power.

- The 'ulama is strongest in Pakistan. Its presence in politics contributes considerably to the overall weight of Islam in political affairs. The 'ulama do not always reach political accord with the Islamists on all issues.

LIBERALIZATION OF THE ECONOMY AS A STIMULUS TO ISLAMISM

Economic liberalization appears to have a positive effect on the development of social classes and groups sympathetic to Islamist political views. This factor suggests that Islamism will probably continue on the rise for some time to come in all these countries.

- In Turkey, the new economic liberalization policies of the Ozal government have stimulated growth of private businesses among petty bourgeois classes, who tend to support Islamist views. Islamic banks have grown up, with notable assistance from Saudi Arabia. The liberalization process has also stimulated the growth of small towns and their economies, strengthening the lower middle classes, who lean toward Islam.

- In Pakistan, as we noted above, similar economic and social trends are under way. Liberalization and stimulation of the economy hasten the social and economic evolution of rural and small-town areas, strengthening the Islamist political base.

- Afghanistan's economic and social development has been severely constrained by the war—but the war has also weakened traditional elites and fostered a new egalitarianism.

- In Iran, it was precisely the suppression of the lower middle class by the economic policies of the Shah's regime that led to the strengthening of support for Khomeini.

The converse, i.e., suppression of the free economy in favor of a statist economy, does not necessarily mean that such policies can have a successful dampening effect upon Islamism. While the economic incentives to the growth of Islamism might then diminish, economic and political frustration stemming from the problems and failures of the statist economy could stimulate the development of Islamist opposition.

ISLAM AND THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS

A critical feature in the future development of Islamism is its relationship with democracy. There is a deep ambivalence in Islam toward democracy. Islamists do not believe that democracy automatically embodies what is best for the establishment of the Islamic state; on the other hand, the freedoms of democracy have permitted expanded Islamist activism and have allowed Islamist parties to avoid persecution and take a larger role in the direction of state affairs. Lastly, the subjection of Islamic parties to democratic procedure may in fact lessen their chances for attaining full control over the state.

Is Democracy Implicit in the Islamic State?

There is nothing inherent in Islam that propels it in the direction of democracy. Islam in its very essence—as a revealed religion like Judaism or Christianity—recognizes the glory of God and the rightness of his divine order. The purpose of the Islamic state is to fulfill the ordinance of God. In principle, the Islamic state is not subject to the criterion of pragmatism or practicality because the Islamic state is an absolute goal in its own right. If democratic procedures were to countermand or violate features of Islamic society in the eyes of the Islamists, then they would unhesitatingly opt for Islam over democracy.

As noted in the RAND study on Islamism in Pakistan, one of the key Islamist thinkers of the twentieth century, Abu'l A'la Al-Mawdudi, the founder of Pakistan's Jama'at-i-Islami, quite expressly cast doubts upon the propriety of democracy in an Islamic state. In his view, political parties and an opposition were to be excluded in a state to be ruled by a single man "whose tenure of office and power are limited only by his faithfulness to the ideology of the state."[6]

On the other hand, Islamic tradition has long recognized the concept of "shura" or advisory/consultative council, which suggests that the absolutism of the individual ruler is to be tempered by an independent body that in principle represents wise and just counsel. Whether that counsel is based on a knowledge of Islamic law, or is to have some broader character representative of the community at large, is not clear. To many modernizing Islamic thinkers, the concept of the shura is clearly intended in the modern era to represent a democratic institution. Many other Islamists have rejected that concept, however, and have declared that the concepts of Islam and democracy are clearly incompatible.[7]

Based on the essentially theocratic concept of Islam, it would seem that Mawdudi is correct: Islam does not inherently embrace the concept of democracy; there is nothing at all in the exercise of democracy to suggest that the voice of the people will pursue choices that reflect God's intent in the establishment of the Islamic state and Islamic society. Islamic modernists, on the other hand, seek to find within Islam the principles necessary to consecrate and to bring about the

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[6]William L. Richter, "Pakistan," in Mohammed Ayoob (ed.), *The Politics of Islamic Reassertion*, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1981, p. 151.

[7]For further illuminating discussion of this subject, see Emmanuel Sivan, *Radical Islam: Medieval Theology and Modern Politics*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1985, pp. 41–42 and 73–76.

modern state—a state that must be compatible with the broader world political and economic order; in their interpretation, the shura concept clearly supports the implementation of popular democracy as entirely consistent with the Islamic order. Problems nonetheless remain. How does one maintain Islamic values in a democratic state where the public, and not scholars of Islamic law, determines what shall be legal and what not?

Democracy as a Safeguard of Islam

Yet Islamist thinkers also recognize that it was under the old-fashioned liberal rule of law in the Muslim world that Islamists enjoyed the preservation of their positions and action. That freedom was stripped away and Islamists became the object of oppression as, one by one, modern secular authoritarian regimes replaced liberal regimes, decimating and persecuting Islamist groups and parties without any protection of law or due process: in Nasser's Egypt, Asad's Syria, nationalist and Ba'thist Iraq, Pahlavi Iran, Afghanistan under Daoud and the communists, and Ataturk's Turkey. The Islamists are aware that bourgeois democracy had much merit in its exercise, enough so that they seek restoration of those democratic procedures and rule of law in most countries of the Muslim world. The Islamists in Turkey and Pakistan today, as well as in most Arab countries, must decide whether or not to work for and through the opportunities of the democratic process, or to take their chances of repression—or perhaps the long shot at total victory—under the vagaries of nondemocratic authoritarian processes.

- In Turkey, the Islamists support greater freedom of speech and action for themselves, including the right to advocate the establishment of an Islamic state (still illegal to do). In this they are united with the communists in seeking greater freedom of speech.

- In Iran, the Islamists are of course already in power; although the state tolerates considerable latitude for policy debate, it has not so far countenanced the development of political parties that advocate non-Islamic government. The regime has found elections and a partially representative and authoritative parliament to be entirely consistent with Islamic law.

- In Afghanistan, there are as yet no democratic procedures, and Afghanistan has almost no tradition of political parties vying in free competition. One doubts that the Islamists would favor

democratic procedures that would cost them power, but certainly they would insist on the right to advocate Islamic politics in the event of a secular government coming to power. In short, in Afghanistan at least, with its very limited political development along modern lines, Islamists would have a largely opportunist view of the democratic process.

- In Pakistan, the Islamists favor electoral freedom and have been working for some time to develop grassroots support. Even late in the Zia regime—one highly supportive of much Islamic politics—the Islamist parties had grown restive under the restrictions of martial law and supported a return to greater democracy. Given the relative sophistication of Pakistani politics, their own internal divisions, and their limited options for power, the Islamists may well believe their best opportunities lie in the democratic process, however intolerant they may still be toward the expression of secular ideas in the media and the arts.

The Behavior of Islamists in Democratic Societies

A final aspect of Islam and democracy that deserves detailed study in its own right is the behavior of Islamists in democratic societies. In the Northern Tier countries, our experience with this phenomenon is too limited to be able to draw many conclusions.

- In Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood has been playing an active role in parliamentary politics for nearly a decade, and that has forced it to contend with other political parties and to formulate policy positions on a variety of issues in order to succeed at the polls. This is a role most Islamists have usually not been comfortable with; they have more often preferred to speak in generalities and suggest that once "Islamic policies" (unspecified) are adopted, problems can be solved.

- In Iran, the Islamic republic has not had many innovative ideas about Islamic policies, and the former ruling Islamic Republican Party was not required to compete in elections against significant non-Islamic opposition. Iran thus provides little evidence of Islam and democracy in action. (Granted, Iran was distracted for nearly a decade by all-out war with Iraq, which did not give the country the opportunity to devise and implement new Islamic policies at leisure.)

- In Turkey over the last decade or so, the Islamist (or crypto-Islamic) parties have had to compete in elections and have not

fared especially well. Yet the process of participation has accustomed them to the need to work in coalitions and to come to terms with the broad spectrum of political ideas in Turkish politics. Over the longer run, as in Egypt, this process of political participation should help deradicalize the Islamists and force them to accept a position of influence—but not dominance—in the process.

- In Pakistan as well, the Islamists have clearly had experience with coalition politics. While nondemocratic tendencies may still not have been softened in a party such as the Jama'at, the process of democratization is bound to have a favorable impact on the moderation of the party as it is increasingly forced to deal with public opinion and electoral issues.

In sum, democracy is probably the best road by which to seek the moderation of radically minded Islamist parties. Repression will only lead to martyr-oriented approaches and zero-sum politics; competition can only lead to greater realism about society's preferences vis-à-vis Islamic politics. Extreme radical, hard-core underground parties such as Al-Takfir wa'l-Hijra, which assassinated Sadat in Egypt, represent more of a police and security problem than a political issue.

OBSTACLES TO AN ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALIST TAKEOVER

The RAND studies indicate that radical Islamic fundamentalism is unlikely to come to power in any of the other three states of the Northern Tier: Turkey, Afghanistan, or Pakistan. Although the political, economic, and social conditions of these countries are all very different, a number of common factors suggest that Islamism faces considerable obstacles in coming to power. Even if Islamism does not actually come to power, as an ideology and political agenda it will exert considerable influence in forming the character of politics and policies in these countries.

Among the key obstacles to a takeover by radical Islamist forces in all three countries are the following:

- The lack of any single charismatic leadership.
- The modest electoral showing of religious parties in free elections (Turkey and Pakistan).
- Opposition of the military to Islamism in power; in both Turkey and Pakistan, the army constitutes a powerful barrier to the

attainment of absolute power by the Islamists, short of the systemic collapse of existing state mechanisms—which is what finally happened in Iran, where the army in the end opted out of any leadership or controlling role.

- Serious divisions among the ranks of Islamists, and disagreements over how Islamic law should be implemented.

- Objection by Shi'a minorities in all three states to the imposition of Islamic law (Shari'a), which would mean Sunni religious domination over the Shi'ites.

- Competition to radical Islam from other political movements and trends, especially from the left.

- Limited Iranian capability to sharply affect the evolution of Islamic politics in these countries.

Despite Islamism's poor prospects for actually coming to power in these countries, Islam is likely to play an increasing role in the political, social, and economic arenas, rendering it a force that will have to be reckoned with by any government that does come to power. Among the factors affecting the growth and influence of Islam, we can note the following general characteristics:

- The ability of Islam to serve as a native cultural vehicle for dissent, for the expression of nationalist grievances against the West, and as a legitimizing instrument for opposition to the oppressive state.

- The general trend for Islam to be strong among the lower middle class (petty bourgeoisie), a class growing in salience in the Muslim world as it assumes a greater role in the economy and society at large.

- The tendency of Islamic organizations and parties to focus on social welfare work, including education and health, in societies where the stresses of urbanization increase the needs in this area.

- The role of Islam as an anchor for values and solace for those caught up in the trauma of an increasingly intense process of urbanization.

- The increasing tendency of Islamist groups to turn to modern political instruments shunned by the traditional clergy, such as political parties and the use of the media, for influence.

- The growth of democracy, which has allowed greater expression of the political views of the Islamists.

- The increasing influence of Islamists in the education system, and a growth of Islamic schools, producing more students exposed to Islamic views.
- The modernist character of the Islamist leadership that, in sharp distinction to the traditional clergy and mullahs, has received Western-style secular education and is dedicated to modern political means and the use of technology to promote the Islamist state.

THE PROBLEM OF CLANDESTINE HARD-CORE ISLAMIST GROUPS

The existence of clandestine conspiratorial Islamist parties and groups in nearly all of the Northern Tier countries—while presenting serious short-term security problems of terrorism against local governments and any foreign presence—probably serves over the longer run to force the nonclandestine Islamist groups into a position of greater responsibility. The actions of conspiratorial groups other-wise serve to discredit the overt Islamist parties; Islamic terrorism can adversely affect the standing of legitimate Islamic parties with the public and threaten their freedom from persecution by security forces, forcing such parties to seek their distance from, or denounce, the clandestine groups.

In Turkey the Islamists have primarily acted within two organiza-tions, Refahat and the Motherland Party. Clandestine groups are extremely limited. Islamic brotherhoods or orders fall somewhere between the two. The brotherhoods (such as the Suleymancis, the Nurcus, and the Naksibendis) have not formed political parties nor joined politics per se, but have rather chosen to work through social and welfare organizations in order to spread their message through society. They also have direct ties with political parties. Some of these efforts admittedly aim at changing the attitudes of society and hastening the day when Islamist ideas achieve greater acceptance among the population as a whole. The Nurcus have not shrunk from efforts to infiltrate the military or various levels of the government in order to improve their future options. It is difficult to describe this as clandestine activity per se, yet it is an approach that skirts formal overt political channels. The brotherhoods clearly hope that a strong presence in the state apparatus will eventually bring about a shift in national attitudes toward political Islam and facilitate their coming to power, through either democratic or nondemocratic means. So far,

the influence of these groups upon society at large has been minimal, although they have contributed to the general growth of interest in, and expression of, Islam in Turkey.

Radical Islamist groups in Iran did not hesitate to work clandestinely and to use terror in their struggle against the Shah and against the U.S. presence.

In Afghanistan, the work of clandestine groups and the use of terrorist attack is a normal part of guerrilla warfare, and these have been used by some mujahidin groups against their own rivals. There has not been any evidence of clandestine or terrorist efforts by Pakistani Islamist groups against the U.S. presence, although Islamist-supported demonstrations have turned violent in the past, leading to the loss of American lives and property.

4. THE UNITED STATES AND ISLAM

It is unfortunate that the U.S. experience with Iran has been so visceral and traumatic that the idea of an Islamic state or Islamic republic automatically unleashes American anxieties; images of American hostages, mobs screaming "death to America," and the dark brooding figure of the Ayatollah leap to mind. Modern Iran indeed does represent one form of an Islamic republic, but a unique Iranian form, a Shi'ite phenomenon, powerfully influenced by the singular vision of the Ayatollah Khomeini.

Fundamentalist Islam has demonstrated anti-American sentiments in other countries as well, even where it has not come to power as in Iran. The burning of the U.S. Embassy in Pakistan in 1980, an attack against the U.S. Information office in Pakistan in 1989 related to the Salman Rushdie affair, and demonstrations against the West in Cairo in recent years have all revealed the existence of a potent political force employing a religious vocabulary that will complicate considerably the American presence in the Muslim world.

Islamic republics do not automatically have to entail all the frictions and hostilities that Iran has exemplified for the United States. After all, we have been dealing with a bread cross-section of independent Muslim states for over half a century; collectively they represent a great variety of characteristics and styles. Saudi Arabia was a "fundamentalist" state long before the term became popularized in the 1970s; the Saudis take the Quran as their constitution, pursue extreme Islamic austerity in public, and strive toward the implementation of Islamic law, the Shari'a, wherever possible. Pakistan under General Zia ul-Haqq likewise supported a widespread Islamization campaign that did not take direct aim at the United States; on the contrary, official American ties with Pakistan were close.

MUSLIM GRIEVANCES AGAINST THE UNITED STATES

Most Islamist organizations and parties maintain broadly negative perceptions of the West and of the United States in particular. These grievances are often shared by major segments of a country's population. While in most cases the United States is far from being the direct source of these grievances, it is often readily perceived to be so. Grievance springs from a complex of developmentally related

political, social, and economic frustrations in which the overall process of "Westernization" may be seen as a root cause. These frustrations born of the Westernization process particularly focus on the genuine phenomenon of U.S. political/military interventionism and "cultural imperialism." America becomes a ready symbol of much that frustrates so many Muslim intellectuals and citizens at large.

U.S. Interventionism

On the most basic level, Islamists first associate the United States with a long tradition of Western imperialism. Even though the United States has not itself exercised a colonial relationship over any Muslim country of the world—unlike England, France, Italy, Holland, Portugal, and Russia—it is nonetheless perceived as the most powerful representative of the West, and just as readily inclined toward "imperialist" intervention in the region. The United States has exercised military power in the Middle East against such states as Syria, Libya, Iraq, Iran, and Lebanon in one context or another in recent decades. Israel, furthermore, is seen as a direct surrogate for U.S. power and influence in the region. While most Muslim populations may have little fondness for the regimes that have been a target of U.S. military power, there is no question that an American confrontation with a Muslim state creates instant sympathies for that state. External Western force invariably evokes images of the bad old colonial days; Muslims feel that any U.S. action against a Muslim state is a symbol of humiliation and subjugation by a force against which they are generally powerless.

The Cold War with the Soviet Union hindered U.S. relations with the Muslim world in some respects as well. U.S. policy since World War II was dominated in the first instance by concerns about the role of the Soviet Union and its client states in the Muslim world. Soviet arms supplies to key clients and Moscow's almost indiscriminate support of radical and anti-Western elements in the past have indeed been among the major sources of tension in the Middle East.[1] But this broader East-West optic through which Washington viewed the Muslim world almost inevitably led to neglect of the specifics of the

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[1]Syria, for example, has been rendered far more powerful and pivotal in the region through its receipt of a major supply of Soviet arms. Its threat to Israel, while primarily serving Syrian policy goals, had also assisted Moscow's own past desire to weaken Israel as the leading U.S. client in the region. Libya has likewise been a destabilizing force, fueled primarily by Soviet arms; it was Soviet support that particularly drew U.S. concern in seeking to check Qadhafi's influence.

regional situation. The Cold War made the United States much more willing to employ force in the region than otherwise might have been the case. Many regional rulers, keenly mindful of U.S. strategic interests, also found it useful to invoke the Soviet threat to gain more plentiful U.S. security assistance or arms sales. (Iran under the Shah, Saudi Arabia, North Yemen, Oman, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Pakistan, and Indonesia come to mind here, among others.)

While local rulers may have found opportunities in the East-West struggle to strengthen their own positions both domestically and internationally, the populations of these same countries have not always shared this strategic view. Local populations have often come to associate U.S. Cold War policies with assistance to unpopular rulers. They see U.S. assistance as serving to strengthen these rulers and hence constituting a kind of external interference.

U.S. assistance often comes in packages of massive diplomatic missions. It was just such a massive U.S. presence in Iran under the Shah that helped spark a great deal of resentment among the Iranian public. Cultural sensitivities are inevitably trodden upon by any large and (relative to the population) wealthy foreign presence, sparking paranoia among the population that the United States is "running the country." Thus in the popular mind America comes to bear much responsibility for the overall maladministration of a pro-U.S. ruler.

While U.S. security assistance can serve to strengthen a Muslim regime or ruler, that security embrace can also become a kiss of death. If a ruler is perceived to be maintained in power by the United States, or unable to defend himself against foreign threats except through U.S. intervention, the ruler himself is weakened domestically.[2]

The Western "Conspiracy" Against Islam

Starting with the Crusades, Europe has left in the Muslim world a legacy of lingering suspicion that the West views Islam as the enemy. The period of Western colonial rule in the Muslim world reinforced this feeling and sparked numerous anticolonial uprisings in the name of Islam over several centuries, serving to convince Muslims that

[2]Strong U.S. support to countries such as Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Lebanon, Iran, and others in the heyday of the Arab nationalist movement under Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser often served to weaken the independence of their leaders' credentials in the face of radicalized masses. The legitimacy of the Persian Gulf rulers has also been attacked by Iran, in part because they "depend" on the United States to stay in power.

their faith was the most effective force that could be brought to bear against Western imperialists. Islamic cultures still tend to believe that the West seeks to destroy Islam—perhaps no longer in the name of Christianity, but as a means of weakening the Muslim world in order to dominate it. This mentality runs deep in the current rhetoric of Iran today.[3]

The U.S. Cultural Threat to Islam

Beyond the threat of U.S. intervention, Islamists see Western—especially American—culture as infinitely more threatening to the establishment of an Islamic society than is any other foreign force, including communism. While communism almost invariably comes to power only at gunpoint, Western mores and life styles are seen to be uniquely seductive, invasive, and corrupting to the Islamic way of life, precisely because they are adopted so willingly by many Muslims. Islamists are not concerned about any struggle between Islam and Christianity per se. On the contrary, it is in part the very decline of the traditional God-given values of Christianity that the Islamists find so threatening. Modern secular Western values are perceived as deeply flawed and dangerous: they embrace the rights of the individual over the strengths of society, pursue the cult of consumerism, and bring about lax and irregular sexual mores, the rampant spread of AIDS, high divorce rates, an epidemic of drugs, increasing crime rates, and the negotiability of all formerly fixed, God-given (Christian or Jewish) values, whereby all morality becomes relative and situational, leading to overall moral decline. The Islamists are determined that the West not "export" these values to the Muslim world, even though the process is already well under way.[4]

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[3]As the Ayatollah Khomeini expressed in his will to the country after his death: "Among the evil plans devised by the great colonialist and exploiting powers ... one can mention the attempts to isolate the clergy. ... From primary school to university level there was an attempt to select tutors and teachers from the ranks of those who were oriented toward either West or East, or those who distorted Islam and other religions ... because they wanted all the students—who would be taking over the government in the future—from their childhood through adolescence and their youth, to be brought up to hate all religions, particularly Islam, so that they would despise the people associated with religions—particularly Islam's clergy. The brave clergy were labeled as English elements, or proponents of capitalism, feudalism, reactionism, or against civilization and progress. ... This was done so that the deep division between the state and the people, and between the university and clergy, would pave the way for the plunderers to such an extent that all of the nation's assets and resources would be under their control and in their own pockets." See FBIS-NES, Tehran Domestic Service, June 7, 1989.

[4]Khomeini expressed this view in his will to the people: "The radio and television, the press, cinema, and theater are all effective means for belittling and destroying

Indeed, most Islamists despair that the process of secularization of life is approaching the point of irreversibility even among Muslims. Islamists consider that "Islam today faces the worst ordeal in its existence," threatened by the "unflagging warfare carried out by the proponents of secularism"; that today's Muslim media, its advertising, educational systems, and commercial orientation are already all designed to marginalize and eventually eliminate the Islamic vision of the good and correct life.[5] The cultural onslaught of the West, they fear, is overwhelming and almost unstoppable.

But the new Islamist approach is not just about morality and life styles. Islam, as it has often been throughout history, is once again a vehicle—a native cultural vehicle—for addressing many other grievances of the Muslim world.

- It serves as a native rallying cry against foreign "imperialism"—a concept quite concrete to the many Muslim states that have been either colonies or protectorates of European states in the past, or else strongly under U.S. political and cultural influence to a destabilizing extent—such as Iran.

- Leaders can call upon Islam to justify attack on rival Muslim states, challenging their legitimacy and devotion to the faith's "true" principles.

- Islam can be made into a highly legitimate vehicle for protest against regimes in power that are perceived as unpopular, oppressive, authoritarian, or "un-Islamic" in character. Anti-state activity thus ceases to be treason and becomes righteous Islamic political activism designed to restore the moral order.

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nations, especially the younger generation. During the last few years, these means were extensively used for major plans, be they propaganda against Islam or the serving clergy, or to propagate the ideas of Eastern and Western colonialists. These methods were used to create a market for luxury goods of all kinds to decorate buildings, or for imitation fabrics among rich or well-o'f ladies—and Western words were used so often in conversation and written texts that they were incomprehensible to the majority of people. Television films were produced by the West or East, and they deviated the young men and women from the normal process of life, drawing them to alienation from self or dragging them to cynicism about everything such as their country, culture and literature.... There was the spread of corruption, such as gambling and vice centers and shops displaying luxury goods, gambling equipment and intoxicating drinks, especially goods imported from the West using money earned from oil and gas and other resources; and hundreds of other things that people like me do not know about." FBIS-NES, ibid.

[5]For a brilliant treatment of the Islamists' very gloomy assessment of the prospects for contemporary Islam against Western inroads, see Ermanuel Sivan, *Radical Islam: Medieval Theology and Modern Politics*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1985, pp. 1-10.

- Islam provides a psychological refuge, whereby increased personal piety can help smooth the way in the wrenching social processes of modernization—especially under the often harsh, impersonal characteristics of urbanization. Islam and its values helps comfort the peasants from the Nile Delta, or from the plains of central Turkey, or from the villages of Sind, who have moved their families to the impersonal, rootless hurly-burly and stress of modern Cairo, Istanbul, or Karachi.

Radical Islam also contains within it a broader social agenda prominently featuring concepts of social justice and egalitarianism.[6] The rawer forms of contemporary capitalism in the Middle East have produced sharp inequities and growing divergences between the rich and the poor. While rich and poor have always existed in the Muslim world, the increasing integration of Middle Eastern economies into the world economy can hasten the process of income disparity. The West is often directly associated with this process, especially where the urgings of the International Monetary Fund in the direction of a more liberal, less subsidized economy have exposed ever greater levels of population to problems of inflation. Western-style advertising and television programs intensify the factor of rising expectations. Under these circumstances it is easy for Islamists to identify the West as one of the sources of (imposed) economic hardship in the lives of Muslims. An Islamic version of Marxist dependency theory becomes readily adopted in Third World intellectual circles. Radical Islam seeks to bridge the gap, in principle, to require the state to pay greater attention to the dispersal of wealth and the welfare of the poor.

In the end, radical Islam is engaged in a struggle for the soul of the Muslim world, essentially a quest to retain the basic forms of Islamic social, cultural, and religious values that make those societies distinctive. The hardships of the modernization process are impugned to the West—especially since the cultural vehicles for most of the process are indeed Western. Islam becomes the native cultural vehicle for striking back, for establishing a solid anchor of cultural and moral certitude in a stormy sea of change that is driven first and foremost by the West.

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[6]Religion has always served as a vehicle for radical social ideologies, going back to the foundation of Islam and Christianity. Christianity has displayed in more contemporary form the same radical social goals in such phenomena as the worker-priest movement and liberation theology.

Given the dimensions of this confrontation—by turns social, cultural, economic, political, or military—there is not always a lot that the West can do to alter the situation. Grievances in the Middle East are genuine, even when the West cannot objectively be considered the source of the problem. But anything that tends to weaken traditional Islamic views and values will be resented by many. And Islam will remain an important vehicle for the expression of grievances that *will be expressed in some form in any case*. In the past, radical Arab nationalism, socialism, or communism had served as vehicles for the expression of many of these same frustrations. But Islam is the native vehicle—more familiar, more satisfying, and a source of consolation to those buffeted by change in their lives.

In effect, for the West, Islam is not the problem. The problem is hardship and frustrations born of rapid socioeconomic development in a variety of Muslim countries—mirroring problems found in the non-Muslim Third World as well—and a resentment of foreign cultural influence that threatens to engulf their own.

ISLAM AS A LATENT ANTI-AMERICAN FORCE

Regardless of traditional Islam's broad tolerance toward Christianity and a preference for dealings with societies that are "religious" rather than "atheist," we cannot neglect the degree to which radical Islam manifests a deep, latent anti-American, anti-Western animus. Because of their perception of American culture as a threat to Islamic societies, as noted above, Islamic radicals have numerous reasons to be hostile to the United States. Also as noted above, Islam can serve as a vehicle for other radical domestic agendas, even though such agendas run basically counter to Islamic tradition and practice. Iran has had a consistent cast of radical factions that lean heavily toward a statist approach to the economy, hostility to private enterprise and the open economy, class grievances against merchants and landlords, and advocacy of close ties with the USSR. Nonetheless, even among the clerics in power, such views are not mainstream.

None of this means that Islam must, by definition, be anti-Western. Indeed, there is much in Islam that is sympathetic with Christianity.[7] But Christianity is now seen as a depleted moral force in the

[7] Islam recognizes Christianity, along with Judaism, as one of the great forerunners of Islam. Both Moses and Jesus are recognized as great prophets within Islam; the only reservation is that their message was not as complete and perfected as that of the last prophet Muhammad, who built upon the two earlier missions. Christians and

corrupted West, and it is not, in itself, the issue. And even a Christian West that exercised "imperialist sway" over the Muslim world is to be condemned, regardless of its religious credentials. Religion, then, ceases to be the primary point of conflict between the Islamists and the West, although a nonreligious West is doubly corrupting and dangerous to Islam.

As with any ideology, however, even radical Islam must be tempered with reality. In the case of Pakistan and Afghanistan, the Islamists have recognized that there are economic and security needs of the state that prevent an all-out assault against the United States. In Turkey as well, the Islamists do not advocate a complete break, simply a dismantling of NATO and similar structures that serve to bind Turkey to the United States. In the Ayatollah's Iran, of course, hostility to the United States has been virtually unremitting, but this must be seen in the context of the special character of Shi'ism, the widespread detestation of the Shah, and opposition to the pervasive character of Americans and American influence in Iranian society under the Shah, including clear-cut damage to the economic interests of certain classes that the Shah's economic arrangements with the West created. And yet even the Islamic clerical leaders of Iran recognize the need to deal with the reality of the United States; needs of state have likewise pervaded Iran's policies toward U.S. allies Turkey and Pakistan.

In short, despite the hostility of radical elements, the United States must avoid becoming paranoid about Islam. The Islamists do not occupy the whole spectrum of Islam by any means. Other moderate Muslims in these countries find much to admire about the West, as well as much to criticize. They wish to maintain ties with the West. But to the extent that there are "objective" anti-American feelings for different reasons in various segments of Muslim societies, there will invariably be some Islamic expression of that hostility, which in any case would be expressed through some vehicle or other. This reality will not disappear, and the United States must live with it.

We have noted the reasons radical Islam is inclined to a negative view of the United States: in its terms, the "threat" of U.S. cultural

Jews are traditionally recognized within Islam as "People of the Book" (Ahl al-Kitab), who enjoy a protected place within Muslim society. Since Christians are believers, they are much to be preferred to atheists (communists) or idolaters. In the eyes of the Islamists, however, Christianity allowed itself to be separated from secular power, which was the beginning of the end of its sway, for it opened the door to the continuing secularization of society—a process that has brought Western society to its present corrupted or amoral condition.

influence upon a rigorously Islamic society is real. Many of the values and characteristics of American culture and life style are antipathetic to strong Muslim values. The perceived pro-Israel U.S. foreign policy tilt is resented, and occasions of great-power muscle flexing are a frequent source of discomfort. The United States is thus likely to face a permanent coolness in some aspects of its dealings with certain kinds of Islamic states. Iran is one model. But Saudi Arabia and Pakistan are another. In the case of the latter two, a strong conservative leaning seeks to insulate the country against foreign and especially American influence in the area of mass culture and morals. On the other hand, both countries have found strong reason to seek other benefits from the United States in the areas of security, commerce, and technology. The animus of the conservative culture against aspects of the United States is thus highly selective and situational.

It is impossible to speak meaningfully about whether Iran or Pakistan "likes" the United States. It is easy to forget that attitudes toward America differ considerably among various segments of the Muslim countries in question. There are at least three broadly different categories of orientation whose views need to be considered.

Regime Orientation

The government of each Muslim country will have its own very concrete agenda. It may seek financial aid or security assistance. The specific leadership of the regime may see U.S. support as critical to its continuation in power. Under these circumstances, relations with the United States are "close" in functional terms: U.S. dealings with a given leader will be facilitated by his desire to work with the United States, regardless of other attitudes in the country. But the durability of the closeness then becomes contingent upon the fortunes of that particular leader. The leader can perhaps ignore or suppress anti-U.S. sentiments in various segments of the society for a long time, or even indefinitely. America's experience with the Shah of Iran is a vivid case in point. Close U.S. ties with such a country can be beneficial for long periods of time, as long as the gap between leadership policies and the political realities of the country is not too extreme. When the gap is great, then the United States itself comes to be perceived as a mainstay of the regime, with negative consequences for U.S. standing in that country.

The converse can also be true. If radicals seize power in a given country and the leadership legitimizes itself in part through presentation

of a hostile and outspoken anti-American position, the leader may not represent a broad national consensus on the subject, but in practical terms the United States is shut out and faces potential hostile action. The anti-American agenda may become a distinguishing political feature of the regime—such as under Khomeini or Qadhafi. If there is a major gap between the ruler and the attitudes of the population—on a great variety of policy issues, including policy toward the United States—then U.S. hostility to the leader can win support for the United States within opposition circles. This support is not translatable into any effective terms as long as the hostile leadership remains in power. In the end, the ultimate collapse of the leader can lead to a warming toward the United States on the part of a subsequent leadership that seeks to readjust major features of the past regime.

The great policy problem for the United States lies primarily in the first area: dealing with a leadership that is pro-U.S. in many respects but that comes to be unrepresentative and even hated by the population. How readily can the United States detect the existence of broad opposition to the pro-U.S. leader? What can be done to improve public attitudes so as to avoid a future explosion, not only against the leader but against the United States itself? Delicate balance is required to negotiate between the benefits of pro-U.S. leadership and the risks of long-term association with those forces if they are non-representative of their people. In all likelihood, Islamism will generally be in the anti-U.S. opposition.

Elite Attitudes

Often closely related to regime attitudes, but not necessarily identical, the elites of many Muslim countries may maintain different attitudes toward the United States than does the leadership—in part depending on how substantially those elites are included in power. Indeed, the elites are not homogeneous either, but they often tend to be more sympathetic to the United States, owing to education, exposure to the West, greater wealth, interest in business, intellectual freedom, etc. It is often easy to confuse elite warmth toward the United States with broader acceptance of American presence in the country as a whole. The pleasure of dealing with a sympathetic elite can lull U.S. leaders into ignoring or downplaying other popular attitudes that may be much less sympathetic. As in the case of the unpopular leader, the United States directly suffers in the event of a backlash against the leader and his policies. Often the elite is

associated with the leadership, but sometimes only particular segments of it—especially business circles and the financially well off.

The intellectual elite is most often likely to be critical of a strong U.S. presence, seeing it as a threat to the country's political and cultural independence, feeling an instinctive dislike for a superpower and a capitalist (nonsocialist) ideological force, or objecting to seeming U.S. support for a leader whom the intellectual elite opposes. Once again, Americans must remain aware of the importance and potential costs of the existence of an elite which may nourish anti-U.S. attitudes. Clearly, if the intellectual opposition is minor, the United States need concern itself less with groups that tend to be predictably anti-American. Conversely, the intellectual elite may bear considerable sympathies for the United States if an oppressive regime is anti-U.S. and oppressive of the intellectual class as well.

Public Opinion at Large

While it is impossible to talk broadly of "public opinion," especially in developing countries, public opinion as a whole may well be distinct from both the regime in power and from the elite. We have noted that Islamic fundamentalism often draws major strength from the lower middle class or petty bourgeoisie. Such support for Islamist views may not surface strongly among either the regime or the elite, but its strength must be gauged in relation to several factors:

- Is fundamentalism a growing factor in politics?
- Is fundamentalism the vehicle for antiregime attitudes and movements?
- Are regime policies such that they serve to strengthen Islamic opposition, or is the regime successful in coopting it?

In effect, popular opinion, especially as distinct from elite or intellectual opinion, may be a relatively minor factor for U.S. consideration in its dealings with a given regime. If popular opinion has limited importance or impact in the dealings with the regime, then a pragmatic view would dictate that opinion should be monitored to the extent possible, but not regularly factored into daily policy considerations. The problem comes when the salience of popular opinion, particularly of an anti-U.S. nature, becomes powerful enough to directly affect American interests and ties.

In assessing the future impact of Islamic radicalism on U.S. interests in the region, the character of that radicalism must therefore be

gauged. What are its roots in a given country? Does U.S. policy have any relevance to Islamist attitudes and grievances? How much can U.S. policy sensitivity change the reality? How much is Islamic radicalism independent of U.S. policies and actions (as in Afghanistan)? How far can the U.S. safely ignore it, leaving it to the regime to handle the issue as it best sees fit? In short, the U.S. contribution to the creation and strength of Islamic radicalism must be accurately grasped; a second step is to assess the American ability to improve the situation, either through shifts in its policies or pressure upon the regime to take steps to alleviate the conditions firing radical Islamist feelings.

Governments of a broadly representative or democratic nature are obviously more capable of making adjustments to the realities of Islamist attitudes. They will also therefore translate the realities of public opinion more directly into their policy dealings with the United States. Thus, even though Islamist governments are quite unlikely to come to power in the Northern Tier countries, Islamist feelings and policy preferences will surely have impact upon democratically oriented states and policies. Such extremist Islamist views can also be more safely ignored (perhaps at longer-range risk) in democratic regimes, where their relative strength is tested at the polls, than in more authoritarian states, where their strength is hidden.

In Turkey, U.S. policies play a relatively limited role in the growth of Islamism. Nearly all of the issues of interest to Islamists are domestic. The government itself is sensitive to them. Only considerable U.S. insensitivity to Turkish feelings relating to Greece, Cyprus, NATO, and human rights issues can play a significant external role in strengthening anti-U.S. Islamist feelings. The generally democratic character of Turkish politics suggests that the government in question will remain sensitive to the postulates of the Islamist segment of the population.

In Iran, radical Islamist policies have already reached an extreme, and, if anything, popular opinion and intellectual groups may be in the process of quietly developing sympathy for the United States precisely because the regime is anti-U.S.

In Afghanistan, U.S. policies are not a political issue. Islamist mujahidin groups have directly benefited from U.S. assistance and hence have no major anti-American agenda at this point. The role of elite and public opinion is still in a highly transitional phase, since the communist Kabul regime has yet to be displaced. Over the longer run, an anti-U.S. policy direction is likely to be relatively slight, since

issues of conflict will be relatively minor, and are most likely to emerge from U.S.-Pakistani policy.

In Pakistan, Islamism has the greatest prospects for influence, but not for attaining power. Social and economic trends in Pakistan for the time being seem to be favoring the strengthening of classes that are supportive of Islamist policies.

5. ISLAM AND THE LEFT

ISLAM AS AN ANTI-SOVIET FORCE

The USSR would be an obvious focus of a coordinated Northern Tier Islamist foreign policy in several areas: security, economics, and the Soviet Muslim minorities.

The dramatic changes in the USSR's foreign policy in the past few years, its abandonment of ideology in its analysis and formulation of policy, its withdrawal from Afghanistan, and its expressed desire for normal relations with all countries may well have significant impact on the Northern Tier. Geopolitics and history indicate that these countries can never forget the presence of a powerful Russian state to their north, but they have already been favorably impressed with new Soviet policies and are more willing to deal with Moscow. Improved ties with the USSR are always a good way to balance relations with the United States and the West, even if America is no longer in a zero-sum relationship with the USSR on most Third World issues. Iran has demonstrated the logic of this thinking powerfully in its recent rapprochement with Moscow.

The key geopolitical concern of Islamist Northern Tier policies would be joint security measures against possible Russian encroachment or pressure—a historic focus of the Northern Tier states. Communist parties would be severely persecuted, as they are in Iran today. In fact, communist parties are marginal in the Northern Tier today anyway: decimated in Iran, illegal in Turkey, and a minor player in Pakistan. Changes in foreign policy orientation under Gorbachev suggest that foreign communist parties are increasingly less likely to be significant instruments of Russian influence in the future, as opposed to more traditional forms of great-power techniques of influence. But radical socialist/communist parties cannot in any case be excluded from the future political scene, regardless of Soviet policies toward them. The radical left will indefinitely remain an alternative to the radical right under conditions of social and economic stress.

The Northern Tier states under Islamist influence would not like the USSR any more than before, but they would see it as distinctly less threatening *as a culture* than the West.

There could be some cooperation with the USSR on certain kinds of Third World issues such as those discussed above: in areas of debt, ecology, multinational corporations, trade blocs, barter trade, etc. The USSR will in any case have a direct interest in improving ties with the Northern Tier states as border states whose hostility is undesirable. Such improvement in Northern Tier–Soviet relations would be much less threatening to U.S. interests than in pre-Gorbachev days.

Despite these possible improvements in Soviet–Northern Tier relations, the Soviet Union faces a major challenge in its own Muslim republics, where Islamic-oriented Northern Tier countries will be strongly antipathetic to Soviet domination of those Muslim peoples. Strong Islamic regimes in the Northern Tier could actively support movements for autonomy and for the expansion of Islamic expression for Soviet Muslims. A key consideration is that Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan all contain sizable quantities of ethnic groups representing nearly all the Central Asian republics: Azerbaijanis, Turkmen, Kazakhs, Kirghiz, Uzbeks, and Tajiks, as well as representatives of smaller ethnic Muslim groups from the Caucasus. There are more Azerbaijanis and Tajiks outside of the Soviet Union than in it.

In earlier days, the threat flowed from north to south: the USSR was successfully able to exploit many of these ethnic ties to the disadvantage of the Northern Tier countries. The threat may now have reversed itself, flowing now from south to north: the Northern Tier states can use these ethnic elements to establish their own working ties with the populations, and possibly the governments, of the Muslim republics to assist them in establishing greater autonomy and more intimate ties with the rest of the Muslim world. Regularly established contacts will serve as a natural encouragement to the Central Asian republics to orient themselves more toward the outside.

In short, Moscow might now have more to lose than to gain from the existence of these nationalities that spill over the border into the Northern Tier. Informal ties are already being established that will be the nucleus of future diplomatic relations. Moscow has demonstrated considerable concern for this issue by seriously courting Iran, beginning in early 1989. While a traditional menacing Soviet response to any Muslim state that interferes in Central Asian affairs can have some deterrent effect, Moscow also clearly recognizes that such a policy in the past has tended to drive the Northern Tier states into the arms of the West. Gorbachev's recent policies indicate

recognition that he must move to defuse the Islamic issue through more sensitive response to the Islamic ideology of Tehran. Gorbachev's exchange of letters with Ayatollah Khomeini before the Ayatollah's death, and the treatment of the Rafsanjani state visit to Moscow in July 1989, suggest that Moscow hopes to have on its borders a sympathetically disposed Iran that will not seek to exacerbate Muslim politics inside the USSR. Gorbachev indeed might even hope to enlist the Northern Tier states to play some kind of positive role in Islamic issues inside the USSR. Such a policy, to say the least, would be very tricky for Moscow. But if the USSR recognizes that it can only moderate—rather than block—the inevitable distancing of the Muslim republics from Moscow, it almost surely will have to recognize the important role its Northern Tier neighbors can play in this process.

LEFT-WING AND COMMUNIST ACTIVITIES AS A SPUR TO THE GROWTH OF ISLAMIC PARTIES

The growth of Islamist activism is directly related to the growth of extreme left-wing and communist activism in nearly every one of the Northern Tier countries. Fear of the strength and violence of the left has been a catalyst for extremism among the Islamists themselves.

- In Turkey, the powerful emergence in the 1970s of radical left/communist activism and terror helped spur the move of Islamic (and nationalist) parties to the use of violence to counter the left. Even today, communism is the greatest source of fear for the Islamists, since communist rule has historically engaged in severe repression of religion and religious activism.[1]

- In Afghanistan, Islamists in the late 1960s received their greatest stimulus to action from the activities of the newly emergent communist movements in the country that had been liberated by a period of liberalism in Afghan politics. Islamist concerns were heightened by the considerable further growth of communist political power in the course of the 1973 coup that abolished the monarchy. Islamist opposition led to the exile of a high proportion of today's mujahidin leaders, who vowed to wage the struggle against communism from Pakistani soil.

- The communist party (Tudeh) in Iran has always been an avowed enemy of the clergy; this helped spur the crackdown

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[1]Despite this deep distrust, both communists and Islamists tactically cooperate in part at present to gain greater right of public expression in today's Turkish state.

against it once the clergy came to power—despite Tudeh efforts at conciliation under Khomeini.

- In Pakistan, the Islamists have always supported the state's move against communist activism, but communism was never a sufficient threat within the country to galvanize the Islamists. The communist coup in Afghanistan and the Soviet invasion, however, more than adequately served to strengthen the Islamists in their support of an anticommunist policy—positions General Zia took advantage of in formulating his policies toward the Afghan resistance.

It does not always have to be communism ascendant to evoke activism from the Islamists. Indeed, throughout the Muslim world it has in part been the failure of left-wing ideologies that has opened ground for the Islamists. The failure of Arab nationalism to cope with the problems of modernization and the challenge from Israel created an ideological vacuum that Islamist ideology has been able to fill, at least in part. The statist, socialist, rigorously nationalist ideology of the Ataturk period has receded considerably over the past four decades, leaving something of an ideological vacuum in Turkey as well. In Afghanistan, the disaster of the communist coup of 1978 and the subsequent Soviet invasion has left the field wide open for Islamic ideology as the only serious contending ideological alternative.

Thus the existence of ideological vacuum will continue to assist the Islamists where they have not had much voice in government previously. As noted above, however, any ideology in power finds its freshness and appeal rapidly tarnished as it meets with inevitable policy setbacks and failures. At this point, Pakistan and, especially, Iran are states where Islam is no longer fresh or original in its appeal, and they may be reaping the fruits of its shortcomings. In Turkey and Afghanistan, Islam still represents politically untried forces, which will serve to strengthen Islamic movements initially. But inevitably, states where Islamists come to power, and are forced to deal with the harsh realities of state polity and the full range of economic, social, and political problems, will eventually acquire the characteristics of other states (especially democratic), in which groups rotate into and out of power based on their own successes and failures and those of their opposition.

Iran is a key experiment here, for it is the first state to have fully embraced Islam as the basis of state polity. So far it has not been a convincing model to the rest of the world, but neither has it had much chance to demonstrate its policies on anything other than a war footing.

6. CONCLUSIONS: IMPLICATIONS FOR U.S. POLICY

Apart from a general admonition to be "sensitive" to Islamist and Muslim feelings, there probably is not a great deal of a concrete nature that the United States can meaningfully do to change its policies in a way that will generically improve its relations with Muslim countries. As noted above, American life styles, social and moral values, wealth, projection of power, and the country's role as a superpower—all contribute to creating some resentments against the United States in Muslim countries.

A few issues are worth mentioning, however, as possibly helping to improve the U.S. image in the Muslim world.

- *Settlement of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.* As many people have frequently observed, the perception of considerable U.S. favoritism toward Israel in everything that relates to the Palestinian problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict affects the United States in the Muslim world. While close U.S. ties with Israel will always be a reality, motion toward a settlement of the outstanding conflict will go a long way toward reducing the importance of this issue in U.S.-Muslim state ties.

- *Increasing emphasis of the United States as a country where Islam is an important religion, practiced by a growing American Muslim population.* The perception of the United States as a country that has significant Islamic practice within it would be a favorable force in Muslim countries. Media coverage of the observance of Islamic holy days and celebrations in America would play well abroad, where there is a deep fascination for Islam as practiced outside the traditional Muslim world. The American Muslim community itself must develop greater self-awareness as a community to help gain greater prominence among the public and in the media.

The ending of the Cold War and the rapid diminution of U.S.-Soviet rivalry in the Third World will unquestionably affect the attitude of the Islamists toward the United States, as well as U.S. policies toward the Third World.

- On the one hand, not all Third World countries welcome the ending of the U.S.-Soviet rivalry, since it diminishes their oppor-

tunities to play off the two superpowers against each other. Security threats from the USSR, especially in the Northern Tier states, have always served to bring the United States closer to most of these states through its security assistance. American aid has often offset other aspects of U.S. policy perhaps less pleasing to those states. Less U.S. security aid will be forthcoming in the future, perhaps creating greater friction between the United States and those countries, although other types of aid may partially offset it.

- On the other hand, some of the aspects of U.S. policy that have most annoyed the Muslim world (and the Third World as a whole) have been the general tendency for the United States to subordinate its bilateral ties to the imperatives of the East-West struggle as a whole. U.S. Third World policy in the future will rest much more on the character of the bilateral relations themselves rather than on the Soviet factor. While the United States will always maintain a global and strategic outlook, the vastly reduced salience of the USSR in the equation will alter the picture. The balance is not yet clear. It is even possible that U.S. concerns for bilateral problems such as ecology, terrorism, weapons proliferation, human rights, democracy, and American economic interests will prove to create more rather than less friction with the Third World than in the past, when the United States was willing to overlook many of these issues in the interests of the broader East-West competition.

In the end, Islamism is a force that in its ideological form will generally be antipathetic to the United States. This does not mean that Islam will inevitably take on radical form or dedicate itself to virulent anti-U.S. postures. America will have to learn to live with it, be sensitive to its concerns, possibly deal with some of its grievances, seek to reach accommodation with it where possible, and stand firm if it should assume active, hostile, radical antiforeign form, as it did in Iran. Islamism does not automatically equate to Islam in its broader, cultural sense, and the United States must make efforts to distinguish between the two. The United States neither wants nor needs a war against Islam—even if some of the terrorists would like to cast it in that light.

It is worth remembering, too, that specific grievances, ambitions, and movements emerge in the Third World that must inevitably assume some kind of ideological clothing or vehicle for expression. While different ideologies to some extent attract different supporters, the

feelings expressed through radical Islam might just have well been expressed through some other kind of ideology. Islam does not create the grievance or the ambition, it helps express it. The U.S. interest over the longer run is to work to limit on an international basis as much as possible the conditions that can produce radical, hostile action. We have only limited power to do so; much of the problem is embedded in the sheer problematic nature of developmental problems, not unknown in our own domestic politics as well. And the wealthy, powerful, and influential United States will always be a prominent target.

Lastly, to devote immense attention to the actions of Islamic radicals is, in part, to play into their hands. They seek affirmation that America is the enemy and thus may seek the confrontation to prove it. When the United States describes the character of fundamentalism as the greatest danger to U.S. interests, it is confirming to the radical Islamists, their supporters, and their opponents that the Islamists indeed have the power they claim to possess and represent the threat to U.S. power that they claim to do.

As noted above, democracy is probably one of the few vehicles by which Islamism may come to be moderated, as it is compelled to work within the confines of public opinion and popular preference. Under such circumstances, Islamism can act as a reasonably positive force in maintaining native values in times of social stress.

We are in for the long haul in working out a relationship with Islam and its manifestations—a much longer period of coexistence than communism has required. When communism loses its virulence and its assault against Western values, it ceases to be meaningful. Radicalism defines it. Islamism is only a radical form of Islam, however, and its weakening as an ideology still leaves in its wake the complex historical force of Islam.