America's Perceptions of Political Islam: Roots of Geopolitical Image and Implications for U.S. Middle East Policy

AL-GHAILANI, ABDULLAH,MOHAMMED

American Perceptions of Political Islam

Roots of Geopolitical Image & Implications for U.S. Middle East Policy

PhD Thesis

Durham University

School of Government and International Affairs

By

Abdullah Mohammed. AL-Ghailani

Student No. 000464632

Supervisor

Professor John W. Dumbrell

Declaration

This thesis is a result of my own work. Material from the published or unpublished work of others which is used in this thesis is credited to the author in question in the text.

Abdullah Mohammed Al-Ghailani

Re-submitted in January 2014.

Contents

Introduction

The political dimension of Islam has figured prominently in the West's collective mind. Historically, Islam and the Christian West have frequently been in conflict both culturally and politically. Taking various manifestations, this clash has persistently constituted one of the most crucial features of contemporary international relations, leading to catastrophic consequences: the 9/11 attacks; U.S. invasions of Afghanistan (October 2001) and Iraq (March 2003). Muslims' endeavors to transform their religious-oriented zeal into a political force, acting in conformity with Islam's geopolitical doctrines, have been perceived by the West in general, and the U.S. in particular, as s security threat to the U.S. regional hegemonic status. Subsequently, U.S. Middle East geostrategic calculations were considerably influenced by American geopolitical perception of political Islam as an anti-western and anti-democratic force. Impeding the rise to power of Islamists, particularly in the Arab Middle East, therefore, was a prominent feature of the U.S. foreign policy, preferring 'stability over democracy'.

Nonetheless, mainstream Islamism has established itself as an unrivalled political force, emerging as the leading catalyst for change, and hence posing a potential threat to the U.S.-backed authoritarian power structures. Indeed, despite the undeterred series of physical oppression and political exclusion of mainstream Islamists, the latter has steadily marched toward power. To the dismay of both the incumbent autocratic regimes and their international backer, the U.S., the mainstream Islamists have extended their electoral constituencies, reinforced their social outreach through a variety of charitable and educational mechanisms, and further advanced their political appeal. Stunning Islamists' electoral triumphs in such countries as Egypt, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, Palestinian territories, Jordan, Yemen, Kuwait, and Turkey are cases in point.

Seemingly, Islamic political activism formed a geopolitical dilemma that successive post-Cold War administrations appear to have failed decisively to surmount. On the one hand, the policy of aligning with the authoritarian status quo is inconsistent with the U.S. self-assigned mission of democracy promotion and human rights protection. And, on the other, genuine democratic transformation in the Middle East would highly likely result in Islamists' escalation to power, jeopardizing U.S. regional hegemonic status and national interests. The geopolitical

vitality of Islamism lies in its character as a socio-political vehicle corresponding to Muslims' longing for the restoration of the 'great past'. It increasingly heightened its political weight, and hence asserted its relevance to both regional and global affairs. The calamitous conditions of the Middle East coupled with the Muslim-majority societies' growing aspiration for genuine change have reinforced the social appeal and political significance of the mainstream Islamists. Ironically, oppressive measures and U.S. support for the region's despotic power structures further encouraged Islamic resurgence. The U.S. approach to the rise of Islamism is a recurring dilemma that needs to be thoroughly examined.

The U.S. approach to Islamism and the latter's consequent posture towards America's regional demeanor tend to influence the region's geopolitics considerably. The potential trajectories of such issues as the region's stability, secured access to energy sources, Arab-Israeli conflict, non-proliferation of WMD, and democratic reforms seem to have been rooted in the nature and scope of the U.S.-Islamist relations. Moreover, the geopolitical consequences of the two pivotal events of 9/11 attacks (2001), and Arab revolts (2011) spectacularly manifested the political significance of Islamic activism and hence brought it to the fore, where it unprecedentedly deepened its centrality to world politics both conceptually and empirically.

While the presidencies of Bill Clinton (1993-2001), George W. Bush (2001-2009), and Barack Obama (2009-….) varied in their tactical approaches towards political Islam, revealing their respective interpretation of the rise of Islamism, they were united by the conceptually constant strategic stance of impeding Islamists' ascendance to power. The primary aim of this research is thoroughly to examine the geopolitical dynamics that shaped U.S. perception of Islamism as a socio-political force, focusing on the presidencies of: Bill Clinton; George W. Bush; and Barrack Obama. It seeks to develop an empirically-based argument, offering a compellingly analytical interpretation of the post-Cold War's U.S. Middle East geostrategic orientation, with respect to its strategic approach to moderate political Islam, as represented by the Muslim Brotherhood and its like-minded political factions. As a policy-oriented study, this research also endeavors to answer three fundamental questions:

- What are the principal forces that primarily shaped the geopolitical image of Islamism as conceptualized by American collective mind and how does this perceived geopolitical image influence U.S. approach to Islamic activism?

- Why was the combination of Islam and power perceived as a security threat, rather than a political challenge?
- What are the potential trajectories of U.S.-Islamist relations?

Research Key Objectives:

- To examine the historical, political, and ideological factors that significantly influenced American conceptualizations of political Islam.
- To examine the viability of U.S. foreign policy towards the Middle East in relation to U.S. perceptions of Islamism.
- To examine the potential trajectories of U.S-Islamist relations in light of the prevailing regional geopolitical transformations, most notably the Arab Spring.

Research Methodology

This research is essentially concerned with the implementation of U.S. Middle East policy (with respect to its geopolitical approach to Islamism), rather than the construction thereof. To be sure, foreign policy formulation and foreign policy implementation are correlatively intertwined. Both themes belong to the realm of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), where policy viability (successfully serving the strategically aimed purposes) lies in the efficiency of the decision-making process – the dynamic that involves a wide range of cognitive, psychological, and bureaucratic components. Indeed, the decision-making process and its ramifications lie at the heart of FPA, examining the intellectual, psychological, cultural, and institutional dynamics that influence human decision makers (acting singly or in a group).[1]

Seeking to understand the fundamental driving forces that ultimately shape decision makers' geopolitical perceptions, scholars invoke a multitude of social sciences theories. These include: Rational Choice Theory, which assumes that the state consistently operates as a unitary actor, rationally identifying its foreign policy choices, and hence acting in conformity with its national interests; the Cognitive and Psychological Model, which emphasizes that individual's attribution, judgment, and perceptions, while deliberating foreign policy preferences, are formatively influenced by his/her cognitive features, and psychological traits; the Bureaucratic Policy Model (BPM), which highlights the crucial role of bureaucracies in shaping foreign policy formulation and

implementation; the Domestic Sources Approach, which stresses the central role that domestic players, outside the formal state structures, play in formulating the foreign policy orientations. Chief among them are the media, interest groups, think tanks, and NGOs; [2] and the Constructivist Approach, which views the world as socially constructed, where the behavior of foreign policy players (state and non-state actors) need to be contextualized in their respective socio-cultural frame.[3]

Specifically, FPA addresses the various dynamics that influence the foreign policymaking, seeking to understand the psychological, conceptual, institutional and socio-cultural contexts within which individual and collective minds operate. These inputs of the decision-making process impact on both foreign policy outputs (strategies, objectives, preferences, and the means to deliver them), and outcomes (the ultimate tangible results). Therefore, while it is captured by the external realities, foreign policy implementation is formatively affected by the domestic decision-making process. Consequently, the various roles of such central players as the White House, the State Department, the Pentagon, the Congress, and non-state actors, notably strategists and intellectuals, will be addressed in relation to their varyingly respective impacts on both the formulation and implementation of the U.S. Middle East strategies.

The international environment in which foreign policy operates tends to be anarchic, fluid, and increasingly characterized by unforeseen circumstances. The viability and relevance of a certain foreign policy are normatively assessed by the extent to which objectives are translated into intended outcomes. Deliverability of outcomes is determined by the dialectic interplay between the actor's strategy (objectives and means), and the external environment, where, in the implementation phase, internal preferences tend to be challenged by external constraints. No matter how well designed and realistic a certain foreign policy is, the external context, with its complexities and unpredictability, harbors the capacity to deflect trajectories to undesired ends.[4]

Indeed, what is important is the actor's capability realistically to conceptualize the geopolitical features of the operational environment, and hence devise foreign policy preferences that will successfully adapt to the respective context both conceptually and empirically. "Interestingly enough, it is precisely in the phase of implementation that America's foreign policy designs have most frequently failed. …many of the difficulties

encountered by the U.S. in its foreign policy (let alone military) projection are due to a poor appreciation of the crucial relation between ends and means on the one hand, and between foreign policy actions and context on the other."[5] The Middle Eastern context, in particular, is replete with historical, ideological, political, and cultural complexities that need to be thoroughly examined with a view both to understand objectively the geopolitical characteristics of the context in which U.S. foreign policy operates, and to offer an empirically-based explanation of the U.S.-Islamist trajectories.

Realists suggest that foreign policy behavior ought to be shaped by such driving forces as power, interest, and security requirements. These objectives, according to the Rational-Choice Theory, are defined in a rational manner that both reflects state national interest, and takes into account the anarchic nature of the international system. While recognizing the substantive role that interest politics play in shaping foreign policy choices, one cannot ignore the key roles that ideas and identities play in shaping geopolitical perceptions. Despite its pragmatic character and interest-oriented inclination, U.S. foreign policy seems to have been rooted in a multitude of ideological and cultural forces. For instance, the feeling of cultural superiority generated the notion of 'American exceptionalism', which in turn serves as a geopolitical lens through which identities of 'self' and 'other' are viewed. Furthermore, the U.S. self-assigned mission of democracy promotion reveals the crucial role that geopolitical images may play in shaping foreign policy choices.

Middle East politics in general and Islamist worldviews in particular, have largely been influenced by a mixture of religious conceptualizations and cultural forces. Clearly, historical dynamics, ideological predispositions, and cultural identities have critically impacted the region's political forces' geopolitical perceptions. Islamists' persistent reluctance to recognize Israel's right to exist; their cultural attitude towards the 'imperial West'; and their ideological stance on the popular sovereignty – just to name a few – have significantly been informed by religious-based cultural, social, and ideological constructs. Muslim-majority societies, by and large, define their identities primarily in terms of their religious, rather than national, belonging.[6]

Seeking to develop a sound argument with respect to American conceptual and policy approaches to Islamism, this research will endeavor to explore the impact that the various

historical and ideological dynamics have had on America's perception of Islamism in power. Informed by Foreign Policy Analysis approach, this study will contextualize American-Islamist relations in their relevant historical, cultural, political, and ideological contexts.

In sum, reams have been written on the U.S. posture towards Islamism, viewing the issue through various realist, modernist, and security lenses. This study, therefore, seeks to explore the geopolitical roots of American perceptions of Islamism, and their implications for U.S. Middle East policy.

Research Methods

In essence, this is a qualitative research project, seeking to develop a sound argument, offering a compelling explanation of American geopolitical perceptions of the contemporary Islamism, and examining the consequent U.S. geostrategic approaches to the Middle East in general, and Islamic activism in particular. Hence, this study is primarily concerned with '***why***' and '***how***', endeavoring to understand in-depth human behavior with respect to foreign policy implementation. (Foreign policy formulation will be addressed in relation to its impacts on the *outcomes*.)

- Levels of analysis: this research will use available data, these include: presidential remarks; national security strategies; official pronouncements; policy debates; and academic studies. Analysis of this material will be conducted in three levels. First, to address the official thinking, as it is reflected by the various official articulations, with a desire to both explore the official perception of Islamism, and examine the degree of consistency between words and action. Second, this research will seek to analyze the broadly discordant intellectual, academic, and policy debates that conceptualize the various political, ideological, and cultural dimensions of contemporary Islamist activism. Offering conceptual underpinnings, these debates tend to influence U.S. geostrategic posture towards Islamic resurgence. Thirdly, examining the viability of both conceptual and empirical approaches, U.S. actual policy towards the Middle East will be thoroughly analyzed.
- Seeking to reach empirically-based conclusions, this research endorses a case-study method as an approach to examining the consistency, relevancy, and viability of the U.S.

policies towards various Islamist variants. The Egyptian, Algerian, and Turkish cases have been selected to epitomize the mainstream Islamist activism in its broader sense.

- The theoretical dimension: both rhetoric and actual policies will be conceptualized within their relevant geopolitical contexts. This research tends to be analytical and predictive rather than merely descriptive and narrative. Grounding the thesis findings in their respective conceptual contexts will both ensure coherence and extend the external validity (the extent to which findings can be generalized).

A Brief Literature Review: Identifying the Gap

A detailed account of the literature will be integrated in the various chapters, where a wide range of relevant academic arguments and policy orientations will be thoroughly examined. Chapter 3, in particular, will address diverse intellectual and policy debates on political Islam. This overview, therefore, aims at highlighting the intellectual gap in academic studies that address U.S.-Islamist relations through diverse methods, identifying this research's potential contribution to knowledge.

The collection of materials on the topic of 'political Islam' is numerous. Similarly, reams have been written on U.S. foreign policy towards the Middle East, in general, and Islamic activism in particular. However, the 9/11 attacks revolutionized American intellectual and policy debates on U.S.-Islamist relations, where the first decade of the twentieth century was "particularly fertile for the research on political Islam. Yet, as is often the case when a topic becomes particularly fashionable and/or policy relevant, the quantity of research produced was not always matched by quality."[7] As Roger Hardy contends, "The crisis in relations between Islam and the West is the most important and the most dangerous issue of our time; it is also the least understood."[8]

In a series of studies, Bernard Lewis, a well noted American historian, emphasizes Islam's inability to reconcile with the western-based modernization. It follows that, as Lewis contends, Islamism cannot be integrated into the globally recognized political modernity so long as it fails to adapt to such ideological forces as liberalism, secularism, individualism, and capitalism.[9] In his well noted thesis of a clash of civilizations, Samuel Huntington suggests that the western-Islamic relations have been, and will continue to be,

defined by the historical cultural conflict, and hence rapprochement appears to be unattainable so long as both sides maintain their respective cultural character.[10]

Depicting Islamic resurgence as a serious threat to America's supremacy, both culturally and politically, Judith Miller and Daniel Pipes, a commentator on Middle Eastern affairs, assertively suggest that Islamists should be deprived of any institutional power.[11] Cherly Benard, in policy-oriented research, concludes that Islamism has to be modernized and re-shaped in the image of the western-based globally recognized political modernity. Hence, the U.S., Benard argues, should undermine fundamentalists, and support modernists: those who seek "to modernize and reform Islam to bring it into line with the age."[12] In a comprehensive survey of the historical development of Islamist activism, Gilles Kepel equated the latter with Jihadism – violent radicalism, highlighting the undemocratic character of contemporary political Islam.[13]

On the other hand, a group of scholars argue for the inclusion of mainstream Islamists in a truly pluralistic political order. This approach, they contend, is for the mutual interest of both the U.S. and the Middle East. Alternatively, this school of thought warns, the region will be plunged into a chaotic state of affairs. John Esposito, a well noted expert on Islamism, suggests, "The fundamental problem for long-term stability in the Arab and Muslim world is not the religion of Islam or Islamic movements but the struggle between authoritarianism and pluralism. …..The threat to the West will not come from civilizational differences but from the political and socioeconomic reality that breeds radicalism."[14] Graham Fuller, a leading Islamist scholar, and former CIA analyst, argues that, if integrated in a genuinely democratic system, moderate Islamists will be tempered by political realities.[15]

Maria Pinto, in well documented research into U.S. policy towards political Islam, shows how the security approach to Islamism has misguided U.S. Middle East geostrategic calculation, highlighting the potential threat of such preference to U.S. regional interest.[16]Analyzing both the conceptual and empirical dimensions of U.S. policy towards political Islam, Fawaz Gerges highlighted the lack of consistency between rhetoric and action. In an in-depth narrative titled 'America and Political Islam: Clash of Cultures or Clash of Interests?' Gerges asserts, "Exclusive politics is a recipe for disaster, but inclusive politics is the key to survival."[17]

The above outlined pattern of studies, to a large extent, represents the prevailing academic trends in the field. They commonly share three fundamental characteristics. First, they appreciate the strategic criticality of the various potential trajectories of the U.S.-Islamist relations to both the regional and global security and stability. Second, they recognize the central role of Islam in shaping Islamists' worldviews and hence influencing Islamist geostrategic behavior. Third, they seem to have agreed, to varying degrees, that the pro-American authoritarian status quo is inimical to U.S. vital interests in the long-run.

Nonetheless, three intellectual gaps can be identified, that this research seeks to file, endeavoring to offer an explanatory model. First, is to identify the roots of the American geopolitical perception of Islamism. Clearly, the U.S. geostrategic posture towards Islamic activism is informed by a combination of cultural and political forces. Hence, examining the foundational components that make the geopolitical image(s) of Islamism is crucial to understanding both the motivational dynamics that inform U.S. official thinking, and the intellectual approaches of the various American academic trends, with respect to their discordant interpretations of Islamism.

Second, I aim to examine U.S. Middle East foreign policy (in relation to the Islamist factor) within the context of the region's geopolitical dynamics, notably America's support for the autocratic regimes, and the emergence of Islamism as an unrivaled political force, viewing the success and failure of U.S. geostrategic preferences through the region's relevant socio-cultural prism. This approach will theoretically inform the analysis, authenticating the validity of the findings. Third, I intend to examine the nature and scope of Islam as a source of both ideological guidance and political inspiration. The character of Islam, notably its compatibility with democracy and identification with secularism, appears to be misinterpreted by both accommodationists and rejectionists. Fulfilling these three conceptual gaps constitutes the primary contribution of this research, aiming at offering a coherently sound, and analytically compelling argument, advancing the understanding of the overly complex U.S.-Islamist relations.

Research Structure

This research is divided into seven chapters (including the concluding chapter). Chapter one traces the evolution of the United States to great power status, exploring the fundamental geopolitical dynamics that evolutionarily shaped America's worldviews, with particular focus on the implications for the Arab Middle East, in general, and Islamist activism in particular. Chapter two critically analyzes the socio-political forces that paved the path for the rise of 'political Islam', examining the character of Islam as source of ideological guidance and political inspiration, and foreseeing the future of Islamism within the prevailing regional geopolitical contexts.

Chapter three addresses the various intellectual and policy debates on political Islam, analytically narrating a wide range of ideological attitudes, conceptual perceptions, and policy orientations. This chapter seeks to encompass the conceptually discordant views that shape collective American geopolitical postures towards Islamic resurgence, including the diverse interpretations of the accommodationists, rejectionists, and policymakers. Chapter four surveys the development of U.S. foreign policy towards the Middle East, examining both the viability of U.S. geostrategic preferences, and the impact of the Islamist factor on America's strategic calculations. This chapter examines the operational components of the geopolitical context in which U.S. foreign policy operates, seeking to identify the cultural, ideological, and political forces that invariably determine the potentially various U.S. regional trajectories.

Chapter five examines empirically the U.S. approaches to the Egyptian and Algerian Islamist movements, where both forces figured prominently in the post-Cold War era, emerging as unrivalled players, threatening the pro-western power structures of their respective countries. Precisely, this chapter examines the relevancy, consistency, and viability of the approaches pursued in both cases. Chapter six focuses on the Turkish Islamist case, which represents the exception rather than the norm, with respect to both ascending to power through the ballot box and maintaining relatively cordial ties with the U.S. Also, this chapter seeks to explore the potential demonstrative effects that the Turkish case might generate, notably in light of the Arab Spring, and the consequent Islamists' rise to power in such countries as Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, and Yemen.

Chapter seven (the concluding chapter) synthesizes the various forces that constantly shape U.S. geopolitical perceptions of Islamism, where research findings are used to develop a coherently vibrant argument, offering a compelling interpretation of U.S. conceptual and empirical behaviors towards political Islam. Taking into account both the material and cultural dynamics, this explanatory model endeavourers to identify the geopolitical factors that, to varying degrees, influence the potential ends of U.S.-Islamist trajectories. This chapter also predicts the future of U.S.-Islamist relations, and examines Obama's Middle East orientations in the light of the Arab Spring, and the consequent rise to power of mainstream Islamists.

Notes

1. See Chris Alden and Amnon Aran, *Foreign Policy Analysis: New Approaches*, pp. 14-30.
2. See ibid, pp. 14-61.
3. See Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield, and Tim Dunne, *Foreign Policy: Theories. Actors. Cases*, pp. 71-82.
4. See ibid, pp. 117-35.
5. Ibid, p. 123.
6. See Shibly Telhami & Michael Barnett, *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, pp. 1-25.
7. Frederic Volpi, *Political Islam Observed*, p. ix.
8. Roger Hardy, *The Muslim Revolt: A Journey through Political Islam*, p. 2.
9. See, for instance, Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror*; "Freedom and Justice in the Middle East", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 84, Issue 3, May/June 2005, pp. 36-51; "The Roots of Muslim Rage", *the Atlantic Monthly*, September 1990, Vol. 266, No. 3, p. 47; "Islam and Liberal Democracy", *the Atlantic Monthly*, February 1993, Vol. 270, No. 2, p. 89.
10. See Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*.
11. See Judith Miller, "The Challenge of Radical Islam", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 2, spring 1993, pp. 43-56; Daniel Pipes, "There Are No Moderates: Dealing With Fundamentalist Islam", *National Interests*, Fall 1995.
12. Cherly Benard, *Civil Democratic Islam: Partners, Resources, and Strategies*, p. x.
13. See Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trial of Political Islam*.
14. John L. Esposito, *The Future of Islam*, p. 196.
15. See Graham E. Fuller, *The Future of Political Islam*; *A World without Islam*.
16. See Maria do Ceu Pinto, *Political Islam and the United States: A Study of Policy towards Islamist Movements in the Middle East*.
17. Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam: Clash of Cultures or Clash of Internets?*, p. 238.

Chapter 1

America's Geopolitical Legacy

The Road to Supremacy

One may argue that the pursued foreign policy of a given power is a reflective manifestation of the geopolitical discourse it has evolutionarily acquired, revealing an interrelated combination of that state's empirical experience, conceptual approaches to foreign policy, cultural identity, and geopolitical strengths (such as geographic location, natural wealth, population, and technical preeminence). This is not to suggest that every single geostrategic preference is subordinated to the state's conventional geopolitical reasoning. Occasionally, the prevailing strategic circumstances dictate such alternatives that may not be consistent with the state's typical geopolitical discourse, reflecting the inevitable requirements of the existing balance of power.

Nonetheless, geopolitical images tend to play critical roles not only in characterizing the 'other', and hence determining the set of political action to be conducted, but also in identifying 'self'. Indeed, by characterizing the cultural identity of the 'other' the state indirectly distinguishes itself, and hence identifies its geopolitical personality. In his well known theory of clash of civilizations, Samuel Huntington suggests; "people use politics not just to advance their interests, but also to define their identity. We know who we are only when we know who we are not and often only when we know whom we are against."[1]

The theme of 'otherness', therefore, constitutes an essential element in the discourse process. Such terminologies as 'evil empire', 'rogue state', 'axis of evil' and 'Islamic extremism' are not mere political expressions. Rather, they are geopolitical specifications formulated in such a way that notoriously expresses the prominent threats that these geopolitical metaphors supposedly connote. The reverse is also true, where phrases such as the 'free world', 'freedom fighters', and 'freedom agenda' were coined and promoted to present attractively desirable geopolitical images.

In practical terms, geopolitics can be defined as the spatialization of the global political space in such a way that places are identified with their relevant cultural, social, and political characteristics. Subsequently, the type of foreign policy towards a given place (state, or a group

of states) is, to considerable extent, determined by that particular place's conceptualized geopolitical identity. Spatialization, along with the concept of 'otherness', constitute the two key elements of the geopolitical conceptualization. Although, a multitude of historical, geographical, and ideological factors contribute to the making of the geopolitical image, hegemonic powers, at any given era, influence the core text of international geopolitics. The statecraft intellectuals and policymakers of the global power(s) are the ones who, almost unilaterally, coin, publicize, and impose the geopolitical terms, values, and formulas that rationalize world politics and serve as references of judgment.

The hegemonic-made version of the geopolitical text, by and large, lacks impartiality. It is assembled and presented in such a way that reduces, or seeks to reduce, world politics to the very vital interests and imperial aspirations of the dominating power, with little or no consideration of the interests of weak states. Expansion, for instance, as presented by the hegemon's geopolitical reasoning, becomes a moral obligation, and honorable civilizational mission upon which the rest of the world is thrust.

President Theodore Roosevelt was consistent with his conventional geopolitical set of values when he stated that "it was a sign and proof of greatness in expanding nations, and moreover, bear in mind that in each instance it was of incalculable benefit to mankind. …… when great nations fear to expand, shrink from expansion, it is because their greatness is coming to an end."[2] The above statement not only glorifies expansion as a noble missionary obligation for the benefit of mankind, but also portrays expansion as a sign of a nation's greatness, revealing that nobility and national greatness are proportional to imperial expansionist ambitions. It was this type of geopolitical rationalization that justified such geostrategic maladies as unilateralism, interference, and imperial expansion that invariably characterized American foreign policy.

To be sure, geopolitical reasoning in contemporary world politics is not restricted to selective elites of statecraft. It is a multidimensional intellectual process, where various domestic and external players are involved in the formulation of the geopolitical text. Chief among them are think tanks, academic institutions, military complex, strategists, Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), particularly human right organizations, and the leading transnational corporations.

The foregoing arguments suggest that the key features of U.S. foreign policy are products of a dynamically multidimensional geopolitical conceptualization process. In-depth understanding of the American geopolitical mindset, therefore, not only forms a conceptual basis for a genuine comprehension of U.S. geostrategic trends, but also equips the reader, notably the foreign policy analyst, with the intellectual tools required realistically to interpret U.S. political demeanor, and locate its strategic preferences in their respective geopolitical parameters.

In practical terms, American geopolitical reasoning is an organic process that evolved through a long series of historical landmarks, and was, as a result, shaped by a combination of interdependent factors: a feeling of cultural superiority that in turn generated that notion of "American exceptionalism", justifying the act of expansion as both a civilizational obligation and a sign of greatness; the prevailing balance of power at the time; and the practically governing corollaries that emerged as a result of such momentous events as the American-Spanish war of 1898, World War II, the Vietnam War, the end of the Cold War, the invasions of Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003), and the outbreak of the Arab spring (2011).

Throughout the two hundred years that followed its emergence, the United States went through enormous internal and external crisis, the consequential outcomes of which remarkably contributed to the making of America's corporate political mindset. The subsequent sections trace the evolution of U.S. foreign policy with respect to the principal dynamics that historically transformed American geopolitical perceptions and hence shaped worldviews of intellectual and policy communities. Indeed, analyzing these pivotal landmarks seems to be crucial to in-depth understanding of the contemporary U.S. approach to Islamic activism. In essence, the conceptual and empirical characteristics of U.S. foreign policy in general, and U.S. Middle East orientation in particular, seem to have been shaped by the geopolitical consequences that these critical turning points have generated.

The practically governing corollaries, as earlier suggested, tend to exert decisive influence on the making of the geopolitical discourse. The abrupt end of the Cold War, for instance, profoundly altered the global balance of power, paving the way for America's emergence as the sole global power. The resounding U.S. triumph over Iraq in the Gulf War of 1991, coupled with the disappearance of the communist camp, and the consequent prevalence of the unipolar system, created an adequate geopolitical atmosphere that enabled the U.S. to re-mobilize the stagnant

Middle East process, culminating in the Madrid conference of 1991, which set the stage for the Oslo accords (1993), and the subsequent creation of the Palestinian National Authority (1994). Similarly, the 9/11 attacks (2001) and the eruption of Arab revolt (2011) altered the region's geopolitical landscape profoundly.

The Evolution of Expansionism

Through a relatively short period of time the U.S. evolved into an unrivalled global power. The early existence of the union signaled America's remarkable potentiality to emerge as a uniquely superior power.

America's potential candidature for distinguished international status was a product of three geopolitical elements. First, the geographical characteristics both protected America's territorial security and largely shaped Americans' views of their regional and international involvements. Inevitably, geography has always influenced foreign policy, where a state's worldviews and strategic preferences are to considerable extent shaped by its geographic features. As Lock Johnson put it, "the foremost advantage was geographic: the protection afforded by the wide moats of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans."[3] And regionally the U.S did not face a serious strategic threat, as "no strong rivals existed within the Western Hemisphere."[4]

Second, the country's enormous natural resources contributed to the construction of America's unrivaled economic power. To be sure, America's wealth rightly generated a feeling of self-sufficiency, and hence strengthened the isolationist inclination that relatively marked U.S. foreign policy nearly up to the end of the nineteenth century. Third, from the outset of its emergence, the U.S. conceptualization of 'self image' revolved around the concept of what came to be labeled 'American exceptionalism', shaping both America's views of the World and its role in it. Understandably, U.S. constitutional superiority, as a democratic pioneer, injected a sense of cultural and political superiority. The idealistic propensity in U.S. foreign policy, as exemplified by Wilsonianism, seems to have derived from that sense of cultural preeminence. In foreign policy terms, the U.S. self-assigned mission of democracy promotion was, occasionally, utilized as a stepping stone to both territorial and economic expansion.

On the whole, the interdependent interaction of the above geopolitical elements, coupled with decisive international transformations (such as the consequences of World Wars I & II) precipitated the emergence of unmatched U.S. preponderance. Precisely, as Brzezinski observes:

> America stands supreme in the four decisive domains of global power. Militarily, it has an unmatched global reach; economically, it remains the main locomotive of global growth; …… technologically, it retains the overall lead in the cutting-edge areas of innovations; and culturally, despite some crassness, it enjoys an appeal that is unrivalled….. It is the combination of all four that makes America the only comprehensive superpower.[5]

In brief, at the outset of its national existence, America was potentially qualified to exercise an intensively decisive role in the international arena. As Williams suggests, "it is both more accurate and more illuminating to realize that the successful revolution which began in 1775, and culminated in 1883 established the United States as world power which sought to and played a very active role in international affairs."[6] Throughout the nineteenth century, the U.S. pursued such foreign policy that was widely conceived to be relatively isolationist. Yet, America's isolation was not a principle-based strategy. Rather, it was a pragmatic orientation dictated both by American internal circumstances, where the national survival of the newly emerging republic was the primary challenge, and the then prevailing global balance of power, which was dominated by the major European powers. Precisely, America pursued a foreign policy that: avoided entangling the country in international alliances; and maintained a low profile in terms of international involvements. Thus, even under the influence of its isolationist attitude, the U.S. did not turn its back on global affairs. Rather, it embraced an approach that, as suggested by Alexander Hamilton, enabled it to manipulate the European-dominated global balance of power, while tying itself to nobody.[7]

In practical terms, during the early decades of the nineteenth century, American intellectual and policy circles developed two central themes, both of which evolved into strategic pillars of American foreign policy. First, America's universal mission as democracy promoter and human rights guardian became an entrenched feature of U.S. foreign policy. Driven by the corporate national feeling of 'American exceptionalism', Americans viewed their constitutional experience as 'the beacon of hope' for humanity. Both intellectuals and policymakers tended to view U.S. democratic institutions and principles as a cultural breakthrough upon which mankind was thrust. President Thomas Jefferson was cited to state that America was "the last best hope of mankind,"[8]

and "presidents from Abraham Lincoln to Ronald Reagan would refer to the nation as a light on a hill."[9]

However, the U.S. commitment to isolation confined its role, as suggested by John Quincy Adams, then Secretary of State in the Monroe administration, to "the well-wisher to the freedom and independence of all."[10] The second theme was the rationalization of expansion as a mechanism both to facilitate America's messianic role, and advance its vital interests. The development of these two geopolitical themes questioned the viability of isolation as a foreign policy orientation, provoking heated debates over the potential geostrategic alternatives that the U.S. ought to embrace.

Conceptually, as Robert Kagan noted, "to the generation of the early republic, to Washington, Hamilton, Franklin, and Jefferson, nothing was more certain than that …… the young republic would someday come to dominate the western hemisphere and takes its place among the world's great powers. Jefferson foresaw the establishment of a vast empire of liberty."[11] And, empirically, the Monroe doctrine of 1823, although it appeared to be a self-protection measure, was a significant stirring of the ascendancy of the expansionist-attitude within policy circles. In his State of the Union address of 1823, President James Monroe warned the European powers, "we should consider any attempt on their part to extend their system to any portion of this [western] hemisphere as dangerous to our peace and safety ……. It is equally impossible, therefore, that we should behold such interposition, in any form, with indifference."[12]

Summing up, within the course one hundred years, expansionism overwhelmingly dominated American geopolitical conceptualization. In particular, securing access to overseas markets and raw materials, economic expansion was conceived to be imperative for America's internal welfare and prosperity. At the dawn of the twentieth century, expansion had already evolved into a central component of American geopolitical text, breaking with the isolationist foreign policy, and hence setting the stage for America's global involvement both conceptually and empirically.

Towards Benevolent Imperialism

By the turn of the century, it was clear that America was steadily emerging as a great power. The then prevailing global dynamics further accelerated U.S. progression towards global supremacy. Precisely, as Paul Kennedy suggests, "industrial productivity, with science and technology,

became as ever a more vital component of national strength. Alternations in international shares of manufacturing production were reflected in the changing international shares of military power and diplomatic influence."[13] This major transformation, therefore, resulted in "dramatic changes [which] occurred in the power balances,"[14] precipitating the ascendance of the U.S. to the great power struggle.

Within the one hundred years that followed the establishment of the Union, the United States successfully surmounted its debilitating internal crisis, from building up the nation, to grouping for identity, to the civil war (1861-1865). Ultimately, America established itself into a politically stable, economically prosperous, militarily powerful, culturally coherent, and technologically preeminent power, potentially emerging as an unrivalled force. In short, "of all the changes which were taking place in the global balances during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, there can be no doubt that the most decisive one foe future was the growth of the United States."[15]

The American-Spanish war of 1898, which "was America's first overseas war of conquest,"[16] constituted a crucial landmark in the development of U.S. foreign policy, empirically reflecting the expansionist attitude that growingly characterized the country's worldviews. This war not only manifested America's decisive endeavor to dominate the Western Hemisphere, as proclaimed by the Monroe Doctrine, but, perhaps more significantly, signaled a sharp divergence in foreign policy orientations. First, it marked an end to the conventionally long running isolationist attitude, and reinforced, instead, the expansionist trend; second, it boldly served as an outright declaration of America's ascendance to the global power struggle; and finally, it launched the militarization of the U.S. foreign policy, where, henceforth, heavy reliance on military might has instrumentally characterized U.S. geostrategic approaches, notably in the Middle East. U.S. unwavering support for Israel in its armed conflicts with Arab States (1967, and 1973), invasions of Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003), and military interference in Libya (2011) were cases in point.

America's victory over Spain resulted in the territorial acquisition of both the Philippines and Cuba, the liberation of which from Spanish colonial rule was the principally avowed objective of the war. Hence, this war set a geopolitical precedent, and offered a moral justification for physical intervention on humanitarian grounds, which henceforth became an essential

characteristic of U.S. foreign policy. To be sure, the most prominent consequence of the American-Spanish war was the promulgation of the 'Open Door Policy', which constituted the lodestar of U.S. foreign policy throughout the first half of the twentieth century, projecting the American version of 'benevolent imperialism'.

Although it was initiated to resolve the trade rivalry over the Chinese market, whereby the contesting foreign powers, including the United Sates, would have a defined sphere of economic influence, the Open Door Policy of 1898, in its broader scope, was a culmination of geopolitical debates within the U.S. intellectual and policy communities. It revealed the American version of imperialism, where expansion, on the one hand, was grounded in humanitarian causes, and universal values (promotion of freedom, democracy, and human rights), and on the other advanced U.S. vital interests, tremendously extending its outreach economically, politically, strategically, and culturally. Unlike the typical colonial strategies, the Open Door Policy, as Williams contends, "Was designed to clear the way and establish the conditions under which America's preponderant economic power would extend the American system throughout the world without the embarrassment and inefficiency of traditional colonialism."[17]

Coinciding with the end of the war, the two-term presidency of Theodore Roosevelt, (14 September, 1901 to 3 March, 1909), served as incubator for the growth of the rapidly ascending notion of benevolent imperialism. Empowered by an unquestionable belief in American superiority, Roosevelt developed what came to be termed 'the Roosevelt corollary', in which he proclaimed America's right "not only to prevent interference from the outside as provided for from the Monroe Doctrine but also, and perhaps above all, to indicate and protect the national interests of the United States."[18]

Guided by the Open Door Policy, and driven by Roosevelt's expansionist zeal, U.S. foreign policy had, within less than a decade, recorded swift moves towards externalization. Actualizing his vision of America's global status, Roosevelt unprecedentedly enlarged the nation's global involvements. Not yet entangled in foreign alliances, America intervened in the Moroccan crisis of 1905, supported the insurgency in Colombia, which led to the secession of Panama, and played a decisive role in the settlement of the Russo-Japanese armed conflict of 1904.

As a realist, Roosevelt's geostrategic calculations were, by and large, rooted in realpolitik. Nonetheless, America's self-assigned universal cause of democracy promotion and human rights protection, maintained its centrality in the foreign policymaking process. Beyond its interest-based motives, expansion, in Roosevelt's geopolitical doctrine, was a sign of greatness, noble obligation, and imperative for world peace, which, as he suggested, "cannot be had until the civilized nations have expanded in some shape over the barbarous nations."[19] Thus, the first decade of the twentieth century witnessed a qualitative transformation in U.S. foreign policy orientation, where America increasingly translated its latent strategic reservoir of military, economic, cultural, and technological preponderance into systematic action, projecting its unmatched power, and hence emphasizing its centrality to global affairs.

While pursuing global power politics, the Roosevelt administration's worldview seemed to have been rooted in two geostrategic guidelines: manipulating the global balance of power in accordance with U.S. hegemonic interests; and reinforcing the notion that U.S. hegemonic centrality was indispensable for world peace, prosperity, and stability.

The Indispensable Power

By the outbreak of World War I, in 1914, the United States had already intensified its international engagement, and hence secured a remarkable foothold in the power system. Yet, mostly for strategic considerations, it didn't entangle itself in international alliances that might entail undesirable commitments. It was not until April, 1917, when America abandoned its nominally proclaimed neutrality, and, in response to German provocations, decided to enter the war considerably to score its second victory (the first was over Spain two decades earlier). Consequently, the U.S. reinforced its image, not as a mere global force simply seeking to maximize its international interests, but, more significantly, as a peerless global power with a remarkably unrivaled potential capacity to shape global landscape. World War I, as Brzezinski observed, "provided the first occasion for the massive projection of American military Force in Europe……which signaled the emergence of a new major player in the international arena."[20]

In practical terms, three main features characterized the postwar era: First, the ascendency of the Soviet-backed communist-nationalist trend that would then evolve into an ideological-oriented strategic threat to the U.S.-led western camp; second, the crushing destruction of the

European powers marked the beginning of the end of the traditional colonial system; and thirdly, the emergence of Wilsonianism as a foreign policy school of thought aiming at making the world safe for democracy, in the image of American institutional values.

One may argue that the congressional rejection of Wilson's League of Nations and the disapproval of his related fourteen points evidently signaled America's entrenched willingness to retreat to is 'splendid isolation'. To be sure, while both President Woodrow Wilson and his political opponents shared the foundational objective of internationalization, to extend both American vital interests and American political institutions and cultural values, their views of the means to these ends diverged fundamentally. Therefore, as Williams maintained, "the fight over the League of Nations was over tactics."[21] Inspired by its deeply-rooted tendency to further advance its hegemonic stature; America sustainably embraced an elaborately designed armament program in the interwar period. Despite the absence of an imminent threat, Paul Kennedy observed, "it [the United States] did allow the creation of a reasonably large and modern air force, and the navy was permitted to develop its air craft-carrier and heavy-cruiser programs."[22]

Undeterred by the great depression after 1929, the United States had remained an economic giant, with a share of 35.1% in the world manufacturing output of 1937, [23] ahead of any single power. Militarily, however, compared to the six major powers (Britain, France, Germany, Italy, the USSR, and Japan), America was a "middle weight"[24] power. But, agitated by the unsettling developments and uncertainties that ultimately led to the eruption of World War II, Franklin Roosevelt "pressed for large-scale increases in defense expenditures,"[25] which rose from 570 millions in 1933, to 1.131 millions in 1938.[26] Unarguably, its late entry into the war, which decisively tipped the scale in favor of the allies, and subsequently resulted in the destruction of the axis, had, once again, reinforced America's geopolitical image, not only as an unchallenged world hegemon, but also as a global power with excessive capacity to resolve international conflicts. Henceforward, America has increasingly been acquiring the status of being the ultimate guarantor of global security, whose international engagement was viewed as indispensable and critical to world tranquility.

The leader of the Free World

The Second World War and its consequent global balance of power constituted a sharp turning point in the development of American foreign policy. For, during its long-running quest for great power, the United States had never confronted a strategically challenging landscape similar to the one that crystallized in the aftermath of the Second World War. Indeed, the old order entirely collapsed, where: the already crumbling League of Nations disappeared; the European-dominated colonial system declined; and the vanquished powers (Nazi Germany, fascist Italy, and imperial Japan) were strategically disarmed and politically undermined. Hence, an entirely new world order emerged, producing its relevant balance of power and geopolitical text that defined world rivalry for nearly half a century.

Clearly, amongst the triumphant powers, America stood preponderant. Indeed, its unchallenged military might, vastly growing economy, which was "accounting alone for more than 50 percent of the world's GNP,"[27] technological preeminence, and, perhaps above all, constitutional and cultural gravity (American exceptionalism) unambiguously reinforced the geopolitical image of the United States as a uniquely unrivaled global power. To be sure, the ideological character of the emergent world conflict posed unprecedented challenges to America's conventional geopolitical worldviews. U.S. intellectual and policy communities, therefore, unleashed a re-conceptualization process aiming at introducing a vibrantly compelling polo-cultural thesis that would, in response to the communist-socialist rhetoric, hasten the U.S. ideological appeal and hence advance America's strategic superiority.

Before long, American intellectual and policy circles compiled a geopolitical discourse primarily composed of three fundamental themes. First, the U.S. ideological foe, the Soviet Union, was presented as a 'red flood' that must be forcibly contained, as suggested by George Kennan's two eminent articles of Mr. X and the Long Telegram. Second, the U.S emphasized its commitment to extend extensive support to those who were struggling against the red menace. As declared by the Truman Doctrine, the U.S. demonstrated its willingness "to support free people who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures."[28] Hence, America officially launched the self-assigned mission of human rights protection. And thirdly, U.S. political, intellectual, and diplomatic institutions unleashed a well-sophisticated campaign to promote western democratic values, economic dynamics, political institutions, and

cultural norms as a recipe for political stability economic prosperity, and social welfare, offering a gratifying substitute for the 'unappealing communist theory'.

Guided by George Kennan's innovative theory of containment, which constituted the grand strategy of U.S. foreign policy throughout the east-west ideological conflict, America waged a comprehensively sophisticated political warfare against the Soviet-led communist camp. Hence, what came to be labeled as the Cold War had come of age. In Kennan's words, political warfare was:

> The employment of all means at the nation's command, short of war, to achieve its national objectives. Such operations are both overt and covert. They range from such overt activities as political alliances, economic measures, and "white propaganda" to such covert operations as clandestine support of "friendly" foreign elements, "black" psychological warfare and even encouragement of underground resistance in hostile states.[29]

Consequently, the U.S. had become fully engaged in a wide range of both covert and overt activities. Militarily it intervened in the Korean War (1950 – 1953), Vietnam (1965), and the first Gulf War of 1991. Economically, the Marshall Plan of 1947 became a pillar of U.S. foreign policy in Europe. Strategically, the U.S. orchestrated a series of collective security frameworks, such as NATO (1949), SEATO (1954), and Baghdad pact of 1955.[30] Furthermore, the U.S. was involved in a number of regime change covert operations, including: Iran (1953); Guatemala (1954); and the unsuccessful Bay of Pigs (1961).

The Cold War experience was formatively historical, where it characteristically influenced American geopolitical conceptualization and impacted on the conceptual dynamics that shaped the nation's worldviews. The Cold War's ideological nature, and all-encompassing strategic scope, contributed to the formulation of the U.S. geopolitical perceptions, considerably shaping U.S. foreign policy geostrategic preferences. Precisely, it reinforced the concept of 'otherness', and stimulated the feeling of cultural superiority. It disseminated a feeling of insecurity strategically, politically, and culturally. It emerged as the primary lens through which the U.S intellectual and policy communities view world geopolitics. U.S. foreign policy making process, therefore, was considerably dominated by such vocabularies as 'national security', 'vital interests', and 'power struggle'. Thus, the various regional affairs were rarely perceived within their respective socio-cultural contexts. Henceforth, heavy reliance on military force, endorsement of covert operations as a means to advance U.S. vital interests (many of them in violation of

congressional regulations, such as the Iran-Contra scandal of 1986), and toleration of human rights violations, have invariably characterized U.S. foreign policy, notably in the Middle East.

Indeed, the Cold War tested not only America's capacity to confront an ideological foe driven by undeterred quest for world domination, but its moral credibility as well. Particularly, aligning with oppressively authoritarian regimes, and tolerating human rights violations committed by U.S.-backed autocrats, severely damaged America's image as a human rights protector and promoter of democratic values. As a result of this lack of consistency, in the Arab Middle East, for instance, where social constructivist approaches play a crucial role in shaping geopolitical perceptions, U.S. moral authority was undermined considerably, providing fertile ground for the growth of anti-Americanism. Brzezinski was right in observing that " the unwillingness to recognize a historical connection between the rise of anti-American terrorism and America's involvement in the Middle East makes the formulation of an effective strategic response to terrorism that much difficult."[31]

The Sole Superpower

At the outset of the last decade of the twentieth century America faced a series of correlated momentous events that unfolded as a result of the stumbling state of the communist camp. The Berlin wall fell in 1989, alarmingly signaling the retreat of the communist iron fist. The Soviet-backed communist regimes in Eastern Europe successively collapsed. These included Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania. The Union of Soviet Socialist Republics disintegrated, where Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Ukraine – then other republics followed – reclaimed sovereignty. The dismantling of Yugoslavia, whereby Croatia and Slovakia declared independence in 1991, precipitated the explosion of the Balkan crisis. The reunification of Germany in 1990, while severely undermining Moscow, relatively shifted the balance of power in Europe, where united Germany emerged as an economic giant, and potential political major power. As a result of mounting domestic and regional challenges the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan, which they invaded in 1979, and hence the Soviet-installed regime collapsed. Henceforth, tragedies have catastrophically been striking that country. Representing the last attempt to restore fragmenting Soviet power, the abortive coup against Mikhail Gorbachev in 1991 clearly signaled the demise of the Soviet Union as a global power. Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, posing a serious threat to both U.S. vital interests, and the pro-

American Gulf States. The U.S.-led coalition against Iraq and the latter's crushing defeat unambiguously revealed both the end of the bipolar system, and the emergence of the U.S as the sole super power.

Indeed, the foregoing formative events profoundly altered both the nature and scope of the global power struggle. America's strategic rival, the USSR, collapsed; the Cold War abruptly came to an end; the communist threat disappeared; no single power was potentially capable of seriously challenging America's supremacy; and no anti-hegemonic coalition was in sight. Hence, the U.S. stood unrivalled strategically, economically, and politically. Consequently, a unipolar system prevailed, replacing the Cold War's unipolar order.[32] With the disappearance of the Cold War's unipolar system, and the coronation of the U.S. as the global hegemon, American geopolitical discourse seemed to confront three conceptual challenges: how should this surplus primacy be exploited?; what should America's strategic role be?; and, what are American national interests?.

Towards the end of the final decade of the twentieth century, Madeleine Albright, then Secretary of State, wrote, "for the first time since the early 1930s, we face no single enemy to concentrate the mind."[33] One year later, Condoleezza Rice, then foreign policy advisor to the Republican presidential candidate, George W. Bush, asserted, "The United States has found it exceedingly difficult to define its national interests in the absence of the Soviet power."[34] Seemingly, the post-Cold War administrations were increasingly concerned with the surplus supremacy that the nation possessed in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War. As Richard Haass observed, "the fundamental question that confronts America today [1999] is how to exploit its enormous surplus of power in the world."[35]

The above statements reveal that post-Cold War U.S foreign policy appeared to face a 'threat deficit'. To be sure, a mixture of strategic issues exhausted U.S. geostrategic efforts. First, created by the anarchic loss of strategic control in the successor states of the Soviet Union, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) posed a lethal threat to U.S. interests and U.S. allies, notably Europe. Second, the U.S. was involved in great power management, where it had to accommodate Russia, contain China, and redefine its strategic ties with its traditional allies, notably Europe and Japan. Specifically, with the absence of the communist threat, the geostrategic preferences of America's allies were no longer captured by the Cold War's

calculations. Thirdly, the regional and ethnic conflicts that erupted in such areas as the Balkans, the Caucasus, South Asia, and the Middle East, captured a great deal of U.S. geostrategic efforts, seeking to contain the consequences of these conflicts in accordance with post-Cold War America's worldview.

Nonetheless, these issues were too limited to fulfill America's strategic magnitude, and hence disqualified to represent the 'other', the existence of which was essentially required to, as Madeleine Albright put it, 'concentrate the mind'. For nearly five decades, the Evil Empire represented the 'other', whose: threatening character; notorious geopolitical image; failed model of life invariably underpinned U.S. self-claimed global mission of containing the 'red flood', and justified the former's foreign policy choices, which frequently violated its avowed democratic and human rights commitments. Internally, the perceived Soviet threat tended to be employed to rally the public and rationalize the mounting increases in the military budget. The demise of the communist foe, therefore, stripped the U.S. of what appeared to be a compelling rationale that appealingly interpreted its internal and external geopolitical attitudes. Thus, U.S. global primacy, at that particular unipolar moment, was primarily challenged by a 'threat deficit'. Hence, "there was a string of attempts to find a replacement for the Soviet Union as the enemy focuses to US foreign and military policy."[36]

Global War on Terror

Threat deficit continued to be a major source of perplexity, until "the terrorist attacks of 9/11 offered a solution to this problem… [bringing the immediate] post-Cold War period to an abrupt end."[37] The 9/11 terrorist attacks marked an end to the state of perplexity that U.S. foreign policy seemed to have experienced throughout the immediate aftermath of the Cold War (1991-2000). These devastating attacks generated a mixture of frightened and retaliatory attitudes, precipitating the domination of neo-conservative reasoning that validated the supporting argument of Global War on Terror (GWoT). Henceforth, GWoT was endorsed as the core – though not the grand – strategy of U.S. foreign policy, whereby the perceived global threat, emanating from 'Islamic violent radicalism' was exploited to justify the George W. Bush's militarized and coercive policy.

Throughout the George W. Bush two-term presidency, GWoT served as the primary worldview that underpinned the administration's geostrategic preferences, rallied the public, and shaped America's international behavior. It was in the context of GWoT that America invaded Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003), and allied with such repressively autocratic regimes as Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, and Musharraf of Pakistan, whom President Bush praised: "I admire the strong leadership of President Musharraf."[38] The George W. Bush administration violated America's avowed human rights principles in such places as Guantanamo Bay, Abu Ghraib in Iraq, and the secret CIA prisons in Eastern Europe.[39]

The George W. Bush administration's analysis attributed the emergence of extremism to a 'freedom deficit', where lack of democracy, political oppression, and social injustice were cited as the primary sources for the growth of violent radicalism in the Middle East. Draining off the sources of desperation and terrorism, the administration, therefore, waged an extensive political and cultural war on the Arab Middle East to both advance democratic reform, and dismantle the region's cultural identity. Particularly, the region's Islamic-based cultural structure was conceived to be a bulwark against the region's full integration into globally recognized cultural and political modernization. The administration thus failed to make a clear distinction between the radicals and the moderate Islamists. Despite their role in driving the region to a calamitous state of political stagnation, economic deprivation, and social injustice, the pro-American autocratic regimes were seen as an anchor of stability.

Hence, the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), which was declared in December 2002, by Colin Powell, the then Secretary of State, "represents a high-profile attempt to break free from pre 9/11 standard approaches by structuring its programs on four thematic pillars-political, economics, education, and women's empowerment-and by supporting indigenous [Non Governmental Organizations] NGOs directly on a more innovative and flexible basis."[40]

In sum, the foreign policy of the George W. Bush White House was built around two pillars: counterterrorism, which aimed at eradicating the perceived Islamist threat to both U.S. hegemonic interests, and U.S. homeland security; and the freedom agenda, as represented by MEPI. Both programs tended to conflate moderate Islamism and violent extremism. They simplistically reduced the region's historical agony to mere cosmetic reforms, and managed change.

Implications for Political Islam

Unlike the Cold War, to which almost all strategically significant issues were subordinated, the Global War on Terror (GWoT) did not represent America's grand strategy. Nonetheless, it was intended to be the core strategy of the U.S. foreign policy, guiding the official thinking, and shaping geostrategic preferences both regionally and globally. GWoT was designed to be long, ideological, and global-scale struggle against 'Islamic extremism', which was portrayed, by the George W. Bush administration and neo-conservative intellectuals, as an imminent threat to U.S. homeland security, global leadership, and regional hegemonic interests. The strategies of GWoT and the freedom agenda, that the administration endorsed as the pillars of the U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East appear to have further strengthened the autocratic political setting, isolated moderate Islamists, and heightened anti-Americanism.

Reinforcing both the durability and the ideological character of GWoT, President George W. Bush, in a series of statements, asserted, “our nation is at war ..... our war on terror is well begun, but it is only begun."[41] Four years later (March 2006), the President reaffirmed, "America is at war."[42] In the last year of his second term (January 2008), the President stressed, “the fight against the forces of extremism is the great ideological struggle of our time."[43] Exemplified by Al-Qaeda and its like-minded violent factions, 'Islamic extremism' appears to have fulfilled the strategically required 'other' to identify the constructed 'global threat'.

Historically, U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East was obsessively captured by the notion of stability, where the U.S. invariably aligned itself with despotic regimes, increasingly tolerated human rights violations, and contributed to the blockade of genuine democratic reforms. As Condoleezza Rice, then Secretary of State, observed, “the Middle East was treated as an exception for so many decades. U.S. policy there focused almost exclusively on stability."[44.] But this pursuit of stability was at the expense of democracy. And after more than sixty years of preferring stability over democracy, Rice concluded, "we achieved neither."[45]

The Islamist factor lies at the heart of the post-Cold War U.S. Middle East geostrategic calculation. Moderate Islamism, in particular, emerged as an unrivalled political force, seeking democratic change, and hence posing a threat to the American-backed authoritarian elites. In its Global War on Terror, the George W. Bush administration failed to make a clear distinction

between the grass-roots anti-authoritarian moderate forces that seek reforms through democratic means, on the one hand, and the aimless extremist forces that violently react out of congestion and despair, on the other. Thus Graham Fuller, a well noted scholar of Islam and former CIA analyst, suggests, "it is important that facile labels such as 'terrorism' and 'fundamentalism' be carefully examined before they push the United States into strong stands against native movements that threaten existing, usually unconstitutional, regimes that seek western support."[46]

The George W. Bush's approach to mainstream Islamic activism widened the western-Islamic gap, and reinforced the cultural dimension of U.S.-Islamist conflict. Islamism was indiscriminately treated as a source of threat to U.S. regional interests. "This argument gained strength with U.S. policymakers in the wake of 9/11 attacks."[47] The existing pro-American autocratic power structure, therefore, was preferred to a democratic transformation that might empower Islamist rule. As a former CIA officer observed, "these regimes are not stupid..... they raise the Islamist threat and we fall for it, because we want their counterterrorism cooperation. That has trumped the idea of democracy."[48]

Summing up, represented by the three pillars of GWoT, MEPI, and freedom agenda, George W. Bush's approach to the Middle East in general, and Islamic activism in particular, generated three counterproductive consequences. First, the arrogant nature of the Bush II administration's foreign policy reinforced the ideological and cultural dimensions of the Western-Islamic conflict. Particularly, the GWoT has widely been viewed as a cultural war against Islam rather that a counterterrorism strategy.[49] Second, the U.S. lack of commitment to genuine democratic reform disseminated a feeling of despair and alienation. Exclusion of moderate Islamists from political competition severely discredited the administration's freedom agenda. The political sphere in which the mainstream Islamists could operate was restricted, "resulting in widespread, severe discontent among citizens who see no legal way to change the situation."[50] Third, the George W. Bush legacy considerably contributed to the heightening of anti-Americanism, empowering the extremist trends.

Breaking with his predecessor's, militarized policy, and coercive diplomacy, Barack Obama adopted a liberal conciliatory posture towards the Middle East. In his inaugural address, the President asserted, "To the Muslim world, we seek a new way forward, based on mutual interest and mutual respect."[51] Obama's speeches in Ankara (April 2009), and Cairo (June 2009) signaled

a change in the U.S. geostrategic approach to the Muslim world.[52] Nonetheless, influenced by the security calculations, the chronic U.S. preference for 'stability' over 'democracy' remains constant, increasingly contributing to the public's mounting rejection of the pro-American authoritarian status quo.

The public's deep-seated discontent culminated in an unprecedentedly large scale revolution which erupted at the outset of 2011, profoundly transforming the Middle Eastern geopolitical landscape. What came to be labeled 'Arab Spring' swept the region, deposing autocratic regimes, many of which were close U.S. allies, such as Bin Ali of Tunisia (January 14th, 2011), and Hosni Mubarak of Egypt (February 11th, 2011).[53] The Arab Spring shifted the regional balance of power in favor of the mainstream Islamists, who, as result of the democratic transformation, have significantly been empowered, posing unprecedented challenges to both U.S. conceptual deliberations, and empirical approaches. The stunning electoral victories of moderate Islamists, particularly in Tunisia (October 2011), and Egypt (November &December 2011, and January 2012) are cases in point. U.S. Middle East foreign policy, therefore, will likely witness a fundamental transformation in its geopolitical perceptions, geostrategic preferences, and implementation.

U.S. Middle East Policy: the Paradigmatic Failure

U.S. foreign policy tends to be a product of a multitude of several interrelated dynamics. These dynamics contribute, to varying degrees, to the making of the ultimate geostrategic preferences. The geopolitical discourse in terms of which 'self-image' and the 'other' are defined, appears to be the key force that guides the official thinking. Conceptually, the notion of 'American exceptionalism' has captured the worldviews of Democratic and Republican administrations alike. In Ronald Reagan's words, "America is a shining city upon a hill whose beacon light guides freedom-loving people everywhere."[54] President Bill Clinton described America as the "indispensable nation". President George W. Bush asserted "our nation is chosen by God and commissioned by history to be a model to the world."[55] Hence, exceptionalism and its consequent feeling of cultural superiority have shaped America's geopolitical perception of the world and its role atop it. Thus, Islamism was conceptualized within this context of self-assigned mission of democracy promotion, and human rights protection, undermining the forces of darkness.

The second geopolitical dynamic that impacts foreign policy choices is the school of thought, to which the president and his foreign policy team belong, shaping their worldview. Such policy approaches as engagement, containment, and military intervention are largely rooted in their relevant intellectual paradigms of liberal internationalism, realism/conservatism, and neo-conservatism respectively. Diverse U.S. tactical approaches to the Middle East were, to certain extent, influenced by the given administration's conceptual reference and geopolitical worldview. For instance, George W. Bush's coercive diplomacy (freedom agenda) and militarized policy (Global War on Terror) were rooted in a synthesis of various foreign policy rends, including conservative nationalism, neo-conservatism, and defensive realism. Whereas, Barack Obama's reconciliatory posture towards the Muslim world, as reflected in his speeches in Ankara, April 2009, and Cairo, June 2009, revealed the liberal internationalist orientation of his administration, where peaceful engagement and multilateralism constitute the core pillars of Obama's foreign policy, as delineated in the U.S. National Security Strategy of 2010.[56] Finally, U.S. geostrategic behavior in certain circumstances tends to be influenced by the prevailing global and regional balance of power. The demise of the U.S.-backed autocratic power structures, as a result of the Arab revolt, altered the regional balance of power, where U.S. capability to impede Islamists' ascendance to power seems to have been constrained immeasurably. The post-Arab spring geopolitical landscape further empowered the grassroots moderate Islamic movements, whose domination of the political scene is highly likely.

U.S. Islamist policy in the last two decades (1990 – 2010) appeared to be counterproductive: the role of Islam, as the primary source of cultural identity and political inspiration, extended considerably; Islamism steadily maintained its political significance, emerging as an unrivaled socio-political catalyst for change; and anti-American sentiment further heightened, jeopardizing U.S. interests and discrediting U.S. moral authority. This policy failure can largely be attributed to three factors. First, the U.S. policy community, by and large, seems to have overlooked the character of Islam as a socio-cultural shaper, and political energizer, tending to reduce it to a mere spiritual mission. Paradoxically, the official pronouncements tended to praise Islam as a civilized and tolerant faith, and condemned Islamic political activism.

Second, most American intellectuals and policymakers appeared to have misinterpreted the very geopolitical dynamics that contributed to the evolution of what came to be labeled

‘Islamism’. The post-Cold War administrations failed to properly diagnose the region’s chronic dilemma: the oppressive exclusion of Islam from the public sphere. The Clinton administration embraced an economic interpretation, attributing the rise of Islamic resurgence to socio-economic deprivation; whereas George W. Bush linked the phenomenon to freedom deficit and political alienation, viewing Islamism as a mere reactive protest movement that could be contained through economic liberation and political liberalization. Both administrations’ proposed remedies of economic reform and freedom agenda were, therefore, irrelevant. Particularly, “the so-called freedom agenda of [George W] Bush was a failure of both conceptualization and implementation.”[57] Hence, both Presidents Clinton and George W. Bush, by the end of their respective terms, achieved short-lived success. In the deeper sense, Islamism is rooted in the political nature of Islam, fuelled by the entirely failing U.S.-backed authoritarian power structures, mobilized by collective feelings of political powerlessness and civilizational marginalization, and invariably energized by Muslims’ collaborate desire to restore the lost Islamic primacy. ‘Islam is the solution’ increasingly captured Muslims’ cultural and political inspirations.

Third, lack of comprehensive strategic vision constituted a characteristically major incompleteness in the U.S. approach to Islamic activism. Although far from being monolithic, moderate variants of Islamic groups, most notably the Muslim Brotherhood and its affiliates, are largely united by common ideological predispositions, geopolitical perceptions, and geostrategic preferences. With the absence of such deliberately designed intellectual parameters, the U.S. Islamist orientation has tended to be driven by scattered events as they randomly unfolded, conflating radicalism with moderation, and equating aimless violent acts with anti-authoritarian peaceful political opposition. Also, the connotations of such terms as sharia, umma, and jihad were dogmatically identified with brutality, regression, extremism, and theocracy as it figured in the western political literature. As a result of the lack of theoretical guidance, and encompassing strategic vision, U.S. interest was ill-defined, and U.S. policy was misled, where America aligned itself with despotic regimes.

In short, the post-Cold War U.S. Middle East policy was not only dysfunctional, but also counterproductive, both reinforcing the autocratic status quo, and widening the anti-American sentiment. This policy failure can largely be attributed to; the misreading of the role of Islam as

the primary source of ideological, and political inspiration; geostrategic miscalculation of the growing socio-political significance of Islamism as the leading catalyst of change; and mismanagement of the region's geopolitical landscape, where the U.S. invariably aligned itself with tyrannical regimes, unconditionally supported Israel, and failed to hold a sustainable strategic dialogue with moderate Islamists. These accumulations, along with other reasons, ultimately led to the eruption of the Arab spring at the outset of 2011.

Conclusion

The rise of the United States as a global power has been a historic breakthrough, profoundly altering the dynamics, the scope, and the nature of the global power struggle, and, as a result, increasingly impacting the destinies of many nations all over the globe. America's combination of vast physical resources, geographical privilege (protection by two vast oceans), self-efficiency, institutional creativities, and value-based pluralistic system enabled the nation to sustain geopolitical preeminence, ultimately emerging as the sole superpower, with unmatched global reach and with no rival in sight. The national feeling of cultural superiority and the notion of 'American exceptionalism' tend to shape America's geopolitical perceptions of 'self' and 'other', defining the U.S. self-assigned mission of democracy promotion and human rights protection. Crucial historic landmarks presented the U.S. with opportunities significantly to project its centrality to international affairs. Precisely, U.S. decisive roles in World Wars I and II, as well as the Cold War both reinforced America's significance for world affairs, and unambiguously revealed its unrivalled multi-faceted power. In brief, America's preponderance has harmoniously been generated by a combination of preparation and opportunities.

The inauguration of the 'open door policy', in the wake of the American-Spanish war of 1898, introduced expansionism as a prelude necessity to both internal well being, and promotion of the American version of democracy. To be sure the Monroe Doctrine of 1823 revealed an early signal of this expansionist inclination, but expansionism became an integral part of U.S. foreign policy at the outset of the nineteenth century, marking the realist, idealist, and liberal internationalist schools of thought. The legacies of –just to name a few – Theodore Roosevelt (realist), Woodrow Wilson (idealist), Ronald Reagan (realist), and George W. Bush (neo-conservative) are cases in point. The post-World War II great power struggle intensified the

expansionist tendency of U.S. foreign policy, breaking with isolationism, which, as Charles Krauthammer suggests, became "an ideology of fear."[58]

The abrupt collapse of the Cold War saddled America with strategic perplexity: numerous surplus of power with no enemy to concentrate the mind. The 9/11 attacks seemed to have solved this problem, where American public and geostrategic resources were mobilized against 'Islamic terrorism', and hence Global War on Terror (GWoT) became the U.S. core strategy throughout George W. Bush's two-term presidency (2001-2009).[59] Henceforth, a stereotypical image of the defiant Middle East figured prominently in American intellectual and policy communities, where the region has dogmatically been identified with the forces of political violence, intellectual extremism, cultural intolerance, and aversion to the secular-based modernization.

Post-Cold War U.S. approaches to the Middle East failed to recognize the vastly ascending Islamist factor. The region, therefore, was viewed through the Cold War's typical prism.[60] America's geostrategic perceptions continued to anchor U.S. regional interests in the stability of the pro-American authoritarian regimes, perpetuating the increasingly unpopular tyrannical power structures, and hence antagonizing a wide segment of the Arab public. The counterterrorism requirements prompted the George W. Bush administration further to reinforce its alliance with regional authoritarianism. Thus, the vastly growing socio-political Islamic resurgence was simplistically equated with 'terrorism'. Neo-conservative intellectuals, in particular, tend to reduce mainstream Islamism to a mere fanatically defiant anti-modernization movement mobilized by a mixture of historical and cultural antipathy towards the Judeo-Christian West.[61]

Both George W. Bush's conservative worldview and the liberal internationalist approaches of Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama failed to capture the region's geopolitical realities: the zealous aspiration for political liberation; the Islamic-oriented cultural identity that invariably tends to shape the collective geopolitical images of 'self' and 'other'; and the increasingly crucial socio-cultural appeal and political perceptibility of the Islamist forces. As Graham Fuller contends, although "various administrations in Washington have applied themselves to understand this phenomenon...they have been slow to learn not least because the subject is in flux."[62] Failing adequately to capture the region's longing for freedom, [63] the misperceived U.S Middle East geostrategic calculation relatively contributed to the eruption of what came to be

labeled ‘Arab Revolution’ that swept the region at the outset of 2011, unseating many pro-American autocrats.[64]

Clearly, relying on the rationalist-realist, and security approaches to understanding the Middle Eastern geopolitical dynamics appears to be inadequate. The region’s political scene is and interdependently constructed by a multitude of historical, cultural, and ideological forces. It is not only the material interests that shape the Muslim-majority societies perceptions and attitudes. Rather, such forces as identities, values, and religious creeds tend to exert a critical influence on peoples’ political and moral judgments. Thus, understanding Islam’s ideological predispositions, political character, and cultural components, is crucial to both examining the viability of U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East, and analytically foreseeing the potential trajectories of the U.S.-Islamist relations.

Notes

1. Samuel p. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, p. 21.
2. Richard Hofstadter, *The American Political Tradition*, p. 275.
3. Lock Johnson, *Seven Sins of American Foreign Policy*, p.3.
4. Ibid, p. 3.
5. Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard*, p. 24.
6. William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, p. 21.
7. Henry Kissinger, *Does America Need a Foreign Policy?*, p. 238.
8. Lock Johnson, *Seven Sins of American Foreign Policy*, p. 14.
9. Ibid, p. 14.
10. Henry Kissinger, *Does American Need a Foreign Policy?*, p. 238.
11. Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*, p. 87.
12. Lock Johnson, *Seven Sins of American Foreign Policy*, p. 13.
13. Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of The Great Powers*, p. 197.
14. Ibid, p. 197.
15. Ibid, p. 242.
16. Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard*, p. 3.
17. William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, p. 50.
18. Henry Kissinger, *Does America Need a Foreign Policy*, p. 241.
19. William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, p. 63.
20. Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard*, p. 4.
21. William Appleman Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, p. 110.
22. Paul Kennedy, *The Rise and Fall of The Great Powers*, p. 328.
23. Ibid, Table 30, p. 330.
24. Ibid, p. 329.
25. Ibid, p. 331.
26. Ibid, Table 27, p. 296.
27. Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard*, p.23.

28. President Harry Truman's Speech before Congress, March 12, 1947.
29. Quoted in *Building Moderate Muslim Network*, Rand Corporation, p. 11.
30. Although it was not officially a member of the Baghdad pact, the U.S. was the strategic sponsor of that organization, which was meant to serve as a bulwark against the Soviet penetration.
31. Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Choice: Global Domination or Global Leadership*, p. 30.
32. See Charles Krauthammer, "The Unipolar Moment", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, Issue 1, 1990/1991, pp. 23-33.
33. Madeleine K. Albright, "The Testing of American Foreign Policy", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 77, Issue 6, November/December 1998, pp. 50-64.
34. Condoleezza Rice, "Promoting The National Interests", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 79, Issue 1, pp. 45-62, January/February 2000.
35. Richard Haass, "What To Do With American Primacy", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 78, Issue 5, September/October 1999, pp. 37-49.
36. Barry Buzan, “Will the Global War On Terrorism be the New Cold War?”, *International Affairs*, Vol. 82, issue 6, November 2006, pp. 1101-1118.
37. Ibid. pp. 1101-1118.
38. President Bush's State of the Union Address, January 29, 2002.
39. *European Parliament Report on the alleged use of European countries by the CIA for the transportation and illegal detention of prisoners*, January 26, 2007.
40. Angel Rabasa and others, *Building Moderate Muslim Network*, Rand Corporation, p. 57.
41. President Bush's State of the Union Address, January 29, 2002.
42. The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, March 2006.
43. President Bush's Speech in Abu Dhabi, UAE, January 13, 2008.
44. Condoleezza Rice, "Rethinking The National Interests", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 87, Issue 4, July/August 2008, pp. 2-26.
45. Condoleezza Rice, “Remarks at the American University of Cairo”, June 20, 2005.
46. Graham E. Fuller, *Algeria: The Next Fundamentalist State?*, p. 113.
47. Tamara Cofman Wittes, *Freedom Unsteady March: America's Role in Building Arab Democracy*, p. 23.

48. Quoted in ibid, p. 23.
49. See John L. Esposito, & Dalia Mogahed, *Who Speaks for Muslims?*, pp. 66-98.
50. Marina Ottaway & Amr Hamzawy, *Getting to Pluralism: Political Actors in the Arab World*, p. 101.
51. President Barack Obama's Inaugural Address, January 20, 2009.
52. See President Barack Obama's Remarks to Turkish Parliament in April 2009, and Speech in Cairo in June 2009.
53. See Robin Wright, *Rock the Casbah: Rage and Rebellion across the Islamic World*, pp. 16-40.
54. Quoted in Paul R. Viotti, *American Foreign Policy*, p. 110.
55. Quoted in ibid, p. 111.
56. See U.S. National Strategy, the White House, May 2010.
57. Brian Katulis, *Democracy promotion in the Middle East and the Obama Administration*, A Century Foundation Report, 2009.
58. Charles Krauthammer, *Democratic Realism: An American Foreign Policy for a Unipolar World*, p. 3.
59. See Zbegniew Brzezinski, *The Choice: Global Domination or Global Leadership*, pp. 7-40; Patrick Porter, "Long Wars and Long Telegrams: Containing Al-Qaeda", *International Affairs*, Vol. 85, Issue 2, March 2009, pp. 285-301
60. See James A. Bill and Rebecca Bill Chavez, "The Politics of Incoherence: The United States and the Middle East", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 56, No. 4, Autumn, 2002, pp. 562-575.
61. See Robert Kagan, *The Return of History and the End of Dreams*, pp. 80-5; Bernard Lewis, "Free at Last", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 88, Issue 2, Mar/Apr 2009, pp. 77-88; Daniel Pipes, "Islam and Islamism: Faith and Ideology", *National Interest*, spring 2000.
62. Graham E. Fuller, *US Policy towards Political Islam*, p. 1.
63. See Michael Mandelbaum, *The Frugal Superpower: America's Global Leadership in a Cash-strapped Era*, pp. 137-80.
64. See Shmuel Bar, "America's Fading Middle East Influence", Hoover Institution, *Policy Review No. 166*, April 2011; Katrina Dalacoura, "The 2011 Uprising in the

Arab Middle East: Political Change and Geopolitical Implications", *International Affairs*, Vol. 88, Issue 1, January/February 2012, pp. 63-79.

Chapter 2

Political Islam

The Quest for Power in Pursuit of Islamic Primacy

Undeterred by ceaseless series of physical oppression and political exclusion, political Islam has evolved to a position of significant socio-political force in the Middle East. Indeed, throughout the second half of the twentieth century, Islamists of various types have frequently been subjected to systematic persecution by the ruling regimes, many of which have widely been classified as American allies. Nonetheless, Islamist movements "have shown the ability not only to craft messages with widespread popular appeal but also, and most importantly, to create organizations with genuine social bases and develop coherent political strategies. Other parties, by and large, have failed on all accounts." [1]

The centrality of Islamism in the current Middle Eastern landscape vividly suggests that genuine political transformation can only be achieved with real participation of moderate Islamists. Thus, the fruitlessness of the American-led democratic reformations is partly attributed to the exclusion of moderate political Islam.

Islamism is hardly new to the American political and intellectual establishments. But, understandably, since the 9/11 disastrous attacks it has increasingly been acquiring overwhelming attention. On the intellectual level, a tremendous amount of literature on the subject has growingly been published to serve as policy guidelines. And on the policy level, Global War on Terror (GWoT) and its subsequent ramifications occupy central positions in America's grand strategy. Nevertheless, while approaching political Islam, American policymakers have noticeably been missing the reality that "in the Arab world today, the best organized, most popular, and most effective opposition movements call for an Islamic reform of society and state."[2]

American contemporary perceptions of political Islam are, by and large, shaped by three factors. First, there is the stereotypical image of Islam that had evolved out of the historical Islamic-western conflict. Although America's involvement in the Muslim world flourished during the Cold War era, "images derived from centuries of European experience are an

important part of the intellectual approach to Islam."[3] As a result of this long history of confrontation between Islam and the west and with the end of the superpower bipolarity, and the consequent disappearance of America's ideological rival, the Soviet Union, "Islam has evolved in the minds of many observers as the next most likely candidate of opposition to western interests across much of the globe."[4] As the most prominent expression of what came to be labeled as "Islamic awakening", political Islam has largely been conceived to be a security threat to American vital interests. Similarly, collective Muslim attitudes towards the "imperial west" are considerably influenced by this ill-defined concept of the west versus Islam. However, while some western intellectuals believe that "Islam as a faith is not on a collision course with the west,"[5] others view Islam – and notably its political manifestation "as the major threat to the west and the western way of life."[6]

Second, there is the Iranian revolution of 1979. Driven by a mixture of domestic calculation, revolutionary zeal, and premature strategic reading of global and regional balances of power, the leading elite of the revolution adopted a radical attitude towards the United States. Prior to this event, the United States had excessive influence over the monarchic regime of the Shah. Indeed, according to the Twin Pillar policy, the Shah along with Saudi Arabia, were identified as the primary guardians of U.S. interests in the Persian Gulf. Ensuring stability, the U.S. successive administrations not only supported the Shah's autocratic regime, but also tolerated his security apparatuses' systemic violations of human rights, heightening the anti-American sentiment.

Furthermore, the anti-Americanism that overwhelmingly captured revolutionary Iran seemed to be rooted in such American political misconduct as the overthrow of the popular Prime Minister Dr. Mohammed Musaddaq who nationalized the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in 1951, antagonizing both Britain and the United States. Musaddaq's anti-western attitude enraged Washington, triggering the fear that Iran might fall to Communism. President Dwight Eisenhower, therefore, authorized a CIA-directed covert operation to remove Musaddaq in 1953. Henceforth, the U.S. propelled the Shah, and the Iranian public developed a hostile attitude towards the West in general, and the United States in particular. Thus, the oppressive posture of the Shah coupled with the U.S. policy of stability over democracy paved the way for the Ayatollah Khomeini's Islamic Revolution that erupted in 1979, constituting the first contact of Political Islam with the United States.

Indeed, the U.S. was first exposed to 'Islamism in power' through the Iranian Revolution, where Islamists were indiscriminately equated with Khomeini's theological, undemocratic, and anti-western model of governance. Such politically unjustifiable and morally ruthless acts as the attacks on the American embassy in Tehran on November 4, 1979, and the subsequent hostage crisis, which "was one of the most humiliating episodes in American history,"[7] not only antagonized the American public, but, more importantly, offered a notoriously horrifying model of Islamic politics. The subsequent Iranian geostrategic preferences, including the Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988), the exportation of the revolution through the mobilization of the Shiite minorities in the Gulf States, and labeling the U.S. as the great Satan, extremely subverted the geopolitical image of 'Islamism in power', where the Iranian model has widely been perceived to be "the norm rather than the exception where Islamic regimes come to power."[8]

The Iranian experiment constituted a formative turning point in the development of American-Islamist relations. It contributed to the making of the notoriously brutal image of Islamism. Khomeini established his rule on the divine right, where the clerical establishment enjoys an absolute power. Despite the parliamentary elections, and the peaceful transfer of the presidential power, which is a mere executive office, the final authority rests with the Supreme Leader of the Revolution, the post that was held by Khomeini himself from 1979 until his death in 1989. Constitutionally, this post is the highest ranking political and religious authority in the Islamic Republic of Iran. This clerical order reinforced the western fears that Islam and democracy are not compatible, and hence Islamism cannot be integrated into the globally recognized political modernity. As Fawaz Gerges suggests, "in the American imagination, revolutionary Islam as practiced by Khomeini came to be associated with terrorism, fascism, and barbarism."[9]

The emergence of Iran as an anti-American regional power posed a threat to American vital interests in the Middle East, curtailed U.S. freedom of maneuver in the Persian Gulf, and hence profoundly altered America's geostrategic and security calculations. The U.S. sided with the late Iraqi dictator, Saddam Hussein, in his war with Iran (1980-1988); after the liberation of Kuwait in 1991, President George H.W. Bush decided against marching to Baghdad and ousting the Iraqi regime, because Saddam served as a deterrent to Revolutionary Iran; and Iran's nuclear program has increasingly been straining U.S.-Iranian relations. Departing from the reconciliatory rhetoric

it embraced in its early months in office, the Obama administration "no longer seeks engagement with the Islamic Republic, or even containment of the long-term foe. Confrontation and economic strangulation are the name of the game. …….. The paradigm of 'engagement' has suffered a fatal blow, replaced with the paradigm of confrontation."[10] In short, notwithstanding the fact that the Iranian case does not represent the mainstream Sunni Political Islam, the latter has largely been equated with the Iranian revolution, and hence depicted as "revolutionary, disruptive, and anti-western force."[11]

A third factor affecting perception is the extremist violence that radical Islamists espoused as a means forcefully to advance their political agenda. Although it is well realized, notably in the expert circles, that what came to be stigmatized as "militant Islamic movements" represent only a tiny fraction of Islamism, "they loom large in the west's imagination as a result of their acts of terror." [12]

Shaped by these factors, (namely: the stereotypical image of undemocratic and anti-western Islam; Iranian revolution; and isolated violent acts), political Islam, as widely perceived in the U.S., is incompatible with the reality on the ground, where "most mainstream Islamic movements operate peacefully within natural boundaries and attempt to influence and transform their societies and politics largely through constitutional means even the constitutional and political cards are stacked against them."[13] This ill-defined perception of Islamism has produced counterproductive policies, where anti-Americanism heightens, Islamists' publicity firmly expands, political congestions further escalate, and American-backed forces, notably the ruling elites and liberals, are increasingly becoming more alienated. The point here is that America's perception of political Islam, in terms of its conceptual components, social appeal, and political magnitude, is, to a great extent, a product of wishful thinking rather than realistic approaches to the region's geopolitical landscape. Consequently, the applied policies- including promotion of democracy, empowerment of women, and combating terror- have been relatively fruitless.

In practical terms, to viably approach Islamism, "it is valuable for the United States… to develop an understanding of the dynamic of Islamist movements and a set of working principles on how to approach the problem."[14] Therefore, moderate Islamism needs to be contextualized within its relevant historical, political, and ideological contexts. Historically, it was the

civilizational collapse of Islam that generated persistent feelings of humiliation and powerlessness. Politically, it is the lack of good governance that engendered pervasive political and economic deprivation, which has occasionally been transformed into armed violence. And ideologically, it is the political character of Islam that has constantly been energizing the revivalist attitude and mobilizing Muslims' political aspiration.

The Political Character of Islam

To the vast majority of Muslims, Islam is not a mere spiritual mission whose sole objective is to fulfill individual's needs. Rather, it is a complementary set of principles, values, and beliefs that thoroughly covers all aspects of life. Islam, therefore, is "more deeply integrated institutionally into state and society than other comparable religions."[15] Islam as such has invariably exercised great impact on Muslims' political and cultural perceptions. Its central role, as revealed in the two primary sources, the Quran and Sunna, revolves around two fundamental themes: to provide guidance for human community; and to establish the Islamic based society that would operate in full conformity with the comprehensively formulated Islamic doctrines.

Admittedly, it has been this very political character of Islam that lies behind the undeterred endeavors of Islamists to re-establish the well overdue Islamic state that would, on the one hand, serve as an instrument to restore lost Islamic greatness and retain the disintegrated Islamic power. And, on the other, manifest the emulative model of the desired Islamic society as theoretically presented in the Quran, and practically embodied by the two guiding political models, the Prophet's state and the rightly guided caliphate.

After thirteen years of siege in Mecca, the Prophet's city of origin, where Muslims were ruthlessly subjected to physical persecution, economic sanctions, and social ostracism, the Prophet and his companions migrated to Medina (about 400 miles north to Mecca) in 622 A.D. In an outright articulation of the political nature of Islam, the Prophet had declared the rise of the Islamic state right upon arrival in Medina, with himself as the head of state and the commander in chief of the armed forces. The Prophet as such "governed place and people, dispensed justice, collected taxes, commanded armies, waged wars, and made peace." [16] Indeed, the Prophet laid the fundamental pillars of his emergent state at the early stages of its existence. Representing the state's constitution, the Medina document, which is viewed as "one of the greatest political

documents which history has known," [17] defined the state's political features. Whereby, freedom of faith was protected, and citizenship was based on political belonging rather than religious identity. Hence both Jews and non-Muslim Arabs were incorporated into the state's political constituency, and recognized as legitimate citizens with equal rights and duties. Moreover, establishing the ideological identity of the state, the Medina document clearly emphasized the centrality of Islam as the supreme ideological and constitutional reference of the state.

The Prophet's state was succeeded by the rightly-guided caliphate (632-661 A.D), where four of the Prophet's top companions had successively ruled the state. Right upon the Prophet's death, even before he was buried, his companions held a conference to elect his successor as head of state. Abu Baker, one of the Prophet's most significant companions, was ultimately selected, and hence became the first elected caliph- head of state- in the post-prophet era. Islamists, therefore, argue that the unprecedentedly democratic way through which the first caliph and his three successors were elected constitutes a model of emulation that Islamic politics is compulsorily required to adhere to as a religious obligation rather than a mere political mechanism. However, the rightly-guided caliphate, in Islamist literature, serves as a source of inspiration. For such political concepts as sovereignty of the people, civil liberty, and social justice, flourished within its tenure of thirty years.

With the collapse of the rightly-guided Caliphate as a result of the assassination of the fourth caliph in 661A.D, Islamic political discourse diverged from its genuine mission to establish a value-based socio-political system. And hence history took another path. To sum up, "from the lifetime of its founder, and therefore in its sacred scriptures, Islam is associated in the minds and memories of Muslims with the exercise of political and military power." [18] The foregoing analysis suggests that Islam, as a way of life, can only be genuinely implemented through a political apparatus. Attainment of power, therefore, has become the core aim of Islamists, who believe in the potential capacity of Islam-if empowered- to provide curative remedies for the deeply-rooted and multi-dimensional predicaments that the *umma* has cyclically been undergoing, as a result of, they argue, the political exclusion of Islam.

As a political ideology, Islam has been exercising substantial influence on Islamists' geopolitical discourse. Thus, understanding this particular nature of Islam is a prerequisite to understanding Islamism. The geopolitical perceptions that Islamists, by and large, embrace are

largely shaped by their religious political convictions. This may include: the way they manage their struggle with 'un-Islamic' ruling regimes in their own respective countries; their views of political reform (including authentic application of sharia law); and their attitude towards the politically and technologically advanced, but morally depraved West. Modernization, for instance, is conceptualized in terms of the Islamic ideological fundamentals. Moreover, Islamist political approaches are, to great extent, affected by the political ideology that Islam offers. Their position towards the Arab-Israeli peace process, for instance, is principally governed by the dogmatically presented political conviction that official recognition of the state of Israel is prohibitively inconsistent with Islamic doctrine, and that no single party -including the Palestinians- is authorized to overstep this sacred religious creed.

Driven by its nature as "global way of life that permeates the whole social fabric," [19] Islam has always been assuming a leading role in mobilizing Muslims against both cultural and physical invasions. "That is a key reason why the United State now finds itself breaking its teeth in the Muslim world."[20] Therefore, while approaching Islamism, it is vitally important for American policymakers inescapably to realize that "Islam is not just a religion, and certainly not just a fundamentalist political movement. It is a civilization and a way of life." [21] In essence, it is this entrenched political predisposition that lies behind the fruitlessness of the American relentless endeavors to re-construct the Islamic ideological and cultural fabric in such a manner that reduces Islam to a mere ritualistic act of worship – separation of church and state.

The Lost Primacy: What Went Wrong?

Within a few decades of its emergence, Islam had established a global power that was militarily preponderant, politically preeminent, ideologically coherent, and economically prosperous. Notwithstanding the multi-ethnic feature of the empire, the grand cultural identity was, to great extent, homogenous. For Islam served as supreme cultural determiner. While tolerating the cultural characteristics of the individual ethnic groups, Islam created a supremely collective identity that harmoniously encompassed groups with various racial and cultural backgrounds. With its foundational principles of egalitarianism, justice, freedom, and human rights, Islam attracted masses of people who were consolidated into a unified *umma* (international community of the faithful). Reinforcing the feeling of belonging, and energizing the collective aspiration

towards the Islamic supremacy, the concept of *umma* played a crucial role in maintaining the ideological unity of Muslims, and the advancement of Islamic civilization**.**

Even today, Muslims' collective political attitudes are substantively shaped by the requisites of this entrenched feeling of belonging to the *umma*. Evidently, the vast majority of ordinary Muslims embrace almost an identical political stand towards such issues as Bosnia, Chechnya, Afghanistan, Iraq, and, of course, the Arab-Israeli conflict, whereby they dogmatically side with their "Muslim brothers". As Graham Fuller argues, "the sense of community abides to this day as a strong feature of the psychology of Islam, in which grievances from one region can affect the attitudes of Muslims elsewhere." [22]

Complemented by the political character of Islam, the concept of a unified *umma* resulted in the emergence of a geographically preponderant and politically consolidated Islamic state, "extending from north Africa to the Indian subcontinent- an empire greater than Rome at its zenith."[23] Driven by undeterred religious obligation to convey the 'truth' to the 'misguided humanity', Muslims accelerated their territorial acquisitions. Transcending its heartland, the Middle East, the Islamic empire encompassed Central Asia, and South Europe where Islam established strategic and cultural footholds. Indeed, by the year 1000 "Islam extended well into Central Asia where it stood astride in Lucrative silk Rout…..[and] also reigned in Iberia and Sicily which assured Muslim control of half the Mediterranean."[24] Jihad (struggle in the path of God) was the primary instrument through which most conquests were achieved. Yet, the massive conversion of the conquered nations apparently lies in the egalitarian nature of Islam as a faith of equality, tolerance, and liberation.

While the Islamic empire was extending its territorial outreach, Islamic civilization was progressively accumulating its achievements, establishing itself as an expressively significant articulation of the viability of Islam as a source of guidance and inspiration. Backed by the Islamic political supremacy, "this civilization formed the heart of the world order far longer than Western civilization has, and over a far broader region."[25] Although conveying the message of Islam as a faith was the primary aim of the Islamic conquests, dissemination of knowledge was an integral part of the Islamic expansion. Indeed, the first verse ever revealed to the Prophet evidently demonstrates Islam's appreciation of knowledge. It reads: "read in the name of thy lord who created."[26] In alignment with its evidence-based approach, the Quran, throughout its various

chapters, not only celebrates knowledge, but also endorsed critical thinking as a scientifically authentic method. Subsequently, within a course of four centuries "the Middle East became the crucible of world civilization. One could not lay claim to true learning if one did not know Arabic, the language of science and philosophy." [27] In short, this remarkable appreciation of knowledge, coupled with the socio-political values, have largely been conceived to be the pillars that, on the one hand, empowered Islam as a political force, and, on the other, advanced Islamic civilization. As Martin Kramer observed, "this supremely urban civilization cultivated genius. Had there been Nobel prizes in 1000, they would have gone almost exclusively to Muslims."[28]

To be sure, while Islamic civilization was firmly ascending and remarkably dazzling the world, the applied political values were consistently decaying, resulting ultimately in the decline of Muslim civilizational and political primacy. With the collapse of the rightly-guided Caliphate in 661 A.D, and the consequent emergence of the Umayyad dynasty, the good governance-as manifested in the previous two eras- had disappeared, paving the path for long lasting despotic regimes. Indeed, over the span of thirteen centuries despotism had predominantly overwhelmed the political life of the Muslim world. From the Umayyad era (661-750), to the Ottoman Turkish Empire (1300-1924) the world of Islam-with few exceptions- had persistently been governed by varying degrees of dynastic authoritarianism, notwithstanding the assertive emphasis of the relevant Islamic teachings on such principles as the sovereignty of *umma*, political freedom, and political participation. Hence Muslims' collective political culture evolved in such an atmosphere where the original value-based Islamic system was, to great extent, deactivated.

Nonetheless, facilitating the advancement of Islamic civilization, "Muslim society has historically been marked by a high degree of what we would today might call civil society."[29] but, with the outset of the eleventh century freedom of thought started to retract, demonstrating preliminary signs of civilizational decay. Fearing science and philosophy, both autocratic ruling elites and short-sighted ulama (religious scholars) elaborately stifled creative thinking. Hence "analysis grew narrow. Thinking ossified over time, forbidding even the kind of historical scrutiny of Islam's own texts and sources of authority that was possible in earlier centuries."[30]

Clearly, political tyranny coupled with the atrophy of intellectual growth interactively led to the decline of Islamic civilization. But a few other factors undeniably contributed to this decline. Chief among them were: the ideological disputes that marked Islamic history, and frequently

tended to develop into armed conflicts and political upheavals; tribalism, where "the material and cultural conditions in which Islam rose and prospered gave the tribesman a central in the life of Islamic civilization;"[31] and the external invaders, notably the Crusaders, who captured Jerusalem in 1099 (recaptured by Muslims in 1187), the Mongols, who brutally sacked Baghdad in 1258, obliterating the Abbasid Caliphate, Christian re-conquest of Andalusia, which ended 800 years of Muslim rule in Spain, and the French, under the leadership of Napoleon Bonaparte, who invaded Egypt in 1798, laying the foundation for European colonization.

Muslims' historical decline culminated in the collapse of Ottoman Turkish Empire in 1924, marking the end of international Islam. As a result, however, three crucial features unprecedentedly characterized the geopolitical landscape of the Muslim world in general and the Middle East in particular. First, the Caliphate ceased to exist for the first time in Islamic history. Hence the concept of unified *umma* had relatively lost its resonance. Instead, nationalist feelings, to certain extent, permeated Muslim societies. Second, the nation-state emerged as a substitute for Islamic global community, and with it flourished the secularist forces, such as nationalism and Marxism. Third, Islam, as the primary source of legislation and legitimacy, had significantly retreated.

With the absence of the global power of Islam and the consequent disintegration of the Islamic world, profound feelings of marginalization, humiliation, and powerlessness outrageously overwhelmed considerable parts of the Islamic world. Although significant segments of Muslims tend to assign responsibility for their failures to external powers, notably the imperial west, the majority believe that the exclusion of Islam as a source of civilizational guidance (as it historically used to serve) constitutes the primary cause of Muslims' contemporary backwardness. Indeed, influenced by the past, where "Islam has significantly formed and informed politics and civilization, giving rise to vast Islamic empires and states as well as Islamic civilization,"[32] the vast majority of Muslims "in many predominantly Muslim countries want to see Islamic principles, sharia, as a source of legislation."[33] In sum, such ideological predispositions prepared the stage for the rise of what has widely been labeled as 'Political Islam'.

The Rise of Political Islam

Beyond the terminological debate over the Islamist phenomenon, the terms 'political Islam' and 'Islamism' interchangeably refer to those social movements that: adhere to Islam as the supreme ideological reference; seek to reform society and institutions in terms of Islamic fundamentals; and pursue power as a mean to advance their Islamic-based reformist project. Or, as Graham Fuller put it, an Islamist is the one "who believes that Islam has something to say about how political and social life should be constituted and who attempts to implement that interpretation in some way."[34] More recently, however, political Islam tends to denote the Islamic political activism that: renounces violence; demonstrates cultural tolerance; embraces democratic values-including elections and pluralism-; and accepts constitutional struggle (instead of coercive instruments) as a universally endorsed approach to attain power. Constituting the mainstream Islamic activism, political Islam, as such, has increasingly been extending its influence and widening its constituencies. Briefly, "in today's Arab world…….they [Islamists] are the mass movements of the twenty-first century."[35] Nonetheless, the Islamic spectrum, in its broader sense, encompasses such diverse intellectual trends as fundamentalism and extremism, whose impact is undeniably visible, although "they are unlikely to change the face of the Middle East."[36]

The disappearance of the Muslim grand political umbrella, the Caliphate, on the one hand, created ideological and political vacuum, enabling the non-Islamic ideologies, notably Arab nationalism, to prevailingly emerge as modern substitutes. And, on the other, it stimulated a heated debate over: what went wrong? Such concerns involved questioning the competence of Islam as a source of inspiration, and its capability to viably lead the modernization process. Ataturk's official abolition of the Caliphate in 1924, and his subsequent declaration of Turkey as a secularist republic had further alienated Islam and unprecedentedly reinforced its political exclusion. Ataturk's ideological revolution "was felt throughout the Muslim world….. [to the extent that] many Muslims are still painfully conscious of this void."[37] Arousing outrageous attitudes, the abolition of the Caliphate, "under the double assault of foreign [western] imperialists and domestic modernists,"[38] heightened Islamic sentiment at the grass root level, contributing to the emergence of political Islam. Indeed, while the nationalist wave was penetrating the Middle Eastern scene, Islamism, in its modern sense, was evolving.

The first half of the twentieth century witnessed the birth of the two most influential Islamic organizations, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, and the Pakistani Jamaat-e-Islami (Islamic assembly) to both of which "most if not all of today's Islamist parties owe their origins."[39] The Muslim Brotherhood was founded in Egypt in 1928 by Hassan AL-Banna (1906-1949). Whereas Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) was established in Pakistan in 1941(prior to its secession from India) by Abu AL-Ala Almawdudi (1903-1979).[40] While JI confined its presence mainly to its regional sphere, Indian subcontinent, and notably Pakistan (which is beyond the scope of this research), the Muslim Brotherhood has vastly expanded its outreach, ultimately to emerge as "the world oldest, largest, and most influential Islamist organization."[41]

The escalation to power of the free officers in Egypt in 1952, under the leadership of Nasser, signaled the domination of Arab nationalism and leftism, where the ideologized military elites monopolized the political life in most parts of the Middle East, denying political Islam any significant expression throughout the three decades that followed. Ruthlessly oppressed by the state security apparatus, the Islamic movement was forced to go underground, launching the phase of clandestine operation. Unarguably, ideological extremism and resort to violence have largely been viewed as products of the physical persecution and political siege that most Islamists had- in varying degrees- undergone. Ironically, while deprived of any form of political existence, political Islam maintained a steady pace of growth, capitalizing on: its public image as an oppressed force combating corruption and struggling for reform; its growing credibility as the primary guardian of Islamic values; and the persistent massive failures of the ruling elites.

The crucial events that unfolded in the late 1970s and early 1980s signaled the rise of Islamism as a potentially leading political force, after years of coercive exclusion. These momentous events included: the resurgence of Jihadism as a result of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in December 1979, which constituted the nucleus of the recent jihadist factions; [42] the Iranian revolution of 1979; the assassination of the Egyptian president Anwar Sadat in 1981 by Islamist militants; and the application of *Sharia* (Islamic code of laws) in Sudan in 1983, where Sudanese president, Nimari, "issued a decree to make the sharia the law of the country."[43]

Throughout the last two decades of the twentieth century political Islam, with its various variants, further advanced its geopolitical vitality, where: Hamas (Islamic resistance movement) emerged in 1987 as a key player, challenging the traditional monopoly of PLO (Palestinian

liberation organization) on the Palestinian cause; Sudanese Islamists (then known as the Islamic nationalist front) seized power through military coup in 1989, and declared the establishment of an Islamic state, projecting the threat that Islamism might pose to the status quo; Algeria, a pivotal Arab state, "slipped into the sphere of political Islam,"[44] where Islamists achieved decisive triumph in the parliamentary election of 1991, agitating the ruling military hardliners, whose reactively arbitrary measures- including annulment of the election- dragged the country into massive violence; Egyptian Islamist militants had unprecedentedly enlarged the scale of their political violence (1992-1997) aiming at deposing the regime; Taliban militants seized power in 1995, and thus declared the emergence of 'Islamic emirate of Afghanistan'; The Rafah Islamist party, under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan, came to power in Turkey in 1996. However, it lasted only one year before it was dismissed by the army; and Islamists in such countries as Yemen, Kuwait, Bahrain, Jordan, and Morocco, which relatively enjoy political opening, visibly insinuated themselves into the political order.

These developments both revealed the geopolitical centrality of political Islam, and reinforced its solidity as an ineradicable force. The outbreak of the Gulf War in 1991 further disclosed the latent capacity of Islamism as a mobilizing force, especially in such countries as Egypt, and Saudi Arabia where Saudi Islamists, for the first time, exponentially enunciated a reformist agenda, agitating the monarchic regime.[45] Summing up, at the dawn of the millennium, Islamism emerged as the most significant political force in the Middle East, notably in the Arab countries and some pivotal Muslim states like Turkey. While Islamist activism, in its broader sense, encompasses various variants of intellectual and political streams, the moderates, mainly represented by the Muslim Brotherhood and its associates, predominantly comprise the mainstream trend. Hence, they are potentially conceived to be the centre of gravity, leading the monumental changes that have eagerly been awaited. Indeed, "it is the mainstream Islamist organizations, not the radical ones, that will have the greatest impact on the future political evolution of the Middle East."[46]

The Political Spectrum and Intellectual Trends

Islamic activism is not monolithic. Rather, it "encompasses a broad spectrum, not necessarily coherent or consistent across movements."[47] Indeed, the contemporary Islamic landscape is noticeably marked by intellectual diversity and political dissimilarity, where several factions

with sharply inconsistent ideological interpretations and political stands claim to monopolize the truth. It is, therefore, vitally important to categorize Islamic groups in terms of their geopolitical discourse and cultural tolerance. While addressing Islamic activism, American policymakers often failed to draw a clear distinction between the militant trends, which oppose political compromise, and instead adopt violent means, and the moderates "who advocate a peaceful approach to social transformation,……[and adopt] the mainstream Islamic rejection of violence."[48] as lack of distinction has, deliberately or undeliberately, resulted into pursuit of groundless policies towards Islamic activism, generating further circumstantial congestions.

To be sure, labeling those Islamic activists who invoke Islam as a source of political guidance has largely been influenced by such factors as misconceived geopolitical images and a lack of scientifically obtained knowledge on the subject. The use of appropriate terminology constitutes the key element in shaping the accurate image of the case under study. Hence, improper identification of political groups is not only misleading, but also prejudicial. The western collective attitude towards Islamism has considerably been shaped by the connotations of such facile labels as fundamentalism, Jihadism, and extremism, which have increasingly been gaining wide currency in both the media and intellectual community, reinforcing the stereotypically conceptualized geopolitical image. However, the most prevailing terms denoting Islamic activism are as follows:

First, 'fundamentalism', which originated in the United States in the 1920s, denoting Protestant Christians who "sought to reaffirm their belief in the literal text of the Bible and the fundamentals of Christian belief…….these Christians called themselves fundamentalists."[49] While the term acquired a pejorative association in western culture, it holds an entirely different meaning within the Islamic literature. There fundamentalists are those talented scholars who possess the required intellectual capacity to appropriately interpret the text, and hence create the standing instructions for the issuance of a religious judgment (fatwa). Fundamentalists as such are highly admired. Islamic sources, instead, use the term 'extremist' to refer to those who adopt a very strict interpretation of Islam.

Second, coined by the French philosopher, Voltaire, the term 'Islamism' dates to the mid-eighteenth century, where it was used as a synonym for Islam. At the turn of the twentieth century this term disappeared and was replaced by the Arabic term 'Islam'. With the rise of

Islamic political activism, 'Islamism' was resurrected to distinguish Islam as a faith from the political ideology that Islamists embrace. Some scholars have recently begun to refer to Islamism as a synonym for 'political Islam', connoting the mainstream Islamic variant that advocates peaceful means for socio-political ghange.[50]

Third, associated with its pejorative implication, the term 'Jihadism' has widely been deployed to stigmatize those Islamic activists who espouse violence, targeting both the U.S and ruling regimes in the Middle East, whom these activists perceive as not only inconsistent with Islamic rule, but, more importantly, adversarial entities impeding the progress of the Islamic revivalist project. While the term 'Jihad' has its origin in the Quran and *Sunna*, denoting the struggle in the path of God, it has been reproduced to label those Islamists who embrace violence as Jihadists. True, these violent acts have largely been carried out in the name of Jihad, but the mainstream Islamists have condemned them, denying their association with the true Jihad as presented by Islamic doctrines. Thus, "to use Jihad interchangeably with terrorism is not only inaccurate, but also counterproductive."[51]

Although the current Middle Eastern scene is replete with various Islamic schools of thought, three major trends have predominantly been monopolizing the leading role, politically, intellectually, and socially. While their existence is commonly grounded in the primary aim of restoring the lost Islamic greatness, their positions towards other related issues sharply diverge, illustrating the non-monolithic character of Islamic activism. Indeed, literal traditionalists, radicals, and the moderates constitute, by and large, the most important forces of the Islamic movement. Unified by the generic aspiration of Islamization of state and society (ultimately to regain the primacy of the united *umma*) these forces adopt diverse perspectives on such central issues as: democracy, violence, human rights (as universally recognized), cultural tolerance, and modernization.

1- Literal-minded tradionalism: referred to in Arabic as Salafiyya (the faith of the devout ancestors, notably Prophet's companions), this school of thought advocates literal understanding of the sacred texts. Exemplified by the official religious establishment of Saudi Arabia (largely labeled as Wahhabis), literal traditionalism has assertively been introducing itself as the most authentic interpreter of the Islamic text, almost monopolizing the truth, and claiming true imitation of the Prophet's path. Its "most notable exponent was the great fourteen-century

[scholar] Ibn Taymiyya, whose work served as the primary reference."[52] Literal traditionalists not only oppose the political agenda that Islamic political activism embraces, but also adopt supporting attitude towards the ruling authoritarianism. Unlike other Islamists, literal traditionalists (or salafis as widely known) are not concerned with the quest for power. Hence they are apparently averse to such values as political pluralism, freedom, and human rights, equating them with westernization. Advocating theological, ethical, and educational reforms, they tend to impose a highly conservative interpretation on the social and personal lives. Summing up, Salafiyya corresponds to a school of thought rather than organized group. And the Salafis, notably the ulama (religious scholars) are accused, mainly by the radicals, of legitimizing despotism through misleading interpretation of the Islamic texts, and, as a result, obstructing the desired socio-political change.

2- Radicalism: the term, in its broader sense, has stereotypically been used to identify those Islamist groups that adopt an extremist interpretation of the texts at the intellectual and moral levels, whether or not this bigoted understanding is transformed into violent act. However, for the purpose of this research, radicalism refers to those Islamist factions that fanatically resort to militant violence as a vehicle for socio-political change. Islamic radicalism, as such, has widely been conceived to be a product of objective and subjective elements. Admittedly, such environmental causes as suppression of freedom, socio-economic deprivation, and prevalence of political despair, coupled with subjective factors such as "the tendency to understand the text literally…….as well as lack of knowledge of history,"[53] led to the emergence of this radical trend. The resurgence of Jihad, the application of *sharia* (the Islamic code of laws) and regaining the sovereignty of the *umma* have constituted the central ideological terms that guide the political vision of militant radicalism. While its advocates, according to a Gallup poll, [54] comprise only 7% of the Muslim population, radicalism has aggressively been reinforcing its effectiveness. Unsurprisingly, groundless American policies, the abject failure of the Middle Eastern ruling elites, and the exclusion of moderate political Islam have interactively fueled armed violence, and, to great extent, justified this radical political orientation. Exemplified by Al Qaeda and its associates, militant radicalism has firmly been evolving politically, mobilizing considerable segments of Muslim youth, and hence enlarging its sphere of influence, from Pakistan to North Africa, and Arabian Peninsula (notably Yemen and Saudi Arabia) to south Asia.

3- Moderate political Islam: descriptive terms have always been controversial, carrying different meanings to different people, in different places at different times. The term 'moderate' is no exception. While detailed treatment of literal tradionalism and militant radicalism is beyond the scope of this research, moderate political Islam- in relation to American foreign policy- is essentially the core theme. Thus, it is extensively addressed in the subsequent pages. It is, therefore, sufficient here to state that, mainly represented by Muslim Brothers- as a school of thought- moderate Islamists constitute the overwhelming majority within the Islamic stream, preeminently dominating the Middle Eastern socio-political scene. The moderates are "a collection of national groups with differing outlooks…… [nonetheless, they] all reject global Jihad [as viewed by militant radicalism] while embracing elections and other features of democracy."[55] While faithfully devoted to their ideological legacy of establishing an Islamic state, implementation of sharia, and restoration of Islamic supremacy, moderate Islamists have noticeably developed pragmatic political rhetoric that advocates "peaceful transfer of power, check and balances, citizens' participation, neutrality of public authorities in approaching multiple religious and ethnic identities, and tolerance of diversity."[56] Indeed, the evolutionary geopolitical discourse that the moderates have progressively developed tends to function as a vehicle for the publically desired socio-political change, seriously challenging the elite-dominated regimes. "Well rooted in the social and cultural fabric of Arab countries,"[57] moderate Islamists have widely been viewed to be the answer to the region's aggregating predicaments. Their embrace of such universal values as the rule of law, human dignity, and pluralism signaled their relative conformity with democracy. Yet, Islamists' political discourse needs to unambiguously address such areas as gender equality, civility of the state, and political rights of the non-Muslim minorities.

In sum, as Richard Haass observed, "Islam will increasingly fill the political and intellectual vacuum in the Arab world and provide a foundation for the politics of a majority of the region's inhabitants. Arab nationalism and Arab socialism are things of the past."[58] But the question is what kind of Islam is potentially capable of filling that political and intellectual vacuum? The foregoing argument suggests that the major competitors are the radical militants and the moderates. Lack of political vision, intolerance, and fanaticism contributed to the failure of radicals to develop a realistically appealing reforming project, and hence reduced their struggle to a mere aimless violent act. Moderate political Islam possesses the potentiality to dominate the

political sphere of the Middle East provided that, as Condoleezza Rice suggests, promoting democratic development remains a top priority for the United States.[59] Moderate political Islam has undeniably been reinforcing its centrality. Thus, its exclusion would not only perpetuate authoritarianism, but also justify extremism and hence draw considerable segments of youth to violence. As Joseph Nye holds, "the United States and its allies will win only if they adopt policies that appeal to those moderates and use public diplomacy effectively to communicate that appeal."[60] To be sure, uncertainty marks the Middle Eastern political scene. Yet, the future of Islamism in general and moderate political Islam in particular, has apparently been linked to certain geopolitical circumstances.

Islamism in Power

The revolutions that swept the Arab Middle East at the outset of 2011 paved the way for Islamists' ascendance to power through democratic means, launching a new era in the region's history. As widely anticipated, genuine democratic transformation has empowered Islamists significantly. Exemplified by Muslim Brotherhood's school of thought, moderate Islamism in Egypt (Freedom and Justice Party), Tunisia (Al Nahda Party), and Morocco (Justice and Development Party) dominated both the legislative and executive branches.

With the collapse of the Rightly-Guided Caliphate in 661 A.D., the Muslim democratic experiment ceased to exist. And hence the political system became characteristically authoritarian, where rulers enjoyed absolute power without adequate accountability, "in clear violation of the moral imperative of *khilafa* and *shura* [consultation]. ……..*khilafa*, as generally understood by Muslim scholars, is a form of government where *khalifah* (head of state) is elected by the people and is accountable to them."[61] Muslims, therefore, failed to develop a functional Islamic-based democratic system that, on the one hand, conforms to both Islamic fundamental principles of freedom, justice, and equality, and the *sharia* code of laws, as spelled out by the *Quran* and *Sunna*, and, on the other, adequately adapts to the globally recognized qualities of political modernity.

Indeed, the monarchic rule, which spanned almost 1400 years, categorically shaped the political culture of the Muslim world, and hence blocked the resurgence of truly Islamic democratic pattern. Will Islamism in power desperately borrow the western political paradigms?

But these are not mere procedural measures simply resolving political contests and ensuring fair distribution of power. Rather, they are manifestations of ideological predispositions, reflecting the liberal and secular identities of the western-based political modernity. Precisely, such political values as: gender equality, political liberalism, popular sovereignty (versus divine sovereignty), capitalism (versus the Islamic-based economic system), and the supremacy of man-made constitutions (versus the ultimate sovereignty of *sharia*) may expose the Western-Islamic inconsistency in the political realm.

Nonetheless, represented by the Muslim Brotherhood and its affiliates, moderate Islamists, by and large, contend that Islam and democracy are essentially compatible, where "Muslim interpretations of democracy build on the well-established Quranic concept of shura (consultation)."[62] Admittedly, within the context of its supreme Islamic reference, moderate Islamism has growingly been developing such a political discourse that, at least in principle, reconciles Islamic political values with political modernity, arguing that "God furthermore gave humanity the power of reason with which to formulate public policy. …… The Islamic state must still be constructed in conformity with human understanding of how Islam translates into practice and institutions."[63]

Islamism in power needs sustainably to preserve its social reservoir, maintaining its socio-political significance. True, the mounting grass-roots support is partly attributed to the religious sentiments. But the religious banner per se cannot ensure sustainable appeal. Failure to seize the moment will likely erode both the electoral capacity and moral credibility of political Islam. Hence, commitment to the globally recognized versions of democracy and human rights will likely remain the essential lenses through which Islamism in power is viewed.[64]

Islamists in power, therefore, will largely be tested by the 'realist idealism' that characterizes their geopolitical discourse and hence guides their political behavior. Indeed, the degree of 'realistic idealism' that Islamists in power adopt may determine the extent to which they will be integrated to both the regional and international systems. Although, accession to power remains the central objective of Islamist activism, this aim is viewed as a stepping stone towards the core mission of restoring Islamic greatness, where political power features as the mechanism through which the *umma* can regain its universal status, and reassume its civilizational role. Precisely, establishment of an authentically democratic Islamic state is intended to serve three purposes

simultaneously. First, it fulfills the religious obligation of full conformity with, and true implementation of the Islamic doctrines. Second, it creates an attractive model that would appealingly constitute 'light on the hill', guiding humanity to peace and prosperity. Finally, it disseminates the faith upon which, Islamists belief, humanity is thrust, utilizing the soft power of the state.

Unarguably, foreign policy is the realm where U.S.-Islamist relations will be critically tested. After decades of engagements, under various circumstances, both sides appear to have acquired a sense of understanding of the dynamics that shape each other's perceptions, and hence direct its political preferences. This assumed geopolitical maturity can only be tested through exposure. Islamism in power may provide this opportunity. Indeed, failure to seize the moment may erode the socio-political significance of Islamic activism, both internally and externally. Islamists' foreign policy posture will play a decisive role in determining their political destiny. Clearly, the destabilizing nature of the Middle East, coupled with the deep-seated socio-economic predicaments pose critical challenges to Islamists' potential capacity successfully to develop a geostrategic synthesis that, on the one hand, conforms to the fundamental principles of Islamic ideology, and, on the other, integrates with the globally recognized political modernity.

Primarily, the U.S. will assess Islamists' geopolitical posture against three broad criteria: the implementation of *sharia*; commitment to the democratic values, notably peaceful transfer of power and the rights of women and religious minorities; and their strategic approaches to such regional issues as Israel, oil, and the American-orchestrated security arrangements. Islamists in power are very untested. Nonetheless, they appeared to have developed a pragmatic discourse. Their geostrategic preferences seem to be shaped by realistic calculations rather than ideological determinants. For instance, they did not enforce the *sharia* code of laws, which literally tend to denote the criminal punishments. Rather, they re-defined *sharia* to include such political vocabularies as social justice, freedom, and human rights. Also, they frequently affirmed their commitment to pluralism, the rule of law, popular sovereignty, judicial independence, and alteration of power. Similarly, Islamists' worldviews seem to be tempered by the prevailing political realities and the regional balance of power.[65] Islamists' stance towards Arab-Israeli peace accords (notably Camp David Treaty of 1979) is a case in point. In brief, "at their core, however, mainstream Islamist organizations, such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and

Jordan and al Nahda in Tunisia, have strong pragmatic tendencies. When their survival has required it, they have proved willing to compromise their ideology and make difficult choices."[66]

Islamists' ascendance to power and the consequent geopolitical transformations relatively constrained the U.S. strategic freedom of action. The pre-Arab spring regional power structures presented the U.S. with considerable leverage, empowering America unilaterally to shape the region's geopolitical landscape. The U.S.-led coalition against Iraq (1991), the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003), the security arrangements in Gulf, and America's involvement in the Arab-Israeli peace process were all conducted within a regional balance of power where the U.S. strategic superiority was unchallenged. Hence, the absence of the U.S.-backed authoritarian power structures will, to certain degree, stripped the U.S. of this strategic superiority. The emergence of democratically elected Islamist governments, notably in Egypt, shifted the balance of power in favor of the public sovereignty, which is largely anti-American, unprecedentedly challenging traditional American policy of 'authoritarian stability', and hence posing potential threats to American vital interests.[67]

Indeed, these dramatic political transformations in the Middle East challenged the U.S. traditional policy of preferring stability over democracy, both conceptually and empirically. The post-Arab spring regimes "will likely produce foreign policies more responsive to democratic Islamism, and popular opinion than ever before."[68] The U.S. Middle East policy seems to be confronting a critical turning point, where it needs to strike a balance between American values and American vital interests. In its engagement with the Arab Spring and the consequent ascendance to power of Islamists, the Obama administration demonstrated a relatively reasonable sense of realism and prudence, siding with the people and forsaking the U.S. longstanding authoritarian allies (Bin Ali of Tunisia, Mubarak of Egypt, and Ali Saleh of Yemen). Unlike the first three Post-Cold War American administrations, the Obama White House appeared to have launched a "new political and diplomatic ground by establishing working relationships with Muslim Brothers [who will highly likely continue to be the most significant player in the region's geopolitical equation for the foreseeable future],…….proving to be less susceptible to manipulations by its local allies than past administrations were, recognizing that its broader interests in a changing Middle East cannot be secured by military adventures."[69]

The presidential memorandum of August 2010, which Obama forwarded to the senior members of his foreign policy team, revealed the fundamental dynamics that shaped the president's perception of the region's geopolitical complications and their potential implications for the U.S. regional status. In a five-page memorandum entitled 'Political Reform in the Middle East and North Africa', Obama maintained:

> Progress toward political reform and openness in the Middle East and North Africa lags behind other regions and has, in some case, stalled. …… if present trends [of citizen discontent] continue, [incumbent regimes would] opt for repression rather than reform to manage domestic dissent. ……. Increased repression could threaten the political and economic stability of some of our allies, leave us with fewer capable, credible partners who can support our regional priorities, and further alienate citizens in the region. …… moreover, our regional and international credibility will be undermined if we are seen or perceived to be backing repressive regimes and ignoring the rights and aspirations of citizens. ……the advent of political succession in a number of countries offers a potential opening for political reform in the region. ……. [If the United States poorly managed these transitions, it] could have negative implications for U.S. interests, including for our standing among the Arab public.[70]

A task force was formed profoundly to review the potential threats and opportunities in light of the president's concerns, coming up with "tailored, country by country strategies on political reform. [The President] told his advisors to challenge the traditional idea that stability in the Middle East always served U.S. interests."[71] The group concluded that the 'conventional wisdom' that historically guided the U.S. geopolitical conceptualization of the region "was wrong". A few months later (December 2010), the Arab revolution erupted, offering an opportunity for the Obama administration's new insights, and placing 'democracy in the Middle East' at the heart of Barak Obama's foreign policy. To the dismay of his regional allies, notably Israel and Saudi Arabia, Obama, by and large, positioned the United States on the side of the protesters, in Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, and Syria, despite the fact that the U.S. approach to Arab revolution was not consistent.[72] Furthermore; he demonstrated willingness to deal with Islamists in power.

Irrespective of the degree to which Islamists in power reconcile their political discourse with the universal values, their fundamental worldviews will continue to be informed by their ideological predispositions. Tactically, they may come to terms with the U.S. regional calculations, debating their geostrategic preferences within the context of the regional balance of power. But, strategically, *sharia* will likely continue to be the primary source of political,

legislative, and moral judgments. Thus, as an ideological movement, Islamic activism needs to be understood within the context of its relevant social constructivist dynamics, where cultural identities, and ideological forces play crucial roles in shaping geopolitical images of both 'self' and the 'other'. Briefly, Islamism is not a mere political force contesting for power. Rather, it is an all-encompassing movement whose ultimate end is to restore Islamic primacy through political power.

Conclusion

Right upon emergence, Islam acquired its character as a political force, enlarging its domains of involvements to encompass almost all aspects of life. It established political entities, waged wars, conquered territories, converted nations, and offered comprehensive moral and legislative systems, creating its own cultural identity. Throughout its history, Islam has constantly been identified with political power. The demise of the last Muslim Caliphate, the Ottoman Empire, and the consequent fragmentation of the Muslim world marked a sharp divergence in Islamic history. Provoked by the exclusion of Islam and the resultant domination of secularism, Islamic political activism emerged to fill in the ideological and strategic vacuum, aiming at restoring the Islamic state as a prelude for resurgence of Islamic global primacy. Having survived a series of repressions that seriously threatened its very existence, Islamic activism ultimately rose as a weighty political actor, firmly extending its appeal, and consolidating its centrality.

Islam, as a source of guidance, and Islamism as a political activism are two different things. True, Islamic ideology exerts great influence on Islamists' geopolitical conceptualization, shaping the fundamental components of their political discourse. But, this ideologized discourse will inevitably be tempered by the political realities on the ground. It is indeed governed by pragmatic calculations, complying with the prevailing balance of power. While such concepts as moderation, tolerance, and pluralism are, on the abstract level, integral parts of the Islamic ideological system, their transformation into political behavior is relatively subordinated to the dominating formulas of the respective political atmosphere. Political moderation is apparently an evolutionary process that needs to be viewed within its geopolitical context.

Mainstream political Islam is conceived to be moderate in a sense that: it denounced violence; acknowledged the legitimacy of the nation-state; and embraced political participation as strategic

choice. Yet, both its electoral constituencies and leadership are seemingly disillusioned with the paybacks. Indeed, "while everywhere they [moderate Islamists] are the strongest component of the overall weak opposition, they have struggled to exert some political influence; in the end they have had little say in the formulation of new policies."[73] Admittedly, dishonest popular elections that have largely characterized the Middle East politics, ostensibly corresponding to American call for reform, have further alienated the incumbent regimes, and discredited their international backers(notably the United States), compounding the already heightening public indignation at the bitter status quo.

In such a political atmosphere where "presidents are as irremovable as kings, [and] parliaments…….have limited oversight power,"[74] would Islamists revert to hard-line stances, searching for other instruments to deliver change? Evidence shows that moderate Islamists may not resort to violence as an alternative for change. Nonetheless, their exclusion will certainly strengthen radicalism, impede the already overdue political reforms in the Arab world, and deepen the feelings of despair, questioning the value of this futile political participation. Withdrawal from political scene and revert to political isolation is a possibility. This will serve as fertile soil for the growth of intellectual extremism. However, the future trajectory of political Islam seems to be determined by: the extent to which incumbent regimes are willing to open the political sphere; the authenticity of the American-led promotion of democracy; and the viability of the Islamic reforming project, where Islamists, beyond the mere slogan of 'Islam is the solution' need to "find concrete answers to concrete problems if they are to succeed in the political arena."[75] Reducing Islam to a sole spiritual mission, in an attempt to rehabilitate Islamic political rhetoric, proved to be pointless. Alternatively, inclusion of moderate Islamism seems to be the viable choice. However, practically to verify their political competence, moral integrity, and ideological moderation- compared to the incompetent and corrupt incumbent regimes- moderate Islamists' potential capabilities and orientations need to be tested while in power. Noticeably, inclusion of political Islam not only reinforces moderation, it also, while weakening extremist trends, facilitates the democratic development of Islamic political rhetoric, embracing the democratic values out of persuasion, rather than mere pragmatic calculations.

To be sure, moderate Islamists are moderate in varying degrees. Indeed, while moderate Islamists, by and large, share identical views on such issues as violence, political participation,

and pluralism, they differ in the extent to which Islamic political discourse should identify with the western version of democracy. Exclusion of political Islam, therefore, may further widen the gap, whereas its inclusion will certainly reinforce the cultural rapprochement, naturalizing the fundamental components of democracy. American policy makers need to recognize that reshaping the Islamic ideological structure, with an attempt to disfigure its political feature, is seemingly unrealistic. Thus, post-Cold War American perceptions of Islamic political activism need to be thoroughly examined.

Indeed, the emergence of Islamic activism in the post-Cold War era triggered an unprecedented challenge to traditionally unrivalled American dominance in the Arab Middle east. While political Islam per se is hardly new to American foreign policy circles, its rise as a leading political force, posing a threat to the American-backed status quo, caused post-Cold War American administrations to formulate relatively sophisticated conceptual stances that would, presumably, provide guidance to concrete policies. The making of geopolitical images is obviously not confined to statesmanship. Rather, it is an extensive process that integrally includes such intellectual forces as think tanks, academic community, and the media that, along with officialdom, interdependently crystallize such a discourse that liberally reflects the pluralistic character of the American system.

Thus, adhering to a scientific approach, addressing American perceptions of Islamism needs to be extended to include, in addition to official thinking, the variously relevant schools of thought. While American conceptualizations of Islamic resurgence will continue to evolve, relevantly responding to the prevailing geopolitical conditions, the perceptions that the first three post-Cold War administrations articulated have largely been conceived to be a formative influence on the subsequent American conceptual stances towards political Islam. Revealing a wide range of discordant perspectives, these perceptions potentially possess the philosophical capacity to establish normative policy guidelines. With the eruption of Arab Spring at the outset of 2011, and the consequent rise to power of Islamists, American intellectual and policy communities will have to confront an entirely new geopolitical landscape, both conceptually and empirically. U.S. Middle East orientation, therefore, will further need to be deliberated in the region's relevant social constructivist context.[76] Potential failure and success of U.S. Middle East

policy appear to be rooted in the objective understanding of the normative set of values, and identities of the geopolitical atmosphere in which it operates.

Islamists' escalation to power as a result of the Arab Spring created an entirely new geopolitical landscape, where the U.S. foreign policy needs to review its geostrategic approaches to the Middle East in particular and the Muslim world in general. Islamists, notably Muslim Brothers and their affiliates, will likely dominate the region's political scene (Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Yemen, and Libya, are cases in point). The future of Islamism in power is rooted in its capacity to adapt to the prevailing political realities. Rhetorically, Islamists demonstrated a reasonable degree of realism, reshaping their discourse in accordance with the practically existing socio-political requirements. However, the strategic challenges that will continue to be a source of frictions, testing U.S.-Islamist relations include: the implementation of sharia; the security of Israel; commitment to the western-based principles of democracy and human rights; and secured access to the region's energy sources. Briefly, dealing with Islamism in power is a challenge to the U.S. Middle East foreign policy, both conceptually and empirically.[77]

Notes

1. Nathan J. Brown, Amr Hamzawy, and Marina Ottaway, "Islamist movements and the democratic process in the Arab world: exploring the gray zones", *Middle East series, number 67*, March 2006, Carnegie endowment for international peace &Herbert-Quandt-Stiftung.

2. Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam: religion, activism, and political change in Egypt*, p. 1.

3. Graham E. Fuller, and Lesser, Ian O, *A sense of siege: The geopolitics of Islam and the West*, p. 13.

4. Ibid, p. 3.

5. Ibid, p. 3.

6. Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Ter*ror, p. 27.

7. Maria Do Ceu Pinto, *Political Islam and the United States: a Study of U.S. policy towards Islamist movements in the Middle East*, p. 142.

8. Graham E. Fuller, and Lesser, Ian O, *A sense of siege: the geopolitics of Islam and the West*, p. 22.

9. Fawaz A. Gerges, *The End of America's Moment? Obama and the Middle East*, p. 177.

10. Ibid, p. 191.

11. Maria Do Ceu Pinto, *Political Islam and the United States: a study of U.S. policy towards Islamist movements in the Middle East*, p. 144.

12. Mohammed Ayoob, "The future of political Islam: the importance of external variables", *international affairs*, volume 81, issue 5, October 2005, p. 954.

13. Ibid, p. 954.

14. Graham E. Fuller, *Algeria: the next fundamental state*, p. 113.

15. Graham E. Fuller, and Lesser, Ian O, *A sense of siege: the geopolitics of Islam and the West*, p. 2.

16. Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror*, p. 6.

17. Hussein Haykal, *The life of Mohammed*, p. 179.

18. Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror*, p. 20.

19. Maria Do Ceu Pinto, *Political Islam and the United States: a study of U.S policy towards Islamist movements in the Middle East*, p. 21.

20. Graham E. Fuller, "A world without Islam", *Foreign Policy*, Issue 164, January/February 2008, pp. 46-53.

21. Ali A. Mazrui, "Islamic and Western Values", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 76, No. 5, September/October 1997, 118-132.

22. Fuller, Graham E. Fuller, and Ian O. Lesser, *A sense of siege: the geopolitics of Islam and West*, p. 33.

23. John L. Esposito, and Mogahed, Dalia, *Who speaks for Islam? What a billion Muslims really think*, p. 24.

24. Martin Kramer, "Islam's sober millennium", *the Jerusalem post*, December 31, 1999.

25. Graham E. Fuller, *The future of political Islam*, p. 2.

26. The Quran, chapter 96, verse 1.

27. Martin Kramer, "Islam's sober millennium", *the Jerusalem post*, December 31, 1999.

28. Ibid.

29. Graham E. Fuller, *The Future of Political Islam*, p. 32.

30. Ibid, p. 5.

31. Andrew Christie Hess, “Islamic civilization and the legend of political failure”, *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 1, January, 1985, pp. 27-39.

32. John L. Esposito, and Dalia Mogahed, *Who speaks for Islam? What a billion Muslims really think?* p. 27.

33. Ibid, p. 6.

34. Graham E. Fuller, *The future of political Islam*, p. 47.

35. Nathan J. Brown, Amr Hamzawy, and Marina Ottaway, “Islamist movements and the Democratic Process in the Arab World: Exploring the Gray Zones”, *Middle East series, number 67*, March, 2006, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace& Herbert-Quandt-Stiftung.

36. Ibid, p. 3.

37. Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror*, p. xvii.

38. Ibid, p. xvii.

39. Husain Haqqani, and Hillel Fradkin, “Islamic parties: Going Back to the Origins”, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 19, No. 3, July 2008, pp. 5-6.

40. AL Mawdudi is one of the widely read Islamist scholars, especially within the Islamic circles where he remarkably enjoys considerable intellectual and spiritual influence.

41. Robert S. Leiken, and Steven Brook, “The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.86, No. 2, March/April 2007, PP. 107-122.

42. See Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trial of Political Islam*, PP. 135-50.

43. Ibid, p. 181.

44. Ibid, p. 159.

45. Angel M. Rabasa and others, *The Muslim World after 9/11*, Rand Corporation, pp. 106-8.

46. Nathan Brown, Amr Hamzawy, and Marina Ottaway, "Islamist Movements and the Democratic Process in the Arab World: Exploring the Gray Zones", *Middle East series, Number 67*, March 2006, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace & Herbert-Quandt-Stiftung, p. 3.

47. Graham E. Fuller, *The future of Political Islam*, p. 44.

48. Tamara Sonn, "Islamic Fundamentalism and Political Islam", *History Compass*, Vol. 4, Issue 1, January 2006, pp. 181-185.

49. Martin Kramer, "Coming to Terms: Fundamentalists or Islamists?" *Middle East Quarterly*, spring 2003, pp. 65-77.

50. See ibid.

51. John L. Esposito, and Dalia Mogahed, *Who speaks for Islam? What a billion Muslims Really Think* p. 75.

52. Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: the Trial of Political Islam*, p. 220.

53. Group of authors, *Islamic Movement: Impact on Political Stability in the Arab World*, The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, p. 104.

54. John L. Esposito, and Dalia Mogahed, *Who Speaks For Islam? What a Billion Muslims Really Think*, p. 69.

55. Amr Hamzawy, "The Key to Arab Reforms: Moderate Islamists", *policy brief No. 40*, August 2005, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

56. Ibid.

57. Ibid.

58. Richard N. Haass, "The New Middle East", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85, Issue 6, November/December 2006, PP. 2-11.

59. Condoleezza Rice, "Rethinking the National Interest", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 87, Issue 4, July/August 2008, PP. 2-26.

60. Joseph S. Nye, “The Decline of America’s Soft Power”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 83, Issue 3, May/June 2004, PP. 16-20.

61. M. Umar Chapra, *Muslim Civilization: The Causes of Decline and the Need for Reform*, p. 55.

62. John L. Esposito, and James P. Piscatori, “Democratization and Islam”, *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 45, No. 3, Summer 1991, PP. 427-440.

63. Graham E. Fuller, “Islamists in the Arab World: The Dance around Democracy”, *Middle East Series, Number 49*, September 2004, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

64. See David D. Kirkpatrick, “Named Egypt’s Winner, Islamist Makes History”, *New York Times*, June 24, 2012.

65. See Katerina Dalacoura, “The 2011 Uprisings in the Arab Middle East: Political Change and Geopolitical Implications”, *International Affairs*, Vol. 88, Issue 1, Jan-Feb 2012, pp. 63-79.

66. Shadi Hamid, “The Rise of the Islamists: How Islamists Will Change Politics, Vice Versa”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 90, Issue 3, May/June 2011, pp. 40-47.

67. See F Gregory Gause, III, and Ian S. Lustick, “America and the Regional Powers in A Transforming Middle East”, *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XIX, Issue. 2, Summer 2012, pp. 1-9.

68. Ibid.

69. Ibid.

70. Quoted in Ryan Lizza, “The Consequentialist: How the Arab Spring Remade Obama’s Foreign Policy”, *The New Yorker*, May 2, 2011.

71. Ibid.

72. See ibid.

73. Marina Ottaway, and Amr Hamzawy, “Islamists in Politics: The Dynamics of Participation”, *Middle East program, No.98*, November 2008, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

74. Ibid

75. Graham E. Fuller, “Islamists in the Arab World: The Dance around Democracy”, *Middle East series, number 49*, September 2004, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

76. See Nathan J. Brown, “When Victory Becomes an Option: Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood Confronts Success”, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, January 2012; Nathan Brown, “The Muslim Brotherhood”, Testimony to House Subcommittee on Terrorism, April 13, 2011.

77. See William A. Rugh, “Egyptian Politics and American Diplomacy”, *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XIX, Issue. 2, Summer 2012, pp. 1-9.

Chapter 3

Post-Cold War Geopolitical Debates

The American Conceptualization of Islamism

With the disappearance of the Soviet Union, America's ideological foe, the global geopolitical landscape had profoundly changed. The disintegration of the Soviet Union, fragmentation of both Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia , reunification of Germany, and the abruptly dramatic collapse of the Communist regimes, notably in Eastern Europe, had signaled the crucial transformations that global balance of power had been undergoing, featuring the characteristics of the emerging world order. Admittedly, the end of the Cold War was not a mere political victory of the American-led west. Rather, it was a total civilizational triumph of the United States and its allies, notably Western Europe, as the abject decline of Communism signified the viability of capitalism and liberal democracy. Such arguments as Fukuyama's 'End of History' manifested the triumphant spirit that predominantly captured the West, particularly America, in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War, reinforcing the feelings of cultural superiority and self-righteousness. In his theory, Francis Fukuyama argued that "the end point of mankind's ideological evolution and the universalization of western liberal democracy as the final form of human government."[1] To be sure, Fukuyama's thesis was widely criticized, largely because of its over assertiveness and the imperious tone it embraced. But the core concept that liberal democracy needs to be globalized as a model for imitation has seemingly been adopted by many American intellectuals and policy makers. Articulating this tendency, Madeleine Albright, former secretary of state (1997-2001), observed, "today, for the first time in history, electoral democracy is the world's predominant form of government,"[2] stressing the universality of liberal democracy- and its economic, political, and cultural applications- as the alternative ideology that the international community is bound to adopt.

However, the post- Cold War's most prominent feature was the emergence of the United States as the sole superpower with unrivalled strategic reach and unprecedented preponderance in all domains of power, militarily, economically, technologically, and culturally. As Brzezinski put it, "never before in history has a single power been so paramount."[3] Seizing the historical moment of unipolarity that, prevailed, for a short period, in the wake of the Cold War, [4] the

United States sought to reconstruct the world system, consolidating its hegemonic status and ensuring that, as Robert Pelletreau, then Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, put it, "America will continue to wear the mantle of leadership, not just in combating enemies, but in building a world that reflects our ideals and promotes our interests."[5] The enlargement of NATO, establishment of the World Trade Organization (WTO), and the American-dominated coalition in the Gulf war of 1991 were apparently conducted within this context. Furthermore, this unprecedentedly matchless American preponderance produced a sense of indispensability, re-conceptualizing America's global role. Indeed, emphasizing the criticality of the U.S hegemonic centrality to world well being, some scholars argued, "American hegemony is the only reliable defense against a breakdown of peace and international order. The appropriate goal of American foreign policy, therefore, is to preserve that hegemony as far into the future as possible."[6] Not surprisingly, American hegemonic leadership was confronted by challenges of various types. Chief among them were: proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD); ethnic and regional conflicts; and the resurgence of political Islam, notably in such pivotal Middle Eastern countries as Egypt, Algeria, Sudan (where Islamists seized power through the military coup of 1989), and Turkey, and ,to lesser extent, Jordan, Tunisia, Yemen, Palestine, Kuwait, and Morocco. Indeed, Islamic political activism emerged as the most significant political force in its respective country, posing a threat to the American-backed status quo, and hence potentially challenging the emerging American-engineered world order.

The emergence of Islamic activism as a major player coincided with the demise of the Cold War and the resultant transformations that overwhelmed the global geopolitical scene. To what extent were these two events interrelated? Three interpretations can be offered to explain this overlapping of the two events: first, it is the combination of preparation and opportunity that enabled political Islam to seize the moment. Undeterred by a series of oppressions, Islamism had steadily been growing, taking numerous forms. Had Islamism failed to advance its political currency as a result of exclusion and physical persecution, it would have been disqualified to exploit the post-Cold War implications. Second, with the absence of the superpower rivalry, the strategic significance of the American-backed regimes retreated. This degradation of their centrality as regional stabilizers, coupled with their locally mounting failures, had considerably undermined the strategic significance of the incumbent regimes, and hence prompted Islamists to advance their political agenda, enunciating their advocacy of genuine reform. Finally, the

universal values of freedom, human rights, transparency, and pluralism permeated Muslim societies in general and Islamist constituencies in particular, pushing for change.

Unlike Central Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America – just to name a few – the Middle East proved to be immune to the democratic waves that marked the post-Cold War historical moment, raising the recurrent question of the compatibility of Islam and democracy. Cultural resistance is undeniably militating against Westernization, not democratization. Thus, it is the political-oriented measures that have widely been conceived to be the primary obstacles to the democratic transformations in the region. As John Esposito put it, "in contrast to other parts of the world, calls for greater political participation in the Middle East have been met by empty rhetoric and repression at home and by ambivalence or silence in the West."[7] While exceptionally vital to U.S interests, the Middle East has invariably been viewed by both intellectuals and policymakers as a source of threat. As Pelletreau observed, "there are few if any areas of the world that combine such strategic importance to the United States with such chronic instability."[8]

Replacing communism as both cultural challenger and strategic threat, Islam and Islamism aroused animated debates in the Cold War's aftermath, generating sharply diverse intellectual trends and policy orientations. These post-Cold War debates have shaped the key features of American geopolitical stances on Islamic political activism, reflecting various intellectual approaches, and hence manifesting, at least on the rhetorical level, the diversity of American responses to political Islam. Indeed, "far from advancing a monolithic interpretation of Islamic revivalism, American academics and policy specialists are split in their evaluation of Islamists and how to deal with them."[9]

To be sure, the prevalence of a confrontational interpretation of Islamic revivalism relatively accounts for the superiority of American hard-line policy towards political Islam. Clearly, the American conceptualization of Islamic activism is a conditioned by combination of historical, cultural, strategic, and realistic factors, shaping the geopolitical image of Islamism as a whole. Although American views of political Islam are considerably discordant, the dominant intellectual and political attitude is unarguably antagonistic. Examining the driving forces that lie behind intellectual and policy orientations, therefore, is a key to authentic understanding of American Middle East policies. While the successive Administrations, out of their prerogative,

assume the role of formulating the strategic alternatives, other parties, notably the intellectual community, have significantly been contributing to the making of American political discourse concerning Islamic activism. Thus, encompassing the various intellectual trends is inescapably a prelude to in-depth understanding of American foreign policy, as a whole, towards political Islam, exploring the influence that the intellectual establishment exerts on the official thinking.

The Intellectual Context: Discordant Interpretations

In such an advanced society as America, where intellectual activities are admirably influential, academic circles, think tanks, foreign policy commentators, and eminent strategic thinkers formidably impact on the formation of political behavior. Hence, the policy pursued towards political Islam, "is, to a great extent, the result of the confluence of views of experts on the best way for the United States to approach that phenomenon."[10] The post-Cold War debates over Islamism ultimately yielded two intellectual trends, the confrontationalists and the accommodationists. While both schools recognize the strategic currency of Islamic activism in the Middle East, they embrace sharply divergent interpretations of its resurgence, and hence call for discordant policies towards it. Three foundational themes apparently set these two schools of thought apart. First, there is the interpretation of Islamists' ideological blueprint that principally shapes their stances towards such issues as Secularism, Modernization, and Westernization (adopting western cultural values). Second, discussion follows on, the compatibility of Islam and democracy, and whether Islamists commit to democratic values once they assume power. "Will they act in an irredentist manner and actively pursue anti-western policies? Or will political realities dilute Islamists' ideological fervor and moderate their behavior?"[11]. Third, we consider Islamists' anticipated approach with regard to American vital interests in the Middle East.

The Confrontationalist Approach

To a considerable number of American scholars, Islam, by definition, is averse to the western version of modernization. Islamic ideology, they argue, is so rigid that it lacks the dynamics that would enable it interchangeably to interact with globally prevailing western values, perpetuating Muslims' historical attitude towards the 'decadent West'. Islam as such has dogmatically been conceived to be stubbornly rejecting such vocabularies as secularism, individualism, liberalism, and gender equality, vigorously condemning the western definition of modernization. Endorsing

Islam as an ideological guidance, this school of thought argues, Islamic political activism is disqualified to be integrated into the American-dominated world order. Fundamentalists (as widely stigmatized) as well as many ordinary Muslims, are not only, Bernard Lewis observes, "anti-western in the sense that they regard the West as the source of evil that is corroding Muslim societies"[12], but, more crucially, they "see the West in general and its present leader the United States in particular as the ancient and irreconcilable enemy of Islam, the one serious obstacle to the restoration of God's faith and law at home and their ultimate universal triumph."[13]

In his widely noted thesis of a clash of civilizations, Samuel Huntington asserts that "the underlying problem for the West is not Islamic fundamentalism. It is Islam, a different civilization whose people are convinced of the superiority of their culture and are obsessed with the inferiority of their power."[14] Underpinning his argument of inevitable cultural clash, Huntington invoked the history of conflicts between Islam and the West, deterministically concluding that "so long as Islam remains Islam (which it will) and the West remains the West (which is more dubious), this fundamental conflict between two great civilizations and ways of life will continue to define their relations in the future even as it has defined them for the past fourteen centuries."[15]. Viewing Islam as a historically constant threat to the West, Lewis has further contended that the current struggle with the Muslim world is a "rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide expansion of both."[16] It deductively follows that it has been Islam's disdain for such western concepts as " individualism, liberalism, constitutionalism, human rights, equality, liberty, the rule of law, democracy, free market, [and] separation of church and state"[17] that persistently forestalls inclusion of political Islam. Hence, disassociation with Islam as a source of political ideology is seemingly a prerequisite for rapprochement with the West in general and the United States in particular. Alternatively, Islamism should be denied any form of political participation so long as its conceptual framework is not in harmony with the western-oriented universal values. In a word, Islam as an ideology, this confrontationalist interpretation suggests, is bound to develop in such a manner that paves the way for the permeation of western values in Muslim societies.

The incompatibility of Islam and democracy is the second central theme that has emphatically captured the imagination of this intellectual trend, underpinning its approach of exclusion. Indeed, the confrontationalist interpretation of Islamism ascribes the entrenched

tyranny and absence of political freedom in the Middle East to the very Islamic political culture that has evolved throughout various historical phases under the umbrella of the Islamic Caliphate, illustrating the alleged inconsistency between Islamic political ideology and Western democratic principles. Lack of popular sovereignty, human rights violations, diminished constitutional accountability, and the prevalence of autocracy have, this school of thought argues, consistently marked Islamic political culture, featuring Islam's political passivity. Hence, Islam as such not merely obstructs genuine political reform that should inevitably be conducted in the image of the globally accredited western democracy, it also, rejectionists observe, glorifies authoritarianism, reinforcing Muslims' political passivity.

Invoking Islam's autocratic heritage, Bernard Lewis, a leading American historian of the Middle East, concludes that Islamists' "attitude towards democratic elections has been summed up as 'one man, one vote, once'."[18] A similar argument was developed by Judith Miller, asserting that Islamists are inherently undemocratic. Thus, Miller suggests, they should be deprived of any institutional power. "For despite their rhetorical commitment to democracy and pluralism, virtually all militant Islamists oppose both. They are, and likely to remain, anti-Western, anti-American, and anti-Israeli."[19] This school of thought makes the point that: if the choice is between undemocratic Islamic theology and the established authoritarian regime, then the latter is apparently the least of the two evils. Promoting democracy in the Middle East, therefore, is seemingly not a viable alternative. For elections will simply weaken the pro-western ruling elites, empower Islamists, and further heighten the already growing anti-Americanism, severely jeopardizing American interests. Recognizing the electoral weight of political Islam, which outperforms that of the pro-western ruling class, Miller resentfully embraces demotion of democracy. As, she asserts, "free elections seem more likely than any other route to produce militant Islamic regimes that are, in fact, inherently anti-democratic."[20] Shortly, rejectionists prefer the incumbent despotic rulers to democratically elected 'Islamic government'.

Democracy, according to this confrontationalist interpretation, need not to be reduced to mere electoral manifestations. Rather, it has to be introduced as a complementary set of conceptual principles, ethical values, and societal norms, where such entitlements as liberty, gender equality, individualism, and minority rights are at the heart of democratization. In brief, they argue, re-constructing Arabs' collective political approaches, both on the theoretical and practical levels,

should receive priority over impulsive imposition of electoral politics, or in Lewis's words 'premature democratization', that would most likely generate undesirably challenging uncertainties, debilitating America's strategic agenda in the Middle East.

Viewing Islamism (or Islamic fundamentalism as it has often been labeled by confrontationalists) as a threat to both western civilization and American interests, is the third core notion that confrontational thesis has zealously been disseminating. With the significant growth of political Islam, modernization (as defined by the West), ideological and cultural conflicts, aspiration for global supremacy, and realistically political clashes of interests have assertively been perceived to be the crucial juncture of the battle, where each side has become the other's 'other'. Equating Islamic political activism with communism may signify the criticality of the former as both ideological foe and strategic threat. It is obviously an exaggeration, at this stage at least, to identify Islamism with the Communist threat. But the point here is the crucial implication for American strategies towards political Islam that such confrontational interpretation may engender, determining the tracks that post-Cold War American Middle East policies would alternatively opt for.

Daniel Pipes, a noted commentator on the Middle East affairs, asserts that, "fundamentalist Islam is a radical utopian movement closer in spirit to other such movements (communism, fascism) than to traditional religion. ……..indeed, spokesmen for fundamentalist Islam see their movement standing in direct competition to western civilization and challenging it for global supremacy."[21] Islamists' accession to power in the Middle East, Pipes warns, would likely create a fanatically aggressive regional order with disastrous consequences. These may include "dramatic run-up in the cost of energy [as a result of political unrest in oil-producing areas], arms races, more international terrorism,…..wars, lots of wars, ……..[and] massive outflows to Europe."[22] The confrontational interpretation tends to identify extremists with moderates, challenging the wisdom of making distinction between the two groups. Denying the very existence of moderation amongst the various Islamist factions, Judith Miller, in an affirmative statement, inquires, "How would Washington view Islamic groups that pledge to create democratic rule, to respect human rights and pluralism? Specifically, how would Washington view such groups as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Jordan……all of which have vowed repeatedly to establish their Islamic state by playing by democratic rules? [23] Likewise,

Daniel Pipes, in what appears to be an overassertive tone, maintains, "yes, fundamentalist Muslim groups, ideologies, and tactics differ from each other in many ways …….but every one of them is inherently extremist. Fundamentalist groups have evolved a division of labor, with some seeking power through politics and others through intimidation."[24]

The Accommodationist Interpretation

Accusing the confrontational thesis of being deliberately reductionist, viewing political Islam as monolithic, this school of thought argues for the inclusion of those Islamic factions that denounce violence, espouse reformist rather than revolutionary means, and demonstrate reasonably moderate attitude towards democracy. Indeed, the basic unit of analysis here is 'moderate Islamism', which is, according to accommodationists, neither undemocratic nor anti-western. Specifically, the core argument of accommodationists is: failure to accommodate moderate Islamists in a truly pluralistic political order will ultimately lead to catastrophic consequences, where the region will witness further growth of anti-American sentiments, ascendance of radicalism, and further political, economic, and educational deteriorations- as a result of lack of genuine reforms-, plunging into chaotic state of affairs. They further argue, "The question is thus not so much whether Islamists would come to power, but rather how would they come to power?"[25] Thus, they conclude, the interest of America lies in disengaging from the Middle Eastern despots, and, instead, maintaining friendly relations with Islamic forces. "By doing this America will best serve both its own interests and the interests of the people of the Middle East"[26]

Addressing the perception of Islam as a violently brutal and intolerant religion, which constitutes the point of departure that underpins the subsequent arguments of confrontationalists, John Esposito, a leading American scholar of, and apologist for Islamic activism, observes, "for the vast majority of believers, Islam, like other world religions, is a faith of peace and social justice, moving its adherents to worship of God, obey his laws, and be socially responsible."[27] Condemning the portrayal of Islam as a political, civilizational, and demographic threat, Esposito asserts, "this is magnified by some who, like [Charles] Krauthammer, reduce contemporary realities to the playing out of ancient rivaliries."[28] Far from being an inherently extremist theological ideology, Islam, accommodationists argue, is a comprehensive way of life, addressing all aspects, including governance. Unlike other related religions, "Islam is the only

major monotheistic religion that offers not only a set of spiritual beliefs but a set of rules by which to govern society."[29] Challenging the stereotypical notion of the anti-western attitude of Muslims, Graham Fuller, a former CIA officer, and well noted expert on Islam and Islamism, contends, "Today it is difficult to find active support for ideas of permanent struggle between Islam and the West in most circles of Islam, radical or conventional. …… [The West is] a culture many of whose features Muslims admire: education, technology, concepts of liberty, respect for human rights, rule of law, and improved standards of living."[30] To be sure, adherents of this school distinguish Muslims' attitude towards western civilization from their opposition to western, notably American, policies, which include (though not limited to), "Washington support for the corrupt and repressive Middle Eastern regimes, U.S unconditional support for Israel, and the long history of American economic and military intervention in the region."[31]

The compatibility of Islam and democracy has been at the heart of accommodationist argument, equating principal fundamentals of democracy with Islam's political values. While admitting that Islam as a faith, and democracy as a liberal political philosophy cannot, and should not, be fully compatible, they nonetheless argue that both ideologies meet at the critical juncture, where the foundational components of the democratic rule - as presented by both Islam and democracy- are essentially identical. Indeed, the two pillars of good governance, popular sovereignty and liberty, have equally been adhered to, and celebrated by both democracy and Islamic political discourse. The divergence exists around secularism, and, by extension, the limits of popular sovereignty. Democracy is substantively based on separation of church and state, and hence argues for absolute sovereignty of the people, denying any sort of divine influence in public affairs. Islam, in contrast, where the faith and political ideology are inevitably intertwined, operates within the limits of the supreme reference of Sharia, complying with its nature as a comprehensive way of life. Does that transform Islam into a theocratic rule (as conceptualized by the western legacy), denying its relative compatibility with democracy? The answer is no, reply accommodationists.

Notwithstanding the differences between the western notion of democracy and Islamic traditions, the vast majority of Muslims today, John Esposito and James Piscatori, assert, "react to [democracy] as one of the universal conditions of the modern world. To this extent, it has become part of Muslim political thought and discourse."[32] Interestingly, mainstream political

Islam, exemplified by the Muslim Brotherhood and its affiliates, evolved a relatively democratic discourse as early as 1940s. "Early in its development, the Muslim Brotherhood accepted that it had to contest elections if it was to exercise real influence. At its sixth conference in 1941, it resolved to field candidates in any forthcoming national election."[33] Theoretically, accommodationists contend, the principles of democracy are rooted in the well-established Islamic concepts of: *shura* (consultation); *Ijtihad* (independent reasoning); and *ijma* (consensus), reconciling the core of democracy with the spirit of Islam as a political ideology.[34] Questioning the proposition that Islamists would adopt 'one man, one vote, one time' style elections, hijacking democracy, Graham Fuller argues, "the real question about whether Islamists are ready to win - and lose- elections has less to do with Islam and more to do with the political culture of the given country in question."[35] While Islam, as a source of political guidance, will continue to exert measurable influence on Islamists' geopolitical conceptualization, accommodationists predict, Islamists in power will be tempered by the surrounding political realities. They will have to adjust their geostrategic calculations in accordance to the rule of the democratic game. Precisely, as Leon Hadar put it, "if they want to expand their political bases, and remain in power, they will have to form political coalitions, modify their rigid theocratic agenda, and take into consideration the interests and views of competing groups like the military and business community as well as those of foreign governments and investers."[36] Briefly, despite their ambiguous attitude towards popular sovereignty – in relation to divine sovereignty-, accommodationists conclude, " the great majority of Muslims today would subscribe to the idea that consultative government is central to the Islamic state."[37]

Accommodationists further argue that the presumed Islamic threat to American interests in the Middle East has purposely been exaggerated further to radicalize the American stance towards Islamic political activism. The Islamic movement, Shireen Hunter suggests, has to be perceived as a "manifestation of the dynamic role of Islam in the evolution of Muslim societies, reflecting the realities of those societies at the present stage of their development,"[38] rather than a cultural and strategic threat to the West. The United States, therefore, John Esposito maintains, "should not in principle object to the involvement of Islamic activists in government if they have been duly elected. [Islamists in power will be] operating on the basis of national interests and showing a flexibility that reflects understanding of the globally interdependent world."[39] Affirming that the Islamic threat is a myth, accommodationists advise the U.S to adopt such a

stance that, on the one hand, support the integration of Islamists into a genuinely open political order, diluting their theocratic orientation, and, on the other, "accept the ideological differences between the west and Islam to the greatest extent possible, or at least tolerate them."[40] Far from being a threat, by definition, to U.S interests, Islamism in power, Islamist sympathizers predict, will relevantly act in reaction to the regional and international, notably American, politics. The difference maker, they argue, is the way through which Islamists escalate to power. Democratic means, apologists conclude, will cause Islamism to espouse a peaceful posture.[41]

These two lines of thinking have vigorously been competing for influence, seeking to shape both public opinion and the policy pursued towards political Islam. While other elements such as the media, interest groups, and the concerned foreign governments endeavor to impact the making of foreign policy, the intellectual voice remains the primary shaper of strategic alternatives, determining, to a considerable measure, the posture that foreign policy ultimately embraces. Naturally, American foreign policy is not deterministic. These two schools of thought, therefore, will continue to strive to have their voice heard, influencing the official thinking on Islamic political activism.

The Post-9/11 Debates

As stated at the outset of the above section, American intellectuals of various schools of thought tend to view Islamism through three broad lenses: the political ideology that shapes Islamists' worldview and hence determines their attitude towards the western-based political modernity; the compatibility of Islam and democracy and Islamists commitment to democratic values, including the peaceful transfer of power; and a geostrategic posture that Islamists in power may embrace towards American vital interests in the Middle East. In the post-9/11 era Islamism continued to be debated within these three contexts. Ironically, both accommodationists and rejectionists interpreted the 9/11 attacks in such a manner that validated their respective conceptual stances. Accommodationists argued the American-backed authoritarianism provided fertile ground for the growth of Islamic extremism, which loomed large because of its violent acts. Hence, accommodationists, observed, the 9/11 attacks were partially attributed to lack of a pluralistic, inclusive, and responsive political setting that would encourage moderation and curb violent radicalism. Nonetheless, accommodationists concluded, as a result of its aimless and unjustified violent acts, Al Qaeda lost ground to moderate Islamists, who unambiguously

denounced violence, and, instead, embraced constitutional struggle as a means for change. As Fawaz A. Gerges, a well known writer on the Middle Eastern affairs suggests:

> Indiscriminate targeting of civilians has turned Muslims opinion against Al Qaeda, its tactics, and ideology. For most Muslims, Al Qaeda stands accused of having brought ruin to the *ummah* [Muslim global community]. Some insist that Al Qaeda is an American invention, a pretext to intervene in Muslim lands. …. [AL Qaeda] has lost the struggle for Muslim hearts and minds, a fact that is more evident in the wake of the Arab popular uprisings. …. The Muslim world did not hail September 11 as a triumph but considered it as a catastrophe. Since September 11, I have argued that, contrary to the received wisdom in the West, Muslim opinion has embraced neither Al Qaeda's extremist ideology nor its murderous tactics and that Bin Laden and his cohorts did not speak for the mainstream Islamists who represent the majority of the religiously based activists, let alone the *ummah*.[42]

John Esposito and Dalia Mogahed strongly condemned the equation of terrorism, as exemplified by Al Qaeda and its affiliates, with the mainstream political Islam. They contended:

> The catastrophic events of 9/11 and continued terrorist attacks in Muslim countries and in Madrid and London have exacerbated the growth of Islamophobia almost exceptionally. Islam and Muslims have become guilty until proven innocent. The religion of Islam is regarded as the cause, rather than the context, of radicalism, extremism, and terrorism… [which are partly attributed to] some aspects of U.S. Foreign policy representing intervention and dominance, Western support for authoritarian regimes, the invasion and occupation of Iraq, or support for Israel's military battles with Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon.[43]

The 9/11 attacks were arbitrarily exploited to support the notion of a 'clash of civilizations', where Islam was portrayed as the primary source of resistance to western-based universal values of democracy, freedom, and human rights. This interpretation, accommodationists believe, offered a misconceived perception of Islam, perpetuating the Western-Islamic cultural conflict and misinterpreting a Muslim attitude towards the West as a cultural entity. As John Esposito suggested, "the attacks of September 11 and the global threat of Osama Bin Laden and Al Qaeda have resurrected a knee-jerk resort to 'the clash of civilizations' for an easy answer to the question: why they hate us?. ……September 11 unleashed new updated versions of an Islamic threat as many found it more expedient to fall back on convenient stereotypes of a monolithic Islam, an historic clash of civilizations, and a conflict between Islam and modernity, rather than examine the complex political, military, economic, and social causes of terrorism."[44]

Accommodationists disapproved of the George W. Bush administration's approach to Islamic activism, most notably the Global War on Terror (GWoT) that the administration waged to

undermine terrorism. Ironically, the GWoT severely discredited America's moral authority, fueled anti-American sentiment, and was viewed by the majority of Muslims as a war against Islam. Emile Nakhleh, a former CIA analyst, observed, "seven years after 9/11, the global war on terror and the commitment of enormous American resources in manpower and treasure in pursuit of that 'war' have not made Americans measurably safer than they were on the eve of the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington."[45] Furthermore, U.S. counterterrorism efforts tarnished America's geopolitical image, identifying the U.S. with the colonial powers that the region historically experienced. John Esposito concluded, "The resultant image of America and American foreign policy is increasingly that of 'imperial' America whose overwhelming military and political power is used unilaterally, disproportionately, and indiscriminately in a war not just against global terrorism and religious extremists but also against Islam and the Muslim world."[46]

Nonetheless, compatibility of Islam and democracy remained the foundational them around which accommodationists' argument revolved, calling Washington to allow democratization to proceed in the Muslim world without America's involvement. Graham E. Fuller warned, "Ideally, Washington should keep its hand off the process so as not to tarnish it, as has been the case in the past through association with U.S. self- interest. Past selective and instrumental use of democratization by Washington for pursuit of U.S. strategic goal has discredited the very concept of its democratization program……The United States must accept that under democratic process Islamic parties will be legitimately elected in early elections in most Muslim countries."[47]

Indeed, the 9/11 attacks and their consequent catastrophic political and military implications for the Muslim world, accommodationists argued, undermined the violent trends and empowered moderate Islamists who unambiguously disassociated themselves from radicalism, denounced violence, and endorsed democracy as a means for change, developing a sense of pragmatism. Exemplified by the Muslim Brotherhood, moderate Islamism, Fawaz Gerges suggested, "learned the art of compromise and pragmatism through hardship and persecution. Ideology takes a back seat to the interests and political well-being of the Brotherhood and Ennahdah [of Tunisia]. More than ever, their message targets specific constituencies and interest groups – a sign of an ideological shift to pragmatism."[48] In short, accommodationists concluded that the 9/11 attacks were a result of the authoritarian rule and political exclusion of Islam from the public sphere.

They sought to make a clear distinction between Al Qaeda's rootless radicalism, and Moderate Islamism whose socio-political appeal is evident.

Rejectionists, on the other hand, argued that the 9/11 attacks confirmed both the undemocratic and anti-western nature of Islam as a faith. Al Qaeda and its like-minded factions, rejectionists suggest, represent the norm rather than the exception. This school of thought built its argument upon the assumption that Islamic societies, throughout history, never experienced democracy, simply because Islamic doctrines do not enshrine democratic values. Violence, confrontationalists believe, is an expression of hatred, which is in turn entrenched in the Islamic texts, notably the *Quran*. Intellectuals like Bernard Lewis, Daniel Pipes, Fouad Ajmi, and Robert Satloff played crucial roles in shaping the George W. Bush administration's geopolitical perception of Islamism in the post-9/11 era, and hence influenced the administration's geostrategic preferences, including the invasions of Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003).

Indeed, rejectionists' point of departure is their interpretation of Islam. Islamists political activism is a mere manifestation of Islamic ideology, which is, rejectionists remarked, not in harmony with the core values of the judo-Christian civilization. Hence, simplistically identifying the 9/11 terrorist attacks with Islam as a faith, Sam harries wrote, "It is time we admitted that we are not at war with terrorism. We are at war with Islam. …..we are absolutely at war with the vision of life that is prescribed to all Muslims in the Koran. …. The idea that Islam is a 'peaceful religion hijacked by extremists' is a dangerous fantasy."[49] Similarly, Charles Krauthammer attributed the 9/11 events to the intolerant nature of Islam and the deteriorating socio-political condition of Arab Middle East: "it's not Osama bin Laden; it is the cauldron of political oppression, religious intolerance, and social ruin in the Arab-Islamic world …It's not a one man; it is a condition. ……And our problem is 9/11 and the roots of Arab-Islamic nihilism.…. September 11 felt like the initiation of a new history, but it was a return to history, the twentieth-century history of radical ideologies and existential enemies."[50]

Bernard Lewis, a prominent American historian, and Middle East expert, interpreted the 9/11 attacks in terms of Islam's failure to cope with modernity. Islamist violence, according to Lewis, reveals Muslims frustration and increasing feeling of powerlessness. Lewis equated Islamism with authoritarianism, warning that Islamists posed threat to democracy. In his book, "The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror", which was published in 2003 (two years after 9/11

events), Lewis wrote, "For Islamists, democracy, expressing the will of the people, is the road to power, but it is a one-way road, on which there is no return, no rejection of the sovereignty of God, as exercised through His chosen representatives. Their electoral policy has been classically summarized as one man (men only), one vote, once."[51] Likewise, arguing against the compatibility of Islam and liberal democracy, David Bukay, a Jewish intellectual, claimed, "Such basic principles as sovereignty, legitimacy, political participation and pluralism, and those individual rights and freedoms inherent in democracy do not exist in a system where Islam is the ultimate sources of law. …. The political Islam espoused by the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamists is incompatible with liberal democracy."[52]

While appreciating Islam as a civilization and spiritual mission, Daniel Pipes views Islamism as a form of radical utopianism, seeking to transform Islam into a political ideology. Islamism, Pipes asserted, "loath the West because of its being tantamount to Christendom, the historic archenemy, and its vast influence over Muslims. Islamism inspires a drive to reject, defeat, and subjugate Western civilization. ….Islamism accurately indicates an Islamic-flavored version of radical utopianism, an –ism like other –isms, comparable to fascism, and communism. …. We will triumph over this new variant of barbarism so that a modern form of Islam can emerge."[53]

Clearly, this confrontational line of thinking not only preheated the policy circles in Washington in the aftermath of 9/11 events, but also provided conceptual justification for the George W. Bush administration's neoconservative agenda. Supporting the administration's military campaign against Iraq, Fouad Ajami, a regular commentator on Middle Eastern affairs, wrote:

> It was September 11 and its shattering surprise, in turn, that tipped the balance on Iraq away from containment and toward regime change and 'rollback'. …. No great apologies ought to be made for America's unilateralism. The region can live with and use that unilateralism. The considerable power now at America's disposal can be used by one and all as a justification for going along with American goals. …in the end, the battle for a secular, modernist order in the Arab world is an endeavor for the Arabs themselves. ….. The Islamists' apparent resurgence in recent months was born of their hope that the United States may have lost the sense of righteous violation that drove it after September 11, and that the American push in the region may have lost its steam. These Islamists are supremely political and calculating people; they probe the resolve of their enemies. … A new war should come with the promise that the United States is now on the side of reform.[54]

In a conference sponsored by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (September 24, 2005), Robert Satloff, an American expert on Middle East policy, argued against the political engagement of Islamists, identifying Islamism as "the greatest ideological challenge America faces in the world today. Islamism and democracy are, by their very definition, antithetical. [Hence] we should not encourage political engagement with Islamists. Instead of moderating the radicals, let us commit ourselves to the project of empowering the moderates."[55] Clearly, Satloff and his like-minded intellectuals appeared to have conflated violent and non-violent Islamists. Their argument is based on the assumption that the two groups are united by the ultimate end – the recreation of the Caliphate (the *sharia*-based global Islamic state).

The Policy Context: Officially Conceptualized Islamism

The outset of the post-Cold War era was noticeably marked by a stunning emergence of Islamic resurgence. Significantly crucial events started to unfold, manifesting the potentially profound transformations that would be overrunning the greater Middle East. Such events as: Islamists attainment of power in Sudan through military coup (1989); the ascendancy of Hamas as an Islamic resistant movement in the Palestinian territories; and the parliamentary victories that Islamists achieved in such countries as Egypt, Yemen, Jordan, and- perhaps most significantly- Algeria, signaled the region's potential political orientations, reflecting the socio-political weight of the newly emerging player. As a result, the most critical theme that American policy establishment had to confront was: to what extent Washington would tolerate Islamic political activism. Or, as Graham Fuller put it, "is the United State willing to inaugurate a democratic process in which Islamists stand a very good chance of gaining a significant voice in power?."[56] Post-Cold War American policies towards political Islam are embodiments of the official perception of the Islamic resurgence. Indeed, confronted by Islamist activism, the first three post-Cold War administrations articulated a set of policies that reflected their respective perceptions of the increasingly ascending Islamic phenomenon. Understanding the official perception is, therefore, critical to interpreting the subsequent America's Middle East strategies.

George H. W. Bush (1989-1993): The Formative Years

With Islamic resurgence as the leading catalyst, the post-Cold War Middle Eastern socio-political transformations figured high on both the regional and international scenes, causing the

George H. W. Bush administration to pay closer attention to this Islamic-oriented political phenomenon. Indeed, notwithstanding its preoccupation with the overwhelmingly accelerating implications of the abrupt decline of the bipolar world system, the first post-Cold War American administration was drawn into a position where articulating a sophisticated perception of Islamism had become a categorical imperative. Political Islam per se is hardly new to American foreign policy concerns. But no coherent discourse was required until Islamic political activism prominently insinuated itself into the battle ground, potentially threatening the American-fostered autocratic status quo. Thus, "when President [George H.W.] Bush assumed office in 1989, a major debate about political Islam ensued within the U.S. foreign-policy establishment."[57]

While the post-Cold War uncertainties, notably in such areas as Central Asia and Eastern Europe, continued to capture the administration's efforts, debilitating its capacity, the Middle East remained at the heart of U.S. strategic considerations, reinforcing its geopolitically typical image as a source of concerns. With the absence of the Cold War, the region was viewed in light of its own substantial features. Indeed, as perceived by the Bush 41 administration, "The Middle East is a vivid example, however, of a region in which, even as East-West tensions diminish, American strategic concerns remain."[58] Not surprisingly, the political expressions of Islam, taking various forms, were conceived to be the main source of threat to both 'friendly regimes' and American interests. At the early stages of the post-Cold War era, American political rhetoric, when addressing Islamic resurgence, almost exclusively referred to 'Radicalism', reducing Islamic revival to mere fanatic groups of aimlessly subversive extremists. Thus, the administration speculated, "religious fanaticism may continue to endanger American lives, or countries friendly to US in the Middle East, on whose energy resources the free world continues to depend. The scourge of terrorism, and of states who sponsor it, likewise remains a threat."[59] It follows, "the necessity to defend our interests will continue."[60]

Clearly, several elements had interdependently accelerated the rise of Islamic activism as an unrivalled socio-political force: the extensive failure of the incumbent elites; the diminishing of Arab Nationalism and Leftism, mainly as a result of the defeat in the Six-day War of 1967; the expansion of anti-American sentiment; the disappearance of the Cold War entitlements; and, above all, the political nature of Islam, which not only legitimizes 'Islamic political activism',

but also presents it as a religious obligation, requiring ordinary Muslims, out of their religious duty, to actively embrace its agenda. The four years of the George H. W. Bush presidency were formative with regard to American official perception of Islamism. While Islamic political preeminence was manifested by various parliamentary victories in such countries as Egypt, Yemen, Kuwait, Jordon, and Tunisia, the administration confronted three pivotal events, shaping its perception, and hence the articulated policy towards political Islam. The Islamic state in Sudan (established in 1989), the Gulf War of 1991, and the stunning parliamentary victory of the Algerian Islamists (1991), apparently constituted the main realistic components that, along with other historical and ideological factors, defined, to varying degrees, the administration's perception of Islamism.

Following the 1989 military coup that brought the Sudanese Islamic movement (national Islamic front) to power, Sudan was perceived as posing a threat to American interests. Hence, the regime was conceived to serve as a regional centre of gravity, further energizing Islamic political orientations in the surrounding sphere, and potentially enlarging the domain of Islamic challenge.[61] Washington, therefore, wanted to see "the total collapse of the regime."[62] Reinforcing the isolation of the Islamic government, Sudan was "classed as a rogue state that actively supported terrorism."[63] The Gulf War of 1991 presented the U.S. with an historic opportunity to expose its hegemonic status as the sole superpower. Yet, it stimulated grass-roots anti-American sentiment in the Arab Middle East, and revealed Islamists' capability to mobilize the public, reflecting their political significance as a potential strategic challenger. However, the subsequent confluence of events further reinforced the public appeal of Islamic activism, notably in such closed political settings as Saudi Arabia.[64] The most crucial test case that the George H. W. Bush administration faced was the Algerian episode of violence that unfolded in January 1992 as a result of the annulment of the 1991 elections by the military hard-liners. Indeed, "the U.S. response to the bloody events in Algeria serves as a test case demonstrating the way American policy makers view political Islam and the affinity between Islam and democracy."[65] Briefly, the steady ascendancy of Islamism in the Middle East led the administration ultimately to articulate a conceptual stance, laying the foundation for post-Cold War American discourse towards Islamic political activism.

Delivered by Edward P. Djerejian, then Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, at Meridian House International in Washington in June 1992, the Meridian address -as it has widely been labeled-, summarized the administration's perception of Islamism. Dispelling what he described as 'misplaced fears' and 'faulty perceptions', Djerejian affirmed that, "the US government does not view Islam as the next 'ism' confronting the West or threatening world peace", as such an approach, he added, "is an overly simplistic response to a complex reality."[66] Clearly, Djerejian, at least rhetorically, belittled the confrontationalist interpretation. He further recognized Islam not only as one of the world's greatest faiths, but also "as a historic civilizing force, among the many that have influenced and enriched our culture."[67] The speech admirably acknowledged Islam's tolerance of Judaism and Christianity. As a result of that very civilizational dimension of Islam, Djerejian implied, diverse Islamic groups have invariably been "seeking to reform their societies in keeping with Islamic ideals..... [and] placing renewed emphasis on Islamic principles."[68] While this statement denied having "monolithic or coordinated efforts behind these movements"[69], it failed to specify America's stance towards their political agenda that seeks reform in terms of Islamic ideological fundamentals.

Asserting that religion is not a 'determinant' in the making of U.S. policy, the Meridian address implicitly suggested that Islamists would not be assessed on their ideological and cultural belonging. Rather, they would be solely viewed in terms of their commitment to internationally recognized democratic values. Adherence to such values as free elections, pluralism, tolerance, and liberty would be, the speech revealed, the primary criterion for judgment. Nonetheless, Djerejian affirmed, "we are suspect of those who would use the democratic process to come to power, only to destroy that very process in order to retain power and political dominance. While we believe in the principle of 'one person, one vote,' we do not support one person, one vote, one time."[70] Forcing Islamists seriously to review their ideological rhetoric, Djerejian set "commitment to peaceful resolution of conflict, especially the Arab-Israeli conflict"[71] as a condition for reconciliation.

The Meridian House Declaration, in response to the evolving political realities, established an intellectual context that, by and large, guided American official thinking on political Islam in the subsequent years. Yet, it revealed a measurable amount of ambiguity, ambivalence, and

irrelevance, leaving relevant and essential questions unanswered. While praising Islam as a great religion and an influential civilizing force, Djerejian did not clarify whether the administration acknowledged Islamic political ideology, which obviously constitutes the driving force of Islamic activism, shaping its fundamental concepts, guiding its political behavior, and steadily fueling its motives. Furthermore, alliance with pro-American regimes (notably Saudi Arabia and Pakistan), "whose systems of government are firmly grounded in Islamic principles"[72], was arbitrarily presented as an evidence of American religious and cultural tolerance. This argument is misleading, missing the point that: 1, these regimes have notoriously been viewed by Islamists as obstacles to emergence of the Islamic state; 2, the case in question is not America's tolerance of Islam as a spiritual mission and cultural identity, rather, it is America's tolerance of an Islamic-based political regime. Although it articulated America's intolerance of all forms of extremism, the Meridian address failed unambiguously to express the Administration's stance towards those Islamic groups that denounce violence, accept pluralism, and intend to compete for power through ballot not bullet, let alone its commitment to just and free elections. Algeria is apparently a case in point. Indeed, former Secretary of State James A. Baker declared, in an interview with The Middle East Quarterly, "when I was at the Department [of State], we pursued a policy of excluding radical fundamentalists in Algeria, even as we recognized that this was somewhat at odds with our support of democracy."[73]

To sum up, despite its rhetorical tone, the Meridian House Declaration manifested the officially conceptualized image of political Islam as an emerging political force challenging the American-dominated status quo. Being America's first official statement on Islamism, its key virtue consisted in the conceptual framework it offered, where: Islamic revivalist endeavors were recognized; Muslims' right to seek reforms of state and society in compliance with their cultural determinants has implicitly been acknowledged; and America's quarrel was declared to be exclusively with "extremism and the violence, denial, intolerance, intimidation, coercion, and terror which too often accompany it."[74] The Meridian Address's centrality also lay in the intellectual influence that it has exerted on the succeeding U.S policy circles, notably in the Clinton Administration, whose contextual conceptualization of Islamic political activism, stemmed, to an extent, from the Djerejian doctrines. In short, the Meridian declaration laid the conceptually foundational components of the U.S rhetoric towards Islamic revivalism.

William J. Clinton (1993-2001): Misleading Interpretations

Assuming office at an historic turning point, Bill Clinton confronted a world uniquely replete with challenges that were "outside the traditional realm of power politics."[75] Indeed, while underpinning American global leadership; the end of the Cold War's consequent implications considerably debilitated the sole superpower's geostrategic efforts. Throughout its terms in office, the Clinton Administration was persistently confronted by such challenges as: regional and ethnic armed conflicts (especially in such volatile areas as the Balkans and the Middle East); the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (India and Pakistan, for instance, officially declared themselves as nuclear powers); humanitarian predicaments (mainly as a result of ethnic cleansings); the potential emergence of anti-hegemonic power or coalition of powers, threatening American global supremacy; and the expansion of Islamic resurgence, notably in such areas as the Middle East and the newly independent Central Asia.[76] Nonetheless, the Clinton Administration addressed these issues with a relatively remarkable degree of efficiency, fortifying America's centrality to world affairs, where "the world accepted the new reality[of American unmatched preeminence. Hence the 'indispensable nation'] ……was at its historical apogee by the second half of the decade."[77]

Viewing foreign policy as an extension of domestic politics, Clinton's geostrategic vision was substantially centered on: (1), globalization, which he defined as "the economic equivalent of a force of nature". It, the president maintained, "has made us all more free and more interdependent". Thus, Clinton concluded, "if we want America to stay on the right track…..we have no choice but to try to lead the train [of globalization] [78]; (2), internationalization of American cultural norms and political values, conducting political reforms in the image of the U.S. The ascendancy of political Islam in the Middle East, therefore, was perceived within the context of these two themes, as well as the region's stability and security, as conceptualized by American official thinking.

Throughout Bill Clinton's presidency (1993-2001), Islamic resurgence steadily continued its march of progress, figuring prominently in the Middle Eastern political scene, and hence establishing itself as an unrivaled force. Algeria slipped into a large scale bloody armed conflict as a result of the western-backed military coup of 1991 that aborted the electoral process. Egyptian radical militants staged a wide-range violent campaign, aiming at deposing the regime.

Islamism in Turkey stepped further, attaining power through peaceful means in 1996. Whereas Islamists in Yemen, Jordan, Kuwait, Tunisia, and Morocco achieved, to varying degrees, stunning parliamentary victories, evidently manifesting their socio-political appeal at the grass root level. Even in the GCC states, political Islam extended its reach- though unofficially- to the extent that it was ruthlessly oppressed by the security apparatus (notably in Saudi Arabia), where hundreds of Islamists were arrested in 1990s.[79] In short, replacing the Cold War calculations, Islamic political activism captured Clinton's Middle East geostrategic efforts. A clearly defined intellectual stance, therefore, was required both to offer a conceptual paradigm, guiding the official thinking on Islamism, and to provide justifications for the inconsistently diverse policies towards the various Islamic factions.

In his remarks to the Jordanian parliament in October 1994, President Clinton summarized his administration's perception of Islamic resurgence, justifying, to an extent, America's Middle East approaches, notably its involvement in the Arab-Israeli peace process. Emphasizing the message of tolerance as a culturally common value, Clinton praised Islam, whose "traditional values……-devotion to faith and good works, to family and society- are in harmony with the best of American ideals", reaffirming that "we respect islam."[80] Propagating his mission of cultural coexistence, the president emphatically rejected the notion of 'clash of cultures', condemning "those who insist that between America and the Middle East there are impassable religious and other obstacles to harmony", and asserting instead that "America refuses to accept that our civilizations must collide."[81] To authenticate his doctrine morally, Clinton cited the Prophet Mohammed's teaching of tolerance.

Clearly, Clinton perceived Islamic activism within the contexts of globalization and the peace process, identifying the 'dark forces of terror and extremism' as the main obstacle to the region's stability, security, and prosperity. In Clinton's words, the contest in the Middle East is "between tyranny and freedom, terror and security, bigotry and tolerance, isolation and openness. It is the age-old struggle between fear and hope."[82] One may discern that, according to the president's classification, those who oppose the American-engineered peace process, and embrace the Islamic-oriented reform agenda are categorically intolerable. They, Clinton affirmed, "cannot succeed for [they] are the past not the future", whereas American allies, in contrast, have

admirably been applauded for "building a society devoted to the growth of pluralism and openenness."[83]

Despite the moral tone that this presidential address adopted, faithfully reinforcing mutual tolerance as an inevitable precondition for cultural coexistence, a twofold intellectual incompleteness can be discerned. First, it intensively relied on economic interpretation as an analytical instrument to understand the Middle Eastern chronic multi-dimensional predicaments, ascribing the rise of Islamism to socio-economic deterioration. As a result, Clinton concluded, "our goal must be to spread prosperity and security to all", with a view to combat "forces of reaction [who] feed on disillusionment, on poverty, on despair. [And] stoke the fires of violence."[84] 'Economic opportunities' Clinton contended, were the remedies for the Middle Eastern state of turmoil. "If people do not feel these benefits, if poverty persists in breeding despair and killing hope, then the purveyors of fear will find fertile ground."[85] Second, it drew on extremist manifestations of Islamic resurgence, seemingly perceiving Islamism as monolithic. Indeed, the presidential remarks failed to draw a clear distinction between the radical factions, who undeniably loom large, but lack political significance, and the mainstream moderate forces whose paramount political weight and grass-root appeal have unarguably qualified them to evolve as potential challenger. However, inspired by subsequent political developments, Clinton senior aides delivered further policy statements on Islamic revival, proffering a relatively detailed perception.

The rise of Islamism further reinforced the strategic significance of the Middle East as a challenge for American foreign policy. The post-Cold War balance of power, with political Islam as a major player, qualified the region to be, as Anthony Lake, then National Security Advisor to President Clinton (1993-1997), put it, "a paradigm for our nation's approach to the post-Cold War era", therefore, Lake added, "it is both our challenge and responsibility to build a regional environment in the Middle East in which the promise of future peace and hope can be realized."[86] Rejecting the notion of clash of civilizations, and hence opposing the proposition that "fundamentalism would replace communism as the West's designated threat", Lake clarified, "our foe is oppression and extremism, whether in religious or secular guise. We draw the line against those who seek to advance their agenda through terror, intolerance, or coercion."[87] But what about those who seek to advance their political agenda through democratic means,

opposing autocratic rule? The Clinton administration's perception of Islamism appeared to be vague about the mainstream moderate Islamists who denounce violence, and instead develop peaceful approaches, adjusting their political behavior in accordance with the rules of the democratic game. To be sure, Lake drew a clear distinction between: (1), fundamentalism, which, in Lake's perception, may identically epitomize the literal-minded interpretation of the Islamic text, almost confining its concerns to the spiritual and moral aspects of Islam, steering clear of political realm. Fundamentalism as such appeared to be tolerated. Hence, the Clinton administration, Lake asserted, "Strongly disagrees" with those theorists who conceive fundamentalism as a potential threat to U.S interests[88]; and (2), extremism, which "uses religion to cover its real intentions--the naked pursuit of power……, [Posing] threat to American interests."[89]

Separating Islam, as a faith, from extremism, as coercive political activism, Lake stated, "Islam is not the issue."[90] While this distinction served a policy purpose, justifying the administration's simultaneous twofold policy: exclusion of political Islam; and backing the pro-American autocratic ruling elites, it further provoked the public, heightened anti-Americanism, weakened American-backed political order, and, as a result, broadened the appeal of Islamic resurgence. Maintaining the status quo, Lake reaffirmed, "will require us to befriend and even defend non-democratic states for mutually beneficial reasons."[91] Categorically characterizing American Middle East approach, this lack of consistency remarkably eroded America's credibility, stripping the U.S of the moral authority required both to act as peace guarantor and to promote democratic transformations. Nonetheless, enlargement of 'the community of market democracies', Lake suggested, would contain extremism, "because democracies tend not to wage war on each other or sponsor terrorism."[92]

Succeeding Edward Djerejian as Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, Robert Pelletreau reaffirmed the administration's economic interpretation of the surge of political Islam, asserting "it [Islamism] follows from conditions of extreme poverty, of not finding a job, of feeling blocked, of not being able to lead a normal life."[93] Pelletreau further contended, "It is in large part the lack of economic, educational, and political opportunities that gives extremists of any sort their constituency. The viable long-term means to defeat extremism was to address the conditions on which it thrives. [the remedy, therefore, lies in] sustainable economic and political

development."[94] Exonerating Islam of any ideological liability for the rise of extremism (the term that has often been referred to in American political rhetoric as a byword for Islamic resurgence), Pelletreau declared "we, as a government, have no quarrel with Islam. We respect it as one of the world's great religions and as a great civilizing movement…….the United States does not view Islam as the next 'ism' confronting the West or threatening world peace."[95] Thus, he concluded; "Islam is not a determining factor in our foreign policy toward any region, state, or group……. From the president on down, the United States has made clear that we have no quarrel with Islam per se."[96]

Mainly associated with Islamic activism, instability in the Middle East, Pelletreau argued, "carries profound dangerous…….it can bring new outbreaks of terrorism to our shores…..the United States [therefore] cannot remain indifferent to this turbulent sector of the globe……We have a major interest…….in changing the conduct and limiting the means of potential war-makers, and in isolating extremists who foment destabilization and conflict. This can only be achieved through active and sustained political engagement, backed by American military power."[97] Like its Republican predecessor, the Clinton administration rejected the monolithic character of political Islam. Its officials frequently maintained "we see no monolithic international control being exercised over the various Islamic movements active in the region."[98] They rather presented "different faces in different countries, according to the differing conditions in those countries…….... [Therefore] we ought not to color every party or group or government the same way, nor should we simplistically condemn them all as anti-Western."[99] Nonetheless, the administration failed to draw a theoretically sharp distinction between moderates, who pursue power through peaceful means, and extremists, who embrace violence to advance their political agenda. As Pelletreau put it, "I have trouble defining exactly where one category starts, and another stops."[100] To be sure, the administration's perception revealingly equated moderation and tolerance with the pro-western incumbent regimes that align themselves with Islam as a source of political legitimacy and cultural identity, most notably Saudi Arabia, Morocco, and Pakistan.[101]

In contrast to its predecessor, the Clinton administration proffered a relatively extensive perception, addressing measurable relevant aspects ranging from term definition to intellectual judgments. Throughout its two-term presidency, the Clinton team was exposed to a variety of

momentous events that largely influenced its perception of Islamic political activism and its significant ramifications. Theses formative events included: seizure of power by Taliban in Afghanistan (1995); the rise of what then came to be labeled as Al-Qaeda, which primarily confined its mission to combating 'Jews and Crusaders', as a necessary prelude to restoration of Islamic global primacy; drastic expansion of violent acts in Algeria, Egypt, and, to lesser extent , Saudi Arabia; the unsteadiness of the American-orchestrated peace process as a result of the armed resistance led by Hamas, an Islamic force whose emergence was viewed as a key concern, "because of its violent challenge [not only] to Israeli-Palestinian reconciliation process, [but also to] the entire peace process."[102]

To sum up, three misleading interpretations marked the Clinton administration's conceptualization of Islamic revival, featuring a formative conceptual deficiency in the administration's theoretical approaches. First, the administration's perception relied heavily on material interpretation, solely attributing the socio-political appeal of Islamists to poverty and deprivation. While socio-economic disillusionment has undeniably contributed to the growth of political Islam, the latter's firm ascendancy cannot be reduced to a mere reaction of the unprivileged segments. Political Islam has equally been prevalent in such countries as the GCC states (notably Saudi Arabia and Kuwait), Turkey, and Malaysia, whose economic conditions are reasonably prosperous. And, to lesser extent, Algeria, Morocco, and Egypt, where the middle class is the primary source of adherents, are cases in point. Second, the Clinton administration conceptualized Islamic revival through the two extremes of pro-Americanism and radicalism. Or as Pelletreau put it, "the two ends of the spectrum", where, on the one hand, there is the pro-American ruling elite, who "identify themselves as believers and incorporate the tents and teachings of Islam into the way they rule."[103] And, on the other, there were "extremist groups…… that practice violence and terrorism either to achieve power or promote a related goal, such as undermining the peace process."[104] This classification is groundless, for it ignored the mainstream non-violent groups that comprise the vast majority of the Islamic spectrum. Furthermore, the American-backed incumbent regimes, notwithstanding their alignment with Islam as a source of legitimacy, have widely been conceived to be inimical to the genuine restoration of Islamic governance, the fundamental aim that Islamic activism has vigorously been striving to achieve. Third, the administration's perception advanced the Arab-Israeli peace process as a mechanism to smash Islamic extremism. Thus, Anthony Lake suggested, "we must

energetically pursue Arab-Israeli peace…... [for] progress in Arab-Israeli peacekeeping helps put the extremists on the defensive and increases their isolation."[105] Unarguably, comprehensive, just and long lasting peace would enhance the regional security and stability. Islamic resurgence, nevertheless, is so deeply rooted that it transcended the survival threat. Therefore, the Peace process per se, notwithstanding its critical impacts, may not curb the ascendance of Islamic activism.

At the dawn of new millennium, Islamism further broadened the scope of its appeal. Yet, the American policy establishment failed to recognize this reality, viewing Islamic revival, as a whole, through the lenses of apolitical fundamentalism, and violent radicalism. Hence, the exclusion of non-violent mainstream political Islam relatively widened the appeal of extremist rhetoric. Represented by AL-Qaeda and its affiliates, violent radicalism extended its political gravitation to such areas as the GCC countries, Yemen, the Maghreb, and South East Asia. The ascendancy of Islamic militancy culminated in the catastrophic events of 9/11, the consequences of which constituted historical turning point in American-Islamic relations, generating a profoundly different geopolitical conceptualization of Islamic resurgence. Indeed, with Bush 43 in office, history took another path with respect to American strategies towards both Islam as a source of inspiration, and the Middle East as the heartland of the Muslim world.

Georg W. Bush (2001-2009): Commander in Chief of 'Global War on Terror'

The George W. Bush administration's perception of Islamic political activism was substantively influenced by: neo-conservatism as a source of ideological guidance on foreign policy, shaping the administration's geopolitical worldview, and hence determining its conceptual stances; and the implications of the 9/11 catastrophic attacks, the events that inflicted fundamental transformations on world politics, notably with regard to the Muslim world in general, and the Arab Middle East in particular. Indeed, the 9/11 attacks created such circumstantial global atmosphere that justifiably empowered the ideological project that the George W. Bush administration intended to apply in pursuit of its version of American exceptionalism. Driven by entrenched feelings of national superiority and strategic preeminence, neoconservatives sought forcefully to preserve American global hegemony, unilaterally embracing such a foreign policy that intended not merely to maintain American ideological and strategic predominance, but, more critically, as William Kristol and Robert Kagan, well noted neoconservative theorists, suggested,

promote "American principles of governance abroad--democracy, free market, respect for liberty."[106] Al-Qaeda's violent approach coupled with the tragic state of the Arab Middle East ostensibly justified, on the pretext of combating terrorism and leading political reform, the coercive policy of the Bush junior administration towards the region.

Captive of its ideology-based foreign policy, the administration perceived Islamism through its neoconservative lenses. Indeed, as a guiding philosophy, neo-conservatism exerted immeasurable influence on the George W. Bush administration's geopolitical conceptualization of the post-Cold War world, shaping its perception of the new 'American exceptionalism' and the nature of challenges that America, as the predominant global leader, would face. Ardently believing in American moral and strategic superiority, neoconservatives "often think of force as the primary instrument for realizing international outcomes, advocate the achievement and maintenance of American preponderance, and oppose the involvement of multilateral institutions on principled grounds as illegitimate bodies inherently threatening to American sovereignty.....arguing that serving America's cause is the world's cause."[107] As Condoleezza Rice put it, "America's pursuit of national interest will create conditions that promote freedom, markets, and peace."[108] Nonetheless, promotion of democracy and human rights, some scholars contended, "is meant to bolster America's security and to further its world preeminence; it is thought to be pragmatically related to the U.S. national interests."[109]

Within this intellectual context, that: vigorously believed in the superiority of American moral authority; advocated unilateral use of military might in pursuit of national interests, where, as Rice suggested, "Military readiness will have to take center stage"[110]; and conceived the world "as struggle for power between good and evil"[111], Islamic resurgence was perceived as an ideological threat to both American moral legitimacy (as introduced by neoconservatives), and, potentially, to American strategic preeminence. Neoconservatives, Brzezinski contended, "shared the conviction that the challenge formerly posed by the Soviet Union and communism now emanated from the Arab states and militant Islam."[112] Deliberately extracted from their socio-cultural context, Islamic political factions, both violent and non-violent variants, have indiscriminately been equated with totalitarianism, and hence viewed as an obstacle to American prevalence in the Arab Middle East, threatening Israel's existence, American allies, and American vital interests, most notably access to oil with affordable prices, and American-

engineered security arrangements. The 9/11 attacks, however, presented neoconservatives with an extraordinary opportunity, providing the circumstantially atmospheric evidence they required to vigorously implement their ideological agenda while equipped with both moral justification and objective reasoning, overly exploiting global empathy with America in the immediate aftermath of the attacks, the events without which the neoconservatives' political enterprise "probably would have remained a fringe phenomenon. But that catastrophic event gave it the appearance of relevance."[113]

Analyzing the genuine causes that lay behind the Islamic surge, neoconservatives ascribed the emergence of political Islam to authoritarianism. Political reform, they concluded, would be the remedy to the various forms of extremism, including violence. Political alienation, economic deprivation, and social exclusion have largely been conceived to be the primary elements that accumulatively generated feelings of marginalization, which was ultimately transformed into intellectual extremism and physical violence. Condoleezza Rice, then Secretary of State, maintained, "freedom deficient in the broader Middle East provides fertile ground for the growth of an ideology of hatred so vicious and virulent that it leads people to strap suicide bombs to their bodies and fly airplanes into buildings."[114] Promotion of democracy, therefore, was endorsed as the cornerstone of American foreign policy in the Middle East. In his second inaugural address, President George W. Bush asserted, "it is the policy of the United State to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world."[115] In short, two interpretations predominately obsessed the Bush junior administration's perception of Islamism. First, the rise of Islamic activism was solely attributed to despotic rule. Second, political Islam was indiscriminately equated with regional instability, totalitarianism, theological ideology, and anti-modernization.

In his address to a joint session of Congress on 21/9.2001(10 days after the attacks), President George W. Bush identified 'Islamic extremism' as the enemy of America, exonerating Islam as a faith, whose "teachings are good and peaceful", from such terrorist acts. The president classified 'Islamic extremism' as "a fringe movement that perverts the peaceful teaching of Islam."[116] Extremists, Bush asserted, "are traitors of their own faith, trying, in effect, to hijack Islam itself."[117] The president wishfully predicted that Islamic extremism would ultimately face the

same destiny that such ideologies as Fascism, Nazism, and Totalitarianism faced, "where it ends in history's unmarked grave of discarded lies."[118] Interpreting the extremists' motivations, the Bush administration concluded that their ultimate end is "not merely to end lives, but to disrupt and end a way of life……..they hate [our] democratically elected government……..they hate our freedoms: our freedom of religion, our freedom of speech, our freedom to vote and assemble and disagree with each other."[119] While the Bush administration endorsed a cultural interpretation to understand the ideological, moral, and political forces that lay behind the Islamic surge, it, ironically, ascribed the rise of Islamic political activism to tyranny and oppressive rule. As President Bush junior put it, "because we have witnessed how the violence in that region can easily reach across borders and oceans, the entire world has an urgent interest in the progress and hope and freedom in the broader Middle East."[120] This inconsistent interpretation led to inadequately ideologized policies, aiming at dismantling ideological, moral, and political structure of Islam, the strategy that antagonized Muslims and further broadened anti-American sentiment.

Underpinning his 'Global War on Terror' President Bush perceived Islamic extremism as a global threat that, he revealed, entailed an American-led international alliance. Indeed, having perceived Islamic radicalism as a lethal threat to humanity, the president sought to justify America's vigorous global engagement, reconciling his geo-strategic vision to his neoconservative worldview. America's war on terror, Bush contended, "is not, however, just America's fight. And what is at stake is not just America's freedom. This is the world's fight. This is civilization's fight. This is the fight of all who believe in progress and pluralism, tolerance and freedom. [Therefore], we ask every nation to join us."[121] The violent extremists, Bush reaffirmed, hate freedom and democracy, seeking to impose their totalitarian ideology and dark rule across the Middle East, and hence challenging the region's aspiration towards liberty and justice. Therefore, "it is the declared policy of the United States to support [the]… peoples…. [Of the Middle East] as they claim their freedom—as a matter of natural right and national interest."[122]

In brief, American official thinking on Islamic political activism is relatively coherent, principally based on systematic conceptualization. Although the first three post-Cold War American administrations embraced various approaches towards Islamic resurgence, reflecting

the prevailing political realities, their principled attitudes have, to some extent, been identical, where Islam has admirably been recognized as a faith and civilizing force, but not as a source of political inspiration. Notwithstanding the fact that, "from the earlier days of a broader Middle East Islam has seemingly shaped the cultural norms and even political preferences of its followers."[123] Interpreting the rise of political Islam, the Clinton administration adopted a socio-economic interpretation, ascribing the phenomenon mainly to material deprivation, whereas the Bush II administration attributed Islamism to lack of freedom, endorsing political liberalization as a remedial instrument. While both interpretations are reasonably valid, Islamic political rhetoric is primarily rooted in Islam as a way of life, presenting an all-compassing systematic ideology. While some sort of compatibility exists between Islam and democracy, they are not identically compatible. Yet, discrediting the Islamic political model, President George W. Bush pronounced, "We know that democracy is the only form of government that treats individuals with the dignity and equality that is their right. We know from experience that democracy is the only system of government that yields lasting peace and stability."[124] This pronouncement revealingly manifests America's insistence on imposing its version of a democratic system. Furthermore, it was not in line with the Clinton administration's rhetorical approval of Muslims' right to 'renewed emphasis' on their religious values, including political discourse, which has noticeably been an enduring element in Islamic civilization for centuries.

American perceptions of Islamism are neither fatalist nor static. Rather, they are subject to change over the years. American official thinking, in particular, has decidedly been a product of various factors, chief among them Islamic intellectual rapprochement with the universally prevalent democratic values, and Islamists' stances towards the Arab-Israeli peace process. Nonetheless, American-Islamic relations can't be reduced to a mere political conflict. Historical, cultural, and ideological paradigms have immeasurably influenced the mutual geopolitical images. Yet, prevailing political realities, as well as vital interests will unarguably force both sides to compromise on their cultural and ideological determinants. However, in-depth understanding of American conceptual debates over political Islam entails an extensively objective analysis, tracing its roots and examining its authenticity. Policies are reflections of perceptions. To thoroughly encompass the substantive components of perceptions, therefore, is to genuinely develop a well advanced understanding of policies, which are, naturally, the result of confluence of geopolitical conceptualizations conducted in intellectual paradigms.

American Conceptual Debates over Islamism

So long as Islamism continues to exist as a significant political force, American Middle East strategies will inevitably continue to be the product of America's conceptualization of: Islam as the primary source of ideological guidance, shaping Islamists' fundamental perceptions of the West's cultural and political paradigms; Islamism's reconciliation with democracy, not as a mere instrumental approach to simply resolve power struggle, but as a cultural value and civilizational norm; and the strategic threat that Islamists in power potentially pose to both American global supremacy and American regional interests. While the intellectual debates between confrontationalists and accommodationists over Islamism substantially revolve around the above three themes, the policy establishment, particularly the executive branch, tends to synthesize such a conceptual stance that, on the one hand, appeals to Muslim and the international community alike , and, on the other, undermines Islamists' political significance. While Islamic activism, as a socio-political movement, is not monolithic, Islam, as an all-encompassing ideology, is a monotheistic universal mission, presenting a coherently extensive worldview, including model of governance. Political Islam, therefore, needs to be perceived within the context of its ideological incubator, Islam.

Despite the various schools of thought that evolved throughout its history, Islam's core substance resistively remains consolidated, maintaining its two fundamental characteristics: monotheism and comprehensiveness. Political discourse is an integral part of the all-encompassing Islamic rhetoric. It is, therefore, the perception of Islam as an ideological reference that, to a large extent, determines the geopolitical image of Islamism. In their conceptualization of Islamic activism, both confrontationalists and accommodationists have inevitably been influenced by their respective version of understanding of Islam. Their approach to Islamic political history, too, has significantly impacted their perception of contemporary Islamism. Underpinning their advocacy of political exclusion of Islamists (radicals and moderates alike), confrontationalists tend assertively to emphasize the incompatibility of Islam and democracy, and alarmingly magnify the alleged strategic threat that Islamism potentially poses to American national interests. Also deliberately selected parts of Islam's political history, most notably its military and cultural confrontations with the West, have exaggeratedly been invoked to rationalize the notion of everlasting Western-Islamic enmity, or 'clash of

civilizations', a term that was first coined by Bernard Lewis to characterize Western-Islamic relations.[125] Indeed, inspired by his interpretations of Islamic doctrines and his approach to Muslims' political behavior, Lewis deterministically classified cultural relations with Islam as perpetually confrontational. Islam, Lewis held, "inspired in some of its followers a mood of hatred and violence. ….. [Much]…. of that hatred is directed against us."[126]

In essence, it has considerably been the misconception of both Islamic text and Muslim's historical posture towards the West that ultimately generated such an anti-Islamist intellectual stance. Interpreting Islamic cultural and political vocabularies in terms of the western-based universal values would inevitably result in condemning Islamism as an anti-democratic and anti-modernization socio-political movement, contrasting sharply with the American-led world order. For instance, such vocabularies as Jihad, sovereignty of God, and Sharia, have distortedly been equated with violence, theocracy, and brutality respectively. Islamism, they contend, is subjectively not in a position to come to terms with democracy's two foundational features: secularism and liberalism. As Lewis put it, "the struggle of fundamentalists is against two enemies, secularism and modernism."[127] Promoted by Samuel Huntington in the early 1990s, the concept of 'clash of civilizations' captured the confrontationalists' imagination, reaffirming the nonconformity of Islam and democracy, where the former, they assert, can never reconcile with American basic principles of "individualism, freedom, secularism, rule of law, democracy, and private property."[128] Summing up, adopting such selective textual and historical readings of contemporary Islamic activism, confrontationalists neglect the prevailing political realities that increasingly temper Islamist political attitudes. Seemingly, Islamic political concepts are sufficiently dynamic to viably operate within a fairly democratic order.

By contrast, accommodationists, argue for Islamists' right to constitutional legitimacy and authentic political participation. Thoroughly engaged with Islamic activism, these Islamic apologists-as often labeled by rejectionists-develop such a geopolitical attitude that: views Islam as a peaceful and tolerant faith with coherent political ideology; draws a clear distinction between militant radicals who embrace violence as a means of change, and moderates who seek to advance their agenda through constitutional struggle, yielding to democratic rules; calls for genuine, not artificial, integration of moderate Islamists into a pluralistically open political order; warns that exclusion of the moderates will justifiably reinforce the already growing feelings of

alienation, providing fertile ground for intellectual extremism that may, out of despair, develop into physical violence; and suggests that Islamists' geostrategic behavior will be largely determined by realistic calculations, rather than idealistic religious ideology. Islamists in power, accommodationists contend, "will be forced to rethink and transform their ideology."[129]

This school of thought has developed a realistically coherent argument, presenting an objectively relevant approach to Islamic political activism, encompassing both Islam as an ideological energizer, and regional and global geopolitical realities that play crucial roles in conditioning Islamist political attitudes. Nonetheless, ideological, cultural, and conceptual differences between the religious-based political discourse that Islamists embrace, as an ideological obligation, and the Western-oriented liberal democracy need not to be obscured. Rather, while addressing Islamic-American relations, these areas ought to be unambiguously confronted, paving the path for genuine cultural reconciliation and political rapprochement. Although frequently overlapping with the essence of democracy, Islamic political ideology contrasts sharply with the latter's secular and liberal dimensions, assertively maintaining its divine and moral character. Indeed, such areas as sovereignty, gender equality, minority rights, sexual freedom, and implementation of Islamic criminal laws are cases in point, increasingly constituting sources of cultural rifts and political polarization. Hence, rooted in Islam's political ideology, Islamism, as a socio-political movement, will continue to preserve an independent cultural personality. To be sure, one of the key challenges that contemporary political Islam has crucially been facing "is to formulate reconciliation between traditional Muslim philosophy and practice of statecraft on the one hand, and those western institutions and practices already on the scene on the other."[130]

Unlike scholars and policy commentators, who reasonably enjoy a considerable margin of intellectual freedom, politicians and policymakers are understandably constrained by realistically political calculations. Thus, adhering to relevant strategic considerations, the American officially pronounced perception of Islamism has justifiably been articulated in the context of realpolitik. Far from being principle-centered conceptual revelations, American official pronouncements are interest-oriented conceptual stances that have deliberately been formulated to, on the one hand, preserve American moral authority, and, on the other, maintain American national interests, which are not always in harmony with American ideals. While, the U.S., for instance,

theoretically supports democratic transformations, it persistently forestalls any such electoral process in the Middle East that may further reinforce Islamists' political significance. The Egyptian and Palestinian parliamentary elections of 2005 and 2006 respectively are cases in point. Justifying this abject lack of consistency, James A. Baker, former Secretary of State (1989-1993), contended, "because we felt that the radical fundamentalists' views were so adverse to what we believe in and what we support, and to what we understood the national interests of the United States to be."[131] Admittedly, that is why the U.S. ultimately developed "a reputation for arrogance and double standard"[132], undermining its moral authority. Nevertheless, ideological and cultural factors obviously exert a crucial influence on shaping official as well as intellectual perceptions of Islamic revival.

Although it systematically acknowledges Islam as both a great religion and civilizing force, as well as those 'moderate' Muslims who seek to apply their religious renewed emphasis on society and state, the officially articulated American perception has failed unambiguously to recognize the non-violent Islamists as a moderate political force potentially susceptible to develop democratic inclination . One may discern that moderation, as defined in American rhetoric, is almost exclusively identified with two parties. First, pro-American ruling elites, who traditionally align themselves with Islam as a source of political legitimacy, in this category may fall: Saudi Arabia, where the "royal family aligns itself closely with the ulama [religious scholars] and the role of protector or custodian of the two Holy Mosques"; Jordan, whose king's "legitimacy is enhanced through descent from the Prophet"; Morocco, where the king is "revered as the commander of the faithful"[133]; and Pakistan whose national identity is primarily founded on Islam, notwithstanding the fact that, while raising the banner of Islam as cultural reference, these regimes have dissociated themselves from Islamic political ideology. Second, there are the liberal Muslims, who advocate a modern interpretation of Islamic texts, reconciling Islam with modernism. Opposing the very political character of Islam, modernists assert that "Islam was not meant to be a state but a code and guiding philosophy of life."[134] Advancing their revisionist interpretation, liberal Muslims "simply point to the fact that changing times bring changing customs and moralities. What was acceptable hundreds of years ago is no longer considered acceptable today."[135] Thus, as Cherly Benard suggested, "Of all the groups, this one is most congenial to the values and the spirit of modern democratic society", for their vision, she added, "matches our own."[136]

Clearly, post-Cold War American official thinking has been reluctant to recognize mainstream political Islam's centrality to democratic transformations in the Arab Middle East, opposing its genuine inclusion in pluralistic order. Applauding Islam's civilizational magnificence, while neglecting political Islam's strategic significance, is apparently irrelevant. For contemporary American-Islamist tensions divide along moderate Islamists' constitutional right to quest for power in such a democratically representative setting that reflects the proportional weights of competing political players. Caught between authoritarianism and radicalism, American official perceptions have been captured by a self-defeating approach, perpetuating the region's authoritarian status quo.

Departing from his predecessor's arrogant perception, President Obama has advanced reconciliatory rhetoric, seeking cultural rapprochement with the Muslim World. Attributing American-Islamic tension to "historical forces that go beyond any current policy debate", Obama ardently pronounced: "I have come here to seek a new beginning between the United States and Muslims around the world; one based upon mutual interest and mutual respect; and one based upon the truth that America and Islam are not exclusive, and need not be in competition. Instead, they overlap, and share common principles of justice and progress; tolerance and the dignity of all human beings."[137] Another typical feature of American official thinking, Obama's Cairo speech of June 2009 has, by and large, been conceived to be a mere rhetoric, lacking substance. To be sure, the extent to which President Barack Obama (if he is re-elected) will be able to transform this rhetoric into tangible policy initiatives is relevantly governed by realistic calculations pertaining to political realities on the ground, notwithstanding the president's personal positive intentions. In practical terms, the geostrategic challenge that the American foreign policy establishment faces is the capability to develop an objectively vibrant and pragmatically result-oriented perception that goes beyond the twofold statement: highlighting the greatness of Islam; and disdainfully rejecting extremism.

The Israeli Factor

The U.S.-Israeli relationship has always played central roles in shaping American geopolitical perception of the Middle East in particular and the Muslim world in general. The magnitude of U.S. strategic commitment to Israel's security and well being goes beyond the traditionally recognized norms in the international relations. Indeed, it is not a mere interest-oriented

relationship, defined solely by the geopolitical realities on the ground. Rather, it has solidly been based on a combination of cultural, ideological, emotional, political, and strategic components. The U.S. Middle East orientations, therefore, have invariably been subordinated to this strategic commitment. Particularly, America's perception of Islamism is, to great extent, viewed through the Israeli lenses.

America's commitment to Israel's security strengthened over time, culminating in strategic cooperation during the Reagan administration (1981-1989). This strategic cooperation included "joint military exercises in the Mediterranean; joint readiness activities; cooperation in research and development, and in defense trade; the storage of medical supplies in Israel for possible use by American forces assigned to the Middle East in an emergency; and a free trade agreement."[138] Throughout the Cold War Israel was viewed as an asset to U.S. regional supremacy, constituting a bulwark against the Soviet penetration. With the demise of the Cold War, Israel's strategic value relatively decreased, but with the rise of the perceived terrorist threat, in the post-Cold War era, Israel seemed to have regained its strategic weight, and hence played a crucial role in shaping George W. Bush's neoconservative perceptions of the Middle East. Nonetheless, John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt suggested, "Israel may have been a strategic asset during the Cold War, but it is a strategic burden in the war on terror and the broader U.S. effort to deal with rogue states."[139] To be sure, U.S.-Israeli relationship is fostered by a widespread public support, where Israel's behaviors "are perceived sympathetically by the American public.… [Pro-Israel groups and individuals played key roles in shaping] U.S. policies, including the March 2003 invasion of Iraq….we believe the United States would not have attacked Iraq without their efforts…… AIPAC and many of the same neoconservatives who advocated attacking Iraq are now among the chief proponents of using military force against Iran."[140]

In his remarks to the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), president Obama asserted, "The bonds between the United States and Israel are unbreakable and the commitment of the United States to the security of Israel is ironclad. ……. A strong and secure Israel is in the national security interest of the United States. …. I and my administration have made the security of Israel a priority."[141] The following year (2012) the President reaffirmed, "if you want to know where my heart lies, look no further than what I have done to stand for up for Israel."[142] Referring to the Arab spring and its consequent implications for U.S.-Israel alliance, vice

president, Joseph Biden, reassured, "even if circumstances have changed, one thing has not: our deep commitment to the security of Israel. That has not changed. That will not change as long as I and he [Barack Obama] are president and vice president of the United States. It is our naked self-interest, beyond the moral imperative."[143]

Clearly, U.S. commitment to Israel's security, survival, and well being is not a mere interest-based variable. Rather, it is a constant strategic stance with its durability stemming from a combination of ideological, emotional, moral, and political considerations. American domestic politics, most notably the remarkable influence of the Jewish lobby, has played a crucial role in reinforcing U.S.-Israel special relations, empowering the State of Israel to assume a decisive role in shaping U.S. Middle East choices. For instance, the U.S. perception of the Palestinian resistance movements, such as Hamas, as well as America's actual policy towards the Israeli settlements in the West Bank, is largely influenced by Israel's hawkish approach.

Whether Israel is a strategic asset or liability is a debatable foreign policy issue. But, in practical terms, America's unconditional support for Israel discredited U.S. moral authority, provoked moderate and radical Islamists alike, heightened anti-Americanism, and undermined American foreign policy objectives. Islamists' ideological position towards Israel is primarily shaped by their religious creeds, where recognizing Israel's right to exist is not in line with Islamic doctrines. While theoretically adhering to its religious-based principle of denying Israel's right to exist, Hamas, at the political level, demonstrated a pragmatic tendency, moving towards a de facto recognition of the state of Israel, whose existence, as Hamas repeatedly declared, is a reality.[144]

With the eruption of the Arab Spring, at the outset of 2011, the American and Israeli views diverged. While the Netanyahu government appeared to be "rooting for the survival of the ruling Arab autocrats … [the Obama administration] tilted in favor of the Arab masses in the streets demanding dignity and change… [It] supported to varying degrees rebellions across the region from Tunisia in the West to Yemen in the East."[145] Nevertheless, this divergence, as the above official remarks suggest, is unlikely to impact the Obama administration's commitment to Israel's security. In short, it is highly likely that Israel will continue to play a significant role in shaping U.S. geostrategic preferences in the Middle East, and hence America's support for Israel will continue to be a source of friction with the Arab world.

Conclusion

While intellectual perceptions are sharply discordant, revealing divergent interpretations of both Islam as a faith and Islamic political ideology, the officially pronounced perception has largely been marked by irrelevance, ambivalence, and ambiguity. Clearly, conceptions of Islamic ideological components and interpretations of Muslims' historical behavior play crucial roles in conceptualizing the related geopolitical image of the contemporary political Islam. American officials, in particular, tend to steer clear of adopting a morally transparent and politically relevant stance towards Islamists' inclusion. They instead raise the banner of cultural co-existence between Islam, which they frequently praise as a tolerant civilization, and the West, concealing America's actual attitude towards Islamism as a political force driven by an Islamic-oriented agenda, seeking profound socio-political change. Indeed, "cultural considerations may unconsciously influence U.S. officials' thinking on political Islam, but they hardly figure in their public pronouncements."[146]

In practical terms, viewing the Islamic revival through the lenses of: the Iranian revolutionary posture; the historically accumulated stereotypical images of anti-western Islam; and the post-Cold War violent acts, American official thinking has conclusively perceived Islamism as the 'designated other'. Similarly, ascribing the rise of Islamic political activism exclusively to such factors as socio-economic deprivation, and political alienation manifests lack of in-depth reading of this critically definitive moment of Muslims' history, where restoration of the role of Islam as a politically mobilizing force has vastly been recognized as necessary prelude to the desired renaissance of the *umma*. While Islamism unarguably "feeds on unemployment, poverty, and alienation,"[147] the primary cause of its ascendency is principally rooted in the very political character of Islam. Hence, perceiving political Islam as an insignificantly rootless force not only theoretically misleads American conceptual stance, but, more crucially, generates "a serious mischaracterization with potentially serious consequences."[148] Therefore, while conceptualizing political Islam's geopolitical image, Arab public opinion needs to be seriously considered. For with its entrenched Islamic-oriented sentiment, Arab public opinion inescapably constitutes the primary source of strength that Islamic activism has increasingly been accumulating, challenging prevailing power structures.

To conclude, the central importance of perceptions lies in their potential capacity to shape tangible policies. Concrete policy initiatives are largely the product of conceptualized geopolitical images. In such an atmosphere as pluralistic and diverse as American political system, the policy-making process tends to be inescapably influenced by many ambivalent institutions, interest groups, and intellectual orientations. The foregoing variously discordant perceptions of Islamic resurgence may account for America's reluctance unambiguously to articulate a coherently consistent policy towards moderate Islamists, one that harmoniously maintains both the U.S. national interests and moral credibility. Unsurprisingly, revealing American geopolitical conceptualization of the Middle Eastern political scene, the current geostrategic approaches have recurrently legitimized violence, perpetuated oppressive tyranny, broadened anti-Americanism, and jeopardized the U.S. regional interests, questioning both the viability of American Middle East strategies and the intellectual framework that guides official thinking. Effectively to overcome this self-defeating approach, "the United States must align itself with the aspirations of the broader population. Engaging with and, in some cases, supporting moderate Islamists is one way to do this, and the one most likely to produce results."[149] However, examining American Middle East strategy, with a view to explore the centrality of the Islamist dimension, is seemingly critical to a thorough understanding of American-Islamist relations.

Notes

1. Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History”, *The National Interest*, 16 (summer), p. 4.

2. Madeline Albright, “The Testing of American Foreign Policy”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 77, Issue 6, November/December 1998, pp. 50-64.

3. Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Second Chance: Three presidents and the crisis of American superpower*, p. 3.

4. See Samuel Huntington, “The Lonely Superpower”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.78, Issue 2, March/April 1999, pp. 35-49.

5. Robert Pelletreau, “American Objectives in the Middle East”, Remarks before the CENTCOM Annual Southwest Asia Symposium, Tampa, Florida, May14, 1996.

6. William Kristol, and Robert Kagan, “Toward Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 75, Issue 4, July/August 1996, pp. 18-32.

7. John L. Esposito, “Political Islam: Beyond the Green Menace”, *Current History*, Vol. 93 (579), January 1994, p. 19.

8. Robert Pelletreau, “American Objectives in the Middle East”, Remarks before the CENTCOM Annual Southwest Asia Symposium, Tampa, Florida, May 14, 1996.

9. Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam: Clash of Cultures or Clash of Interests?*, p. 35.

10. Maria do Ceu Pinto, *Political Islam and the United States: A Study of U.S Policy towards Islamist Movements in the Middle East*, p. 165.

11. Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam: Clash of Cultures or Clash of Interests?*, p.21.

12Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror*, p. 24.

13. Ibid, p. 28.

14. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* P. 217.

15. Ibid, p. 212.

16. Bernard Lewis, "The Roots of Muslim Rage", *the Atlantic Monthly*, September 1990.

17. Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, Issue 3 Summer 1993, pp. 22-49.

18. Bernard Lewis, "Islam and Liberal Democracy", *the Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 270, No.2 February 1993, p. 89.

19. Judith Miller, "The Challenge of Radical Islam", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, Issue 2, Spring 1993, pp. 43-56.

20. Ibid.

21. Daniel Pipes, "There Are No Moderates: Dealing with Fundamentalist Islam", *National Interest*, Fall 1995.

22. Ibid.

23. Judith Miller, "The Challenge of Radical Islam", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, Issue 2, Spring 1993, pp. 43-56.

24. Daniel Pipes, "There Are No Moderates: Dealing with Fundamentalist Islam", *National Interest*, Fall 1995.

25. Maria Do Ceu Pinto, *Political Islam and the United States: a Study of U.S policy Towards Islamist Movements in the Middle East*, p. 171.

26. Leon Hadar, "What Green Peril?", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.72, Issue 2,Spring 1993, pp. 27-42.

27. John L. Esposito, "Political Islam: Beyond the Green Menace", *Current History*, Vol. 93 (579), January 1994, p. 19.

28. Ibid.

29. Robin Wright, “Islam, Democracy, and the West”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.71, Issue 3, Summer 1992, pp. 131-145.

30. Graham E. Fuller, and Ian O. Lesser, *A sense of Siege: The Geopolitics of Islam and the West*, pp. 102-3.

31. Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam: Clash of Cultures or Clash of Interests*?, P. 31.

32. John L. Esposito, and James P., Piscatori, “Democratization and Islam”, *Middle East Journal*, vol. 45, No. 3, Summer 1991, pp. 427-440.

33. Ibid

34. Ibid

35. Graham E. Fuller, “Islamists in the Arab World: The Dance around Democracy”, *Middle East series, No. 49*, September 2004, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

36. Leon Hadar, “What Green Peril?”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol.72, Issue 2, Spring 1993, pp. 27-42

37. Esposito John L. Esposito, and James p., Piscatori, “Democratization and Islam”, *Middle East Journal*, vol. 45, No. 3, Summer 1991, 427-440.

38. Shireen T. Hunter, “Islamic Fundamentalism: What It Really Is and Why It Frightens the West”, *SAIS Review*, winter/spring 1986.

39. John L. Esposito, “Political Islam: Beyond the Green Menace”, *Current History*, Vol. 93 (579), January 1994, p. 19.

40. Ibid

41. Maria do Ceu Pinto, *Political Islam and the United States: A Study of U.S Policy Towards Islamist Movements in the Middle East*, p. 171.

42. Fawaz A. Gerges, *The End of America’s Moment?: Obama and the Middle East*, PP. 222-23.

43. John L. Esposito and Dalia Mogahed, *Who Speaks for Islam: What a Billion Muslims Really Think*, p. 136.

44. John L. Esposito, *Islam and the West After September 11: Civilizational Dialogue or Conflict?*, pp. 11-12.

45. Emile Nakhleh, *A Necessary Engagement: Reinventing America's Relations with the Muslim World*, p. 80.

46. John L. Esposito, *Islam and the West after September 11*, p. 17.

47. Graham E. Fuller, *A World without Islam*, p. 301.

48. Fawaz A. Gerges, *The End of America's Moment: Obama and the Middle East*, p. 224.

49. Quoted in John L. Esposito and Dalia Mogahed, *Who Speaks for Islam*, p. 72.

50. Charles Krauthammer, *Democratic Realism and American Foreign Policy for a Unipolar World*, pp. 16-17.

51. Bernard Lewis, *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror*, pp. 111-12.

52. David Bukay, "Can There Be an Islamic Democracy?", *Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2007, pp. 71-79.

53. Daniel Pipes, "Islam vs. Islamism", *the Washington Times*, May 13, 2013.

54. Fouad Ajami, "Iraq and the Arab's Future", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 82, Issue 1, Jan/Feb 2003, pp. 2-18.

55. The Washington Institute for Near East Policy (www.washingtoninstitute.org).

56. Fuller, Graham E. Fuller, *Algeria: The Next Fundamentalist State?*, P. xx.

57. Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam: Clash of Cultures or Clash of Interests?*, p. 73.

58. "National Security Strategy of the United States", the White House, March 1990, p. 13.

59. Ibid, p. 6.

60. Ibid, p. 13.

61. Graham E. Fuller, *The Future of Political Islam*, pp. 107-113.

62. Ibid. p. 112.

63. Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: The Trial of Political Islam*, p. 184.

64. Angel M. Rabasa, and Others, *The Muslim World After 9/11*, Rand Corporation, p. 48.

65. Fawaz A. Gerges, *America And Political Islam: Clash of Cultures Or Clash Of Interests?*, p. 143.

66. Edward P. Djerejian, "the US and the Middle East in a Changing World", *Department of State Dispatch*, Volume 3, No 23, June 8, 1992.

67. Ibid.

68. Ibid.

69. Ibid.

70. Ibid.

71. Ibid

72. Ibid

73. *The Middle East Quarterly*, volume 1, No 3, September 1994.

74. Edward p. Djerejian "The US and the Middle East in a Challenging World", *Department of State Dispatch*, Volume 3, No 23, June 8, 1992.

75. Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Second Chance: Three presidents and the Crisis of American Superpower*, p. 90.

76. Angel M. Rabasa and Others, *The Muslim World After 9/11*, Rand Corporation, pp. 321-66.

77. Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Second Chance: Three Presidents and the Crisis of American Superpower*, p. 130-1.

78. Quoted in Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Choice: Global Domination Or global Leadership*, pp. 142-3.

79. Angel M. Rabasa and Others, *The Muslim World After 9/11*, Rand Corporation, pp. 99-112.

80. "Remarks by President Bill Clinton to the Jordanian parliament", 26 October 1994.

81. Ibid.

82. Ibid.

83. Ibid.

84. Ibid.

85. Ibid.

86. Anthony Lake, "Building a New Middle East: Challenges for US policy", *US State Department, Dispatch Volume 5*, August 1994.

87. Ibid.

88. Ibid.

89. Ibid.

90. Ibid.

91. Anthony Lake, "From Containment to Enlargement", *US State Department, Dispatch*, Vol. 4, No. 39, September 1993.

92. Ibid.

93. Robert H. Pelletreau, "Not Every Fundamentalist Is a Terrorist", *the Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. 2, No. 3, September 1995, pp. 69-76.

94. Robert H. Pelletreau, “Symposium: Resurgent Islam in the Middle East”, *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 3, Issue 2, June 1994, pp. 1-21.

95. Ibid.

96. Robert H. Pelletreau, “Dealing With the Muslim Politics in the Middle East: Algeria, Hamas, Iran”, Address at Council on Foreign Relations, New York, May 8, 1996.

97. Robert H. Pelletreau, “American Objectives in the Middle East” Remarks before the CENTCOM Annual Southwest Asia Symposium, Tampa, Florida, May 14, 1996.

98. Robert H. Pelletreau, “Symposium: Resurgent Islam in the Middle East”, *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 3, Issue 2, June 1994, pp. 1-21.

99. Robert H. Pelletreau, “Not Every Fundamentalist Is A Terrorist” *The Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. 2, No. 3, September 1995, pp. 69-76.

100. Ibid.

101. Robert H. Pelletreau, “Dealing With Muslim Politics in the Middle East”, Address at Council On Foreign relations, New York, May 8, 1996.

102. Ibid.

103. Ibid.

104. Ibid.

105. Anthony Lake, “Building a New Middle East: Challenges For US Policy”, *US State Department*, *Dispatch Volume 5*, August 1994.

106. William Kristol, and Robert Kagan, “Toward a Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 75, Issue 4, July/August 1996, pp. 18-32.

107. Brian C. Rathbun, “Does One Right Make a Realist?: Conservatism, Neo-conservatism, and Isolationism in the Foreign Policy Ideology of American Elites”, *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 23, Issue 2, 2008, pp. 271-299.

108. Condoleezza Rice, “Promoting the National Interest”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 79, Issue1, January/February 2000, pp. 45-62.

109. Adam Wolfson, “Conservatives and Neoconservatives”, *The Public Interest*, Winter 2004, PP. 32-48.

110. Condoleezza Rice, “Promoting the National Interest”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 79, Issue1, January/February 2000, pp. 45-62.

111. Brian C. Rathbun, “Does One Right Make a Realist?: Conservatism, Neo-conservatism, and Isolationism in the Foreign Policy Ideology of American Elites”, *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 23, Issue 2, 2008, pp. 271-299.

112. Zbigniew Brzezinski, “*Second Chance: Three presidents and the Crisis of American Superpower”*, p. 36.

113. Ibid. p. 37

114. Condoleezza Rice, “The Promise of Democratic Peace: Why Promoting Freedom is the Only Realistic Path to Security”, *the Washington Post*, Sunday, December 11, 2005.

115. Quoted in ibid.

116. President George W. Bush’s address to a joint session of Congress, delivered on Tuesday night, September 21, 2001.

117. Ibid.

118. Ibid.

119. Ibid.

120. President George W. Bush’s speech on fighting terrorism, delivered on Tuesday, March 8, 2005, at the National Defense University.

121. President George W. Bush’s address to a joint session of Congress, delivered on Tuesday night, September 21, 2001.

122. President George W. Bush's speech in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, delivered on January 13, 2008.

123. Graham E. Fuller, "A World without Islam", *Foreign Policy*, Issue 164, January/February 2008, pp. 46-53.

124. President George W. Bush' speech in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, delivered on January 13, 2008.

125. Bernard Lewis, "The Roots of Muslim Rage", *Atlantic Monthly*, September 1990, Vol. 266, No. 3, p. 47.

126. Ibid.

127. Ibid.

128. Daniel Pipes, and Mimi Stillman, "The United States Government: Patron of Islam?" *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. IX, No. 1, January 2002, pp. 25-35.

129. John L. Esposito, "Symposium: Resurgent Islam in the Middle East", sponsored by the *Middle East Policy Council* on May 26, 1994.

130. Graham E. Fuller, *The Future of Political Islam*, p. 119.

131. *The Middle East Quarterly*, volume 1, No. 3, September 1994.

132. Richard Haass, and Martin Indyk, "Beyond Iraq: A New U.S. Strategy for the Middle East", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 88, Issue 1, January/February 2009, pp. 41-58.

133. Robert H. Pelletreau, "Dealing With the Muslim Politics in the Middle East: Algeria, Hamas, Iran", Address at Council on Foreign Relations, New York, May 8, 1996.

134. Cherly Benard, *Civil Democratic Islam: Partners, Resources, and Strategies*, Rand Corporation, National Security Research Division, p. 11.

135. Ibid. p. 17.

136. Ibid. sp. 37.

137. President Barack Obama, “Remarks in Cairo University, June 4, 2009.

138. Maria do Ceu Pinto, *Political Islam and the United States: A Study of U.S. Policy towards Islamists Movements in the Middle East*, p. 99.

139. John j. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, “Unrestricted Access: What the Israel Lobby Wants, it Gets Too Often”, *Foreign Policy*, July/August 2006, p 58.

140. Ibid, p. 58.

141. President Barack Obama, “Remarks at AIPAC’s Policy Conference”, May 22, 2011.

142. President Barack Obama, “Remarks at AIPAC’s Policy Conference”, March 4, 2012.

143. Joseph Biden, “Remarks at AIPAC’s Policy Conference”, March 4, 2013.

144. See Jonathan Austin, Benjamin Hoffman, Beatrice Goddard, and Hannah Gary, *Hamas and the Peace Process: Resistance, Rejectionism, Reconciliation?*, pp. 61-63, Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies, University of St Andrews, June 2011.

145. Dov Waxman, “The Real Problem in U.S.-Israeli Relations”, *The Washington Quarterly*, Spring 2012, p. 80.

146. Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam: Clash of Cultures or Clash of Interests?*, p. 229.

147. Ibid. p. 239.

148. Terry Regier & Mohammed Ali Khalidi, “The Arab Street: Tracking a Political Metaphor”, *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 63, No. 1, Winter 2009, pp. 11-29

149. Shadi Hamid, “Engaging Political Islam to Promote Democracy”, *Policy Report*, June 2007, Progressive Policy Institute.

Chapter 4

American Middle East Orientations

A Dysfunctional Geopolitical Paradigm

Emerging from the Cold War as the sole superpower, with unprecedentedly unrivaled global reach, the U.S has increasingly been embracing such ideological predispositions that: further reinforce its hegemonic status as the ultimate guarantor of world peace and security; prevent the rise of a strategic axis that may challenge its freedom of action, threatening American geostrategic preponderance; contain such regional and ethnic conflicts that debilitate American strategic efforts; and decisively confront the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). However, the post-Cold War world order has been-and will continue to be-manifesting its own characteristics, featuring a balance of power where the hegemon's freedom of action is relatively constrained. The potential capacity of attaining WMD, and the rise of non-state actors, notably in the Middle East, topped the challenges that constrain American predominance. America's hegemonic ascendancy, especially in the wake of its military involvements in Afghanistan (2001), and Iraq (2003), has increasingly been generating a world public opinion that perceives the U.S as a rogue superpower, embracing a coercively arrogant and unilateral posture.[1] Nowhere are these sentiments more on display than in the Arab Middle East where anti-Americanism has figured prominently, invariably feeding on: calamitous humanitarian and security predicaments that resulted from military engagements in Afghanistan and Iraq; constant American backing of oppressively autocratic regimes, impeding genuine democratic transformations; and undeterred American support of Israel.

Identified with volatility and explosions, the Middle East has stereotypically been viewed as a source of concern, demonstrating consistent resistance to the western-rooted modernization, especially in the fields of socio-political values. This Middle Eastern reluctance has been attributed to Islam, whose comprehensive ideological character militates against cultural penetrations. Unlike many other nations, Muslims, by and large, have historically grown suspicious of the western-led cultural transformations. Viewed as the supreme ideological reference, Islam has reinforced its role as the primary shaper of Muslims' political literature and cultural values. Therefore, "it is entirely natural that Muslims should turn to the *Quran, Hadith*

and *Sunna* of the Prophet to find political values there that can be applied to the contemporary needs of Muslim societies……..if ideas and political principles can be developed from Islamic traditions, that is preferable to importing traditions from other cultures."[2]

Hence, relying on this grass-roots religious predisposition, Islamism, despite an undeterred series of ruthless repression and exclusion, emerged as a significant political force, establishing itself as an important figure in the regional geopolitical equations. Islamism as such insinuated itself into American geostrategic considerations, notwithstanding the fact that, as some scholars may argue, Washington "has no policy towards Islam. Nor should it have a policy towards Islam, because, as the State Department points out, the US does not have diplomatic relations with religions."[3] True, Islam as a faith is not a political entity. But, as a source of both political inspiration and ideological predispositions, Islam's crucial role in shaping Islamists' geopolitical discourse is undeniably evident. Furthermore, America's Middle East strategies and its conceptual stance towards Islam, as the most influential socio-cultural mobilizing force, are indivisible.

Nonetheless, circumstantial factors and political realities equally play central roles in tempering the geopolitical orientations of political players—American policymakers and Islamists alike. In short, while American Middle East policy making is unarguably subordinated to several various calculations, Islamism remains a critical element, exerting measurable influence on American official thinking. Post-9/11 policy trends are cases in point. The question, therefore, is not whether political Islam is present in the policy making process. Rather, it is the extent to which Islamic resurgence impacts on American geopolitical conceptualizations, and hence the consequent policies. Thus, providing an analyzed account of post-Cold War American Middle East orientations is critical to in-depth understanding of American perceptions of Islamism. Examining the profound conceptual stances of the post-Cold War successive administrations is vital. For policies are an actualization of conceptualized discourses, and their viability, therefore, is largely rooted in the relevancy of their related conceptual context.

Throughout the last three decades political Islam has remained at the heart of American Middle East policy. With the demise of the bipolar rivalry, to which American geostrategic calculations had almost exclusively been subordinated, Islamism further advanced its strategic positioning, emerging as a significant socio-political force, with massive public appeal.

"America's post-Cold War engagement in the Middle East", as Martin Indyk put it, has seemingly been rooted in "a confidence that the United States knows the remedy for the ills that plague such a troubled region."[4] But the resultant ends revealed otherwise. However, 9/11 constituted a remarkably sharp turning point in American Middle East orientations, resulting in two military involvements, the unleashing of the Global War on Terror, and the launch of a sophisticated program of educational, political, and socio-cultural reforms.[5] As George W. Bush's freedom agenda became America's leading strategy in the Middle East.[6] Ironically, post-Cold War American Middle East policy seemed to be conducted within the context of the Cold War's paradigm, where: stability at the expense of human rights and freedom; Israel's security; access to energy resources; and exclusion of such domestic oppositions as Islamists continue to play key roles in guiding America's geostrategic deliberations.

In practical terms, unipolarity enabled the United States to dominate the Middle Eastern scene, predominately reinforcing its hegemonic status as the ultimate arbiter. Does that serve long-run American interests? The answer is apparently 'no'. The heightening of anti-Americanism, due to successive policy failures is a case in point. Such pivotal events as the Gulf war of 1991, the ending of the Cold War[7], the rapid demographic changes (which brought about generational change and hence contributed to political maturity), and, perhaps most significant of all, the rise of political Islam, as an unmatched socio-political challenger, produced profound multi-dimensional transformations. Nonetheless, post-Cold War American Middle East orientations seem to have been captured by the Cold War's mindset.[8]

Post-Cold War Policy Tracks

Conventional Approaches to Unconventional Challenges

Since the collapse of their global political umbrella, the Ottoman Empire, Muslims have growingly been developing feelings of powerlessness, backwardness, and humiliation. These are not mere passive sentiments. Rather, they vigorously shape Muslims' perceptions of themselves and the 'other'. Indeed, the concept of 'otherness' is an entrenched theme in Islam's theological text, where the brotherly association of the believers is primarily founded on their ideological, cultural, and psychological coherence. Solidarity of the *umma*, Islamic creeds emphasize, is a religious obligation to which 'true believers' are mandatorily required to adhere.[9] In most of the

twentieth century the quality of otherness was largely embodied by the 'imperial West', and, to lesser extent, the atheist Soviet Union. The demise of the latter and the consequent emergence of the U.S. as the sole superpower reconfigured Muslims' stance towards America along four central themes: Muslims' historical grievance against the West, which is now represented by the U.S.; American unconditional support of Israel; America's backing of repressive authoritarianism, particularly in the Arab Middle East; and, as a result, halting the publicly desired reformation, perpetuating the almost globally incomparable calamitous status quo. To be sure, free of the bipolar rivalry's calculations, America was blessed with an opportunity to reconfigure the region's politics along the entitlements of the then heightening democratic wave. But it didn't. Instead, as its post-Cold War policy revealed, the U.S. has recurrently been seeking cost-free reformation in the Arab Middle East. Or as some scholars contended, "the problem is not that Muslims are not ready for democracy, as some have condescendingly argued. It is that Washington is not ready for the choices that they would probably make."[10] In brief, Washington tends to achieve 'cosmetic reform' through its politically illegitimate authoritarian allies.

Despite the diversity of the geopolitical surroundings in which they operated, post-Cold War American presidents consistently sought to further reinforce America's regional hegemony, pursuing various means including military might, diplomatic efforts, and economic sanctions and rewards. Although American presidents differed in their foreign policy tactical approaches to the Middle East, America's perception of 'self' and the 'other' appeared to have excreted tremendous influence on their respective geostrategic attitudes towards the region's geopolitical challenges. U.S. lack of in-depth comprehension of the socio-political dynamics that significantly shape the Middle Eastern collective psychological, cultural, and conceptual topography contributes to the policy failures that it constantly faces. While American foreign policy is visionary, energetic, and relatively efficient, utilizing all resources at its disposal, its accomplishments, on the whole, are not as effective. A critical review of the post-Cold War historical record, particularly the first three presidencies, may delineate the geopolitical components that form American perceptions of the Middle East as a geopolitical entity. (Obama's Middle East policy will be discussed in chapter 7).

America's Mismanaged Opportunity (1989-1993)

While preoccupied with the rapidly drastic transformations that characterized the Cold War's immediate aftermath, the George H.W. Bush administration had to confront three major challenges in the Middle East: the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990; the chronically debilitating Arab-Israeli conflict; and the Islamist-based rising tendency towards political reform. Saddam Hussein's typical miscalculation of the post-Cold War balance of power, belittling American geostrategic decisiveness, entrapped him into such a grave act that ultimately destructed his regime and, as a result, altered both regional calculations and geopolitical features. Iran merged as an undeterred regional power. The Strategic vulnerability of the GCC states has justifiably reaffirmed their need for, and tightened their reliance on U.S. security umbrella. However, the U.S. instantly seized the historic moment, establishing a strategic coalition that, for the first time in history, included many central Arab states, notably Egypt and Syria. Indeed, America, despite its stunning ideological triumph, appeared to be in desperate need for such historic opportunity that: unambiguously affirmed its unrivalled hegemonic preponderance; practically dispeled the alleged Vietnam syndrome; and further empowered America geo-strategically to reshape both global (notably Eastern Europe and central Asia, where Communism was chaotically disintegrating, alarmingly generating potential political anarchy), and the Middle Eastern geopolitical topographies in such a manner that complied with the new American-designed world order. As, then senior director for Near East and South Asia affairs on the National Security Council staff, Richard Haass argued, the Gulf crisis of 1990 was " the first major test of the post-Cold War world."[11]

With Egypt isolated and neutralized, as a result of the Camp David accord of 1979, Iraq was ardently seeking a distinguished leading role within the Arab world, counterbalancing the regional predominance of non-Arab powers, notably the U.S. and Iran. Thus, the crushing defeat of Saddam Hussein produced a twofold result: removal of Saddam's threat to both American regional hegemony, and Israel security; and paving the path for Egypt, an American ally, to regain its central significance as a leading regional force. In short, Iraq emerged from the war strategically devastated, morally humiliated, economically debilitated, and territorially fragmented, where the Kurdish northern region was informally separated. The U.S., in contrast, emerged as the ultimate guarantor of regional security and stability, decidedly reinforcing its

image as the sole superpower, with unmatched military reach and unrivaled political influence. Indeed, America was simultaneously blessed with two opportunities-the end of the Cold War and stunning victory over Iraq-to dismantle the region's autocratic setting, and reconstruct it in accordance with the globally recognized democratic values. But it missed both, betraying the Middle East to its Arab autocratic allies.[12]

Throughout the Gulf crisis of 1991, the Arab-Israeli conflict was, as it has always been, at the heart of American geostrategic considerations. Iraq arbitrarily linked its annexation of Kuwait to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories. Translating his threats into action, Saddam attacked Israel, while the latter was assertively instructed by Washington to restrain its anger, as retaliation would have played into the hands of Saddam Hussein, severely weakening the American-led coalition.[13] The Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), under the leadership of Arafat, who was reportedly identified, mainly by the GCC states, with Saddam's aggression, emerged politically weak. Exploiting these postwar atmospheric conditions, the U.S. unleashed a series of endeavors culminating in Madrid peace conference of 1991, "where Israelis and Arabs came together for the first time in their history to discuss peace, face-to face."[14] But, "despite the breakthrough that was Madrid, the Middle East did not appear ripe for peace."[15] To be sure, the chronically typical paralysis of the peace process is chiefly attributed to lack of decisiveness that has invariably been characterizing the American approach, embracing a confirmatory-bias attitude towards Israel, irrationally tending to tolerate both its physical aggressions and political maneuvering.

Islamists, notably the Muslim Brotherhood and its affiliates, condemned Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Yet, their condemnation was overshadowed by their mounting opposition to the non-Muslim military involvement. They instead called for an Islamic solution. Paradoxically, neither Arabs nor Muslims were competently qualified to preponderantly challenge, or even offset, Saddam's aggressively expansive ambitions. The non-Muslim military engagement unprecedentedly aroused animated debates amongst both Muslim scholars and Islamist activists, questioning, from a religious perspective, the legitimacy of allying with non-Muslim forces, invoking both the relevant theological texts, and related political precedence of the Prophet. The Saudi state-appointed religious establishment legitimized the King's appeal for American protection, whereas the independent Islamic activism conclusively viewed such act as an outright

violation of the authentic doctrinal interpretations. However, the Gulf crisis served as a catalyst, empowering Islamism to emerge as a serious threat to the status quo.

Indeed, the Gulf crisis of 1991 rocked the region's politically stagnant status quo. On the one hand, it overwhelmingly exposed the regimes' extensive impotence. Their full dependence on American military umbrella was a case in point. And, on the other, it mobilized the latent momentum of reform.[16] The postwar resentful public attitude evidently revealed the political alienation of pro-American ruling elites. In this context, Islamists further reinforced their socio-political appeal. Surprisingly, Saudi Islamists, who traditionally confined their activities to the apolitical realm, challenged what appeared to be a constantly stable political landscape, questioning the monarchic monopoly of power, and subsequently calling for genuine reform. Their demands included redistribution of wealth, juridical conformity to *Sharia* codes, social justice, and accountability.[17] Simultaneously, Islamism in such countries as Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Yemen, and Bahrain appeared to have matured to an exceedingly appealing centre of gravity. Islamists' unrivaled electoral preeminence was evident.

The George H.W. Bush administration seemed to have mismanaged the historic opportunities with which it was blessed. The simultaneous disappearance of the Soviet Union and the U.S. decisive victory in the Gulf War constituted a crucial juncture, where the Middle East could have been put on track. The perceived Islamist threat caused the U.S. to prefer stability to democracy. George H.W. Bush's successor, Bill Clinton, was bequeathed a Middle East replete with political uncertainties.

Clinton's Threefold Strategy (1993-2001)

The Clinton administration assumed power in an exceptionally dividing point of history where: it inherited a world with increasingly mounting uncertainties; energized by the stunning triumphs of the Cold and Gulf wars, the U.S. hegemonic posture was spectacularly evident; and America's geostrategic mind was operating in an entirely different global geopolitical topography, where the Soviet threat, which "had been both functionally constitutive of American identity, and strong concentrator of America's foreign policy mind since the Truman presidency"[18], abruptly demised. As Clinton's second term National Security Advisor, Sandy Berger, put it, "Bill Clinton was elected president at a moment of both triumph and uncertainty for America in the

world."[19] Looking at the bigger picture, many vital regions, notably Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia, and the Middle East, were undergoing fundamental geopolitical formations, as a result of the disintegration of the communist camp, and the consequent keen disequilibrium of global balance of power. America's allies, such as Western Europe and Japan, as well as its old enemies, notably Russia and China, were simultaneously reconsidering their geostrategic postures, in light of the rapidly crystallizing post-Cold War's calculations, embracing freelance attitudes.

Furthermore, the post-Cold War world was largely characterized by potential proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD), posing a lethal threat to both American national security and supremacy. Anarchic loss of control in the successor states of the Soviet Union enhanced the opportunities of both states and non-state actors to secure access to fissile materials, relevant expertise, and the means to deliver them. Preventive regimes such Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty, Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CNTBT), Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), proved to be relatively inefficient to decisively ensure non-proliferation of WMD. Nonetheless, the administration's efforts, Stephen Walt wrote, "reduced the direct threat of WMD to the United States."[20] Clinton's two-term presidency was also challenged by the outbreak of genocide and ethnic armed conflicts in such areas as Rwanda, the Balkans, East Timor, and Somalia, as well as the eruption of violent extremism.[21]

Nonetheless, the Middle East maintained its centrality, remaining at the heart of American foreign policy throughout Clinton's two-term presidency, notably in the second term. The Arab-Israeli peace process, economic integration of the region, and dual containment of Iraq and Iran interdependently constituted the strategic pillars of the administration's Middle East policy. Clearly, the Arab-Israeli conflict topped Bill Clinton's Middle East concerns. Everlasting settlement of this persistently debilitating predicament was dogmatically conceived- by the president as well as his foreign policy team- to be the remedial prerequisite for the region's chronically multidimensional catastrophes. As former National Security Council staffer, Martin Indyk, put it, "Clinton set himself a transformational objective: to move the Middle East into the twenty-first century by ending the Arab-Israeli conflict."[22] Confronting the region's diverse challenges, including radicalism, Clinton's first term National Security Advisor, Anthony Lake,

stressed, "we must energetically pursue Arab-Israeli peace", as real, secure, and comprehensive peace, Lake contended, "is the cornerstone of our efforts to help transfer the region."[23] However, the Oslo accords of 1993, merely recognized PLO's political legitimacy, empowering it to operate under the banner of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in an upright endeavor to undermine its emerging ideological competitor, Hamas. Beyond this symbolic achievement and Israeli-Jordanian peace agreement of 1994, which officially nationalized the two regimes' diplomatic relations,[24] American peace diplomacy failed to achieve the aimed breakthrough. By the time Clinton left office in January 2001, the second *intifada* had already erupted (September 2000), revealing the prospective ideological landscape that would prevail, and shaping Palestinian as well as Arab Middle Eastern political topography,[25] where, at the dawn of the millennium, political Islam figured prominently.

Integrating the region into the global market constituted the second component of Clinton's Middle East approach. In his historic speech to the Jordanian parliament in October 1994, President Clinton attributed the region's deteriorating status mainly to economic deprivation. Economic reform, therefore, the president suggested, "is vital to building peace……., if people do not feel these [economic] benefits, if poverty persists in breeding despair and killing hope, then the purveyors of fear will find fertile ground."[26] The administration seemed to have cited prosperity (independent of genuine political reform) as necessary prelude to regional stability, security, and peace, enhancing American regional hegemony, and preserving the prevailing socio-political conditions that interdependently harbor the American-sponsored status quo. Addressing the Middle Eastern scene, Clinton's first term Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, concluded that, it is "trade, not violence [that] will one day mark relations among peoples."[27] Understandably, capitalizing on economic reform was consistent with President Clinton's worldview of globalization, the prism through which his administration had viewed its worldview, and accordingly adjusted its geostrategic alternatives.[28]

The third element of Clinton's threefold strategy was 'dual containment' of Iran and Iraq, the two regional powers that, despite their historical bloody dispute, relentlessly sought to militate against American regional influence. Indeed, the Shiite Islamic government of Iran, and the secularist Baath rule of Iraq were among the few regimes in the international arena that had been identified as a source of threat to post-Cold War American preponderance, subverting the

American-sponsored regional system. Their alleged endeavors to possess WMD, reported support for terrorist groups (mainly Iranian backing to Hezbollah and Hamas), and their stubborn opposition to Arab-Israeli peace process, are cases in point. Articulated by Martin Indyk in May 1993, the dual containment policy aimed simultaneously at isolating both powers economically, militarily, and diplomatically, with the ultimate ends of overthrowing Saddam Hussein, and modifying Iran's regional behavior. Lacking strategic viability and concrete regional and international support (implemented unilaterally by the U.S.), the dual containment failed to reach its ultimate ends, yielding instead mere midcourse results.[29]

While rhetorically replete with such geopolitical terms as engagement, democratic enlargement, dual containment, rogue states, globalized market, and indispensable nation, Clinton's foreign policy seemed to have lacked a conceptually comprehensive framework that would have offered strategic guidance, and ensured consistency. The administration's Middle East approach, therefore, was conducted in such a scattered manner that it was relatively dissociated from the prevailing geopolitical context. The Clinton administration, for instance, failed adequately to sense the public's escalating desire for genuine political reform. It also misread the violent acts that alarmingly rocked such countries as Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Algeria throughout 1990s. The significant emergence of Islamism as an unrivalled socio-political dynamic force was not proportionately taken into strategic consideration. Inadequate accommodation of these revealing signals, due to "the absence of any overarching intellectual framework,"[30] culminated in massive backlash, providing fertile ground for radicalism, heightening anti-Americanism, and further discrediting pro-western autocratic elites. Clinton's successor, George W. Bush, inherited a Middle East marked by increasing feelings of desperation, and political alienation, the state of affairs that would inevitably breed its relevant consequences. 9/11 catastrophic attacks revealed the degree of public indignation, and political stagnation, as well as the mounting anti-American sentiment that radical groups harbored.

George W. Bush: Squaring the Circle (2001-2009)

At the dawn of the third millennium, and as a result of the previous administration's globally-oriented foreign policy, "the new world order of globalization had begun to emerge, but its full implications for the American place in the world did not become clear immediately. That would have to wait until September 11, 2001,"[31] when the catastrophic attacks immeasurably altered

American geopolitical perception of the Middle East as a spatial entity, and hence transformed American geostrategic approaches towards the region's fundamental cultural shaper, Islam. Throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, the Middle East had traditionally been viewed as a source of debilitating, yet manageable, crises. In the post-9/11 phase, the region's geopolitical image was identified with lethal threats not only to America's global primacy and vital interests, but to its homeland security as well. The fatal incidents of 9/11, which coincided with the seizure of power by a cluster of neoconservative scholars and politicians, justified the coercive politics that the George W. Bush administration pursued throughout its two-term presidency. Indeed, under the banner of combating Islamic terrorism, George W. Bush pursued a militarized, unilateral, and ideology-oriented policy.[32] Constituting an integral part of American grand strategy, Global War on Terror (GWoT) was rigorously formulated to: eradicate any potential threat in its infancy, draining terrorist swamp; rehabilitate the region's autocratic setting to accommodate western-based democratic values, reshaping the Middle Eastern political landscape; dismantle what conceived to be the primary source of hatred, intolerance, and extremism, Islamic-based cultural construct, re-constructing the region's collective system of beliefs and values, with an ultimate desire to integrate the Middle East into the American-fostered prevailing universal culture.[33]

George W. Bush was presented with a historic opportunity to launch the most strategically significant redesign of America's grand strategy since the presidency of Franklin D. Roosevelt.[34] Indeed, the 9/11 attacks represented the strategic equivalent of the December 7, 1941 Pearl Harbor events. The parallels between these two watersheds suggest that: the geographic privilege of being protected by two vast oceans can no longer ensure homeland security. George Washington's disapproval of 'entangling alliances' became obsolete. While the two events militated against isolationism, they substantively reaffirmed the inevitability of engagement as a strategic necessity for American prosperity, supremacy, and, above all, homeland security. Ironically, 60 years (1941-2001) of intensively multidimensional international engagement failed to fortify America's homeland security, let alone its interests abroad, questioning the viability of the successively endorsed grand strategies. Post-9/11 grand strategy, therefore, tended to rectify the perceived failure, most notably American Middle East dysfunctional posture. Hence the heterogeneous organs of the "War on Terror" were assembled in such psychological and intellectual contexts that fundamentally intended to overcome American historically geopolitical

misreading of Middle Eastern socio-political dynamics, aiming at reconciling the region's cultural atmosphere with American interests. As Condoleezza Rice, then secretary of state, maintained, "The center of gravity is not the enemies we fight but the societies they are trying to radicalize."[35]

Unarguably, the 9/11 attacks revolutionized American geopolitical conceptualization, playing a crucial role in shaping the policy community's worldview. While formulating post-9/11 American grand strategy, the George W. Bush administration's conceptual approach seemed to be influenced by the following factors. First, in such a globalized world, where means to deliver WMD are comparatively accessible, and consequences of given global events are not simply confined to their respective domestic, or even regional parties, they are rather borderless. Thus, acquiring the character of being globally transmitted, threats to American national security are incomparably greater. Second, the role of non-state actors, including Islamic radical groups, has tremendously grown. In contrast, the absolute sovereignty of nation-state had noticeably eroded in the post-Cold War era, weakening its typical iron fist. Third, Americans-politicians and intellectuals alike-were, by and large, captured by the notion that the post-Cold War world had to be made safe for both American global predominance and liberal democracy. Fourth, exemplified by Al-Qaeda and its like-minded groups, the foe was -and still is- unique in terms of: character (non-state actor, formless, and shadowy); identity (belonging to, and resting on religious-oriented ideological predispositions); and cause (invoking both historical and contemporary Islamic grievances against the West, and hence combating the U.S. on behalf of the *umma*).Thus, equating Islamic extremism to fascism or communism is apparently irrelevant.[36] Finally, the neo-conservative ideological-based worldview served as an intellectual framework, forging the administration's geopolitical discourse.

As non-state actors questing for power to advance their non-western political agenda, both moderate Islamism and extremist factions insinuated in American official thinking while conceptualizing post-9/11 grand strategy.[37] Counterterrorism appeared to have hijacked American grand strategy, where the latter was largely organized around the confrontation with an ill-defined adversary, Islamic extremism. Triumph over shadowy Islamic terrorism was endorsed as a measure of assessment against which foreign policy success was to be evaluated. The September 2002 National Security Strategy (NSS-2002), which constituted George W. Bush's

grand strategy, emphasized, "in leading the campaign against terrorism, we are forging new, productive international relationships and redefining existing ones in ways that meet the challenges of the twenty-first century."[38] After five years of undeterred series of military actions, covert operations, and diplomatic efforts, the National Security Strategy of 2006 confessed, "The war against terror is not over. America is safer, but not yet safe."[39]

Post-9/11 American grand strategy was apparently built on three fundamental pillars, from which strategic objectives, geostrategic approaches, and policy guidelines stemmed, aiming to: vigilantly assure homeland security; competently sustain America's global hegemonic centrality; and disseminate liberal democracy, along with its socio-economic and culturally indivisible features. Clearly, with the 'War on Terror' at its heart, this grand strategy placed the U.S. in physical, political, and cultural confrontation with not only militant radicalism, but also with considerable segments of Muslims all over the globe. Stemming from the U.S grand strategy, the War on Terror embodied three major modalities: military action; political transformation; and educational reform.[40]

Heavy reliance on military might had acquired remarkable significance in post-9/11 U.S. geostrategic posture. Notwithstanding the distinct motives that dictated their invasions, both Afghanistan (2001), and Iraq (2003) were conquered in the context of George W. Bush's doctrine of preemption, the controversial concept that predominantly guided his administration's alternatives. In both cases, preemptive military measures -for preventive purposes- were grounded on the perceived 'imminent' danger that Saddam Hussein, and Al-Qaeda, from its safe haven of Afghanistan, posed to American national security. Constituting the centerpiece of the 'War on Terror', preemption was primarily premised on the conviction that "traditional concepts of deterrence will not work against a terrorist enemy whose avowed tactics are wanton destruction and the targeting of innocents; whose so-called soldiers seek martyrdom in death and whose most potent protection is statelessness", thus, "to foster or prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States will, if necessary, act preemptively."[41] With preemption and prevention as the leading foreign policy tools, the significance of such concepts as diplomacy, soft power, and economic sanctions markedly retreated. Recklessly implemented, coercive politics dragged the U.S. into spectacular violations, where such phrases as 'Guantanamo', and 'Abu Ghraib', have symbolically been identified with brutality, ruthlessness, and systematic

cultural humiliation, exposing the U.S. to global discrediting, and causing devastating harm to America's geopolitical image.

The freedom deficit and the socio-cultural illiberal setting were identified as the most fertile grounds for the growth of extremism. Democracy promotion and the socio-cultural integration of the Middle East, therefore, constituted the other two sides of the George W. Bush administration's triangular strategy. Three initiatives were launched to serve as multilateral instruments through which democratic, socio-economic, and educational reforms can simultaneously and interdependently be achieved: Middle East Free Trade Area (MEFTA); Middle East Partnership Initiatives (MEPI); and the Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA).[42] MEFTA was intended to extend the margin of freedom through the relevantly anticipated economic growth which, the administration discerned, would generate a politically active middle class, upon which democratization would ultimately rest. Adopted by the Group of Eight (G8) in June 2004, the BMENA initiative, whose mission was to support indigenous civil society organizations in their efforts to advance democratic reform, revealed America's eagerness to integrate the industrialized world's consensus with its Middle East strategy, transforming moral support into financial and political commitments. Neither the commercially-oriented MEFTA, nor the multilateral BMENA appears to be viable. MEPI, therefore, has outstandingly gained currency, particularly within American official circles, as a reliably well-sophisticated cluster of coherently interlinked reforming programs.

Launched in December 2002 by, then Secretary of State, Colin Powell, MEPI emerged as America's catalyst for change in the broader Middle East. Indeed, it was meant to be a U.S. geostrategic instrument to dismantle the region's autocratic setting that was viewed as the primary cause of indignation, disillusionment, and political passivity, the massively entrenched characteristics that, at some critical point, generated reactive political violence, targeting not only the domestic regimes, but their international backers as well. Constituting a departure from U.S. traditional approaches, MEPI was divided into four pillars, responding to political, economic, educational, and gender challenges. Reforms in these four areas were identified as the vehicle that would lead the democratic transformation, ultimately ensuring enduring change. To meet the initiative's objectives in the four designated realms, "MEPI officials, in conjunction with Arab governments, invest funds in programs geared toward strengthening Arab civil society,

encouraging micro-enterprise, expanding political participation, and promoting women's rights."[43]

Operating in a friendly, yet closed political setting, MEPI would certainly result in conflict of interests. It was confronted with this dilemma, where the initiative's ultimate ends –advancement of democratic values and liberation of civil rights- pose existential threats to American-fostered authoritarian regimes, the survival of which, at this moment of history, seems to be critical to American vital interests. Thus, constrained by the administration's pragmatic calculations with respect to America's relations with the existing autocratic order, MEPI ended up fostering relatively irrelevant programs, where, for instance, "more than 70 percent of its first $103 million in grants went to programs that either directly benefited Arab governments agencies ……..or provided training programs and seminars for Arab government officials."[44] Unsurprisingly, MEPI'S fundamental mission of regional democratization retreated, squandering its fiscal and diplomatic resources on such nominal programs as translation, school computerizing, training seminars, and exchange visits.[45]

Post-Cold War U.S. Middle East strategies appeared to have preserved American pronounced interests: unimpeded access to energy sources; maintaining the pro-American autocratic order; and excluding anti-American political activism, notably Islamic resurgence. Ostensibly, this is a success. Indeed, America's Middle East orientation yielded an artificially revised version of the Cold War's landscape, maintaining the principal socio-political forces that persistently ensured American regional hegemony. Nevertheless, two questions need to be examined: (1), to what extent is this success authentic and viable?; (2), what implications does the prevailing American-orchestrated order generate for the U.S. and Islamists alike?.

The Vulnerability of Success

Post-Cold War American deliberations over the Middle East seemed to have been processed within the traditional Cold War's conceptual paradigm, leading essentially to identical destinations. The demise of the Soviet Union provided the U.S. with unprecedentedly considerable freedom of action, the dominant features of which included "the U.S.-led liberation of Kuwait, the long-term stationing of U.S. ground and air forces on the Arabian Peninsula, and an active diplomatic interest in trying to solve the Arab-Israeli conflict once and for all."[46]

Simultaneously, the disappearance of the Cold War's geostrategic calculations created a threat deficit, undermining the U.S 'marketing capacity', the tool that had misleadingly been used to justify policies, rally the public, and intimidate friends and allies. America's emergence as the sole superpower coincided with the rise of Islamic-oriented political activism, the radical variant of which, coupled with proliferation of WMD, constituted the most serious intertwined threat not only to U.S. core interests, but also to its national security and regional hegemony. These two particular elements exerted immeasurable influence on the formulation of American geostrategic alternatives towards the Middle East, ultimately leading to disastrous military adventures in Afghanistan (2001), and Iraq (2003).

To be sure, further traditional factors contributed to the post-Cold War American perception of the Middle East. The Cold War's geopolitical paradigm was invoked to operate as a benchmark, steering U.S. regional deliberations. Precisely, Israel's security, access to the Persian Gulf energy resources, and political annexation of the region, along with the perceived Islamic threat and WMD, comprised the primary shapers of American geostrategic preferences. America's strategic commitment to Israel's security deprived the U.S. of the moral authority required as a supposedly impartial patron of peace, antagonized the vast majority of Arabs and Muslims alike, and further heightened anti-American sentiment. Cold War's tendency to monopolize dominance over the oil wells continued to capture U.S. regional concerns, although "70 percent of American energy supplies do not originate in the Middle East."[47] Understandably, America's eagerness to maintain a tight grip on oil wells appears to be consistent with its self-image as the indispensable nation, where, " control of the oil resources in the region provides Washington with geo-strategic and geo-economic leverage over [the primary consumers], the European and Asian governments."[48]

Perpetuating the pro-western status quo, American Middle East policy constantly preferred autocracy over democracy. During the Cold War, this policy was rooted in the containment doctrine. In the post-Cold War era, counterterrorism has been invoked to serve as a pretext for America's alignment with authoritarianism. As, then Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice contended, "We do need capable friends in the broader Middle East who can root out terrorists now. These states are often not democratic…….we cannot deny the nondemocratic states the security assistance to fight terrorism or defend themselves."[49] Viewed as stumbling block to

political openness, American support for such rootless autocratic order seemed to be essentially driven by the perceived Islamic threat, impeding Islamists' escalation to power. Stripped of authentic constitutional legitimacy, the incumbent regimes grew increasingly submissive to U.S. dictations. Their survival has largely been interlocked with American financial, diplomatic, intelligence, and military support.

Captured by the above stated five components (Israel's security, access to energy resources, alignment with autocracy, counterterrorism, and non-proliferation of WMD) post-Cold War American Middle East policy ended up confronting a recurring predicament, a paradoxical situation where America's policy failure lies in its ostensible success. Or what might be termed 'America's Middle East Dilemma' (AMED), where American regional interests have indivisibly been identified with the survival of the pro-American autocratic order. This authoritarian setting, in turn, persistently produces social despair, economic deprivation, and political alienation, the notorious combination that provides fertile ground for the growth of extremism. Viewed as the fundamental backer of Middle Eastern authoritarian regimes, the U.S. has increasingly become the primary target of political violence. Genuine democratic reform, American policymakers believe, would bring about intolerable anti-American regimes. Thus, notwithstanding its strategic burdens, the prevailing autocratic order, American official thinking concludes, is the lesser of two evils. Alignment with despotic rules and human rights violators, therefore, turned out to be a deterministically entrenched American geostrategic alternative. This is how AMED's unbreakable cycle aimlessly loops, furthering the region's typically ingrained uncertainties.

In pursuit of its pronounced strategic goals, America conquered Afghanistan, occupied Iraq, empowered Israel, ensured access to energy resources, fortified the pro-American autocratic order, relatively isolated anti-American forces, such as Iran and Hamas, and claimed to have weakened Islamic militancy (most notably AL-Qaeda and Taliban). Nonetheless, U.S. regional hegemony and core interests are far from being fully secured. Three policy failures demonstratively support this conclusion. Politically, the American-led democratization failed to yield the hoped-for transformation. The tide of freedom retreated, and political exclusion of the opposition forces continued to mark the region's geopolitical scene. Freedom House's annual survey of global political rights and civil liberties, Freedom in the World 2008, indicated that, "the period of modest gain that had marked the region's political landscape in the post-9/11

period came to an end in 2007, with freedom experiencing a decline in a number of important countries and territories."[50] Whereas the 2010 report concluded, "the Middle East and North Africa region suffered a number of significant setbacks…… [Where] declines in 2009 brought the portion of the region's residents who live in Not Free societies to 88 percent."[51] Designed to advance Arab democracy, such instruments as MEPI, MEFTA, and BMENA, "were akin to putting a Band-Aid over a gapping wound,"[52] lacking both principle-centered commitment to genuine reform, and willingness to cope with potentially undesired outcomes.

Militarily, engagements in Afghanistan and Iraq apparently entangled the U.S in what appears to be long-term strategically debilitating deadlock, eroding America's resources and credibility. Apart from Iraq's alleged possession of nuclear capabilities, counterterrorism was the common ground on which both adventures were grounded. Ironically, nourished by the sense of Jihad against external invaders, Islamic militancy zealously surged, gaining both currency and justifiability. Exemplified by AL-Qaeda, Taliban, and their like-minded factions, militant groups expanded their outreach to such areas as Pakistan, Somalia, Yemen, and Maghreb. Over-reliance on military might had the unintended consequence of rationalizing radicalism. The U.S. National Intelligence Council assessed that "the global jihadist movement……is spreading and adapting to counterterrorism efforts. ….. [Jihadists] are increasing in both number and geographic dispersion. …..the Iraq jihad is shaping a new generation of terrorist leaders and operatives; perceived jihadist success there would inspire more fighters to continue the struggle elsewhere."[53] Military actions not only failed to drain the swamp, they also turned out to be counterproductive. The hoped-for democratic model failed to materialize. Instead, both countries slipped into security chaos and political instability. Sectarian cleansings, worsening humanitarian conditions, and lack of essential infrastructures-let alone socio-economic prosperity-are evident.[54]

Morally, America's geopolitical image has increasingly been identified with ambivalence, unilateralism, and pragmatism. Viewed as inconsistent with its emphatically pronounced mission of freedom and human dignity, U.S. moral authority in the Arab world was incalculably damaged. Indeed, by the end of Bush43's presidency polls illustrated that "83 percent across the Muslim world express unfavorable view of the United States."[55] To be sure, it is not what America is that provoked anti-American sentiment, but rather what America does. The essential

cause of the dramatic growth of anti-Americanism "is not a clash of civilizations, but the perceived effect of U.S. foreign policy in the Muslim world."[56] American diplomatic efforts to win hearts and minds seemed to have been undermined by the politics of fear. Clearly, U.S. foreign policy and public diplomacy are evidently divergent; reinforcing America's perceived hypocritical character. Remedy thus lies in reconciling foreign policy approaches with public diplomacy aims.[57]

Post-Cold War American geopolitical perceptions of the Middle East have been captured by the Cold War's conceptual paradigm, which proved to be not only dysfunctional, but also counterproductive. The region's political, socio-economic, and educational calamitous conditions stimulated massive backlashes, calling for structural reform. Yet, Washington remained insensitively indifferent to these escalating signals, capitalizing instead on its autocratic allies. President Obama's election was globally perceived as a rejection of his predecessor's politics of fear. Rhetorically, Obama adopted a reconciliatory posture. His Ankara remarks of April 6, 2009, and Cairo speech of June 4, 2009, are cases in point. To be sure, Obama's foreign policy, as Brzezinski contended, "has generated more expectations than strategic breakthrough. Nonetheless, Obama has significantly altered U.S. policies regarding the three most urgent challenges facing the country [the Arab-Israeli conflict, Iran, and the AFPAK quagmire]."[58] Admittedly, in an attempt to redefine the U.S. view of the world of Islam, Obama re-conceptualized American geopolitical discourse, embracing an apologetic tone, where, in his historic Cairo speech of June 2009, the president asserted, "Islam demonstrated through words and deeds the possibilities of religious tolerance and racial equality. …….Iraq was a war of choice."[59] In essence, however, American Middle East orientations have yet to be emancipated from the Cold War's paradigmatic constraints, advocating genuinely inclusive political openness.

Apparently, the Obama administration recognizes the compound nature of the geostrategic challenges that U.S. has been facing: two unwinnable wars; extremist violence; nuclear Iran; the chronically debilitating peace process; and a politically brittle autocratic order, the survival of which, while perceived to be vital to U.S. core interests, has increasingly been furthering American geostrategic burdens. The foregoing issues are so interlinked that they need to be addressed in a coherent manner. These issues "are all of a piece, or at least they are all inextricably related to one another. ……. [Nonetheless] during the last several years, the

United States has had no coordinated set of policies that has embraced all of these issues."[60] Inclusion of mainstream political Islam, for instance, is seemingly a prerequisite for defeating extremist violence, and anti-American sentiment is proportional to American stances towards the Arab-Israeli conflict and democratic reform.

In practical terms, Islamism, in its broader sense, appeared to have maintained its central role in shaping U.S. regional geostrategic posture. The Jihadist tendency of anti-American guerrillas in Afghanistan and Iraq, the Islamic-based political identity of Hamas, and, perhaps above all, the Islamic-oriented character of the leading political forces across the region are cases in point. The military failures in Afghanistan and Iraq, paralysis over Arab-Israeli conflict, and the retreat of American-led democratization were primarily attributed to the impacts that these forces significantly had on the trajectory of events. Yet, the U.S. grew unjustifiably reluctant to recognize this geopolitical fact. Influenced by a bizarre blend of ill-defined perceptions of Islam as a source of ideological predispositions, and Islamism as a political expression, U.S. foreign policy failed to draw clear distinction between extremism and moderation, adopting instead undifferentiated view of Islamic resurgence as a whole. Arbitrarily equated with fanaticism and cultural intolerance, moderate Islamist groups, "which are the most powerful opposition movements, are excluded from participating in MEPI programs due to the insistence of host governments and the unwillingness of some U.S. policymakers to legitimize Islamist groups that may seek to permanently enshrine Islam in a country's political and social system."[61] As a result of the stunning victories that Egyptian and Palestinian Islamists achieved in their parliamentary elections of 2005 and 2006 respectively, the George W. Bush administration backed away from its pronounced commitment to democracy promotion, discrediting its democratization enterprise, and unintentionally reaffirming the notion of double standards.

While violent radicalism looms large in American rhetoric, "the real challenge came from non-violent organizations, mostly tracing their roots to the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, which decided they should participate in the legal political life of their countries."[62] Rhetorically, to be sure, American official pronouncements recognized Muslims' right to renewed emphasis on their cultural values. But policy pursued revealed otherwise. America's undifferentiated view of Islamists signaled a paradigmatically systemic misreading of the region's socio-political rumblings, where the masses dogmatically identify reform to Islam, and moderate Islamic

activism is the predominant political force. Policy failure, therefore, is a product of geostrategic miscalculation, the malady that appeared to be generated by a geopolitical misreading, where: (1), massive discontents were simplistically misinterpreted as mere economic needs; (2), the mounting calls for political reform were reduced to an exclusionary electoral process; (3), alliance with the unpopular autocratic order was conceived as strategically imperative; (4), the U.S. increasingly relied on hard power (military might, security measures, and even systematic physical oppressions) to prolong its regional hegemony; and (5), grass-roots reformist forces were indiscriminately painted with the broad brush of extremism.

Summing up, a faithful change in U.S. policy "to resume principled engagement, ……[pressing for genuine] democratic reform, not just in the electoral realm but with respect to enhancing judicial independence and governmental transparency as well as expanding freedom of press and civil society,"[63] could precipitate extensive transformations and reconcile American interests with American values.

Conclusion

Historically, the Arab Middle East has always been viewed as a source of strategic concern. As a spatial entity, the Middle East evolved such geopolitical characteristics that obstructed its full integration into the Western-based civilization. While the Middle East is comprised of several various ethnicities, races, and sub-cultures, Islam persistently maintained its centrality as the predominant shaper of the region's grand cultural and political identities. Unlike other world religions, whose missions are largely spiritual, Islam's political character has exceedingly played crucial roles in shaping Muslims' geopolitical postures. While demonstrating tolerance and willingness to peacefully co-exist with the 'other', Islam tends to coin its own definitions of such concepts as sovereignty, gender equality, modernity, liberty, and morality, establishing an Islamic-based system of statecraft. The socio-political order that prevailed in the post-colonial era was, to great extent, secular. Hence, exclusion of the socio-political dimensions of Islam, coupled with the decline of Ottoman Empire served as stimuli to the rise Islamic resurgence.

Driven by strategic imperatives with respect to its bipolar rivalry with communism, U.S. allied with the post-colonial undemocratic regimes, sowing the seeds of anti-American sentiment, the attitude that would be translated to destructive violence, and heated cultural

conflict. Thanks to relentless American support, the autocratic order survived. But the long-term American interests were considerably jeopardized. Indeed, "the political status quo in the region – the status quo on which America has long relied to protect its interests – has become unsustainable, and the coming years will see major changes in Arab politics. …..The key question is not whether the regimes will survive but in what form and at what cost to themselves, to their citizens, and to U.S. interests."[64] The U.S. Middle East geopolitical paradigm had come into being within the context of the Cold War's considerations, where containment was the leading doctrine of U.S. foreign policy. At the outset of the post-Cold War era, two fundamental threats figured prominently, posing unprecedented challenges to American geostrategic capacity: proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD); and the rise of Islamism as a potential vehicle for long overdue change. The Cold War's conceptual paradigm was invoked to tackle the progressively crystallized landscape. Being already dysfunctional, the paradigmatically typical measures further reinforced America's Middle East Dilemma (AMED), a misguided geopolitical framework that delivered U.S. into calamitous, yet avoidable, ends.

Willingness to align with authoritarianism, commitment to Israel's security (even at the expense of American core interests and moral authority); and reluctance to political openness that may empower Islamists to enshrine their doctrinal convictions in state's constitutional features, are the three foundational components of America's Middle East Dilemma (AMED) that recurrently entangled U.S. in its self-made Middle Eastern predicaments. Thus, America's regional objectives, including promotion of democracy, will likely continue to be blunted by five strategically lethal maladies: (1), an incoherent approach to interrelated problems "that each depends on what happens in regard to the others"[65]; (2), geopolitical misreading of the region's massively momentous aspirations for change, and their implications for U.S. regional posture; (3), cultural superiority that insistently tends to confine the role of Islam to the spiritual realm; (4), over-reliance on hard power; and (5), the embrace of undifferentiated view of Islamic activism, demonstrating insular attitude towards such indigenous and popularly advocated alternative as moderate Islamism. In short, mishandling of Middle Eastern overly complicated and interdependent questions "could commit the United States for many years to a lonely and self-destructive conflict in a huge and volatile area. Eventually, that could spell the end of the United States' current global preeminence."[66]

While U.S. official pronouncements tended to praise Islam as a great world faith, U.S. actual policies are far from being consistent with this rhetorically declared attitude. Rather, U.S. policies tend to impede Islamists' political inclusion, let alone their attainment of power. Argumentatively, given its experiences with revolutionary Iran, Sudan, Taliban of Afghanistan, and Hamas of Palestine, America's skepticism about Islamists' in power, some scholars argue, is understandable. Nonetheless, America's regional posture, as the foregoing analysis revealed, is inescapably dependent on the geostrategic approaches it ultimately embraces towards Islamic activism.

As a result of the debilitating consequences of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the financial crisis of 2008, and the Arab Spring, which swept the Middle East at the outset of 2011, deposing many pro-American autocrats, U.S. Middle East policy appears to have been undergoing fundamental changes.[67] The post-9/11 neo-conservative policy of preemptive strike and military intervention came to an end. A 'Strategic Guidance' released by the Department of Defense articulates, "in the aftermath of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the United States will emphasize nonmilitary means and military-to-military cooperation to address instability and reduce the demand for significant U.S. force commitments to stability operations. …… U.S. forces will no longer be sized to conduct large-scale, prolonged stability operations."[68]

The above analysis of U.S. Middle East policy reveals that American conceptual stance and geostrategic preferences are not solely informed by material interests. Rather, a combination of cultural elements seemed to have contributed to the formation of American perception of the Middle East as a geopolitical entity and Islamism as a political expression of the region's longing for democratic transformation. Clearly, the deterioration of the socio-political and economic conditions severely undermined the American-backed autocratic status quo, and consequently empowered Islamists. As the periodical Arab Human Development Report demonstrated, the region's achievements in such areas as knowledge, freedom, human rights, and good governance, are far below the internationally recognized standards.[69] The welfare conditions and economic growth are as bad or even worse.[70] The absence of genuine democracy remained the most significant feature of the Arab Middle East, which never experienced 'good governance' as globally defined.[71]

The U.S. was largely viewed as the primary backer of this politically autocratic, socially corrupt and economically static status quo. Indeed, in the public collective mind, America has increasingly been associated with hypocrisy and authoritarianism, generating anti-American sentiment. The post-Cold War Arab world's agony is, therefore, a product of the American-fostered dysfunctional socio-political power structures. With the democratic transformation that swept the Middle East as a result of the Arab spring and the consequent rising to power of Islamists, the U.S. foreign policy will have to operate in an entirely different geopolitical setting, entailing a profound change in both U.S. geopolitical perception of Islamism and geostrategic approaches to the region.

To assess the viability of U.S. Islamist orientations, a complementary set of relevant cases need to be thoroughly addressed. Islamic movements in Egypt, Algeria, and Turkey appear to possess the characteristics required to epitomize the multifaceted movement that collectively represent the various variants of political Islam. Their differences, similarities, failures, and successes – with respect to both their domestic politics and relations to U.S. policy – will offer relevant conclusions with regard to the American approach to Islamism, in its broader sense. Indeed, given the varying geopolitical circumstances of their respective countries, these three models in particular are dynamic, and seem to possess the capacity to offer an evidence-based interpretation of U.S. strategies towards Islamic political activism.

Notes

1. See Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Choice: Global Domination or Global Leadership*, p. 86.

2. Graham E. Fuller, *US Policy towards Political Islam*, Emirates Lecture Series (45), The Emirates Center For Strategic Studies and Research, p. 13.

3. Ibid. p. 5.

4. Martin Indyk, *Innocent Abroad: An Intimate Account of American Peace Diplomacy in the Middle East*, p. 391.

5. See "Middle East Partnership Initiatives (MEPI)" that was launched in 2002 by the then Secretary of State, Colin Powell.

6. See Tamara Cofman Wittes, *Freedom's Unsteady March: America's role in Building Arab Democracy*, pp. 76-101; Colin Powell, "A Strategy for Partnership", *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 83, Issue 1, January/February 2004, PP. 22-34; Francis Fukuyama and Michael McFaul, "Should Democracy Be Promoted Or Demoted?", *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No.1, Winter 2007-08, pp. 23-45.

7. See Bernard Lewis, "Rethinking the Middle East", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 71, Issue 4, Fall 1992, 99-119.

8. See Leon Hadar, *Sandstorm: Policy Failure in the Middle East*, pp. 1-23.

9. Many Quranic verses and Prophetic narrations emphatically highlight the centrality of these concepts as integral requisite of the faith. See, for instance, Quran: chapter 3, verse 103; chapter 9, verse 71; & chapter 49, verse 10.

10. Richard Murphy, and F. Gregory Guase III, "Democracy and U.S. Policy in the Muslim Middle East", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 5, Issue 1, January 1997, pp. 58-67.

11. Richard N. Haass, *War of Necessity War of Choice: A Memoir of Two Iraq Wars*, p. 4.

12. See Dawisha Adeed, "The United States in the Middle East: The Gulf War and Its Aftermath", *Current History*, vol. 91, (561), p. 1, January 1992; Martin Indyk, "Watershed in the

Middle East", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 71, Issue 1, 1991/1992, PP. 70-93; James E. Akin, "The New Arabia", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, Issue 3, Summer 1991, PP. 36-49; Peter W. Rodman, "Middle East Diplomacy After The Gulf War", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, Issue 2, Spring 1991, PP. 1-18.

13. See Richard N. Haass, "*War of Necessity War of Choice: A Memoir of Two Iraq Wars*", pp. 117-20.

14. Ibid. p. 132.

15. Ibid. p. 147.

16. See Daniel Byman & John R. Wise, *The Persian Gulf in the Coming Decade: Trends, Threats, and Opportunities*, Rand Corporation, 2002; Antony Cordesman, *Saudi Arabia, the US, and the Structure of the Gulf Alliances*, Centre for Strategic and International Studies, February 25, 1999.

17. See Angel M. Rabasa & Others *The Muslim World After 9/11*, Rand Corporation, 2004, pp. 106-9.

18. John W. Dumbrell, *Clinton's Foreign Policy: Between the Bushes, 1992-2000*, p. 22.

19. Samuel R. Berger, "A Foreign Policy for the Global Age", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 79, Issue 6, November/December 2000, PP. 22-39.

20. Stephen M. Walt, "Two Cheers for Clinton's Foreign Policy", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 79, Issue 2, March/April 2000, pp. 63-79.

21. See John W. Dumbrell, *American Foreign Policy: Carter to Clinton*, pp. 178-96; Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Second Chance: Three Presidents and the Crisis of American Superpower*, pp. 83-133; *A National Security Strategy for A New Century*, The White House, December 1999; Warren Christopher, "America's Leadership, America's Opportunity", *Foreign Policy*, Issue 98, Spring 1995, PP. 6-27; Samuel R. Berger, "A Foreign Policy for the Global Age", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 79, Issue 6, November/December 2000, pp. 22-39.

22. Martin Indyk, *Innocent Abroad: An Intimate Account of American Peace Diplomacy in the Middle East*, pp. 391-2.

23. Anthony Lake, *Conceptualizing U.S. Strategy in the Middle East*, the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, August 1994.

24. Both treaties were negotiated without intense American involvement.

25. See John W. Dumbrell, *Clinton's Foreign Policy: Between the Bushes, 1992-2000*, pp. 146-52; Martin Indyk, *Innocent Abroad*, pp. 120-45 & 361-76.

26. Remarks by President Bill Clinton to Jordanian parliament, October 26, 1994.

27. Warren Christopher, "America's Leadership, America's Opportunity", *Foreign Policy*, Issue 98, Spring 1995, PP. 6-27.

28. See Henry Kissinger, *Does America Need A Foreign Policy?*, pp. 211-33; Ian Tyrrell, *Transnational Nation: United States History in Global Perspective since 1789*, pp. 201-22; Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Second Chance*, pp. 83-90; Clinton's Second Inaugural Address, January 20, 1997; A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement, The White House, February 1995.

29. See, John W. Dumbrell, *Clinton's Foreign Policy*, pp. 152-59; Martine Indyk, *Innocent Abroad*, pp. 149-66; Zbigniew Brzezinski, Brent Scowcroft, Richard Murphy, "Differentiated Containment", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 76, Issue 3, May/June 1997, pp. 20-30; F. Gregory Gause III, "The Illogic of Dual Containment", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73, Issue 2, March/April 1994, pp. 56-66.

30. Richard N. Haass, "The Squandered Presidency: Demanding more from the Commander-in-Chief", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 79, Issue 3, May/June 2000, PP. 136-140.

31. Ian Tyrrell, *Transnational Nation: United States History in Global Perspective since 1789*, p. 222.

32. See Loch K. Johnson, *Seven Sins of American Foreign Policy*, pp. 117-184; Ian Tyrrell, *Transnational Nation*, pp. 223-29; John W. Dumbrell, "Unilateralism and America First?: President George W. Bush's Foreign Policy", *The Political Quarterly*, Vol. 73, Issue 3, July 2002, pp. 279-287.

33. See "*The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*", September 2002; "President Bush's address to a joint session of congress", September 20, 2001; "President Bush's state of the union address", January 29, 2002; Collin L. Powell, "A Strategy of Partnership", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 83, Issue 1, Jan/Feb 2004, pp. 22-34; Condoleezza Rice, "The Promise of Democratic Peace: Why Promoting Freedom Is The Only Realistic Path To Security", *Washington Post*, Sunday, December 11, 2005.

34. See John Lewis Gaddi, "Grand Strategy in the Second Term", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 84, Issue 1, Jan/Feb 2005, pp. 2-15.

35. Condoleezza Rice, "Rethinking the National Interest", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 87, Issue 4, Jul/Aug 2008, pp. 2-26.

36. See Colin L. Powell, "A Strategy of Partnership", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 83, Issue 1, Jan/Feb 2004, pp. 22-34; Anthony H. Cordesman, " Winning The War On Terror: A Fundamentally Different Strategy", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 13, Issue 3, Fall 2006, 101-108; Patrick Porter, " Long Wars and Long Telegrams: Containing Al-Qaeda", *International Affairs*, Vol. 85, Issue 2, March/April 2009, pp. 285-301.

37. See Michele A. Flournoy and Shawn Brimley (editors), "Finding Our Way: Debating American Grand Strategy", *Solarium Strategy Series*, Center for New American Security, June 2008, pp. 63-80 & 83-102.

38. The White House, "*The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*", September 2002, p. 7.

39. The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, March 2006, p. 8.

40. *The National Security Strategy* (NSS), September 2002.

41. Ibid, p. 15.

42. See Tamara Cofman Wittes, *Freedom's Unsteady March*, pp. 85-97; Angel Rabasa & others, "*Building Moderate Muslim Networks*, Center for Middle East Public Policy, Rand Corporation, 2007, pp. 57-63; Jeremy M. Sharp, "The Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative: An

Overview*”, Congressional Research Services* (CRS), the Library of Congress, February 15, 2005; Mary Jane Boll, “ Middle East Free Trade Area: Progress Report”, *Congressional Research Services*, July 3, 2006.

43. Jeremy M. Sharp “The Middle East Partnership Initiative: An Overview”, *Congressional Research Service*, the Library of Congress, July 20, 2005.

44. Tamara Cofman Wittes, *Freedom’s Unsteady March*, p. 90.

45. Ibid. p. 90-1.

46. Richard N. Haass, “The New Middle East”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85, Issue 6, Nov/Dec 2006, pp. 2-11.

47. Leon Hadar, *Sandstorm in the Middle East: Policy Failures*, p. 154.

48. Ibid. p. 155.

49. Condoleezza Rice, “Rethinking The National Interests”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 87, Issue 4, Jul/Aug 2008, pp. 2-26,

50. Arch Puddington, *Freedom in the World 2008*”, Freedom House, Washington, U.S.

51. Ibid. *Freedom in the World 2010*.

52. Tamara Cofman Wittes, *Freedom’s Unsteady March*, p. 147.

53. National Intelligence Council, *Trends in Global Terrorism: Implications for the United States*, April 2006.

54. See Louis Fisher, “Deciding on War against Iraq: Institutional Failures”, *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 118, Issue 3, 2003, pp. 389-410; National Security Council, *National Strategy for Victory In Iraq*, November 2005; James A. Baker & Lee H. Hamilton (Co-Chairs), “The Iraq Study Group Report”, 2006; Steven Bowman & Catherine Dale, “War in Afghanistan: Strategy, Military Operations, and Issues for Congress”, *Congressional Research Service*, December 3, 2009.

55. Hady Amr, “The Opportunity of the Obama Era: Can Civil Society Help Bridge Divides Between the United States and a Diverse Muslim World?”, Brookings Doha Center Analysis Paper Number 1, November 2009.

56. John L. Esposito & Dalia Mogahed, *Who Speaks for Muslims?*, p. 156.

57. See Hady Amr, “The Need to Communicate: How To Improve U.S. public Diplomacy with the Islamic World”, Saban Center for Middle East Policy, Brooking Institution, Analysis Paper number 6, January 2004.

58. Zbigniew Brzezinski, “From Hope to Audacity: Appraising Obama’s Foreign Policy”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 89, Issue 1, Jan/Feb 2010, pp. 16-30.

59. President Barak Obama, “Remarks in Cairo University”, June 4, 2009.

60. Robert E. Hunter, “A New American Middle East Strategy?”, *Survival*, Vol. 50, Issue 6, 2008, pp. 49-66.

61. Jeremy M. Sharp, “The Middle East Partnership Initiative: An Overview”, *Congressional Research Service*, the Library of Congress, July 20, 2005.

62. Marina Ottaway, “The More Things Change….Political Reform in the Arab World”, *World Policy Journal*, Volume 26, Issue 2, summer 2009.

63. Larry Diamond, “Why Are There No Arab Democracies?”, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 21, No. 1, January 2010, pp. 93-112.

64. Tamara Cofman Wittes, *Freedom’s Unsteady March*, p. 32.

65. Robert E. Hunter, “A New American Middle East Strategy?”, *Survival*, Vol. 50, Issue 6, 2008, pp. 49-66.

66. Zbigniew Brzezinski, “From Hope to Audacity: Appraising Obama’s Foreign Policy”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 89, Issue 1, Jan/Feb 2010, pp. 16-30.

67. See Michael Mandelbaum, *The Frugal Superpower: America’s Global Leadership in a Cash-Strapped Era*, pp. 137-80.

68. Department of Defense, “Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities For 21st Century Defense”, January 2012.

69. See Arab Human Development Reports of 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005, Issued by United Nations Development Program, Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development.

70. See “Arab Human Development Report 2003: Building a Knowledge Society”, Table A-13, PP. 207-210.

71. See “Arab Human Development Report 2002: Creating Opportunities for Future Generations”, Issued by United Nations Development Program & Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, pp. 105-120.

Chapter 5

Case Studies: Egypt and Algeria

Examining America's Discordant Policies

Examining actual U.S. policy towards political Islam is a key to reaching empirically-based conclusions (or at least generating hypotheses) with respect to both American perception of, and concrete policies, towards the distinct variants of Islamism. While representing individual units of analysis, the case studies in question will offer a reasonably reliable interpretation of the geopolitical dynamics that influence the political mindset of policymakers. The external validity (the extent to which findings can be generalized) of such research methods as case-study is controversially debatable. Nonetheless, examined within its respective real-life context, the strength of case-study, as a qualitative method, lies in its capacity to generate empirically-oriented conclusions with considerable scope of applicability. Thus, the geopolitical dynamics that typically guide official thinking while addressing these particular cases will most likely yield relatively similar consequences if applied to relevant conditions. An empirically-based method, case-study can potentially enhance objectivity. Such qualities as relevancy, reliability, and transferability of findings are to great extent dependent upon the researcher's impartiality, as well as the rigor of the method applied particularly the accuracy and relevance of both analysis framework, and case questions.

The primary purpose of these case studies is threefold. First, to examine the conceptual context within which American official thinking operates while addressing Islamist-related issues. Concrete policies are products of intellectual deliberations, which in turn are reflections of the collective state of mind that captures the policymaking atmosphere, heavily influencing the end results. Second, I intend to examine the correlation between the prevailing geopolitical context(s), and the respective geostrategic alternatives the U.S. embraces. Having adopted discordant attitudes towards Islamist variants of almost similar schools of thought entails questioning the geopolitical dynamics – both domestic and regional – that guide American geostrategic calculations with respect to Islamist political activity. Finally, I will examine the viability of post-Cold War American grand strategy towards Islamism as epitomized by the case

studies in question. Viability will be assessed against both: U.S. long-term core interests; and the region's political stability, economic prosperity, and human development.

Subsequently, the central motivating questions are: (1), why does America grow constantly skeptical about the combination of Islam and power? (2), how efficient are American policies in impeding Islamists' political ascendency? Capturing the core purposes of this case-oriented research, the analysis will be conducted at two levels: cultural and geopolitical. The cultural framework will examine those historical and ideological vocabularies that accumulatively shape the stereotypical images that both sides mutually invoke when conjuring the respective 'other'. Both western and Islamic collective memories are inescapably replete with notorious images that have evolved throughout their bloody confrontations. The conceptual dynamics that guide American contemporary conceptualization of the 'Islamic threat' have, to some extent, been generated by these cultural corollaries. Whereas the geopolitical framework will analytically address the respective movement's political discourse in terms of the globally recognized universal values, as well as the movement's impact on its regional sphere. Ensuring relevancy and coherence, analysis will be conducted within the contexts of American conceptual and actual stances, exploring the correlation between various Islamist cultural and political preferences, and the relevant U.S. posture.

The cases in question were selected to epitomize the Islamist state of affairs in its broader sense. While sharing relatively similar intellectual interpretations of the doctrinal texts, belonging almost to the same school of thought, and adopting peaceful means to change, these cases operate in sharply varying socio-political atmospheres. Egyptian and Algerian Islamists have experienced diverse challenges, and hence have developed political discourses that inevitably conform to their respective prevailing conditions, ultimately confronting distinct destinies. Egyptian Islamists, exemplified by the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), have long been deprived of any form of political legitimacy. Yet, they have preeminently maintained their socio-political appeal. Also, the Algerian Islamic Salvation Front was stripped of its stunning parliamentary victory of 1991, sparking Algeria's national agony. These particular two models, due to their diverse political experiences, possess the capacity to offer a relevantly complementary set of guiding conclusions with regard to both Islamists' potential sustainability as an unrivaled challenger to the status quo, and the viability of American geostrategic measures

that aim to deactivate Islam's inspirational momentum. On the whole, notwithstanding their unchallenged political significance, nonviolent Islamists of the Arab Middle East have persistently been denied institutional power, [1] and that appears in keeping with American preference. In short, representing the compound nature of the sharply diverse political settings within which Islamists operate, these cases are comparatively more indicative than others.

Whether or not the U.S. possesses a coherently comprehensive strategic vision on Islamism is seemingly debatable. Nonetheless, American geostrategic approaches towards the Islamic resurgence signaled the conceptual framework within which these alternatives were deliberated. The compatibility of Islam and democracy, Islamists' commitment to the universal values (notably cultural tolerance, gender equality, and freedom of worship), implementation of *Sharia* law, and Islamists' historical, cultural, and ideological perceptions of the West, constitute the fundamental vocabularies of the intellectual paradigm within which Islamic political activism seemed to be conceptualized.[2] Simultaneously, geopolitical factors exert a crucial influence on policymaking. American concrete policies towards a particular Islamic faction are largely defined by the prevailing geopolitical determinants. Precisely, the regime's strategic significance to U.S. core interests plays the determining role in shaping the latter's stance towards the former's respective Islamic movement. Egypt's oppressive measures against, and political exclusion of, its non-violent Islamists have invariably been tolerated by the U.S. For Egypt's efforts to facilitate the peace process, stabilize Iraq, combat terror, and counter Iran are deemed critical to America's regional success. By contrast, Washington supported the Moroccan Justice and Development Party's (PJD) integration into the country's political fabric.[3] In brief, American "policymakers appear wedded, or perhaps resigned, to a failing status quo."[4]

Summing up, the U.S. approach towards Islamism appears to be guided by a combination of cultural-oriented conceptual dynamics that were insinuated into the western collective mind as a result of long Islamic-Western ideological and physical confrontations, and geopolitical factors that shape America's Middle East geostrategic preferences. Both sets of tenets need to be empirically examined to develop a solid argument, offering a compelling interpretation of America's Islamist orientation.

Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood: Struggle for Recognition

Founded by the Egyptian scholar, Hassan Al-Banna (1906-1949) in 1928, the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) has widely been viewed as the pioneering manifestation of contemporary political Islam. The prevailing mainstream non-violent Islamic activism is considerably affiliated to the Egyptian-origin Muslim Brotherhood**,** either organically or intellectually. Prior to its existence, MB was preceded by several reformist endeavors carried out by such well noted scholars as Al- Afghani (1838-1897), Mohammed Abdu (1849-1905), and Mohammed Rashid Reda (1865-1935). Notwithstanding their significant contribution to the political awareness of the *umma,* these efforts failed to establish the aimed Islamic-oriented political order that would liberate the *umma* from western domination, and ultimately restore the lost Islamic primacy. Led particularly by Al-Afghani and Abdu, the early reformism failed mainly because it lacked "a plan of action, and a means of attracting socioeconomic groups to support it. [Its endeavor] was primarily ideological [where these intellectuals] sought to re-inject their reformist thoughts into the exiting political system without creating a political body to support them."[5] Avoiding his predecessors' political incompetence, Al-Banna's fundamental contribution to Islamic activism was the popular support that he successfully garnered for his reformist endeavors. In practical terms, "his establishment of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in 1928 was effectively the point at which one can begin to discuss Islamism as a mass social movement. Today, different branches of Al-Banna's movement vie for political power in Egypt, Algeria, Tunisia, Jordan, Sudan, and Palestine……. Hundreds of prominent thinkers and political leaders have emerged from their ranks."[6] Nonetheless, these preceding efforts paved the way for Al-Banna's reformist project, preparing the *umma,* at least intellectually, for the Brotherhood's political-oriented comprehensive understanding of Islam.

The hugely predominating influence of his movement throughout the contemporary Middle East reveals Al-Banna's extraordinary leadership capacity. Indeed, his line of thought has largely been adopted by wide segments of moderate Islamists. Thus, in-depth understanding of Al-Banna's intellectual construct and leadership features is critical to understanding the non-violent Islamist political discourse. His scholastic legacy still exerts a formative influence on the movement's political mind-set. His teachings are widely read, shaping the Brothers' conceptual

framework. Briefly, Al-Banna's charismatic character, visionary leadership, and intellectual soundness were evident.

Significantly, Al-Banna's religio-political line of thought revolved around five fundamental concepts. These intellectual determinants persistently served as a frame of reference, adjusting the movement's political rhythms. First, he re-emphasized the comprehensiveness of Islam as a complementary set of life systems. Presenting Islam as a harmoniously all-encompassing way of life was the masterpiece of Banna's thought. He was considerably cited as the leading figure who revitalized this particular aspect of Islam. Indeed, the comprehensive nature of Islam, as presented by Al-Banna, was the foundational concept on which he established his reformist project. Emphasizing this key concept, Al-Banna maintained, "We believe the rules and teachings of Islam to be comprehensive, to include the people's affairs in the world and the hereafter. Those who believe that these teachings deal only with the spiritual side of life are mistaken. Islam is an ideology and worship, a home and a nationality, a religion and a state, a spirit and work, and a book and sword."[7]

Second, the state, as both an embodiment of Islam's supremacy and an instrument to ensure full conformity with Islamic tenets, has occupied a central position in Al-Banna's system of thought. This concept derives its significance from the political nature of Islam, the notion that Al-Banna frequently used to stress. In one of his messages, he emphatically pronounced, "we call for the Islam ……. And government is part of it, and freedom is one of its teachings. And if you were told: but this is politics! Say: this is Islam and we do not recognize these differences."[8] Hence, the quest for power has remarkably exhausted great deal of the movement's human and physical resources, seeking to establish the hopped-for Islamic state. Liberation of the *umma* from foreign, notably Western, domination constituted the third pillar of Al-Banna's intellectual construct. For the cultural and political liberation of the *umma* was conceived to be the prelude to its unification under the umbrella of Islam, the aim that Islamists, at least theoretically, ultimately seek to achieve, establishing the hoped-for Islamic global entity. Mobilizing the Brothers to this end, Al-Banna asserted, "The Muslim is required, by the virtue of his Islam, to concern himself with the affairs of his community…… I can declare quite frankly that the Muslim can express his Islam fully only if he is political, takes into his regard the affairs of his *umma*, is preoccupied with it, and guards it zealously."[9]

Internationalization of Islam was the fourth component that comprised Al-Banna's ideological view, and hence influenced his geopolitical conceptualization. He faithfully harbored the predisposition that Islam possessed the potential capacity to, if empowered, offer the civilizational alternative that would fulfill humanity's aspirations for peaceful and prosperous life.[10] Fifth, what distinguished Al-Bann's reformist approach from his predecessors' was his ability to combine "a profoundly Islamic ideology with modern grass-root political activism."[11] Indeed, Tarbiya (conceptual, moral, and political preparation through preaching, educating, and training), was the core mechanism through which he intended gradually to reform society and state. Al-Banna, therefore, disapproved of a revolutionary approach, and denounced violence, endorsing instead the constitutional struggle as a catalyst for change. In short, while the movement's political discourse continues to evolve in response to the prevailing geopolitical atmospheres, the above five elements continue to influence Muslim Brotherhood's worldview.

The disappearance of the founder (he was assassinated by the monarchic regime in 1949) coincided with huge domestic, regional, and global geopolitical transformations, exposing the movement to highly challenging threats and opportunities.

Throughout the Nasser era (1952-1970) the Muslim Brotherhood was severely exposed to a series of ruthless persecutions by the security apparatus to the extent that the movement was almost physically liquidated, ceasing to exist as a socio-political entity.[12] While the movement's mainstream body maintained its moderate posture, few Islamist activists reactively adopted an extremist attitude towards the incumbent regime, laying the foundation for the growth of radicalism that gradually evolved ultimately to assassinate president Sadat in 1981, wage a series of terrorist attacks across the country in the last decade of the twentieth century, and ally with like-minded Islamic trends, forming the 'World Islamic Front For Jihad Against the Jews And the Crusaders' in 1998[13], which eventually transformed into Al-Qaeda. Confronted by such existential threat, the movement's political activism was paralyzed.

During the Sadat era (1970-1981), the Muslim Brotherhood co-existed with the regime, whose conflict was mainly with the Nasserists and Communists. Sadat's tolerance of Islamists was intended to serve as a counterweight to the leftists. Although it remained legally banned, and politically unrecognized, the Brotherhood, as a result of its peaceful co-existence with the regime, expanded its socio-political outreach. It regained its currency, where it intensified its

presence in the universities' student unions across the country, broadened its social service circles, and hence re-established itself as a significant, yet informal, political power.[14] The Camp David Accords of 1979, and Sadat's defection to the American-led Western camp alienated his formal supporters, leading to his assassination by Islamist militants (1981).

By the time Mubarak assumed power in 1981, the Muslim Brotherhood had already transcended the existential threat. Egypt's regional isolation, as a result of the Camp David Accords, coupled with Mubarak's political fragility, further alienated the regime, potentially threatening its sustainability. Thus, reinforcing his legitimacy, Mubarak launched a series of political reforms, including: a multi-party system; judicial independence; freedom of press; and enhanced civil society. Nonetheless, the regime preserved the monopoly of power. Although they continued to be deprived of legal party status, the Muslim Brothers exploited the regime's reformist attitude, aggregating "citizens' newfound Islamic sympathies and [channeling] them into electoral campaigns in national-level organizations closer to the political center."[15] Student unions, professional associations, and charity organizations served as the primary channels through which the movement expanded its political outreach, mobilizing considerable segments, notably the deprived sectors, into its Islamic-oriented reformist project. Evidently, the movement's victories in the parliamentary elections of 1984 and 1987 (when it garnered 6 and 36 seats respectively) revealed both its electoral capacity, and grass-roots socio-political appeal. At the outset of the 1990s the Brotherhood appeared to have outgrown the regime-defined confinement, alarmingly emerging as a leading political force, provoking a massive counterattack by the security apparatus. Simultaneously, Mubarak regime "closed off opportunities for electoral competition within Egypt's interest-group organizations and targeted the brotherhood most dynamic leaders in a new wave of repression."[16]

Not surprisingly, the Muslim Brotherhood survived the series of political exclusions and physical oppressions of the 1990s. Indeed, at the dawn of the new millennium it emerged as unchallenged player, with uncontested socio-political appeal, notwithstanding its illegal status. In the parliamentary election of 2000, the movement, under the individual candidacy system, gained seventeen seats, exceeding all the opposition parties combined.[17] Demonstrating a reasonably consistent attitude towards the increasingly evolving political realities, the Brotherhood began to articulate such a political discourse that, to some extent, corresponded

with the globally recognized democratic traditions. The movement, for instance, embraced a relatively concordant stance towards such controversial topics as the rights of women, the role of Egyptian Copts, and pluralism, revealing "a moderate and conciliatory political agenda."[18] Significantly, the Brotherhood's electoral capacity strikingly surfaced in the parliamentary election of 2005, when the movement won 88 seats – roughly 20% of the total, assertively emerging as the most crucial political player, posing momentous threat to the American-sponsored status quo. Ironically, moderate Islamists, including Egyptian Brothers, have been conceived to be threatening (by the incumbent authoritarian regimes, and, to a lesser extent, their international backer, the U.S.), "not because they were terrorists but because they were not."[19] Seemingly, the significance of moderate Islamists lies in their capacity to carry out change through the ballot box. Hence, American foreign policy towards moderate Islamism has increasingly become inconsistent, paradoxically oscillating between 'promotion of democracy' on the one hand, and a deep-seated fear of Islamists' attainment of power through democratic means, on the other.

Egypt's centrality to America's regional geostrategic success is evident. Since its defection to the American orbit in 1979, Egypt has, by and large, been identifying its regional posture with that of the U.S. American financial aid to Egypt, and tolerance of the regime's authoritarian character and constant violations of human rights reinforced the U.S. upper hand over Egypt's regional alternatives, undermining its stature as a leader in the Arab Middle East. Nonetheless, Egypt's religious, intellectual, and cultural influence throughout the region is largely evident. Egypt's strategic significance to the U.S. Middle East hegemonic posture further heightened in the post-Cold War era, particularly in three domains: American military operations (the American-led coalition against Iraq in 1991, and American invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq in 2001 and 2003 respectively); Arab-Israeli conflict; and combating terrorism to which Egypt itself was severely vulnerable throughout the 1990s. U.S. policy on the Brotherhood, therefore, was inevitably influenced, along with other factors, by Egypt's geostrategic status as America's closest Arab ally.[20]

With the emergence of Islamist political activism in 1990s as a potential catalyst of change, threatening the autocratic status quo, Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood in particular, while it remained deprived of legal status, gained further political and moral weight. Two factors

appeared to have accounted for this. First, the vast majority of the non-violent Islamist factions that prevailingly swept the region's political scene were intellectually affiliated to the Egyptian-origin Muslim Brotherhood, providing the latter with such a leverage that reinforced its moral authority. Indeed, Islamic parties in such countries as Sudan, Yemen, Jordan, Palestine, Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco, and the Gulf states historically evolved as branches of Egypt's Brotherhood. It can be argued, therefore, that "it is the parties rooted in the thinking of the Muslim Brotherhood that over the years have undergone the ideological transformation that justifies their participation in the legal politics of their respective countries. …… [Whereas, by contrast] Sunni organizations that do not derive from the Muslim Brotherhood have not undergone a similar transformation."[21] Despite their organizational independence, moderate Islamists, by and large, harbor a considerable degree of deference to what they view as the historical leadership of the movement. The Egypt-based General Guide, for instance, is widely recognized as the spiritual leader of the Brothers all over the world. The movement's moral authority not only heightened its socio-political significance at the domestic level, but also broadened its regional inspirational influence, and legitimized the exemplary status of its political approach that ultimately endorsed democracy.[22] The movement's inspirational capacity and moral leverage over its affiliates are yet to be realized by and incorporated into American policy deliberations.

Second, the outbreak of the armed violence that swept the region in the 1990s had, to great extent, played into the hands of moderate Islamists, notably the Muslim Brotherhood. Along with Algeria, and to a lesser extent, Saudi Arabia, Egypt had severely undergone a debilitating low-level war of attrition waged by militant Islamists, namely Al-Jama Al-Islamiyya and Jihad. These militant groups evolutionarily developed a reactive extremist attitude towards the regime as a result of the latter's systematically oppressive behavior against Islamists. The Muslim Brotherhood benefited greatly from this prolonged confrontation between the security apparatus and the militant radicalism, further advancing its moderate agenda, and mounting its political currency. Precisely, it promoted its image as a reformist socio-political force seeking change through peaceful means. Contrasting sharply with the notoriously brutal image of the militants, the moderate self-image that the Brotherhood promoted sought to appeal not only to the domestic public, but to U.S. officials as well. Indeed, viewing the mainstream Islamism as the lesser of two evils, Washington "attempted to test the pulse of the internal body politic by establishing contacts with the mainstream Muslim Brothers to collect information and keep diplomatic

channels open to Islamists."[23] Moreover, the regime's incompetence was further exposed, where its "weakness, rigidity, closeness of the political system … the pervasiveness of corruption [and] the government's dependency on foreign handouts"[24] were evident. Hence Islamists' constant call for genuine reformation gained further currency and legitimacy, expanding its constituency. In brief, radical Islamists lost the battle, but mainstream Islamism won the debate.[25] The Brotherhood, therefore, presented itself as the alternative to both the incumbent authoritarianism and militant radicalism, resurrecting its retrospective image as a peaceful, moderate, faithful, and yet, within the confinements of Islam, pragmatic socio-political reformist force.

While the U.S. stance towards Islamism has principally been rooted in a combination of historical, ideological, and geopolitical factors, its concrete policy on individual cases appeared to be dictated by and subordinated to the immediate geopolitical context. To this end, the American posture towards Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood needs to be analyzed within the context of pre-9/11 and post-9/11 phases. The criticality of the 9/11 attacks obviously lies in the profound transformations they inflicted on both U.S. conceptualizations of and actual policy on political Islam. The invasions of Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003), Global War on Terror, and George W. Bush's freedom agenda are cases in point.

Historically, U.S. attempts to approach the Muslim Brotherhood dated back to Al-Banna's era, when "a U.S. Embassy official talked with Al-Banna about cooperating against the prevailing communist threat, but the gap in views proved too wide to bridge."[26] In the late 1970s, two formative events necessitated the resurrection of the U.S.-Islamist relationship. First, the Carter administration appealed to Omar Al-Telmesani, then the Brotherhood General Guide, to mediate in the hostage crisis, but Tehran declined to respond. The second event was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979), where the U.S. sought to strengthen its ties with Islamic groups, including the Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood.[27] Beginning in the 1990s, events unfolded in such a manner that spectacularly signaled the rise of political Islam as an unchallenged grass-root force. The establishment of an Islamic state in Sudan, emergence of the Palestinian Hamas, the stunning parliamentary victories of Islamists in Algeria, Jordan, Kuwait, Tunisia, Turkey, Yemen, and Egypt evidently revealed the Islamists' alarmingly growing power.[28]

Indeed, sustaining its ascendency, the Muslim Brotherhood alarmed both the Egyptian regime and the Clinton administration. The latter, therefore, "established [via U.S. diplomats in Cairo]

discreet contacts with some of the Brotherhood's leaders in order to collect information and keep diplomatic channels open to moderate Islamists."[29] The meetings were confirmed by former U.S. ambassador, Daniel Kurtz, who stated that "he met Muslim Brotherhood officials or people representing them."[30] While some Brothers denied these contacts, "others confirmed them."[31] These American-Islamist contacts were short-lived. They seemed to be designed to serve a twofold purpose: maintaining low-level contact with the growingly powerful Muslim Brotherhood, which, given the then potentially speculated trajectory of events, was the most likely alternative to the regime if a power vacuum occurred; and information gathering. As a former National Security Council official suggested, "the United States seeks neither protection nor the establishment of close ties with Islamists, only information gathering."[32]

U.S. officials' contacts with the Muslim Brothers inflamed the regime's fears, prompting President Mubarak provocatively to retort, "Your government is in contact with these terrorist from the Muslim Brotherhood. …….. You think you can correct the mistakes that you made in Iran, where you had no contact with Ayatollah Khomeini and his fanatic groups before they seized power. But I can assure you these groups will never take over this country."[33] Subsequently, on the pretext of confronting terrorism, the Egyptian security apparatus unprecedentedly waged a large-scale oppressive campaign against the Muslim Brothers in 1995, when a huge number of leading figures (more than eighty) were rounded up in a sheer violation of human rights principles. Referred to a military court, fifty-four of the detainees were sentenced to three to five years in prison.[34] Clearly, the regime intended to, on the one hand, contain the steady growth of the mainstream Islamists, who, unlike the radicals, extended their socio-political appeal, and, on the other, forestall American-Islamist potential rapprochement.

Surprisingly, the Clinton administration ultimately yielded to its ally's claims, demonstrating full support for the regime's repressive measures, indiscriminately tolerating its human rights systematic violations, and ceasing U.S. contacts with Islamists.[35] Two fundamental interpretations appeared to have accounted for this sudden reversal in the Clinton administration's stance towards Egypt's state of affairs. First, American contacts with the mainstream Islamists were not a reflection of a strategic commitment. Rather, this initiative was a mere tactical approach aimed at gathering information and maintaining diplomatic channels. Indeed, American-Islamist contacts were not conducted within a context of a strategically

designed vision. Simply, they seemed to be driven by precautionary motives rather than principle-centered sustainable commitment. Lacking visionary guidance, U.S. policy on Islamism has inevitably been dictated by random events. As a former NSC staffer put it, "meeting with Islamic leaders is different from policy."[36]

Second, the administration seemed to be attracted by the success that the regime relatively achieved against radical militants. In his statement before the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Robert Pelletreau, then Assistant Secretary of State for Near Affairs, applauded the Egyptian Government's "important success …… in its battle against terrorism."[37] By 1996, the administration apparently concluded that, as Pelletreau asserted, "The protracted low-level conflict largely in Upper Egypt, however, does not threaten the stability of the country."[38] Throughout its second term, the Clinton administration grew acquiescent in the Egyptian claims of 'global terrorist network', where such external forces as Iran, Sudan, and Taliban's Afghanistan were arbitrarily entangled in Egypt's internal armed conflict.[39] "Subsequently, President Clinton voiced his support for Mubarak's fight against religious extremism and terrorism."[40]

Throughout the second half of the 1990s, events unfolded in such a manner that further stimulated chronic American fears of the perceived Islamic threat. Theoretically, such themes as 'clash of civilization', 'incompatibility of Islam and democracy', and Islam's inherent apathetic attitude towards 'modernization'[41] provided the intellectual base, shaping America's perception of both Islam, as a source of ideological guidance, and Islamism, as a political force seeking restoration of the lost Islamic supremacy. Events accumulated, consolidating the geopolitical image of the instant threat that Islamic militancy posed not only to American interests, but to world peace and prosperity as well. As President George W. Bush maintained, "violent radicals had landed painful blows against America – Iranian hostage crisis, the attacks on our embassy and Marine barracks in Beirut, the destruction of Pan Am Flight 103, the truck bombing of the World Trade Center, the attacks on Khobar Towers [in Saudi Arabia], the bombing of our embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, and the strike on the USS Cole. …….. And then came September the 11th, 2001, [which] etched a sharp dividing line in our history."[42]

Thus, overwhelmingly obsessed by the event, the George W. Bush administration's worldview increasingly grew captive to the conclusions it unilaterally drew. Interpreting the

region's political complexities, the President and his foreign policy team ascribed extremism to a 'freedom deficit'. As the president contended, "throughout the region, suffering and stagnation were rampant. ……. Above all, the Middle East suffered a deep deficit in freedom. Most people had no choice and no voice in choosing their leaders."[43] Hence, political reform was endorsed as the remedial recipe that would eventually defuse stagnation, remove hatred, ensure stability, and rehabilitate the region for integration into the American-led world order. In her Cairo speech of June 2005, Condoleezza Rice, then Secretary of State, assertively maintained, "Now, we are taking a different course. We are supporting the domestic aspiration of all people. ……. Throughout the Middle East, the fear of the free choices can no longer justify the denial of liberty. It is time to abandon the excuses that are made to avoid the hard work of democracy."[44] Ironically, the mainstream Islamists, particularly in Egypt, were unjustifiably excluded.

In the post-9/11 era, "no direct dialogue existed between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Americans."[45] Alternatively, realizing the movement's locally growing political weight, and potential regional influence, the U.S., while avoiding direct dialogue with the Brotherhood, sought to maintain indirect contacts with the latter's parliamentarians. In April 2007, Steny Hoyer, the U.S. House majority leader, met Mohammed Saad El-Katatni, the leader of the Brotherhood parliamentary block. They "first met in parliament [People's Assembly] ……. and then at a cocktail party held at the residence of US Ambassador to Cairo, Francis Ricciardone."[46] Despite U.S. officials' assertions that El-Katatni was invited in his capacity as independent MP, Hoyer reportedly asked him "about the Brotherhood's relation with Hamas and what their view of Israel would be if they were ever to govern Egypt."[47] Understandably, complying with the officially declared U.S. policy of boycotting the banned Brotherhood, "the U.S. Embassy in Cairo adamantly denied that any meetings with Brotherhood parliamentarians represented a change in U.S. policy toward the group."[48] In May 2007, a congressional delegation met a group of Egyptian parliamentarians, including Saad El-Katatni, in the People's Assembly. Reaffirming U.S. policy towards the Muslim Brotherhood, U.S. Ambassador to Cairo, Francis Ricciardone, asserted, "neither the American Embassy nor American official aim to establish contacts with Brotherhood members. ……we respect Egyptian laws and are keen not to establish contacts with a banned group. ….. When American congress people come to Egypt they meet Egyptian parliamentarians in their capacity as majority, opposition or independent MPs."[49]

For its part, the Muslim Brotherhood demonstrated willingness to engage in dialogue with the U.S. Generational change within the movement, along with other factors, contributed to the crystallization of a relatively more pragmatic political discourse. Noticeably, there is "a current within the brotherhood willing to engage with the United States. In the past several decades, this current – along with the realities of practical politics – has pushed much of the Brotherhood toward moderation."[50] To be sure, America's ambivalence, and lack of a coherent strategic vision with respect to its approach to Islamism, as well as its persistent ill-defined commitment to its authoritarian allies negated the fruits that American-Islamist contacts could have produced. Briefly, the nuanced inclination towards rapprochement that the U.S. occasionally demonstrated has seemingly been blunted by the 'dysfunctional geopolitical paradigm'[51], to which U.S. Middle East orientations have dogmatically been captive, forestalling the potential opportunity for mutual understanding between the U.S. and "the world's oldest, largest, and most influential Islamist organization"[52], the Muslim Brotherhood.[53]

The parliamentary election of 2010 was the straw that broke the camel's back. The ruling National Democratic Party (NDP), through a notoriously massive fraudulent operation, managed to secure more than 80% of the seats, Whereas the Muslim Brotherhood, Egypt largest opposition group, was reduced from 20% ,in the previous parliament, to zero.[54] The regime's outrageous electoral behavior, coupled with its ruthlessly oppressive character and corruptive posture further heightened the already mounting public frustration, and hence paved the way for the public uprising of January 2011,[55] which ultimately deposed the Mubarak regime on February 12, 2011. Thus, the Muslim Brotherhood emerged as the most organized political force in the post-Mubarak political landscape. Influenced by the character of Islam as an all-encompassing religion, the MB tends to introduce itself as a multifaceted movement with an extensively reformist program that harmoniously tackles social, economic, and political aspects. Therefore, while maintaining its identity as a comprehensive reformist movement, the MB established the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP) to serve as its political arm.

At the initial stage of the protests, the Obama administration was dithering over the would-be American stance on these formatively grass roots political mobilizations. Understandably, "siding with the protesters against Mubarak was not an easy position for Washington to take, but one to which it came remarkably quickly, under the circumstances."[56] The administration

realized that massive change in the Middle East was an unimpeded entitlement. The geopolitical dynamics that triggered these mass revolts were rooted in the American-fostered authoritarian status quo. Hence, consistent with these tidal waves of public uprisings, the U.S. eventually decided to be on the right side of history, forcing Mubarak to step down. Unlike the Carter administration in the case of Iran, where it sought to mobilize the military against the 1979 revolution, [57] the Obama administration prudently "paid particular attention to its relationship with the Egyptian military, persuading it to restrain violence and to urge its leadership to step in when Mubarak proved unwilling to reform."[58]

The ouster of the Mubarak regime constituted a formative turning point in the development of U.S. Middle East foreign policy. It was not a mere disappearance of a reliable ally. Rather, the most significant transformation was the rise to power of Islamism in Egypt, the most critical Arab ally to American regional interests. Indeed, after signing the Camp David Peace Accords (1979), Egypt almost entirely identified its regional preferences with America's geostrategic stands in the Middle East. The U.S. leverage mainly stems from the military and economic aids that America has consistently been offering to Egypt since 1979.[59] Three main elements seemed to have precipitated the collapse of the American-backed autocratic regime. First, under Mubarak, Egypt fully aligned itself with America in its: Global War on Terror; invasions of Afghanistan (2001) and Iraq (2003); blockade of the Gaza strip, as a result of Hamas's seizure of power; and conflict with Iran over the latter's nuclear program. Hence, Egypt's strategic significance as a regional power diminished considerably. Second, the regime tightened its grip on power through a wide range of security measures including physical repression, political exclusions, the emergency law that suspended constitutional rights for almost three decades, and use of military courts to try both violent and non-violent political activists. Third, the socio-economic conditions severely deteriorated as a result of corruption and mismanagement.

Throughout the first decade of the twenty first century the Egyptian geopolitical reality was increasingly defined by a combination of despotic rule, economic deterioration, socio-political alienation, and obsessive use of repressive measures, leading to the massive public demonstrations that ultimately deposed the regime. Nonetheless, the successive American administrations failed to sense the potential consequences of the political reality on the ground that eventually caused the downfall of Mubarak regime. Driven by fear of Islamism, the pretext

that Mubarak persistently tended to manipulate, the United States appeared to have bought Mubarak's warnings that democratic reform would empower the Muslim Brotherhood, an all-encompassing Islamic organization, and well organized political force. But, the regime was ultimately ousted by massive public protests, and the Muslim Brotherhood rose to power, launching a new chapter in both U.S.-Egyptian, and U.S.-Islamist relations.

Hilary Clinton, then Secretary of State, visited Cairo in March 2011, exploring Egypt's political landscape in the post-Mubarak era. Many revolutionary groups boycotted Hilary's meetings, as she was reported to be against the revolution, whereas Obama's supportive attitude was appreciated. Many Egyptians remembered Clinton's remarks on January 25, 2011, the first day of the revolution: "our assessment is that the Egyptian government is stable". Nonetheless, the Secretary realized that Islamists, notably the Muslim Brothers, would dominate the country's political scene in the foreseeable future.[60] During this visit, Clinton declared, "we have a clear message of support for what the Egyptians decide is in their own best interest."[61]

The first post-Mubarak parliamentary elections that were held in November 2011, and January 2012, revealed the proportional weights of the various political players. The Muslim Brotherhood won about 47% of the seats, whereas the salafi party of Al Noor won the next largest share of seats, nearly 25%, [62] emerging as the most significant political forces, and posing both conceptual and empirical challenges to the U.S. Middle East traditional approaches. The presidential election of June 2012 brought to power, for the first time in Egypt's history, an Islamist president, Dr. Mohammed Morsi, a key Brotherhood leader. Hence, after 84 years of ideological struggle, political exclusion, arbitrary arrest, and physical repressions, the MB became close to its historical dream of building an Islamist political entity that would restore the lost Islamic primacy. Nonetheless, president Morsi, in his victory speech, "repeated his pledge to uphold all international agreements, an apparent reference to Egypt's peace treaty with Israel. …president Obama called Mr. Morsi to congratulate him and offer support."[63]

With the MB at the helm, it was anticipated that American foreign policy would operate in a profoundly different geopolitical context, one that is defined by a multitude of ideological, geostrategic, and cultural challenges. Islam would likely maintain its role as the primary source of political guidance, and the implementation of Sharia would continue, at least theoretically, to be the ultimate goal of Islamic rule. Without denying the impact of realities on the ground on

shaping Islamists' worldview, and influencing their political behavior, Islamists would deliberate their geostrategic preferences within their religious-oriented conceptual framework, adhering to Islam's doctrinal fundamentals.

The Obama administration demonstrated a precocious willingness to deal with the MB in power. During her second visit to Cairo in July 2012 to meet Egypt's first democratically elected Islamist president, Mohammed Morsi, of the Muslim Brotherhood, Secretary Clinton maintained that the United States "supports the full transition to civilian rule with all that entails,"[64] responding to the ongoing power struggle between the Islamist president and the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF). In practical terms, given Egypt's political uncertainty, the Obama administration seemed to have maintained close ties with the generals, capitalizing on America's historical relations with the military, U.S. most reliable ally. As Peter Mandaville, a political scientist and former State Department advisor, suggested, "every bone in the body of the U.S. foreign Policy establishment is going to feel more comfortable with the idea that there is still a strong military looking over these guys, and looking out for U.S. interests in Egypt and the region."[65]

During his visit to Egypt in March 2013, John Kerry, Secretary of State, announced that the United States would provide $ 250 million in assistance to Egypt. This amount is part of the $ 1 billion that President Obama pledged in May 2011. The Obama administration appeared to have linked financial aid to Egypt's commitment to both the peace treaty with Israel, and the scope and nature of the democratic reforms. After several meetings with Egyptian officials, including the president, Kerry declared, "in all my meetings, I conveyed a simple but serious message: the brave Egyptians who stood vigil in Tahrir Square did not risk their lives to see that opportunity for a brighter future squandered. …. I encouraged President Morsi to implement the homegrown reforms that will help his country secure an I.M.F [International Monetary Fund] agreement, put Egypt on the path to establishing a firm economic foundation and allow it to chart its own course. He agreed and said that he plans to move quickly to do so."[66]

Islamists in power sought to broaden their contact with the U.S. In November 2012, President Mohammed Morsi and then Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton worked together to bring about cease fire in Gaza between Israel and Hamas, revealing the MB's willingness to build a security cooperation with Washington. To be sure, while seeking to maintain good ties with the U.S., the

MB would revise the terms of the U.S.-Egyptian relations. In an interview with the *New York* Times, on 22 September 2012, President Mohamed Morsi recognized the importance of the U.S.-Egyptian partnership. But, he stressed that the United States needed to change its approach to the Arab World. Apparently, Morsi was referring to the emergent balance of power that prevailed as a result of the Arab Spring, empowering the Muslim Brotherhood and its affiliates in Tunisia, Libya, Morocco, Yemen, and potentially Syria. He emphasized the centrality of Egypt as an anchor of regional stability, signifying his country's criticality to America's regional hegemony. Criticizing America's typical policy of supporting tyrannical regimes, Morsi argued, "successive American administrations essentially purchased with American taxpayer money the dislike, if not the hatred, of the people of the region. [He hoped for] a harmonious, peaceful coexistence [with the U.S., and described the two nations as] real friends. [Egypt, he asserted,] is not theocratic, it is not military. It is democratic, free, constitutional, lawful, and modern."[67]

In that same interview, highlighting the crucial role of values and culture in shaping nations' worldviews, president Morsi suggested, "if you want to judge the performance of the Egyptian people by the standards of German, or Chinese, or American culture, then there is no room for judgment. ……When the Egyptians decide something, probably it is not appropriate for the U.S. When the Americans decide something, this, of course, is not appropriate for Egypt."[68] Seemingly, Morsi sought to contextualize his Islamist-oriented geopolitical conceptualization, where geostrategic preferences are considered within the Brotherhood's ideological framework. Proudly appreciating his roots in the Brotherhood, President Morsi asserted, "I grew up with Muslim Brotherhood. I learned my principles in the Muslim Brotherhood. I learned how to love my country with the Muslim Brotherhood. I learned politics with the Muslim Brotherhood. I was a leader of the Muslim Brotherhood."[69]

The above presidential pronouncements reveal three conceptual and policy developments. First, Islamists in power developed a pragmatic approach to domestic and regional affairs. Indeed, Egypt's commitment to its peace treaty with Israel, and its security cooperation with the Obama administration that ultimately led to a cease fire between Israel and Hamas (the Palestinian version of the Muslim Brotherhood in Gaza) in November 2912, are cases in point. Furthermore, such religious slogans as 'Islam is the solution', literal implementation of *sharia*, and the establishment of the Islamic state, retreated considerably. Instead, Islamist political

discourse adopted such political vocabularies as democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, which belong to the western-based political modernity. Second, irrespective of the extent to which Islamists reconcile with the universal values, it is unlikely that they conceptually break with their ideological predispositions. Islam will continue to be the primary source of political judgment. Third, the evolving power structures in the Middle East are not destined to be hostile to the United States, but they will not be as compliant as the previous pro-American autocratic regimes. Thus, the U.S. foreign policy has unprecedentedly faced strategic challenges, prompting it thoroughly to review its conceptual and empirical approaches to the rapidly changing regional landscape, taking into consideration the rise to power of Islamists, as well as the newly empowered Arab public.

The historical development of the U.S.-Egyptian relations exemplified America's dilemma in the Arab Middle East, where Washington failed to reconcile its self-assigned mission of democracy promotion with the potential outcomes that would yield Islamist governments. Ironically, America's policy of backing Mubarak autocratic regime, and impeding Islamists' escalation to power proved to be counterproductive. Mubarak was insultingly ousted by mass demonstrations, and Islamists attained power through a ballot box. Paralyzed by lack of influence on the unfolding events, the Obama administration, after long debates, developed a pragmatic approach to Egypt's political transformations. Given its strategic resources, Egypt appears to be on its way to emerge as a regional power, forming a regional axis of power with Turkey and probably Iran, if the latter adjusts its sectarian behavior of mobilizing the *Shiite* minorities, and viewing the region through the narrow lens of its sectarian project. To be sure, the Egyptian Sunni moderate Islamists may play a decisive role in curbing Iran's regional expansive ambition, converging with one of America's key objectives.

Significantly, the demonstration effects of the Egyptian case are evident. Egypt is a regional power. And the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood is the mother of all moderate Islamists. Throughout the last eight decades, the movement's ideological discourse (often classified as moderate) and political preferences served as a source of inspiration for the like-minded Islamist factions. Indeed, it evolved into a school of thought rather than a mere socio-political organization. Washington's approach to a Brotherhood-led government in Egypt will play a crucial role in shaping Islamists' regional behavior and attitude towards the West. Washington,

therefore, "should clearly and forcefully advocate for political reform as an essential component of its strategic agenda of encouraging the emergence of strong, influential, and internally democratic allies. ….. A more democratic Egypt may produce less cooperative leaders, but they could well prove more effective and useful."[70] Turkey's case, for instance, provides an example, where an Islamic-oriented government aligned with the U.S. on many regional issues, including counterterrorism, and Syrian and Libyan revolutions.

Despite its rhetorically supportive attitude towards Egypt's revolution, the Obama administration, like its predecessors, appeared to have lacked a coherently strategic vision. Instead, it adopted a reactive approach, addressing the various events as they unfolded. "Obama has emphasized bureaucratic efficiency over ideology, and approached foreign policy as if it were case law, deciding his response to every threat or crisis on its own merits."[71] Or as Zbigniew Brzezinski, an earlier backer of Barack Obama, suggested, "He doesn't strategize. He sermonizes."[72] Egypt is a test case where the administration's preferences would generate demonstration effects on the U.S.-Islamist potential trajectories. Confronting a historical turning point, and increasingly difficult policy choices, particularly in Egypt, the Obama administration may need to develop a conceptually relevant discourse that would provide policy guidance with respect to dealing with Islamism in power.[73]

Algeria: the Abortive Experiment

Historically, Algeria has never been central to the strategic concerns of the United States, notwithstanding the former's geopolitical significance as a leading state in the broader Middle East. Indeed, given its physical size (2,400,000); location; population (estimated at about 35,000,000 as of 2010); economic potential (relatively huge proven reserves of oil and gas); and political legacy as an admirably recognized anti-colonial struggler, Algeria acquired the capacity of a pivotal state.[74] The country's geopolitical centrality within both its regional sphere, and the broader Arab Middle East is evident. Algeria's post-independent domestic and international postures were largely shaped by both its long anti-colonial legacy and the Cold War's polarizations, where the country, driven by its historically rooted anti-imperialist psychological tendency, gravitated to the Soviet-led socialist camp. Both its domestic socio-political system and foreign policy preferences were considerably squared with its ruling elites' leftist inclination.[75]

Historically, Islam has been the primary shaper of Algerian socio-political culture. The anti-colonial movement was predominately led by the religious-oriented 'Association of Scholars', where Islam was the fundamental driving force that sustainably fueled the collective spirit of resistance. The armed anti-colonial struggle, therefore, was Islamic in character. While it recognized Islam as a source of socio-cultural norms, the post-independence state that emerged in 1962 adopted a socialist political identity, breaking with Islam as an ideological guidance. Furthermore, the country fell under a military-controlled autocratic system. Hence, "Islam once again became the vehicle for the anger of the masses and the voice for their social aspirations to eliminate poverty and unemployment."[76]

At the outset of the 1990s, and after three decades of a military-based authoritarian rule, the National Liberation Front's (FLN) regime seemed to have inevitably eclipsed. The FLN's corruptly despotic character generated such a massive socio-political backlash that outgrew the regime-imposed confinements, leading to a relatively genuine political pluralism. The multi-party system that subsequently prevailed revealed the country's political landscape, reflecting the proportional weights of the various political forces, including Islamists of diverse spectrum. Chiefly, three Islamist parties surfaced: (1), the Movement for Islamic Society (Hamas), which is intellectually affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood. (Apparently, the name was inspired by the Palestinian Hamas, as both organizations belonged to the same root. In 1991 the party changed its name to the Movement for a Peaceful Society (Hams), conforming to the constitutional amendment that required political parties to make no reference to Islam). (2), the Al-Nahda Movement, which was a clandestine organization.[77] (3), the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS in French). A coalition of varying Islamic intellectual trends, the FIS emerged as the most significant political force, challenging the military-fostered status quo, and potentially outperforming the discredited FLN.[78] The movement's stunning victory in the country's first pluralistic parliamentary election of December 1991 alarmingly signaled its unmatched socio-political outreach. Reacting out of fear, the army hardliners "forced [president Chadli] Benjedid to resign, canceled the second round of the elections, declared martial law, banned the FIS, and set up a transitional authority."[79] Hence, Algeria was plunged into a massive political violence, agitating both European and American concerns.

Indeed, the consequent Algerian crisis figured prominently in American geostrategic deliberations. Specifically, three primary concerns appeared to have captured American calculations: European security; regional stability; and, perhaps more importantly, the perceived Islamist domino effect that would potentially overrun such states as Morocco, Tunisia, and Egypt, posing serious threats to U.S. core interests.[80] Lacking an extensively well-designed policy towards Islamism, the George H.W. Bush administration (1989-1993), " initially deferred to France in its support to the military government and which sought to exclude the radical [Islamic] fundamentalists."[81] In practical terms, the Algerian crisis was the first post-Cold War significant expression of political Islam as a potential catalyst for change in the Arab Middle East. It, therefore, constituted a test case, challenging America's post-Cold War mindset with regard to its approach to the emergent Islamist phenomenon. For U.S. official thinking, the Algerian experiment was a premonition of how events may unfold, had Algerian Islamists escalated to power through ballot box. "The prospect of an FIS victory in Algeria in 1992 slowly crystallized in State Department discourse as a nightmare vision of what democracy might bring to the Arab World: legitimately elected Islamist governments that were anti-American, illiberal, and ultimately antidemocratic."[82]

In his Meridian House Address of 1992, Edward Djerejian, then Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, assertively articulated the U.S. attitude towards Islamist political activism that was to guide respective U.S. policy throughout the final decade of the twentieth century: "we are suspect of those who would use the democratic process to come to power, only to destroy that very process in order to retain power and political dominance."[83] Thus the Bush41 administration, as former Secretary of State, James A. Baker, maintained, "Pursued a policy of excluding the radical fundamentalists in Algeria, even as we recognized that this was somewhat at odds with our support of democracy…….. [because Islamists' views were] so adverse to ……..what we understood the national interests of the United States to be."[84] Coinciding with the collapse of the communist tyranny and the consequent victory of the democratic West, the Algerian crisis challenged the avowed American commitment to democracy significantly. The ambivalent American posture towards Algeria discredited the claimed ideological triumph of the western-based universal values over the communist totalitarianism.

Increasingly disillusioned with America's ambivalent stance, Arab moderate Islamism partially lost ground to militant radicalism, which, throughout the final decade of the twentieth century, prevailed in Algeria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, and Somalia. U.S. fear of Islamism in power – as demonstrated by the 'Meridian House Address of 1992' – at that particular moment (1991), when Islamist were not yet tested (Sudanese Islamists seized power only in June 1989), appeared to have been rooted in the stereotypical image of anti-democratic, and anti-modern Islam. In brief, the George H. W. Bush administration's Meridian House Address served as the milestone, laying the foundation for the subsequent policies on political Islam, where U.S. posture was captured by the 'geopolitical image' of anti-western Islamic resurgence.

The Algerian crisis and its consequent bloody events posed unprecedented challenge to the George H. W. Bush administration both conceptually and empirically. For the first time, the U.S. found itself in a position where it was exposed to an Arab (and Sunni) Islamism competing for power through democratic means. The U.S experience with the Iranian Revolution proved to be relatively irrelevant here, where the political context and the ideological background were entirely different. The Meridian House Address, therefore, revealed America's conceptualization of Arab Islamism, which was perceived as a security threat, promoting the U.S. to align itself with the Algerian military-controlled regime. Algeria served as a test case revealing the geostrategic preferences the U.S. would potentially embrace in similar circumstances. Hence, many "Islamic leaders have warned that the West's support for the interruption for the democratic process in Algeria could alienate Muslims from the Western values, driving them further away from democracy."[85]

Though not vital to U.S. regional interests, Algeria gained strategic significance after 1991, as a result of its internal conflict. Precisely, Algeria's significance stemmed from the rise of Islamism as an unrivaled political force, threatening the U.S.-backed autocratic regimes, notably Morocco and Tunisia, close allies of the United States, as well as Southern Europe. Paul Kennedy, for instance, classified Algeria as a pivotal state that is "so important regionally that its collapse would spell transboundary mayhem. A pivotal state's steady economic progress and stability, on the other hand, would bolster its region's economic vitality and political soundness."[86]

The George H.W. Bush administration's initial reaction to the cancellation of the second round of the parliamentary elections (December 1991), "in which the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) was poised to win the absolute majority in parliament, was one of 'concern', without condemning the cancellation as such. U.S. officials felt that the interpretation was in conformity with the Algerian Constitution."[87] To be sure, Washington did not unambiguously oppose coming to power of moderate Islamists; rather, it embraced a wait-and-watch approach to the Algerian crisis which, throughout the Clinton Presidency, escalated to a bloody armed conflict, posing serious threats to the stability of the Maghreb.

By the time Bill Clinton came to power in January 1993, the Algerian crisis escalated to a security threat, both locally and regionally, and Islamism figured prominently in America's foreign policy agenda. Despite the Algerian regime's ruthlessness, and human rights violations, the Clinton Administration failed to adhere to its principle of humanitarian intervention. Yet, the administration adopted a less confrontational stance, at least at the rhetorical level. While adhering to the conceptual guidelines of the Meridian House Address, the Clinton administration developed a realistic approach to the Algerian question, seeking to strike a balance between Islamists, who were poised to ascend to power, and the military-based regime, which was stubbornly adopting a hard-line attitude, rejecting political reconciliation with FIS.

The Clinton administration's (1993-2001) stance on the Algerian crisis did not essentially differ from that of its predecessor in the sense that both militated against the FIS attainment of power. Nonetheless, the Clinton administration embraced such a nuanced policy that, while impeding the rise to power of Islamists, it rhetorically recognized Islamists' right to political participation. Practically, it maintained low-level contact with the military regime until the Algerian presidential election of 1995; criticized its human rights record; pressed for economic reforms; called for dialogue with all parties including non-violent Islamists; and established discreet contacts with FIS through its representative, Anwar Haddam, who was permitted to reside in Washington.[88]

During the period between 1993 and late 1995 "most American officials were convinced that it was a matter of time before the Algerian government would collapse. Fearful of a repeat of the Iranian scenario in 1979, some policy makers felt that the U.S. government should reach out to Islamists and 'check what they are up to.'"[89] Thus, the Clinton administration's stance during

this period was primarily shaped by two factors: first, the potential spillover of radical effects that would prevail as a result of militant Islamists' ascent to power, jeopardizing American regional hegemony, notably in the Maghreb; second, fear of a repeat of the Iranian scenario of 1979 seemed to have influenced the U.S. official perception of the Algerian crisis, where the administration sought to reach out to moderate Islamists, who were alternatively viewed as the lesser of two evils.[90] In brief, influenced by these two factors, America's "desired objective for Algeria [during this period] was a compromise between moderate Islamists and the regime,"[91] whereby extremists would be isolated. Indeed, activities of such a stubbornly violent force as the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), whose increasingly bloody strikes dominated the scene, eclipsing the moderates, reinforced American fears of the perceived Islamic threat, inducing the Clinton administration to push for national reconciliation through dialogue. The administration's official pronouncements and congressional testimonies assertively emphasized this preference, [92] which placed the U.S. at loggerheads with France, the primary backer of the ruling military elite.

Clearly, during the first half of 1990s, the Clinton administration's deliberations were captured by the possibility of an Islamist takeover, the eventuality that seemed to have shaped the administration's perception of the Algerian crisis. The humanitarian conditions were deteriorating, the civil war was rapidly escalating, and the military regime was losing ground to radical Islamists. Driven by fear that extremists would dominate the scene, the Clinton foreign policy team pressed for political change that would ensure power sharing, include moderate Islamists, and achieve national reconciliation. In his testimony before the Subcommittee on Africa of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Mark Paris, then acting Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs, stated, "in the absence of serious political change, violence is likely to continue to escalate and threaten Algeria's stability."[93] Obviously, the Clinton administration appeared to have recognized the political significance of moderate Islamists, notably the FIS, making distinction between violent and non-violent Islamists. "This recognition reflected the administration's nuanced approach toward Algerian Islamists and the progressive evolution of American [foreign] policy."[94]

The desired objective of the administration was a 'compromise' between moderate Islamists and the ruling military elites. Viewing Political Islam as a security threat, U.S. regional and European allies opposed this 'compromise'. In November 1994, the Civilian Affairs Committee

of the North Atlantic Assembly published a report that alarmingly highlighted the danger of Political Islam:

> The rise of Islamic radicalism in North Africa, whose most extreme manifestation is in Algeria, is worrying not only to the governments in the region, but also to those of the alliance countries, which feel threatened by: 1) the erosion of confidence in democratic values to which this movement testifies, an erosion that could, moreover, spread to the European countries with large Muslim communities; 2) the risk of spread of terrorism based on blind defense of Islamic values; 3) the danger of large-scale migration that could accompany civil strife in the Maghreb.[95]

The Algerian presidential election of November 1995, through which Liamine Zeroual came to office, seemed to have succeeded in rehabilitating the regime's legitimacy. Indeed, "the impressive turnouts at the polls demonstrated that the regime was not on the brink of collapse and that Islamists did not enjoy the overwhelming support they once did."[96] Thus, the Clinton administration's rhetorical support for Moderate Islamists' inclusion relatively retreated, and the perceived threat of Islamic extremism became the central theme of U.S. policy. In a testimony before the Subcommittee on Africa of the Committee on International Relations, House of Representative (October 1995), Bruce Riedel, then Defense Department Deputy Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, warned, "if the Algeria situation deteriorated to full-scale civil war or Algeria becomes a hostile Islamic revolutionary state, these forces could rapidly complicate U.S. military operations worldwide. Simultaneously, the chaos could rapidly spill over into neighboring states destabilizing North Africa and possibly Southern Europe."[97]

While it continued to deplore the regime's security measures, and call, instead, for national reconciliation and political inclusion, the Clinton administration practically sided almost entirely with the ruling class. Throughout the second half of 1990s, the administration embraced a policy of 'positive conditionality', where U.S. support, at least rhetorically, was tied to the political, legal, and economic reforms.[98] Seemingly, the U.S. policy during that period was designed to prevent the rise to power of Islamists, protecting the pro-western status quo. As a former NSC staffer observed, "by paying lip service to the Islamist opposition and the necessity for reforms, the Clinton administration has maintained consistency on the rhetoric level without taking any action."[99] In his message to the newly elected Algerian president, Liamine Zeroual, President Clinton emphasized the importance of the "process of national reconciliation to move forward, and I welcome your affirmation of the importance of dialogue as part of such a process.…

Algeria's recent history, and the message of your election, is that force cannot be the arbiter of Algeria's future."[100]

Abdelaziz Bouteflika was elected president of Algeria in April 1999. Bouteflika's fundamental aim was to bring about 'national reconciliation'. Bouteflika was reelected to second and third terms in 2004 and 2009 respectively. The Clinton administration referred to the Algerian presidential election of 1999 as a welcome step towards democracy and stability, notwithstanding Washington's observations on the conditions under which the election took place, including the withdrawal of six candidates over accusation of fraud.[101] Clearly, Bouteflika's initiatives of civil concord and national reconciliation appealed to Washington, but they did not prompt a major change in U.S. policy. Revealing the strategic vitality of the Maghreb, the Clinton administration in 1999 launched the 'U.S.-North Africa Economic Partnership' the purpose of which was to link the United State to Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria.

In short, the Clinton administration's policy on the Algerian crisis revealed the chronic American fear of genuine political reform that might unseat pro-western forces. In the Maghreb, in particular, moderate Islamists in Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia, and, to lesser extent, Mauritania, moderate Islamists stood as the major potential winners of democratic transformation, posing serious threat to the pro-western autocratic setting, and serving as a source of strength, both morally and materially, for their like-minded Islamist entities all over the Arab Middle East. The Clinton administration's approach to the Algerian crisis was: Islam, as a faith, is not our enemy; but the U.S. is decisively opposed to Islamist political activism.

The post-9/11 American strategic calculations viewed Algeria as a key partner in the Global War on Terror (GWoT). With the retreat of the moderate Islamists, notably the FIS, as a result of security measures and political exclusion, violent groups dominated the scene. The 9/11 attacks further strengthened American-Algerian ties, primarily in the security arena. The ruling military elites' claims regarding the global threat of Islamic terrorism gained currency in Washington's policy circles. Vindicating the global nature of the Islamic threat, Algeria's most violent group, the Salafi Group for Preaching and Combat (GSPC), merged with Al-Qaeda in 2006, forming what came to be known as Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).[102] Influenced by these security developments, American policy on Algeria centered on counterterrorism partnership, where the latter was viewed as a bulwark against violent radicalism in the Maghreb.[103]

Nonetheless, the two countries' stances on such issues as the U.S. invasion of Iraq and the Arab-Israeli conflict differed significantly.

Not surprisingly, throughout its two-term presidency; the George W. Bush administration did not genuinely advocate inclusion of moderate Islamists. Consistent with its declared strategy of a 'freedom agenda', it rhetorically continued to press for political opening. But, its tolerance of the military-based regime revealed Washington's chronic dilemma of preferring stability over change, which constantly influenced the U.S. geostrategic approach to Islamism. The 9/11 attacks empowered the Algerian military-based regime both morally and strategically. Indeed, the regime regained its centrality as a major player in combating terrorism.

The Arab spring of 2011 resulted in profound geopolitical changes in the Middle East and North Africa, where many pro-American autocrats were ousted. However, Algeria weathered the public waves of regional turmoil. Indeed, the security apparatuses curtailed the protest movement "by using the security forces to prevent and break up public gatherings."[104] After two decades of internal conflict, the military-controlled regime appeared to have maintained its oppressive character, and succeeded in introducing itself to the West as a bulwark against 'Islamic extremism'. The hostage crisis of January 2013, when Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) stormed a gas field compound in Algeria and seized 800 people, including Americans, as hostages, strengthened the U.S.-Algerian security cooperation, and further reinforced Algeria's central role in combating terrorism. Hilary Clinton, then Secretary of State, asserted, "we are going to do everything we can to work together to confront and disrupt Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb."[105]

Barack Obama's approach towards Algeria is consistent with his realist worldview. The security and economic considerations seemed to have captured Obama's approach to North Africa in general and Algeria in particular. Hence, "U.S.-Algeria relations highly focused on counterterrorism and Algeria's oil and gas sector. … Obama Administration policy has tried to balance appreciation for Algeria's cooperation in counterterrorism with encouragement of democratization. ….. A bilateral contact group was on counterterrorism was launched in March 2011, which the U.S. Embassy in Algiers referred to as 'a historic moment for the development of bilateral security cooperation,"[106] The reemergence of AQIM, notably in Algeria and Mali, posed a serious threat to the West, prompting the Obama administration to strengthen its security

ties with Algeria. Economically, the United States "is Algeria's largest export market (mainly for crude oil), and U.S. investment is concentrated in the oil and gas sector. ... U.S. bilateral imports for goods totaled $ 14.7 billion in 2011; U.S. exports totaled $ 1.6 billion. … Economic ties have broadened beyond the energy sector to financial services, pharmaceuticals, and other industries."[107] Nonetheless, counterterrorism appeared to have remained the primary lens through which Algeria's geostrategic significance is viewed.

The U.S.-Algerian counterterrorism partnership not only reduced the Algerian crisis to a mere source of terrorist threat, but, more importantly, generated three misguided notions. First, it obscured the increasingly growing political significance of the moderates who noticeably began to reconcile their discourse with the democratically required conditions of pluralism, tolerance, and peaceful rotation of power – the transformation that would embolden moderation and undermine the violent tendency. Second, it overly exaggerated the perceived threat of radicalism. Third, Washington seemed to have underestimated the socio-economic and political grievances that constantly fueled the public anger, leading to widespread backlashes. It opted, instead, to align itself with an oppressively despotic regime. This policy eroded Washington's proclaimed efforts at 'democracy promotion', encouraged the regime's repressive measures on the pretext of combating terrorism, and hence contributed to the abortion of the democratic promise that Algeria would have met, had it been empowered to seize the moment.

Summing up, more than any relevant case, the Algerian experiment contributed greatly to the various parties' perceptions of Islamism in power: the American-backed Arab tyrants frequently cited the Algerian example to show how threatening democracy is to stability, repressively undermining their respective democratic forces; radical militants cited the Algerian abortive experiment to vindicate their argument of 'jihad' as the only means through which political reform is to be delivered, and the lost Islamic supremacy can be restored; American rejectionists regularly referred to the Algerian lesson to reinforce their ideological predisposition of incompatibility of Islam and democracy, featuring the violent nature of Islamism, and conflating moderates with militants; while they maintained their commitment to democracy, moderate Islamists were disillusioned with the U.S. ambivalent and inconsistent posture, with respect to its approach to the Algerian crisis. In brief, the U.S. posture towards Algeria summarizes America's chronic dilemma, where "the disjuncture between American rhetoric and American policies leads

to charges of hypocrisy in U.S. foreign policy. ... In North Africa, the United States is likely to continue its policy of rhetorically supporting democracy and offering limited assistance for democratization."[108]

U.S.-Islamist Engagement

Engagement of moderate Islamists is apparently the most critical challenge that post-Cold War U.S. foreign policy has increasingly been confronting in the Middle East. The rise of non-violent Islamists as an unrivalled political force seeking power through fair democratic competition has challenged America's avowed mission of 'democracy promotion', contributing to the systemic failure of U.S. Middle East geostrategic approaches. Although it is principally driven by pragmatic calculations, America's eagerness to promote pluralism and tolerance is authentic. Historically, spread of democracy and human rights has persistently been an integral part of the American proclaimed geopolitical discourse. Paradoxically, when it comes to the Middle East in particular, this messianic zeal of 'democracy promotion' is overwhelmed by 'Islamophobia'. This fear of the perceived Islamic threat has obscured three geopolitical realities. First, the ascendance of the non-violent political Islam is unimpeded. Rather, suppressive measures, while discrediting both the domestic tyrants and their international backers, further extend the socio-political appeal of moderate Islamists. Second, the American-backed autocratic political setting has constituted a source of threat to the U.S. core interests, providing fertile ground for the growth of violent extremism. Third, no democratic transformation can successfully be achieved without genuine inclusion of moderate Islamists. Artificial remedies, including cosmetic reforms, and rhetoric support for change, have proven to be counterproductive. As John Esposito contends, "perpetuating the culture and values of authoritarianism and repression will only contribute to long-term instability and anti-Americanism that empower the terrorists."[109]

The above case studies demonstrate that the ill-defined 'stability' remains the key conceptual pivot around which American geostrategic calculation revolve. Seemingly, stability, in the U.S. geopolitical conceptualization, corresponds to the perpetuation of the pro-western, autocratic, and dysfunctional status quo. The George W. Bush administration, for instance, rightly identified a 'freedom deficit' as the primary cause of radicalism. Ironically, like his predecessors, the George W. Bush 'freedom agenda' was rocked by the deep-seated fear of the uncertainty to which democratization may lead. Hence the administration failed to hold sustainable strategic

dialogues with either Egyptian or Algerian moderate Islamists, despite their strategic significance as catalyst for change. Instead, the U.S., influenced by this ill-defined concept of stability, opted to side with the incumbent regimes with a view to marginalize the destabilizing forces – the moderate Islamists who, despite their denouncement of violence and their acceptance of pluralism, have been viewed by Washington as anti-western and anti-democratic. The George W. Bush administration's approach to the Egyptian and Algerian cases was substantively shaped by its counterproductive War on Terror, failing to draw a clear distinction between moderate and militant Islamists. This very U.S. policy, as described by John Esposito, was "seriously shortsited."[110] In short, the American-preferred stability (over democracy), as the above case studies reveal, has become synonymous with anti-Americanism, violent radicalism, authoritarianism, and socio-economic deterioration.

Unarguably, U.S.-Islamist dialogue is a prerequisite for mutual understanding and rapprochement. The post-Cold War administrations demonstrated a reasonable degree of willingness to create ties with various Islamist factions. Nevertheless, these contacts appeared to be tactical, seasonal, and relatively opportunistic. The U.S. attempts to approach the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood dated back to the 1940s, seeking the movement's cooperation against the communist threat. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979) and the Iranian hostage crisis (1979-1980) necessitated contacting the Muslim Brothers. The semi-war of attrition that Islamist militants waged against the Egyptian regime in 1990s prompted the Clinton administration, as a precautionary measure, to build ties with the moderates. Similarly, the U.S. contacts with the Algerian Islamists seemed to be mobilized by fear of the radical threat, which emerged as a potential alternative to the military-based regime. Lacking both a strategic vision of addressing the Islamist question, and commitment to inclusionary democratic reform, these contacts seemed to have been designed to serve short-term purposes, such as information gathering, and restoration of the U.S. public image. Such parties as rejectionists, pro-Israeli policymakers, and Arab ruling classes contributed to this lack of constructive communications that, at least, would remove the psychological barriers. With the absence of such a sustainably strategic dialogue, the gap widened, the mutual suspicions further heightened, and, as a result, the preconceived cultural judgments dominated at the expense of the interest-based realistic calculations.[111] For their part, non-violent Islamists, particularly the Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt, Justice and Development party of Morocco (PJD), the Islamic Action Front of Jordan (IAF), the Islamic Constitutional

Movement of Kuwait, and the Yemeni Congregation for Reform, "have signaled strong interest in opening dialogue with U.S. and EU governments."[112]

With the exception of Turkey, where Islamism is rigorously counter-balanced by an extremely secular constitution designed deliberately to contain Islam's potential expansion in the public sphere, America's approaches to the various variants of Islamic movements in the Arab world, including Egypt and Algeria, showed that the U.S. was not yet ready to run the risk of empowering moderate Islamists. The Bush I and Clinton administrations, despite their rhetoric calls for national conciliation and political inclusion, supported the Algerian regime's repressive measures. Likewise, the electoral victory of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood in 2005 outrageously alarmed the Bush II administration, paralyzing its assertively articulated 'freedom agenda'. Indeed, as a result of Islamists' far-reaching parliamentary triumphs in Egypt (2005), and the Palestinian territories, where Hamas unexpectedly and unprecedentedly outperformed the American-backed Fatah in the parliamentary elections of 2006, the administration's reformist zeal retreated significantly, revealing an overly growing fear of the combination of Islam and power.[113] With the regression of the U.S. enthusiastic support for change, the Arab Spring of 2003-5 vanished, provocatively generating endless debates about U.S. commitment to democratic reforms in the Middle East.

Arguably, misguided by the perceived 'Islamist threat', the U.S. Middle East policy, through its autocratic allies, impeded genuine political openings for decades. With the popular uprisings that swept U.S.-backed authoritarian regimes, America no longer has a choice. The Middle East has progressively been evolving into a post-autocratic era, where moderate Islamists, notably the Muslim Brotherhood's affiliates, will assume a leading role in re-shaping the emerging political landscape. Noticeably, Islamist discourse seemed to have been tempered by political realities, acquiring pragmatic features. Instead of calling for an 'Islamic state' and rigidly narrow implementation of *sharia*, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, for instance, began to call for a 'civil democratic state with an Islamic reference'. Yet, this last phrase of 'Islamic reference' may remain controversially subject to various interpretations.[114]

By and large, the Obama administration's rhetorically reconciliatory posture towards the region's grassroots revolutions appeared to have relatively alleviated the U.S.-Islamist troubled relations. Asserting his administration's position towards the region's unfolding events, President

Obama affirms, "The United States opposes the use of violence and repression against the people of the region……it will be the policy of the United States to promote reform across the region, and to support transitions to democracy. …… we cannot hesitate to stand squarely on the side of those who are reaching for their rights, knowing that their success will bring about a world that is more peaceful, more stable, and more just."[115] Clearly, these official pronouncements reveal essential changes in the U.S. Middle East approach, breaking, at least rhetorically, with the typically entrenched posture of 'preferring stability over democracy'.

Despite their commitment to the globally recognized democratic values, Islamists will likely adhere to their ideological fundamentals in a sense that reasonably maintains their identity as a religious-oriented revivalist movement. Precisely, three themes may surface as sources of discord with the U.S. First, there is the extent to which Islamists identify with the secular-based democratic principles. It is highly likely that Arab Islamists will insist on instituting *sharia* as a (if not the) primary source of legislation, according to which the socio-political rules, including women's roles and minority rights, will be determined. Finally, the mutual foreign policy preferences will have crucial impacts on the U.S.-Islamist trajectories. Islamists in power will embrace an ambitiously vigorous foreign policy posture, colliding with American hegemonic strategies. Mohammed Badie, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's grand guide, asserted that the revolution "must be a starting point for Egypt to take up its place in the world again, through recognizing the importance of our responsibilities toward our nations and defending them and their legitimate demands."[116] Whereas, Hammam Said, a well noted leader of the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood, warned, "America must think seriously about changing its policy in the region, for people will no longer remain submissive to its dictates."[117]

Conclusion

The discordant U.S. approaches to such diverse variants of Islamism as the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and the Algerian FIS reflected the paradigmatic characteristics of America's Islamist worldview. Notwithstanding their rhetorical and tactical diversity, post-Cold War administrations tended to view Islamism as a threat rather than challenge. U.S. calculations, therefore, remained practically captive to the notion of 'stability vs. democracy', where adopting one would inevitably result in sacrificing the other; addressed the various Islamist cases on individual basis, lacking the guidance of a coherently strategic and theoretical-based vision;

surrendered to the stereotypically demonized geopolitical image of political Islam, where actual policies conflated non-violent Islamists with radical militants; and tended to underestimate the potentially lethal threat – emanating from the existing pro-western power structures – to U.S. regional status, neglecting the growingly expanding appeal of Islamists. To be sure, U.S. democracy promotion efforts unleashed eager debates over such vocabularies as pluralism, civil society, and transfer of power, relatively extended the margin of participation, and infused a sense of freedom. However, "the overall effect [of these efforts] in the politics of the Middle East region was shallow and superficial."[118]

Breaking with his predecessor's coercive policy, President Barack Obama, in an attempt to restore the discredited U.S. image, adopted a conciliatory posture. The president's speeches in Ankara (April 2009), and Cairo (June 2009), while they simplified the cultural and political significance of both Turkey and Egypt, harbored a reconciliatory tone, articulating eagerness to establish constructive ties with the Muslim world. Paradoxically, the Obama administration embarked on a public diplomacy that, with respect to democratic reform, appeared to be vague.[119]

The foregoing analytically addressed case studies reveal that so long as Islamism continues to be the potential reaper of democratization, U.S. democracy promotion efforts will likely remain far-fetched, accelerating the region's uncertainty. A multitude of historical, ideological, cultural, and political underpinnings seem to be lying behind this America's Middle East dilemma. Chief among them is the geopolitical image of Islamist political activism, which evolved throughout a long history of physical and ideological confrontations, and was reinforced by such contemporary underpinnings as the Iranian revolution of 1979, and the Taliban's model of governance (1994-2001). The roots of this demonized image of Islamist activism need to be thoroughly addressed. For American-Islamist trajectory, to a considerable measure, will be determined by two developments. First, the American policy establishment's capacity to re-assess its perceptions of Islamism against the prevailing political realities, rather than the ideological paradigms, will play a crucial role in re-shaping U.S. Islamist orientations, emancipating the conceptualization process from the historical restrictions. Second, Islamists' identification with (not dissolution in) the political modernization may dispel the groundless fear of Islam in power. Precisely, while maintaining their originality, such doctrinal terms as *Sharia*,

Jihad, and *Umma* may need to be re-defined in light of both the sacred texts (Quran and Sunna), and the globally recognized set of political values and dynamics, including democracy, freedom and human rights.

Constituting an historic turning point, the popular uprisings that swept the region at the outset of 2011, ousting U.S. embattled allies, signaled an end to the U.S.-fostered autocratic era. The advent to power of the Muslim Brotherhood in such a pivotal state as Egypt will be a force multiplier for its affiliates and like-minded groups in Algeria, Morocco, Jordan, Yemen, and even the Gulf States. The American intellectual and academic circles may continue to harbor the stereotypically demonized image of political Islam. But the actual U.S. policy will inevitably operate in a geopolitical landscape where mainstream Islamists comprise a significantly hard figure in the regional and domestic power equations.[120]

Indeed, Egypt's potential emergence as a major regional power is considerably high. With moderate Islamism, as represented by Muslim Brotherhood, as a significant political force, the country's strategic strength will likely contribute to the advancement of the Islamist agenda in the region. Along with Turkey and Iran, Egypt may constitute a regional power triangle, restricting U.S. freedom of behavior that the latter's autocratic allies guaranteed for decades. Turkey and Egypt, in particular, seem to possess the capacity to form a relatively homogenous coalition. Both countries belong to the Sunni sect of Islam. The most significantly prevailing variants of Islamist groups in both countries (the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood and Turkish Justice and Development Party) belong almost to the same moderate school of thought, delegitimizing the violent radicalism. Or as Senator John McCain observed, "this revolution is a repudiation of Al-Qaeda."[121]

Summing up, in the post-Mubarak era, actual U.S. policy towards moderate Islamists will be challenged by three political realities, entailing a profound change in both U.S. geopolitical perception of, and geostrategic approach to political Islam. First, the rise to power of moderate Islamist forces, notably the Muslim Brotherhood, is unimpeded. Second, operating in a genuinely pluralistic political setting will be a challenge for Islamists, "not because they are opposed to democracy – far from it – but because they have been structured for non-democratic politics."[122] Indeed, Islamists' ultimate posture, as the Turkish experiment reveals, will be tempered by political realities rather than ideological predispositions. Textual interpretations, therefore, may

be subordinated to the geostrategic preferences on the ground. Finally, Islamists, irrespective of the extent to which they identify to the political modernity, will highly likely maintain their Islamist identity. Unlike their Turkish counterparts, Arab Islamists are not constitutionally bound to embrace secularism as a source of ideological guidance. Rather, the socio-political appeal of Islamism, at the grass roots level, has been rooted in its commitment to the Islamic reference.[123]

Notes

1. See Malika Zeghal, "Islamist Parties: Participation without Power", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 19, No. 3, July 2008, pp. 31-36.
2. See Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam*, pp. 6-11.
3. See Shadi Hamid & Amanda Kadlec, "Strategies for Engaging political Islam", Project on Middle East Democracy & Frederic Ebert Stiftung, January 2010.
4. Ibid.
5. Lukas Strickland, *Approaching Islamic Activism: The Case for Social Movement Theory*, p. 74.
6. Ibid. p. 74.
7. Quoted in Abd al-Monein Said Aly and Manfred W. Wenner, "Modern Islamic Reform Movement: The Muslim Brotherhood in Contemporary Egypt", *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 36, No. 3, Summer 1982, p. 340.
8. Quoted in Tamim Al-Barghouti, *The Umma and the Dawla: The Nation State and the Arab Middle East*, p. 72.
9. Quoted in Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam: Religion, Activism, and Political Change in Egypt*, p. 139.
10. See Abd al-Monein Said Aly and Manfred W. Wenner, "Modern Islamic Reform Movement: The Muslim Brotherhood in Contemporary Egypt", *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 36, No. 3, Summer 1982, p. 340.
11. Robert S. Leiken and Steven Brook, "The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 86, No. 2, March/April 2007, pp. 107-122.
12. See ibid, pp. 342-44; Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam*, pp. 21-35.
13. See Bernard Lewis, "License to Kill: Usama bin Laden's Declaration of Jihad", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 77, Issue 6, November/December 1998, pp. 14-19.
14. See Carrie Wickham, "*Mobilizing Islam*", pp. 65-6 & 112-18.
15. Ibid. p. 202.
16. Ibid. p. 18.
17. See Mona El-Ghobashy, "The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers", *International journal of Middle East Studies*, Volume 37, Issue 3, 2005, pp. 373-395.

18. Bruce K. Rutherford, “What Do Egypt’s Islamists Want? Moderate Islam and the Rise of Islamic Constitutionalism”, *Middle East Journal*, volume 60, No. 4, autumn 2006, p. 720.
19. Carrie Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam*, p. 214.
20. See Abdel Monem Said Aly, “An Ambivalent Alliance: The Future of U.S.-Egyptian Relations”, *Analysis Paper Number 6*, January 2006, the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution; Tamara Cofman Wittes and Michele Dunne, “Democracy in Egypt: Necessary Ingredient in a U.S.-Egyptian Partnership”, the Brooking Institution, August 2009.
21. Marina Ottaway, and Amr Hamzawy, *Getting to Pluralism: Political Actors in the Arab World*, p. 70.
22. See ibid, pp. 69-9; Nelly Lahoud and Anthony H. Johns, *Islam in World Politics*, pp. 170-91.
23. Fawaz A. Gerges, “The End of The Islamist Insurgency in Egypt?: Costs and Prospects”, *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 54, No. 4, Autumn 2000, pp. 592-612.
24. Ibid.
25. See Robert S. Leiken, and Steven Brook, “The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 86, Issue 2, March/April 2007, pp. 107-122; Bassma Kodmani, “The Dangerous of Political Exclusion: Egypt Islamist Problem”, *Middle East Series No. 63*, October 2005, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
26. Khalil Al-Anani, “Is Brotherhood with America Possible?”, *Arab Insight*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring 2007.
27. See Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Advisor 1977-1981*, pp. 430-59; Scott Kaufman, *Plans Unraveled: The Foreign Policy of the Carter Administration*, pp. 162-4 & 199-201; John K. Cooley, *Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America, and International Terrorism*, pp. 29-64.
28. See Judith miller, “The Islamic Wave”, *The New York Times*, May 31, 1992.
29. Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam*, p. 177.
30. Khalil Al-Anani, “Is Brotherhood with America Possible?” *Arab Insight*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring 2007.
31. Ibid.

32. Quoted in Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam*, p. 178.
33. Mary Anne Weaver, "The Battle for Cairo", *New Yorker*, January 30, 1995.
34. See Mona El-Ghobashy, "The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 37, Issue 3, 2005, pp. 373-395.
35. See Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam*, pp. 180-3.
36. Ibid, p. 178.
37. Robert Pelletreau, "Recent Events in the Middle East", statement before the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Washington, DC, June 14, 1994.
38. Robert Pelletreau, "Developments in the Middle East", testimony before the House International Relations Committee, June 12, 1996.
39. See Zachary Karabell, "The Wrong Threat: the United States and Islamic Fundamentalism", *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 12, No. 2, Summer 1995, pp. 37-48.
40. Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam*, p. 180.
41. These themes have thoroughly been discussed in Chapter 3.
42. "Remarks by President George W. Bush to Saban Forum", Washington, D.C., December 5, 2008.
43. Ibid.
44. Condoleezza Rice, "Remarks at the American University in Cairo", June 20, 2005.
45. Khalil Al-Anani, "Is Brotherhood with America Possible?", *Arab Insight*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring 2007.
46. Gihan Shahine, "Smoke and Mirrors: U.S. Meets with Muslim Brotherhood", *Al-Ahram Weekly*, 28 April, 2007.
47. Gamal Essam El-Din, "A Separate Meeting?", *Al-Ahram Weekly*, Issue No. 847, 31 May, 2007.
48. Jeremy M. Sharp, "Egypt: Background and U.S. Relations", *Congressional Report Services*, Report for Congress, June 19, 2007, p. 14.
49. Gamal Essam El-Din, "A Separate Meeting?", *AL-Ahram Weekly*, Issue No. 847, 31 May, 2007.
50. Robert S. Leiken, and Steven Brook, "The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 86, Issue 2, March/April 2007, pp. 107-122.

51. This topic was discussed in detail in chapter 4.
52. Robert S. Leiken, and Steven Brook, "The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 86, Issue 2, March/April 2007, pp. 107-122.
53. See Barry Rubin, "Comparing Three Muslin Brotherhoods: Syria, Jordan, Egypt", *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, Vol. 11, No. 2, June 2007; Jeffery Azarav and Samuel Tadros, "The Problem of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood", American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, No. 4, 2007; Jeremy M. Sharp, "Egypt: Background and U.S. Relations", *Congressional Research Service*, September 2, 2009.
54. See Ashraf Swelam, "Egypt's 2010 Parliamentary Elections: The Landslide", *Occasional Papers 2*, January 2011, Egypt's International Economic Forum.
55. See Dina Shehata, "The Fall of the Pharaoh", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 90, Issue 3, May/June 2011, pp. 26-32.
56. Marc Lynch, "America and Egypt after the Uprisings", *Survival*, Vol. 53, Issue 2, 2011, pp. 31-42.
57. See Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Power and Principle*, pp. 354-98.
58. Marc Lynch, "America and Egypt after the Uprisings", *Survival*, Vol. 53, Issue 2, 2011, pp. 31-42.
59. See Jeremy M. Sharp. "Egypt: Background and U.S. Relations", pp. 7-21.
60. See Ryan Lizza, "The Consequentialist: How the Arab Spring Remade Obama's Foreign Policy", *the New Yorker*, May 2, 2011.
61. Quoted in Steven Lee Myers, "Clinton, in Cairo's Tahrir Square, Embraces a Revolt She Once Discouraged", *the New York Times*, March 16, 2011.
62. See David K. Kirkpatrick, "Islamists Win 70% of Seats in the Egyptian Parliament", *the New York Times*, January 21, 2012.
63. David K. Kirkpatrick, "Named Egypt's Winner, Islamist Makes History", *the New York Times*, June 24, 2012.
64. Quoted in David K. Kirkpatrick, "Clinton Visits Egypt, Carrying a Muted Pledge of Support", *the New York Times*, July 14, 2012.
65. Quoted in ibid.
66. Quoted in Michael R. Gordon, "Kerry Announces $ 250 Million in U.S. Aid for Egypt", *the New York Times*, March 3, 2013.

67. Quoted in David A. Kirkpatrick and Steven Erlanger, "Egypt's New Leader Spells out Terms for U.S.-Arab Ties", *the New York Times*, September 22, 2012.
68. Quoted in ibid.
69. Quoted in ibid.
70. Colin H. kahl and Marc Lynch, "U.S. Strategy after the Arab Uprisings: Toward Progressive Engagement", *the Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 36, Issue2, Spring 2013, pp. 53 & 54.
71. Ryan Lizza, "The Consequentialist: How the Arab Spring Remade Obama's Foreign Policy", p. 17.
72. Quoted in ibid. p. 18.
73. See Bruce W. Jentleson, Andrew M. Exum, Melissa G. Dalton, and J. Dana Stuster, "Strategic Adaptation: Toward a New U.S. Strategy in the Middle East" Center for a New American Security, June 2012.
74. See Robert S. Chase, Emily B. Hill, and Paul Kennedy, "Pivotal States and U.S. Strategy", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 75, Issue 1, January/February 1996, pp. 33-51.
75. See Graham E. Fuller, *Algeria: The Next Fundamental State?*, pp. 5-19.
76. Abdul Wahhab El-Affendi and Others, "Islamic Movements: impact on Political Stability in the Arab World", p. 60.
77. See Graham E. Fuller, *Algeria: The Next Fundamental State?*, pp. 72-4.
78. Ibid, pp. 21-8.
79. Andrew J. Pierre, and William B. Quandt, "Algeria's War on Itself", *Foreign Policy*, Issue 99, Summer 1995, PP. 131-148.
80. See Peter W. Rodman, "Policy Brief: Don't Destabilize Algiers", *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. 3, No. 4, December 1996, pp. 17-20; Bruce Riedel, William Quandt, Richard Falk, and Thomas R. Mattair, " The Middle East: What Is Our Long-Term Vision?", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 3, Issue 3, October 1994, pp. 1-19; Michael Collins Dunn, "Algeria's Agony: The Drama So Far, The Prospects For Peace", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 3, Issue 3, October 1994, pp. 145-156; Graham E. Fuller, *Algeria: The Next Fundamental State?*, pp. 111-19.
81. Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam*, p. 144.

82. Tamara Cofman Wittes, *Freedom's Unsteady March: America's Role in Building Arab Democracy*, pp. 22-3.
83. Edward P. Djerejian, "The U.S. and the Middle East in a Changing World", *Department of State Dispatch*, volume 3, No. 23, June 8, 1992.
84. *The Middle East Quarterly*, volume 1, No. 3, September 1994.
85. Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam*, p. 143.
86. Robert Chase, Emily Hill, and Paul Kennedy, "Pivotal States and U.S Strategy", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 75, Issue 1, Jan-Feb 1996, p. 37.
87. Yahia H. Zubair, "Algeria and U.S. Interests: Containing Radical Islamism and Promoting Democracy", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. IX, No. 1, March 2002, p. 66.
88. See Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam*, pp. 143-70; Maria do Ceu Pinto, *Political Islam and the United States*, pp. 239-63; Andrew J. Pierre and William B. Quantd, "Algeria's War on Itself", *Foreign Policy*, Issue 99, Summer 1995, PP. 131-148; Christopher Hemmer, "U.S. Policy Towards North Africa: Three Overarching Themes", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 14, Issue 4, Winter 2007, pp. 55-66.
89. Yahia H. Zoubair, "Algeria and U.S. Interests: Containing Radical Islamism and Promoting Democracy", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. IX, Issue 1, March 2002, pp. 64-81.
90. Edward G. Shirley, "Is Iran's Present Algeria's Future?", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 74, Issue 3, May/June 1995, pp. 28-44.
91. Yahia H. Zoubair, "Algeria and U.S. Interests: Containing Radical Islamism and Promoting Democracy", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. IX, Issue 1, March 2002, pp. 64-81.
92. See, for instance, Robert Pelletreau's statement before the subcommittee on Africa of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, September 28, 1994, U.S. *Department of State Dispatch*, October 3, 1994; U.S ambassador's declaration to *El-Watan* (Algiers), February 9, 1995; David Welch, "Terrorism in Algeria", *U.S. Department of State Dispatch*, October 30, 1995.
93. Quoted in Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam*, p. 147.
94. Ibid. p. 147.
95. Quoted in Yahia H. Zubair, "Algeria and U.S. Interests: Containing Radical Islamism and Promoting Democracy", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. IX, No. 1, March 2002, p. 68.
96. Ibid. p. 72.

97. Quoted in ibid, p. 71.

98. See ibid; Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam*, pp. 157-61; Robert Pelletreau, "U.S. Policy Toward Algeria", statement before the Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Washington, DC, April 16, 1996, the State Department Website.

99. Quoted in Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam*, pp. 167.

100. Quoted in Yahia H. Zubair, "Algeria and U.S. Interests: Containing Radical Islamism and Promoting Democracy", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. IX, Issue 1, March 2002, p. 73.

101. John F. Burns, "Skepticism in Algeria: Failed Ballot Dashes Dream of Democracy", *the New York Times*, April 18, 1999.

102. See David H. Gary, and Erick Stockman, "Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: the evolution from Algerian Islamism to transnational terror", *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, Vol. 2, No. 4, December 2008, pp. 91-97.

103. See Hassan Al Mosadak, "U.S-Algerian Relations: A Pragmatic Politics", *North African Affairs*, Sunday 7-13/10/2007; Carol Migdalovitz, "Algeria: Current Issues", *Congressional Research Service*, April 16, 2009; Ambassador Daniel Benjamin, Testimony to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations' Subcommittee on African Affairs, November 17, 2009.

104. Alexis Arieff, "Algeria: Current Issues", *Congressional Research Service*, January 18, 2013, pp. 6-7.

105. Quoted in Michael R. Jordon and Mark Mazzetti, "Lack of Warning on Rescue Effort Highlights Limits of Algerian Cooperation", *the New York Times*, January 17, 2013.

106. Alexis Arieff, "Algeria: Current Issues", *Congressional Research Services*, January 18, 2013, pp. 14-15.

107. Ibid. pp. 15-16.

108. Christopher Hemmer, "U.S. Policy towards North Africa: Three Overreaching Themes", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XIV, Issue 4, Winter 2007, p. 63.

109. John L. Esposito, *The Future of Islam*, pp. 157-8.

110. Ibid, p. 157.

111. See Khalil Al-Anani, "The Myth of Excluding Moderate Islamists in the Arab World", *Working Paper Number 4*, March 2010, The Saban Center for Middle East Policy, The Brooking Institution; Shadi Hamid, "Engaging Political Islam to Promote Democracy", *Policy Paper*, July 2007, Progressive Policy Institute; 'Islam and the West: Annual Report on the State of Dialogue", January 2008, World Economic Forum.

112. Shadi Hamid and Amanda Kadlec, "Strategies for Engaging Political Islam", Friedrich Ebert Stiftung & Project on Middle East Democracy, January 2010.

113. See Tamara Cofman Wittes, *Freedom's Unsteady March: America's Role in Building Arab Democracy*, pp. 76-101; Jeremy M. Sharp, "U.S. Democracy Promotion Policy in the Middle East: The Islamist Dilemma", *Congressional Research Service*, June 2006.

114. See Lorenzo Vidino, "Five Myths about the Muslim Brotherhood", *the Washington Post*, March 6, 2011.

115. President Barack Obama, "Remarks on the Middle East and North Africa", May 19, 2011. (www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/05.19/remarks-president-middle-east-and-north-africa).

116. Quoted in Shadi Hamid, "The Rise of the Islamists", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 90, Issue 3, May/June 2011, pp. 40-47.

117. Quoted in ibid.

118. Dalacoura, Katerina, "U.S. Foreign Policy and Democracy Promotion in the Middle East: Theoretical Perspectives and Policy Recommendations", *Ortadogu Etutleri*, Volume 2, No. 3, July 2010, pp. 57-76.

119. See Obama's Remarks in Ankara (April 2009), and Cairo (June 2009); Marina Ottaway, "Middle East Democracy Promotion Is Not a One-Way Street", *Policy Brief 82*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, November 2009; Brian Katulis, " Democracy Promotion in the Middle East and the Obama Administration", A Century Foundation Report, 2009.

120. See Lorenzo Vidino, "Five Myths about the Muslim Brotherhood", *the Washington Post*, March 6, 2011.

121. Quoted in Cynthia Farahat, “The Arab Upheaval: Egypt Islamist Shadow”, *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. XVIII, No. 3, Summer 2011, PP. 19-24.

122. Nathan Brown, “The Muslim Brotherhood”, Testimony to the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence Subcommittee on Terrorism, HUMINT, Analysis, and Counterintelligence, April 13, 2011.

123. See Lorenzo Vidino, “Five Myths about the Muslim Brotherhood”, *the Washington Post*, March 16, 2011; Amal A. Kandeel, “Egypt at a Crossroads”, *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 18, Issue 2, Summer 2011, pp. 37-45.

Chapter 6

Case Study: Turkey's Exceptionalism

America's perception of and actual policy towards Islamism in the Arab world (as represented by Egypt and Algeria) substantively varied from its posture towards Turkish Islamic activism. Understandably, this variation is partly attributed to the sharply different contexts in which Arab and Turkish Islamists have been operating. Yet, America's discordant approaches to political Islam are not solely confined to the latter's respective context. Rather, a multitude of geopolitical and ideological interpretations seems to account for these inconsistent American orientations. As the previous chapter demonstrated, the U.S., out of fear of the perceived Islamist threat, preferred stability over change in Egypt and Algeria, aligning itself with the authoritarian regimes, in opposition to America's avowed mission of democracy promotion. Whereas, along with the EU, it prized the Turkish pluralistic system that enabled an Islamic-oriented force, the Justice and Development Party (AKP), to rise to power democratically. It is, therefore, crucial to examine the conceptual and geopolitical considerations that shaped the U.S. Perception of Turkish Islamic activism, particularly the AKP.

Turkey's Islamist experiment is unique. This uniqueness is revealed by three manifestations: the Islamists' attainment of power through genuine electoral process, the privilege that Arab Islamists, through various intimidating measures, have invariably been deprived of; the Islamists' capability to operate in such a radically secular context, where Turkish Islamism, to sustain its political functionality, had to deny its Islamic identity ; and, by and large, western endorsement of the Turkish version of political Islam as represented, particularly, by the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP). Until the collapse of the Ottoman Empire (1924), Islam had long been the primary source of civilizational guidance, shaping both the state's internal and external preferences, and society's cultural outlook. Although Islamic political values, notably pluralism, participation, social justice, and the rule of law eroded significantly, the Islamic identity of state and society maintained its presence. The state's legitimacy derived fundamentally from Islam. Turkey's contemporary Islamic activism has essentially been rooted in the country's historical legacy.

With the collapse of the Ottoman Empire (1924), and the consequent emergence of the Kemalist state, Islam was reduced to a mere spiritual mission. Indeed, Islam's historically vigorous role as a source of political ideology and inspiration retreated significantly. Kemalism adopted a version of secularism that, through state apparatuses, sought to uproot Islamic socio-cultural manifestations, profoundly re-shaping Turkish political culture. Political Islam, nonetheless, penetrated the Kemalist siege, ultimately escalating to power through democratic means. Unlike its Arab counterparts, Turkey's Islamism appeared to appeal to the West. Represented by the Justice and Development Party (AKP), Turkish Islamist activism emerged as a modernized variant that, while reaffirming its commitment to secularism as a constitutional obligation, internalized its religious tendency in both domestic and foreign approaches.

The Turkish Islamist experiment is exceptional in terms of both its ability to function in a secularist context, where it successfully survived constant attempts at eradication, and its capacity to pacify the western fear of the perceived Islamist threat, emerging as a legitimately recognized force. Thus, examination of the Turkish experiment, with respect to the American perception of Islamism, is important for several reasons. First, Turkey's Islamism seems to be resonant with the American standard for moderate political Islam. Unlike its counterparts in Iran, Sudan, the Palestinian territories (Hamas), and the former Taliban regime in Afghanistan, the AKP's political posture, by and large, appeared to be recognized by the West, notably the United States, as an acceptable model of governance that can be integrated into the American-sponsored regional system.[1] This unprecedented western endorsement of an Islamist variant stimulated a debate on the objectivity and the relevancy of the criteria by which Islamists are assessed in terms of their moderation and identification with the globally recognized democratic principles.

Second, provoked by what has been labeled 'the Turkish successes', Arab Islamists began to call for an extensive revision of their ideological and political tenets. To considerable segments of Islamist constituencies in the Arab world, who have increasingly been disillusioned with the political advancement of their respective movements, the AKP's domestic and regional geostrategic approaches – notwithstanding the sharply different contexts in which the party operates – stand as an attractive experiment, revealing the potentially creative dynamics that Islamists may adopt to break the cycle of exclusion. Third, coerced to comply with Turkey's constitutional requirement, Turkish Islamism embraced Kemalist-designed secularism, denying

its Islamic political identity. Nonetheless, the AKP's internal and external preferences appeared to be partly informed by its Islamic tendency. The party's endeavor to fuse Islam and secularism has stimulated controversial debates over the extent to which Islamist political ideology can be secularized.

Whether or not the AKP is a typical Islamist party is controversial. Implicitly, its Islamist roots and sympathy are evident.[2] Therefore, the Turkish experiment, despite its secular outlook, may serve as a test case for moderate Islamists in power. America's approach towards Turkish Islamism is apparently shaped by a multitude of factors: Turkey's strategic vitality; the AKP's domestic electoral appeal, and its regional preferences, notably its postures towards Iran and the Arab-Israeli conflict; and the stereotypical image of the anti-western political Islam that the Turkish secularists and American rejectionists frequently invoked to influence the administration's deliberations.[3] Although the bilateral U.S.-Turkish concerns are multi-dimensional, encompassing such diverse issues as the Iraqi Kurds, the alleged Armenian genocide, and the Turkish-Greek conflict over Cyprus, the Middle East potentially remains the primary arena where the two countries' geostrategic approaches are likely to diverge, straining the U.S.-Turkish partneship.[4] President Obama's visit to Turkey in April 2009 "succeeded in setting a new tone in bilateral relations."[5] The President's remarks to the Muslim world signified Turkey's historical and geopolitical centrality. Yet, the U.S.-Turkish divergence has continued. The Turkish experiment showed the compound challenge that moderate Islamism has persistently been confronting: "striking a sustainable balance between the pragmatic requirements of political participation and the demands of ideological commitment."[6]

The Rise of Turkish Islamism

Corresponding to a series of diverse challenges, Turkish political Islam took various forms, and survived several attempts at exclusion, adapting itself to Turkish aggressive secularist context. Adapting to the domestic dynamics, Turkish Islamists developed politically realistic approaches that enabled them simultaneously to win both the presidency and the premiership. Indeed, the stunning victory of the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) in July 2007 parliamentary election (47%) was a culmination of a series of ideological, political, judicial, and psychological struggles. Clearly, the AKP's rise to power revealed the accelerative transformations that both domestic and regional political scenes have growingly been undergoing, whereby moderate

Islamism has emerged as a leading force. The Turkish experiment, in a broader sense, while pursuing vigorous domestic and foreign policies, it appealed to the West, notwithstanding occasional U.S.-Turkish frictions.[7]

In practical terms, three formative events constituted historical landmarks in the development of Turkish Islamist activism. Although they generically impacted the country's political landscape, their significant impact on the defining features of the Islamist movement – in terms of both its accelerative expansion and its peaceful political tendency – was evident. First, the establishment of a multiparty system in 1946 advanced the process of democratization and expanded the margin of associational freedom. Reflecting the proportional weights of the various political forces, the advent of multiparty politics ended the Kemalists' monopoly of power. Hence, "Islam became an important factor in attracting votes. The pious rural periphery, which had largely been excluded from politics since the founding of the republic in 1923, now became an important political constituency whose interests had to be taken into consideration by conservative political parties."[8]

Second, the economic liberation carried out by the then prime minister, Turgot Ozal, in the mid-1980s generated formative socio-political changes. Islamists were the primary beneficiaries of these significant transformations, where: they broadened their access to media outlets; further extended their political outreach; and built financial networks.[9] Ozal's reforms "encouraged the emergence of a new middle class, more pious than the traditional elite and eager to claim its share of economic and political power."[10] These 'Anatolian tigers', as they came to be labeled, today comprised a core constituency backing Islamist activism. Third, the end of the Cold War reinforced the pluralistic character of Turkey's political system, enabling Islamists further to extend their grass-roots appeal. With the dissemination of the democratic values, as a result of the West's ideological triumph, the grip on power of the militant Kemalism relatively diminished. The Kemalists' inability to interfere militarily against the Refah Party (RP) and the AKP in 1996 and 2007 respectively was a case in point.[11]

In practical terms, Islamists maintained their existence through various political manifestations. Founded in 1970 under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan, the National Order Party (MNP) was the first in a series of parties successively established by Turkish Islamists. The MNP was banned in the wake of 1971 military coup. The National Salvation Party (MSP) was

founded in 1972, representing a coalition of various Islamic and conservative trends. The party was dissolved after the military coup in 1980, and its leader, Erbakan, along with his lieutenants were stripped of their political rights for ten years. The third incarnation of Turkish political Islam was the Refah Party (RP), which was established in 1983, harboring relatively more pragmatic orientations.[12]

In the national elections of 1995, the Refah Party, for the first time in Turkey's modern history, garnered nearly 22 percent of the popular vote, unprecedentedly emerging as an unrivalled political force with unmatched socio-political appeal. The Islamists' triumph stimulated the secularists' fears. Nonetheless, the former were allowed to attain power through a coalition with the centre-right True Path Party. The Refah accession to power, therefore, signaled an indicative shift in Turkey's politics with respect to the military's intervension.[13] The Islamists' escalation to power through democratic means aroused a blend of ambivalent, perplexed, and skeptical feelings in Washington policy circles. On the one hand, the Clinton administration was considerably concerned that an Islamic-oriented government would seek to alter Turkey's secularist character, and embrace anti-western attitudes, jeopardizing American-Turkish historical ties. And, on the other, some officials believed that Islamists' engagement in a democratic setting would expose them to such political realities that would inevitably temper their geopolitical perceptions, moderate their rhetoric, and subsequently subordinate their preferences to realistic, rather than idealistic, calculations. Testing the pulse, Peter Tarnoff, then undersecretary of state for political affairs, met with the newly appointed Prime Minister, Necmettin Erbakan, in mid-1996. After this meeting Tarnoff maintained: "We found a disposition in all of our conversations to respond to all of our security cooperation concerns."[14]

Influenced by political realities, the Refah leadership embraced a relatively pragmatic agenda. Aligning with the U.S. policy in Iraq, upholding military accords with Israel, and supporting Turkey's membership in the EU are cases in point. Noticeably, Erbakan's anti-western rhetoric comparatively ceased. To be sure, consistent with his Islamist latent tendency, Erbakan played a dynamic role in the establishment of the 'Developing Eight', an Islamic organization composed of Turkey, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, and Egypt, agitating Turkey's European partners. By and large, the Clinton administration maintained relatively cordial relations with the short-lived Islamist led government.[15]

Growing increasingly intolerant of Islamists in power, the Turkish National Security Council initiated what came to be termed the 'February 28 Process', "when the secularist military brought down a coalition government headed by Erbakan, closed his Welfare Party, and launched a concerted assault against Islamic social, and economic networks."[16] Replacing the Refah Party, which was officially banned in January 1998, the Virtue Party (FP) emerged as the fourth political incarnation of Turkish Islamic movement. With the closure of the FP by the constitutional court in June 2001, the movement formally split, where "the traditionalists established the Felicity Party (SP) …… [and] the moderates founded a new party, the [Justice and Development] AKP."[17]

Breaking with the legacy of its predecessors, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) emerged as a progressively revised version of Turkish Islamic activism. Adapting to the country's anti-Islamic secularist context, the AKP defined itself as a 'democratic conservative party', demonstrating full commitment to both secularism and pluralism. Operating in such an aggressively anti-Islamic context had constituted an existential threat to the successive Islamic-oriented parties. The primary challenge to the AKP, therefore, was how to undermine the Kemalist forces, notably the military and the judiciary, the two instruments that have invariably been used to dismantle Turkish Islamic activism on the pretext of the latter's threat to the state's Kemalist identity. To this end, a fivefold strategy was pursued.

First, while it affirmed its commitment to secularism as a constitutional obligation, the AKP leadership emphasized the Anglo-American interpretation of the concept, where secularism is viewed as "a constitutional principle designed to protect religious freedom and practice against the state."[18] Thus, it should not be used as an instrument to shape individuals' preferences. Clearly, the party's domestic posture on such controversial issues as the headscarf, and Islamic (*Imam-Hatip*) schools, was influenced by this interpretation, revealing its fervid religious inclination.[19] Indeed, the AKP's emphasis on 'state impartiality' towards religious manifestations substantively undermined the Kemalist radical interpretation of secularism, which, by contrast, aims at negating the role of Islam as a socio-cultural determinant.

Second, Turkey's accession to the EU constituted a central pillar of the AKP's geopolitics. This attitude, Graham Fuller contends, "contributed greatly to [the party's] electoral support in the country and to its reputation abroad."[20] Furthermore, the push for the EU membership has

"hastened the pace of reform and capacity formation."[21] Third, the economic growth that the AKP achieved expanded its electoral appeal considerably. Engagement with the global economy, privatization, and attracting foreign investment, "which has risen twentyfold on the AKP's watch,"[22] constituted the fundamental pillars of the economic policy. As a result, "Turkish exports jumped from $ 31 billions in 2001, to $ 132 billions in 2008."[23] Hence, the party's stunning triumph in July 2007 parliamentary elections (47%) was mainly attributed to the economic success generated by the liberal-oriented economic approach it endorsed. Indeed, "it was the first time since 1954 that an incumbent in Turkey had increased its share of the vote, and the AKP did so by an astonishing 14 percentage points."[24]

Fourth, the AKP's leadership launched a series of democratic reforms, culminating in the September 2010 constitutional amendments. Approved through a referendum by 58% of the vote, this project has widely been viewed as Turkey's most formative democratic revolution since the emergence of the republic in 1923, eroding the political influence of both the military and the judiciary – the strongholds of Kemalism. Emphasizing such values as people's sovereignty, the rule of law, civilian control of the political sphere, impartiality of the judiciary, this AKP-led democratic transformation served a twofold aim: extending the AKP's electoral constituency, and hence securing its political prospect at home; and reinforcing the party's democratic image abroad, notably within the American and European circles, where compliance to western-defined universal values is a prerequisite for Turkey's full membership of the EU.[25] In brief, the September 2010 constitutional amendments emasculated the Kemalist forces, and hence fortified Turkey's democracy against both military intervention, and politically-driven judicial measures.[26]

Fifth, the AKP government pursues an ambitiously dynamic foreign policy. Departing form Turkey's traditional non-involvement, the AKP's geopolitical orientation appeared to have been shaped by: Turkey's potential capacity as a pivotal regional power; the Ottoman legacy; and Islam's inspirational character as a civilizational guide. Such doctrines as 'zero-problem with the neighbors', and strategic depth (both concepts were developed by Ahmet Davutoglu, Turkish foreign minister, and the party's leading foreign policy intellectual) gained currency in the country's geostrategic thinking.[27] Departing from the Kemalist regional passivity, the AKP established close ties with Russia, Syria (before the eruption of the Syrian revolution in March

2011), and Iran; embraced an energetic approach towards the Arab-Israeli conflict; and intensifies its involvement in the Arab world.[28]

U.S.-Turkish Relations: Troubled Alliance

At the dawn of the millennium, U.S.-Turkish relations entered a stage of turbulence. Three formative events seemed to have underpinned this divergence in the U.S.-Turkish worldviews. First, with the end of the Cold War, and the resultant emergence of profoundly different global and regional landscapes, the geostrategic underpinnings that historically tied the two countries' worldviews disappeared. Hence, their strategic calculations sharply diverged. Second, the post-9/11 implications, notably the invasion of Iraq (2003), and the Global War on Terror, constituted a source of friction. American-Turkish divergence on such issues as the Iraqi Kurds, and Hamas, was evident; the latter has been categorized by Washington as a terrorist group, whereas the Turkish ruling party (AKP) assertively advocated its inclusion in the peace process. Third, the coming to power of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) – a conservative party with Islamic roots – further reinforced U.S.-Turkish tension. Indeed, "rather than seeing further democratization in Turkey and taking note of the domestic pressures facing a populist AKP government, [American policymakers] see a final nail being placed in the coffin of the military and secular elites that once protected American interests, and have concluded that Ankara has already switched sides from the West and turned its back on the historic U.S.-Turkish alliance."[29]

Nonetheless, Turkey remains a strategically vital partner. Indeed, as Philip Gordon, Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, states:

> How many countries have borders with as diverse an array of countries as Turkey – Greece, Bulgaria, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Iran, Iraq, and Syria. With its combination of strategic, economic, and cultural links, Turkey's influence touches such vital concerns of both our countries as the stability of the Middle East and relations with the broader Islamic world, relations with the Caucasus and Black Sea region, the transit of energy from the Caspian Basin to Europe, the security and development of Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, and the maintenance of strong ties to Europe and the Trans-Atlantic alliance. The geography that I have just mentioned spans some of the most sensitive and significant parts of the globe and in every one of these areas U.S.-Turkish cooperation can be a force of progress.[30]

In geopolitical terms, Turkey was fundamentally transformed, placing U.S.-Turkish multi-faceted relations at a critical juncture. Domestically, assimilationist nationalism and militant

secularism, the two pillars that constantly underpinned the Kemalists' monopoly of power, were considerably dismantled by the Islamist-oriented ruling party (AKP) through a series of publicly supported reforms. Externally, the AKP has undertaken a vigorous foreign policy whose substance was increasingly at odds with Washington's orientations, notably in the Middle East. Consistent with my research aim, U.S.-Turkish partnership is to be addressed within the context of 'American perception of Islamism', with a desire objectively to examine two essential themes: to examine the extent to which the AKP's posture is shaped by its Islamist roots. The role that Islam, as a source of political guidance, plays in informing Islamists' preferences is crucial to predicting the geopolitical posture that 'Islamism in power' will potentially embrace. The balance that the AKP has sought to strike between its (alleged) Islamic tendency and the dominating political realities may serve as an indicator of the capacity that Islamism potentially harbors to co-exist with, and adapt to political modernity; and to examine the very criteria that the U.S. policy circles endorsed in assessing the AKP's domestic and external orientations. Notwithstanding its Islamic roots, and anti-American regional posture, the AKP, unlike its Arab counterparts, was recognized by the West in general and the U.S. in particular. Hence, developing a compelling argument interpreting this American discrepancy is critical to understanding the geopolitical dynamics that shape 'American perception of Islamism'—the core theme of this research.

The AKP in Power

The Justice and Development Party (AKP) emerged as a revised version of political Islam that, on the one hand, adapted its rhetoric to the prevailing global and domestic political dynamics, and, on the other, preserved its 'conservative posture' as an Islamic-rooted party. The AKP's political resonance appeared to have lain in its ability to maintain the equilibrium of this synthesis. The party's electoral triumph in the November 3, 2002 National election "represented an earthquake in [Turkey's] domestic politics. …….. The term 'Islamic conservative', which AKP coined and claims to be akin to Europe's various Christian Democratic parties' social conservatism, has been a continual theme in the Turkish press, as the AKP has sought to balance its commitment to Turkey's strict secular constitution with its constituency's Muslim worldview and faith."[31] The party's stunning victory in the July 2007 parliamentary election (when it garnered nearly 47% of the popular vote) unambiguously revealed its unrivalled electoral appeal,

further empowering its anticorruption and reformative agenda, and securing its single-party government.

By and large, and notwithstanding its Islamic origins, the AKP was viewed by Washington as a moderate party with a grounded democratic commitment. For its part, the party sought to maintain cordial relations with the U.S., to the extent that it was stigmatized as the "American party and as part of a CIA-sponsored strategy to spread moderate Islam in the region with Turkey at the helm."[32] The AKP's firm denial of its Islamic identity, its adherence to secularism, and its identification with the western-promoted universal values of human rights, pluralism, and the rule of law credited its image as a democratic force. America's relatively positive perception of, and keen willingness to cooperate with, the AKP appear to have been based on three considerations: the party's moderate character, particularly its renunciation of Islamic reference and implementation of *sharia*; Washington's desire to promote the AKP's political discourse as a model of modernized Islamism; and, perhaps more vitally, Turkey's strategic criticality to U.S. hegemonic preeminence in the Middle East and Central Asia/Caucasus.

The AKP's economic success, coupled with its undeterred series of democratic reforms not only undermined the Kemalists' strongholds (notably the army and the judiciary), but also further advanced the party's credibility both internally and externally, broadened its electoral constituency, and empowered its increasingly ambitious foreign policy – the very area where U.S.-Turkish preferences diverged. The post-9/11 U.S. orientation, particularly George W. Bush's Global War on Terror, seemed to be at odds with the AKP's geopolitical view of Turkey's role as a major regional force. The AKP's foreign policy preferences have largely been influenced by the concept of Strategic Depth – the doctrine that was forged by Ahmet Davutoglu, the Party's primary foreign policy theorist:

> The core idea of the doctrine of Strategic Depth is that a nation's value in international relations depends on its strategic location. Turkey is seen as particularly well suited to play an important geopolitical role because of its strategic location and control of the Bosporus. In addition, the concept of Strategic Depth emphasizes the importance of Turkey's Ottoman past and its historical and cultural ties to the Balkans, the Middle East, and Central Asia. These ties are seen as important assets that can enable Turkey to become a regional power. The doctrine also suggests that Turkey should counterbalance its ties to the West by establishing multiple alliances, which would enhance its freedom of action and increase its leverage, both regionally and globally.[33]

Davutoglu's notion of Strategic Depth was conceptually rooted in what came to be termed 'Neo-Ottomanism' – the theoretical framework that seemed to have shaped the AKP's geopolitical discourse. Neo-Ottomanism, emphasizes that Turkey should: rediscover its imperial legacy in formerly Ottoman territories, notably the Middle East, without turning its back on the West; reorient its regional posture in such a manner that reflects the country's geostrategic capacity as a potential regional superpower; and regain its multinational identity, where its various ethnic and cultural components can peacefully coexist. Neo-Ottomanism, as such, sought to counterbalance Kemalism's two pillars: militant secularism; and assimilationist nationalism.[34] Also, at the core of Davutoglu's vision was the proposition of 'zero problems with neighbors', whereby Turkey could emerge as a geopolitical locomotive of regional stability – the role that would reinforce its regional preponderant stature.[35]

In practical terms, the Middle East captured the AKP's geostrategic focus, and hence emerged as a growingly contentious arena where U.S.-Turkish orientations sharply diverged. The U.S. invasion of Iraq (2003) generated a subsequent series of discords between the two countries. Turkey's perception of the invasion was, to a measurable extent, shaped by the bitter implications it experienced as a result of its alignment with the U.S.-led coalition against Iraq in 1991. Chief among them was the Kurdish question which, since then, has increasingly been capturing Turkish strategic concerns. The invasion risked creating an independent Kurdish state in northern Iraq, posing an existential threat to Turkish national security. U.S.-Turkish divergence escalated on March 1, 2003, when the AKP-dominated parliament denied the U.S. use of Turkish territories as staging ground for invading Iraq. Not surprisingly, this refusal "dealt a serious political blow to relations between Ankara and Washington. Many U.S. officials saw the vote as a lack of solidarity on Turkey's part and a betrayal of a loyal ally."[36]

Indeed, the George W. Bush administration (notably the Pentagon) was extremely outraged. Paul Wolfowitz, then Deputy Secretary of Defense, complained that the Turkish military "did not play the strong leadership role we would have expected."[37] Donald Rumsfeld, then Secretary of Defense, ascribed the U.S. predicament in Iraq to Turkey's refusal to grant access to American forces:

Had we been successful in getting the 4th infantry division to come in through Turkey in the north when our forces were coming up from the south out of Kuwait, I belief that a considerably smaller number of the Baathists and the

regime elements would have escaped. More would have been captured or killed, and as a result, the insurgency would have been at a lesser intensity than it is today.[38]

The already existing U.S.-fostered Kurdish autonomous entity in northern Iraq, which emerged as a result of Iraq's defeat in the 1991 Gulf War, developed into the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG), acquiring a semi-state status. The rise of the U.S.-backed KRG further heightened Turkish fears that "an autonomous Kurdish state in northern Iraq will fuel secessionist tendencies among the estimated 14 million Kurds concentrated in Turkey's southeast border region."[39] It was alleged that KRG provided a safe haven for Turkish Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), which, since June 2004, has waged a series of armed attacks on Turkey's territories from its sanctuaries in northern Iraq. Washington's ambivalence towards the Kurdish issue, with respect to its impact on Turkey's territorial integrity, reinforced the speculation that "the United States is seeking to weaken Turkey by providing support to the Kurds and even to the PKK."[40]

Prime Minister Erdogan indirectly accused the U.S. of supporting the PKK: "we can see that many of the confiscated weapons are U.S.-made. It is not clear whether [the U.S. is] supplying the weapons or they are getting them from elsewhere."[41] Graham Fuller, a former CIA officer, and noted commentator on Turkish affairs, suggested that the U.S. supports the PKK terrorists.[42] Understandably, the George W. Bush administration, while classifying the PKK as a terrorist organization, was unwilling to support any massive cross-border military campaign by Ankara against PKK sanctuaries in northern Iraq, fearing that such measures could destabilize the U.S.-fostered Kurdish enclave.

To be sure, aggravated by the PKK's undeterred bloody attacks in the fall of 2007, Turkey assertively intended to conduct a massive cross-border military operation targeting the PKK's training camps and sanctuaries in northern Iraq. However, the Turkish Prime Minister's visit to Washington on November 5, 2007, and his discussions with top U.S. officials, including President George W. Bush, seemed to have succeeded in pacifying Erdogan's fears, preventing Turkey's military campaign. In compromise, "the President promised to provide Turkey with actionable intelligence to use against the PKK. …… [Nonetheless], Turkish forces have launched targeted air and ground strikes against PKK camps and other facilities located in the mountains of northern Iraq."[43] In brief, discordant U.S. policies on the Kurdish issue, notably its

inconsistent stance towards the PKK, reinforced the perceived notion of 'America's double standards', corroding U.S. credibility, and contributing to the heightening of anti-Americanism in Turkey.

The second factor that strained U.S.-Turkish alliance was Turkey's posture towards Syria and Iran, which was increasingly at odds with American orientations. Two geostrategic forces appeared to have shaped Turkey's approaches to Iran and Syria. First, the three countries are united by the Kurdish threat, where their respective Kurdish populations, to varying degrees, harbor separatist tendencies. Second, Turkey's quest for regional power status, under the guidance of the AKP-invented doctrine of 'zero problems with neighbors' reinforced Turkey's reconciliatory spirit, leading to rapprochements with both Syria and Iran.

Historically, Turkish-Iranian relations experienced difficulties. As two major allies of the U.S. during the Cold War, Turkey and Iran put aside their historical discords. With the emergence of revolutionary Iran (1979) the two countries' geopolitical rivalry resurrected, reflecting their sharply different worldviews and ideological predispositions. Thanks to the AKP's geopolitical conceptualization of strategic depth; zero problems with neighbors; and Turkey's aspired regional primacy, Turkish-Iranian bilateral ties improved significantly. Essentially, three elements seemed to have intertwined Turkish-Iranian interests, running at odd with U.S. geostrategic preferences. First, the shared Kurdish threat remained the single most strategic locomotive that inevitably heightened the two countries' mutual interdependence. Thus, they signed a security agreement in 2004 that classified the PKK as a terrorist organization. The anti-Kurdish coalition (Turkey, Iran, and Syria) has increasingly grown skeptical about the U.S entanglement in the Kurdish issue. Indeed, as the primary backer of the Iraqi Kurdish entity – the potentially key mobelizer of Kurdish nationalism in the region – the U.S. has implicitly been viewed as a source of instigation, heightening the regionally perceived Kurdish security threat.[44]

Second, Iran's abundant oil and gas resources provided a point of convergence in the bilateral Turkish-Iranian cooperation. Demonstrating a defiant attitude towards American endeavors to isolate Iran over its nuclear program, [45] Turkey firmly sought to tighten its economic ties with Iran via a series of energy agreements. Chief among them was the July 2007 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the construction of a new pipeline that would transport 40 billion cubic meters of Iranian and Turcoman gas to Europe via Turkey (the project is scheduled to be

completed by 2013). The treaty also granted the Turkish Petroleum Corporation (TPAO) the concession to develop Iran's energy infrastructure in South Pars.[46] With Tehran as Turkey's second largest natural gas supplier (after Russia), Turkish-Iranian cooperation – in contrary to U.S. desire – will likely mountain.

Finally, while Turkey assertively opposed Iran's quest for weapons of mass destruction, its approach to Iran's nuclear program diverged from that of the U.S. and its western allies. To be sure, Turkey recognizes Iran's right to develop nuclear technology for peaceful purposes. Much to the dismay of the U.S., Turkey demonstrated a decisive stance against all forms of military actions, calling instead for diplomatic alternatives to curtail Iran's nuclear aspirations. Iran's emergence as a nuclear power would impact the regional balance of power, impeding Turkey's potential regional superiority. Nonetheless, Ankara, given its growingly multifaceted interest-based ties with Tehran, is highly unlikely to yield to Washington's interventionist measures against Iran, which Turkey perceived as destabilizing.[47]

Turkish-Syrian relations were historically marked by various types of strains, ranging from border disputes to military frictions. The AKP's reconciliatory foreign policy induced Syria to more into the Turkish regional orbit. The shared Kurdish threat, which has growingly been expanding since the U.S. invasion of Iraq (2003), as well as Iraq's uncertainty solidified the two countries' mutual interests. They succeeded in resolving their conflicts over water supplies (from Tigris and Euphrates rivers), territorial disputes, and the Kurdish question. Bilateral trade improved significantly. Employing its cordial ties with Syria and Israel, Turkey initiated proximity talks between the two countries in 2008. After five rounds of indirect negotiations, the Turkish initiative was aborted by Israel's Operation Cast Lead started against Gaza in December 2008-January 2009, when Turkey condemned Israel's ruthless behavior, denouncing this act as 'state terrorism'. As with Iran, Turkey's rapprochement with Syria conflicted with the U.S. endeavors to isolate Damascus, further poisoning U.S.-Turkish relations.[48]

The third Middle Eastern dimension that defined the broader scheme of U.S.-Turkish partnership was the Arab-Israeli conflict, where the two countries' relatively discordant perceptions contributed to the deterioration of their bilateral ties. Turkey, under Kemalism, was the first Muslim state to recognize Israel in 1949. Henceforth, Turkey's Middle East posture was largely identified with the Western, particularly American, orientations, lacking an

independently nationalist-based visionary approach. By the 1990s, the two countries' military and intelligence cooperation developed significantly. The AKP's Turkey, by contrast, embraced a strategically defiant attitude towards the American-Israeli approaches, growingly drifting away from the typically pro-Israel western position. Turkey's support for Hamas is evident. After the latter's stunning victory in the Palestinian parliamentary election of February 2006, Turkey hosted a high-ranking delegation led by Khalid Meshal. Irritating both Israel and the U.S., this act provocatively undermined Washington's efforts to isolate Hamas. Justifying his country's diplomatic approach, Abdullah Gul, then Turkey's Foreign Minister, maintained: "We want to contribute to the peace process between the two countries. This is why we gave the Hamas delegation the message of 'leave off weapons, and recognize Israel as legitimate.' Whether or not they take this advice is up to them."[49]

Israel's military attacks on Lebanon in the summer of 2006 further deepened U.S.-Turkish divergence. Prime Minister Erdogan strongly condemned Israel's military act, which, he asserted, "defiles the sense of justice."[50] He also denounced the U.S. passivity and failure to restrain Israel's aggression. Similarly, Foreign Minister Gul "warned that U.S. support for Israel's actions could turn Turks and others in the Middle East even further against the United Staes."[51] Israel's Operation Cast Lead against Gaza in December 2008-January 2009 provoked Turkish outrage. Turkish leaders condemned Israel for committing genocide in Gaza. In Ordagan's terms, "they [the Israelis] have once again showed to the world that they know how good they are at killing people, [warning that] Turkey's hostility is as strong as its friendship is valuable."[52] Turkish-Israeli relations severely deteriorated as a result of the free Gaza flotilla incident of May 2010 when nine Turkish civilians were killed by the Israeli naval commandos and dozens of pro-Palestinian activists from various nationalities (the majority of whom were Turkish citizens) were wounded.[53] This act prompted Turkish officials to describe Israel as a 'terrorist state', further compounding the two countries already deteriorating relations. Turkey's strained relations with Israel and its close ties with Hamas seemed to have provoked some American lawmakers, reinforcing their suspicious views of the AKP's alleged Islamist agenda, and hence aggravating the U.S.-Turkish alliance.[54]

At this particular moment in history, when profound changes swept the Middle East, Turkish-Israeli rifts tended to undermine the U.S. regional objectives. The two countries are amongst the

most vital allies of the United States. The Obama administration, therefore, sought to persuade Turkey and Israel to restore their diplomatic ties, which had been frozen since 2010, as a result of the free Gaza flotilla incident where nine Turks were killed by the Israeli commandos. During his visit to Israel in March 2013, president Obama brokered an agreement between Turkey and Israel to normalize their relations. The President's endeavors succeeded in persuading the Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu to apologize to the Turkish prime minster, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who accepted Netanyahu's gesture.[55] The administration's eagerness to have Turkish-Israeli relationship fully normalized was reemphasized by the U.S. Secretary of State, John Kerry, During his visit to Turkey in April 2013. Kerry called on Turkey and Israel to fulfill the American-engineered rapprochement, including exchange of ambassadors.[56]

With the downfall of the pro-American autocrats, as a result of the Arab Spring, the stagnation of the Middle East peace process, and the escalation of Iran's nuclear program, the Obama administration appeared to be determined to persuade America's two most closest allies to restore their diplomatic ties. The regional geopolitical changes, notably the escalation to power of Islamist parties, will further isolate Israel, and empower Turkey which enjoys cordial relations with the Palestinian Hamas, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, and Tunisian El Nahda. The post-Arab Spring political landscape will likely strengthen Turkey's geostrategic capacity as a regional power, enabling it to play crucial roles in the region's issues, particularly the American-orchestrated peace process.

Clearly, "deteriorating relations between Israel and Turkey have created more tensions between Washington and Ankara. … The Obama administration fears that Turkey, under Erdogan, has taken the clash with Israel to a dangerous level. In contrast, the Turkish government is bitter about America's pro-Israel bias, a blinder that, in its opinion, fuels regional instability and conflict."[57] The AKP's attitude towards Israel appears to be informed by the former's Islamist worldview and fueled by Israel's persistent aggressions. During his visit to the Arab Spring states, Egypt, Libya, and Tunisia, in September 2011, Erdogan warned, "Israel will no longer be able to do what it wants in the Mediterranean, and you will be seeing Turkish warships in this sea."[58] Agitated by Erdogan's threat, the *New York Times* commented, "Mr. Erdogan's increasingly shrill denunciations of Israel are a danger to the region as well as to Turkey."[59]

Indeed, the falling-out with Israel generated a widespread criticism within various pro-Israel circles, where Turkey's posture towards Israel was equated to the AKP's perceived Islamist agenda. "Neoconservatives and pro-Israel voices have launched a concerted campaign to demonize Erdogan, and the AKP, his governing party, and have equated Turkey's distancing itself from Israel with a turn toward an Islamist Agenda. Commentators and members of Congress have questioned whether Turkey can be a reliable ally and whether Washington should maintain close relations with Ankara."[60]

With the AKP in power, Turkey will likely continue to embrace a decisive attitude towards Israel's arrogant policies. Nonetheless, with Turkey emerging as a geopolitical regional power, U.S.-Turkish alliance cannot be solely viewed through the narrow Israeli lens. Turkey is viewed as a counterweight to Iran, a model of Islamist governance that combines Islam and democracy, and a potential key player in the Middle East peace process, due to its ideological and emotional ties with the ruling Islamist factions, particularly the Egyptian Freedom and Justice Party and Palestinian Hamas, whose engagement is of critical importance to any regional settlements.

The European Dimension

Breaking with Turkey's Islamist legacy, Ataturk sought to identify the new Turkish republic with the West. To Kemalists, Westernization was not a mere interest-based reorientation. Rather, it was a civilizational choice, where Turkey's geopolitical identity was intended to be made in the western image, equating modernization to westernization and secularization. During the Cold War, Turkish-Western relations were dominated by the military-strategic cooperation, whereas the socio-political, cultural, and economic dimensions were noticeably shrunken. Notwithstanding Turkey's undeterred quests for European membership – which predate the EU – the destiny of its western orientation appears to be ambiguous. Nonetheless, identified with economic prosperity, and political stability, the European model continued to serve as a centre of gravity, energizing Turkish western orientation.[61]

In the 1990s, Turkey was plagued by a combination of economic deterioration, security threats (posed by the Kurdistan Workers Party), and political instability, undermining its credentials as a potential EU member. Indeed, the advent to power of the Islamist Refah Party (RP), and the ousting of Prime Minister Erbakan through a soft military coup (1997) dragged

Turkey to a political polarization, reinforcing its typical image as a brittle military-controlled democracy, and hence curtailing its opportunity for EU membership. Thus, "at the Luxembourg Summit in December 1997, however, the EU decided to exclude Turkey from its enlargement process, refusing even to recognize it as an official 'candidate' for membership. Instead, it was placed in a special category, behind twelve other aspiring members from Central and Eastern Europe."[62] However, Turkey regained its candidacy status at the Helsinki Summit in December 1999, when the summit declaration stated that "Turkey is a candidate state destined to join the Union on the basis of the same criteria as applied to the other candidate states."[63]

With the AKP's ascendance to power in 2002, EU membership became one of the strategically key pillars of Turkish foreign policy. The AKP's western orientation not only represented a geopolitical shift from the typically anti-Western rhetoric of its predecessors (notably the Refah Party), but also exemplified a sense of political realism. Complying with the Copenhagen Criteria of 1993, [64] the AKP government ardently launched a series constitutional reforms. Consequently, at its summit in Brussels in December 2004, the EU Council recognized Turkey's fulfillment of the Copenhagen political criteria, and hence decide to "open accession negotiation with Turkey without delay."[65] However, the accession negotiation formally began in October 2005. These talks appeared to be open-ended, failing to deliver tangibly significant progress.

In practical terms, Turkey's genuine integration into the European Union is seemingly a farfetched aspiration. Indeed, Turkey's full membership has growingly been opposed by France, Greece, Germany, and, to lesser extent, Austria. The 'privileged partnership' alternative, which was promoted by France, largely disillusioned the Turks with the EU, intensifying their feeling of cultural discrimination. Two categorical interpretations seemed to have accounted for the European ambivalence towards Turkey's accession to the EU: geopolitically, Turkey's large population of 70 million (the second largest country after Germany), coupled with its comparatively unsteady economic growth and relatively dysfunctional political setting generated public concerns and insecurities about unemployment and immigration in Europe. Also, the Cyprus issue contributed to Turkey's alienation; and culturally, European perception of Turkey's civilizational identity appeared to be rooted in the latter's Islamic-oriented historical legacy, where Islam, in the western collective memory, has historically been conceived to be the 'other'.

Hence, Turkey's denial of eventual accession appears to be attributed to its perceived cultural identity as a populously leading Muslim country with a vibrant potential to emerge as a regional power. The AKP's vigorous foreign policy and the alleged surge of what came to be termed 'New-Ottomanism' seemed to have fueled this European ill-defined perception.[66]

Clearly, successive U.S. administrations advocated Turkey's accession to the EU. For it is in the U.S. interest to have Turkey anchored in the western-led military, economic, and socio-political structures (NATO and the EU). Turkey's disillusionment with the EU coincided, for the first time in its contemporary history, with its strained relations with the U.S., jeopardizing Turkish-Western partnership, and hence propelling Turkey further towards the Middle Eastern and Eurasian preferences.[67]

The Eurasian Alternative

Turkish disillusionment with the West, coupled with the AKP's propensity to diversify the country's geostrategic alternatives precipitately prompted Turkey's Eurasian orientation. To this end, Russia, Central Asia, and the Caucasus fell within Turkish would-be-sphere of geostrategic aspiration. Understandably, the Turkish quest for regional power status can only be achieved through constructing grounded partnerships with the Middle East and Eurasia (particularly Central Asia and the Caucasus) – the two primary regions where Turkey enjoys a combination of cultural, ethnic, and historical ties. Turkey's relative economic success, strategic preeminence, and diplomatic dynamism appeared to have generated a sense of regional superiority, prompting the Turks further to broaden their regional hegemony under the guidance of the AKP-invented doctrines of 'strategic depth', and 'zero-problem with neighbors'. Briefly, enhancement of Turkish influence in Eurasia serves two goals simultaneously: it reinforces Turkey's regional hegemonic status; and, as a consequence, heightens its centrality to the West, particularly the U.S.

The post-Cold War landscape liberated Turkey's geostrategic calculations, presenting it with an opportunity to reorient its posture towards Russia – a significant, if not the most significant, Eurasian pivot. Chiefly, energy seemed to have constituted the primary driving force that dynamically bolstered the Turkish-Russian partnership, enabling the two countries to surmount both their contentious historical legacy, and their geopolitical divergence on such issues as

Bosnia, Kosovo, and Chechnya. Russia is Turkey's largest energy supplier; it is "the source of 65 percent of Turkey's natural gas and 40 percent of its crude oil.[68] Furthermore, Turkish-Russian closeness aimed at weakening the U.S. leverage in Central Asia and the Caucasus. Nonetheless, Russian growing concerns about Turkey's potential emergence as a regional power will likely decelerate the two countries' bilateral ties, "because both nations have competing ambitions for restoring their spheres of influence in Eurasia. …….. These differences may become insurmountable obstacles to strategic partnership, despite the two countries current considerable economic cooperation and warm relations."[69] Clearly, "the Russian and Turkish elites' frustration with the West, particularly with the policies of the U.S. administration, proves to be an inadequate basis for the truly strategic relationship."[70] Potentially, therefore, Turkish-Russian partnership does not possess the capacity to evolve as an equivalent substitute for Turkey's deeply rooted security, economic, and political ties with the West, particularly the U.S.

Since the end of the Cold War, Turkey has striven to expand its influence in Central Asia (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan), and the Caucasus (Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Georgia).[71] With the AKP's escalation to power, Turkish Central Asian and Caucasian engagements further heightened, reflecting the Party's conceptualization of Turkey's must-be geopolitical status as a regional power. Three dimensions appeared to have shaped Turkey's Central Asian and Caucasian posture: economically, Turkey increasingly seeks to turn itself into an entrenched energy hub through which these two regions' gas and oil are transferred to Europe via a well-sophisticated Turkish-controlled regional network of pipelines, reinforcing Turkey's hoped-for regional centrality as a key energy player; geopolitically, these two regions fall into Turkish traditional sphere of influence. The Central Sian republics (except Tajikistan), and Azerbaijan belong to the Turkic world ethnically, culturally and linguistically. The other three states (Georgia, Armenia, and Tajikistan), to some extent, share historical ties with Turkey; finally, the security dimension plays crucial role in shaping Turkey's Central Asian and Caucasian perception – instability of these two regions will impact Turkey's own national security.[72]

Development of U.S. Policy towards Turkey

U.S. policy towards Turkey has gone through various stages and operated in diverse geostrategic contexts. Nonetheless, Turkey's centrality to U.S. regional hegemony remains crucial,

notwithstanding the formative transformations of the global, regional, and domestic contexts. The Islamist factor (advent to power of an Islamist-rooted party) played a formative role in shaping the American perception of Turkey. U.S. policy towards Turkey is a product of the diverse perceptions of such players as the White House, the State Department, the Congress, and interest groups, notably the Greek and Israeli lobbies. These perceptions, in turn, seemed to have been shaped by both the AKP's vigorous foreign policy that frequently placed Turkey at odds with the U.S. geostrategic worldview, notably in the Middle East, and the stereotypical geopolitical image of Islamism as a threat to U.S. vital interests. With the AKP's victory in the parliamentary election of June 2011 (it garnered 50% of the popular vote); controversially heated debates over the U.S. posture towards Turkey will likely further heighten, revealing the discordant nature of U.S. policy on Turkey in particular and Islam in power in general.

The Cold War Interlude

Cold War geostrategic implications forced both countries to establish such a security-based alliance that equally fortified their mutual interests against the common communist threat. The ruling Kemalist establishment needed American support to confront the Soviet-backed Turkish communists, whereas Washington needed Turkey as a strategic bulwark against the red flood. Indeed, Turkey's geographic location, cultural influence, and historical ties reinforced its centrality to the containment of the Soviet Union. The Truman Doctrine of 1947 laid the foundation for U.S.-Turkish security cooperation that spanned for nearly fifty years, subordinating all other issues, including democratization and human rights, to the Cold War security calculations. Throughout the Cold War era, Turkey was annexed as a mere security buffer, functioning within the limits of the American grand strategy of containment.

In practical terms, the U.S.-Turkish strategic partnership was exemplified by the Korean War (1950 – 1953), when "15,000 Turkish troops fought alongside American soldiers."[73] Integrating Turkey to the western security system, the U.S. supported the former's accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in 1952. "During the ensuing decades, Turkey maintained the second largest military in NATO and played a critical role in the defense of Europe."[74] Turkey's security role extended to the Middle East, where its participation in the American-fostered Baghdad pact of 1955 – along with the United Kingdom, Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan,

and Iraq – manifested the extent to which the country was associated with the West's security arrangement.

Beyond the security dimension, Turkey, as a result of its association with the West, was required to adjust its political setting to fulfill the democratic requirements. To be sure, Ataturk tended to anchor Turkey geopolitically with the West, breaking with the Ottoman legacy. Kemalism, therefore, sought to transform the republic into a modern country in the western image. Hence, "the prospect of joining NATO and qualifying for U.S. assistance under the Marshall plan encouraged Inonu [Ataturk's successor] to hold multiparty elections."[75] Nonetheless, the Kemalist establishment further tightened its grip on power. During the Cold War, three civilian governments were ousted – in 1960, 1970, and 1980 – through military coups. The deposed prime minister in the 1960 coup, Adnan Menderes, was sentenced to death. Influenced by Cold War geostrategic calculations, the U.S. embraced a passively ambivalent attitude towards Kemalist violations of human rights democratic principles, preferring stability over democracy. Thus, the Kemalist-oriented military continued to control the country's political activism throughout the Cold War era. Turkey, therefore, failed to evolve a genuinely pluralistic system, maintaining instead a semi-authoritarian outlook.

A few significant events occasionally strained U.S.-Turkish alliance. The Cuban Missile Crisis forced President John F. Kennedy in 1962 – as part of a deal with the Soviet Union – to dismantle the nuclear missiles the U.S. based in Turkey in 1957. This action infuriatingly stimulated Ankara's concerns, questioning the commitment of the United States as a reliably strategic partner. In 1964, President Lyndon Johnson threatened to withhold U.S. support if Turkey invaded Cyprus. He further stated that any Turkish unilateral intervention – that might result in Soviet engagement – would not be supported by NATO. However, the most critically provoking event that severely strained the U.S.-Turkish alliance during the Cold War was Turkey's invasion of Cyprus in 1974, using U.S.-supplied equipments. The U.S. responded by imposing a four-year (1974-1978) arms embargo.[76] And "Ankara retaliated by suspending the U.S. Defense Cooperation Agreement of 1969 and placing limitations on all U.S. military activities in Turkey except those directly related to NATO."[77]

Two watersheds seemed to have rehabilitated the U.S.-Turkish partnership, where Turkey regained its strategic vitality. First, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (1979) further heightened

Turkey's centrality to U.S. hegemonic calculation in Southwest Asia. Thus, the U.S. "stepped up its aid to Turkey in this period, [where U.S. military aid peaked at $ 715 million in 1984], and recovered the use of its [military] beses."[78] Second, the loss of Iran (1979) as a key strategic ally of the U.S. solidified the U.S.-Turkish alliance. Indeed, the pro-American Shah's regime was a pillar of strength to U.S regional supremacy. Its ouster, therefore, undermined the U.S. strategic posture in the Persian Gulf. Alternatively, Turkey emerged as a potential geopolitical rival, counterbalancing the anti-American revolutionary Iran. The end of the Cold War drastically altered the geopolitical nature of U.S.-Turkish relationship.

The Post-Cold War Context

The end of the Cold War and the consequent disappearance of the Soviet threat impacted the nature and the scope of the U.S.-Turkish alliance. Turkey's role as a bulwark against Soviet expansion became obsolete. Nonetheless, the post-Cold War geopolitical landscape further heightened Turkey's geostrategic significance. Indeed, "no longer a flank state, Turkey found itself at crossroads of a new strategic landscape that includes areas where it had long-standing interests, historical ties, or both."[79] A combination of geopolitical, historical, and cultural considerations enabled Turkey to establish itself as a major regional power, potentially possessing the geostrategic capacity to play decisive roles in three strategically critical areas: the Middle East; central Asia/Caucasus; and the Balkans. Furthermore, the absence of the common communist threat liberated Turkey's geostrategic calculations, empowering the country freely to envision its geopolitical preferences.

The post-Cold War U.S.-Turkish frictions were inaugurated by the 1991 Gulf War, when, as a consequence of Iraq's defeat and disintegration, a U.S.-fostered Kurdish autonomous entity emerged, posing a serious threat to Turkish national security. Although, for Washington, "the experience of 1990-91 reinforced the image of Turkey as a strategic ally, at the forefront of new security challenges emanating from the Middle East, ….. [for Ankara, the Gulf War is] where the trouble started."[80] Seizing the moment, Turkish president Turgot Ozal (1989-1993) sought to demonstrate Turkey's strategic centrality to the U.S., reinforcing his country's post-Cold War image as an indispensable regional hub. He, therefore, despite most of his top advisors' objection, threw his full support behind the U.S.-led military campaign against Iraq.

Thus, Ankara granted access to U.S. aircraft operating from Incirlik Air Base; deployed 100,000 Turkish troops along the border with Iraq; closed down the Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline, through which Iraq's oil was brought to the global market; sheltered nearly half a million Kurdish refugees after the U.S. encouraged 1991 uprising that aimed at toppling Saddam's regime, and granted access to allied aircraft to fly sorties to monitor the no-fly zone over northern Iraq.[81] Nonetheless, Turkey "turned out to be among the losers in the post-War political setup,"[82] where "Turks felt they had not been sufficiently compensated for either support they had given the United States or the economic losses they had incurred as a result of that support."[83] Throughout the 1990s, U.S.-Turkish relations experienced a series of divergent views over such issues as the Kurdish problem, and economic sanctions and military operations against Iraq. Chiefly, the Kurdish question has persistently constituted the primary source of U.S.-Turkish friction, where "the establishment of a de facto Kurdish state in northern Iraq under Western protection gave new impetus to Kurdish nationalism and provided a logistical base for attacks on Turkish territory by Kurdish separatists in the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)."[84]

The Clinton administration (1993-2001) inherited a relatively contentious partnership. Recognizing the geopolitical vitality of Turkey, notably with respect to U.S. strategy on Iraq, the administration sought to bridge the gap between the two countries: "it backed Turkish loan guarantees from the International Monetary Fund, designated Turkey as a 'Big Emerging Market,' pushed for new pipelines to be built across Turkey to get Caspian oil and gas to the Mediterranean, strongly supported Turkey's membership in the European Union, and authorized ongoing arms sales to Turkey, often in the face of pressure from domestic lobbies against doing so."[85]

The Clinton administration's efforts to solidify the U.S.-Turkish alliance culminated in the capture of PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan in 1999, when U.S. intelligence apparatuses contributed to the success of the operation, the role that earned America a wide admiration in Turkey. President Clinton's visit to Turkey in November 1999 signaled the relatively cordial characteristic of the bilateral ties. His historic speech to the Turkish parliament and his sympathetic visit to the survivors of the August 1999 earthquake further strengthened the U.S.-Turkish partnership, both emotionally and politically. To be sure, the 9/11 consequent Global War on Terror (GWoT) that assertively captured the George W. Bush two-term presidency

(2001-2009), coupled with the escalation to power of an Islamic-rooted party (AKP) in 2002, seemed to have worsened relations between the two nations.

Upon its ascendance to power in 2002, the Justice and Development Party (AKP) was praised by the George W. Bush administration as a moderate model of political Islam, introducing the AKP's version as the globally recognized variant of Islamism. Three factors seemed to have accounted for U.S. recognition of the AKP. First, the party evolved in a global context where the administration was desperate for strategic partners in its Global War on Terror (GWoT). The U.S was involved in two simultaneous wars in Afghanistan and Iraq – two fronts where Turkey's strategic engagement was critical. Second, the AKP formally broke with its Islamic reference, introducing itself instead as a democratic conservative party committed to the secular character of the Turkish republic. Third, unlike its predecessors, notably the Refah Party (RP), the AKP embarked on a series of western orientations that pacified Turkey's western allies, and hence defused the western misconception about the combination of 'Islam and power'. Indeed, EU accession, NATO membership, and strategic partnership with the U.S. constituted geostrategic pillars of the AKP's foreign policy.[86]

Visiting Turkey on his first overseas trip, President Barack Obama sought to both emphasize Turkey's centrality to the U.S., and reach out to the Muslim world, restoring the deeply devastated American ties with the vast majority of Muslims all over the globe. The selection of Ankara to serve as a platform through which the President addressed the Muslim world signified Turkey's historical, civilizational, and strategic weight. In his historic remarks to the Turkish Parliament (delivered on April 6, 2009), the President asserted: "Turkey is a critical ally. Turkey is an important part of Europe. And Turkey and the United States must stand together and work together to overcome the challenges of our time ……Let me be clear: the United States strongly supports Turkey's bid to become a member of the European Union."[87] The Obama administration's efforts to restore U.S.-Turkish relations, which the President defined as 'model partnership,'[88] were aborted by the two countries' divergent stances on the Gaza flotilla incident (May 2010), and the Iranian nuclear program, where Turkey voted 'no' on the UN Security Council sanctions against Iran (June 2010).

Turkey's assertive Middle East posture triggered an anti-Turkish wave in the U.S. Congress, further jeopardizing the U.S.-Turkish alliance. On June 9, 2010, Congressman Michael Pence

warned that "Turkey needs to decide whether its present course is in its long-term interest."[89] Democratic Congressman, Gary Ackerman, stigmatized Turkey's foreign policy as "rife with illegality, irresponsibility, and hypocrisy."[90] Howard L. Berman, chairman of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, in a full committee hearing dedicated to Turkey, condemned Turkish policies on various Middle East issues, notably the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Iranian nuclear program. And he accusatorily questioned Turkey's western orientations as well as the AKP's commitment to democracy.[91] Many other committee members expressed their concerns about Turkey's so-called drift from the West.[92] The Congress, by and large, seemed to have been provoked by Turkey's anti-Israeli posture and pro-Iranian sentiment.

Hence, in an attempt to undermine Turkey's moral authority, U.S policymakers tended to raise the alleged Armenian genocide issue of 1915. On March 4, 2010, the House Foreign Affairs Committee passed the 'Affirmation of the United States Record on the Armenian Genocide' resolution by a vote of 23 to 22, enormously provoking Turkey's government, which immediately recalled its Ambassador from Washington. Ironically, President Obama as well as Vice President Joe Biden and Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, "had a similar position when they were in the Senate."[93] However, the Obama administration, as Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, pronounced "strongly opposes the resolution that passed by only one vote in the House Committee and will work hard to make sure that it does not go to the House floor."[94]

Clearly, anti-Turkish lobbies in U.S. Congress seemed to have played vital roles in shaping U.S. orientation towards Turkey. Particularly, Israeli, Armenian, Kurdish, Greek, and Cypriot lobbies invariably sought to influence the trajectory of U.S.-Turkish relations. Hence, "Turkey is able to get across some politics to the White House, State Department, or Pentagon even if there is a difference in opinion. And, to some extent, it receives sympathy, but with Congress it is different."[95] For "Turkey is not considered a reliable ally anymore in the United States Congress."[96] Turkey's vigorously independent foreign policy that appeared at odds with U.S. interests, notably in the Middle East, the Balkans, and Central Asia/Caucasus, seemed to have justified the endeavors of these anti-Turkish powerhouses, most notably the pro-Israeli and pro-Armenian groups.[97]

American Perceptions of the Turkish Experiment

Addressed within the framework of 'American perception of Islamism', the Turkish case generated controversially heated debates over three interdependently essential themes: the extent to which AKP's orientations are informed by its Islamist tendency; the ultimate trajectory of the U.S.-Turkish alliance, in view of the AKP's growingly defiant posture; and the potential impact that Turkish model will have on American perception of Islamism in its broader sense, and the consequent geopolitical stance that Washington may likely embrace on Islamists' advent to power through democratic means.

The extent to which the AKP's domestic and external orientations are informed by its Islamist origin is controversial. The party, as a political entity, frequently denied Islamist identity. Instead, it emphasized its commitment to secularism as a political ideology. To be sure, the AKP's geostrategic creativity lay in its dynamic competence to: appeal to the West, notwithstanding both the party's Islamic roots and its ambitious foreign policy; firmly erode the deep-seated military despotism through a series of systematically planned structural reforms; broaden its electoral constituency, as a result of its stunning economic and political success; and simultaneously, maintain its 'perceived Islamist character', where its Islamist sentiments have been internalized in its formal political behavior.[98]

Indeed, "Erdogan's favorite Islamic motto, 'service to people is service to God', has been effective in justifying and also secularizing the AKP's new policy line. ……The alternative to Kemalist secularism was no longer sought in Islam, but in modern political concepts and institutions such as democracy, human rights, and the rule of law."[99] Noticeably, ideology appeared to have played the principal role in shaping the AKP's orientations. The party's stance on Iran's nuclear program (as demonstrated by Turkey's 'no' vote on UN Security Council sanctions against Iran in June 2010); its solidarity with Hamas and Sudan – with respect to the latter's alleged commitment of genocide in Darfur –; and its increasingly anti-Israeli posture are cases in point.[100] With the revolution that swept the Middle East in 2011, and the consequent emergence of Islamism as potentially central political player, the AKP's experiment harbors the capacity to serve as a model of a pragmatically revised and realistically re-shaped Islamist political modernity.[101]

U.S. perception of the AKP's Turkey seems to be rooted in two dimensions. First, there is Turkey's geostrategic centrality as a major regional power, whose strategic partnership is critical to American vital interests, notably in Turkey's sphere of influence, particularly the Middle East and Central Asia/Caucasus. Second, the AKP's geopolitical trend – which has been associated with the party's Islamic origin – provoked America's phobic concerns, viewing the AKP's regional activism as a potential threat to the U.S. primacy. The Congress, therefore, tended to adopt an accusatory posture towards the AKP, whereas the White House and the State Department embraced a relatively realistic approach to Turkish question. The AKP's vigorous foreign policy ambition will likely remain the arena where the U.S.-Turkish interests contentiously overlap.

The escalating U.S.-Turkish divergence over various Middle Eastern issues, coupled with Turkey's frustration with the EU, undermined the AKP's western orientations, and consequently generated a socio-political backlash against the West in general and the U.S. in particular. Alarmingly, a Transatlantic Trent survey conducted by the German Marshall Fund of the United States in August 2010 showed a dramatic shift in Turkish public opinion attitude towards the West. Only 6% of the Turks polled approved of working closely with Washington, whereas 20% approved of aligning with the Middle East, compared to 10% in 2009. Turkish support for EU membership drastically declined from 73% (in 2004) to 38%. The percentage of Turks who viewed NATO as inessential to their national security eroded to 30%, compared to 53% in 2004.[102] In brief, as a result of the George W. Bush administration's foreign policy, anti-Americanism in Turkey heightened considerably.[103]

The Turkish experiment evolved as a regional hub. Islamists of various trends have monitored the geostrategic creativity of their Turkish counterparts, who, through a series of pragmatically designed domestic and external approaches, relatively succeeded in defusing the western fears of 'Islam and power'. Nonetheless, promoting the Turkish case as a model is seemingly misleading. For both the domestic and external contexts within which Turkish Islamism operates are entirely different from those which prevail in the Arab Middle East. To be sure, the Turkish case has the capacity to offer insights into the way regional Islamism defines its worldview in terms of the prevailing political realities rather than the ideological confinements. To this end, the AKP experiment may serve as a test case for successful U.S.-Islamist rapprochement. However, the

U.S.-Turkish ultimate trajectory will largely be determined by the extent to which Washington will tolerate the AKP's increasingly defiant posture, notably in the foreign policy arena, where the latter's regional aspiration and the former's hegemonic calculations diverge considerably.

With the region's generational changes that resulted in the ouster of several U.S. allies through public uprisings, and the consequent emergence of national or Islamist-oriented landscape, U.S. need for an ally that possesses access to all regional actors has heightened. Turkey, therefore, has become indispensable to U.S. regional hegemony. On the other hand, the AKP's overwhelming electoral triumph in the parliamentary election of June 2011 (it garnered more that 50% of the popular vote) re-emphasized the public mandate that the party has enjoyed since its advent to power in 2002, empowering it further to advance its agenda, especially in the foreign policy arena.[104] As a result, U.S. policy circles, including the Congress, will have to confront an even more vigorous Turkey. Thus, U.S. policy towards Turkey in the years ahead will likely be shaped by genuine American national interests rather than Turkish attitudes towards such U.S. allies as Israel, Armenia, and the Iraqi Kurds.[105]

Conclusion

Represented by the Justice and Development Party (AKP), the Turkish variant of Islamic activism established itself as a controversially unconventional Islamist-rooted political experiment. The AKP is a culmination of Turkish Islamists' march towards political viability. Indeed, throughout their historical quest for power, Turkish Islamists experienced a combination of disillusionment, frustration, and unsteadiness, where their geopolitical discourse ultimately matured into a realistic approach, shaped essentially by political realities rather than mere ideological confines. Arab Islamism, by contrast, was not presented with such relatively democratic setting where its world view could have been tempered by the prevailing political realities rather than the idealistic predispositions.

The AKP's escalation to power (2002) coincided with the George W. Bush administration's desperate search for strategic partners: to defuse the administration's alleged hostility towards Islam as a faith, which was allegedly embodied by its Global War on Terror (GWoT). With its Islamist roots and secular outlook, the AKP appeared to have fitted the bill. Significantly, the AKP's commitment to secular politics, and its foreign policy orientation, remained the two most

critical lenses through which Washington tended to view the party's relevancy to the U.S.-orchestrated standards of good governance.[106] The AKP dismantled the Kemalist version of militant secularism through a series of constitutional reforms that ultimately fortified Turkish democratic setting against any potential military or judicial arbitrary interventions. In the foreign policy arena, the AKP reversed Turkey's typical non-involvement inclination and pro-Western posture, embracing instead an ambitiously independent approach, placing Turkey's strategic preferences at odds with U.S.-hegemonic calculations.[107]

Turkey's vigorous foreign policy generated lingering concerns in Washington about Turkey's long-term orientations. The Obama administration, notably the White House and the State Department, seemed to have adjusted to the new Turkey.[108] Whereas the Congress, influenced by the stereotypical geopolitical image of Islamism as a threat to the U.S. regional hegemony, tended to view Turkish regional activism through the prism of the AKP's Islamist origin, where the party's foreign policy preferences have accusatorily been interpreted in terms of an 'alleged Islamist agenda'. Such issues as the Armenian genocide, Kurdish question, Iraq war, Iran's nuclear program, and Turkey's anti-Israel and pro-Hamas attitudes frequently strained the U.S.-Turkish relationship. Turkey's posture towards these issues has contributed to the undermining of its support within the U.S. policy establishment.[109]

With the popular uprisings that swept the Middle East landscape (2011), and the consequent emergence of moderate Islamists (notably the Muslim Brothers) as key players, the Turkish experiment further reinforced its significance as a source of inspiration, exemplifying, to a certain degree, the compatibility of Islam and democracy.[110] Conclusively, the Turkish case reveals that U.S.-Islamist relations will be paradigmatically determined by two parameters: the extent to which Islamists are willing to secularize their geopolitical discourse; and the foreign policy posture they embrace. The first factor reflects the ideological and cultural dimension of the American-Islamist conflict, whereas the second corresponds to the geostrategic (strategic management of interests) divergence over regional issues.

Notes

1. See Carol Migdalovitz, "Turkey: Selected Foreign Policy Issues and U.S. Views", *Congressional Research Service*, August 2008.
2. See Graham E. Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic: Turkey as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World*, pp. 52-6.
3. See Sabri Sayari, "Turkey's Islamist Challenge", *The Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. 3, No. 3, September 1996, pp. 35-43; Alan Makovsky, "How to Deal With Erbakan", *The Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 1, March 1997, pp. 3-8; Alan Makovsky, "U.S. Relations With Erbakan's Turkey", The Washington Institute for Near Eastern Policy, *Policy Watch 213*, August 8, 1996; US House Committee on Foreign Affairs, "Turkey's New Foreign Policy Direction: Implications for U.S.-Turkish Relations", July 28, 2010.
4. See Stephen F. Larrabee, "Turkey Rediscovers the Middle East", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 86, Issue 4, July/August 2007, pp. 103-114; Saban Kardas, "Turkey: Redrawing the Middle East Map Or Building Sandcastles?", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 17, Issue 1, Spring 2010, 115-136; International Crisis Group, "Turkey and the Middle East: Ambitions and Constraints", 7 April 2010.
5. F. Stephen Larrabee, *Troubled Partnership: U.S.-Turkish Relations in an Era of Global Geopolitical Change*, p. 119.
6. Marina Ottaway and Amr Hamzawy, *Getting to Pluralism: Political Actors in the Arab World*, p. 105.
7. See Philip H. Gordon and Omer Taspinar, *Winning Turkey: How America, Europe, and Turkey Can Revive A Fading Partnership*, pp. 7-25.
8. Angel M. Rabasa & F. Stephen Larrabee, *The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey*, p. 35.
9. See ibid. pp. 38-40; Graham E. Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic*, pp. 40-1 & 49.
10. Roger Hardy, *The Muslim Revolt*, p. 129.
11. See ErselA. ydinli, "A Paradigmatic Shift for the Turkish Generals and an End to the Coup Era in Turkey", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 63, No. 4, Autumn 2009, pp. 581-596.
12. See Gilles Kepel, *Jihad: the Trial of Political Islam*, pp. 342-76; Angel M. Rabasa & Others, *The Muslim World After 9/11*, pp. 175-205; Sabri Sayari, "Turkey's Islamist Challenge", *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. 3, No. 3, September 1996, pp. 35-43.

13. See ErselA ydini, “A Paradigmatic Shift for the Turkish Generals and an End to the Coup Era in Turkey”, *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 63, No. 4, Autumn 2009, pp. 581-596.
14. Quoted in Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam*, p. 212.
15. See ibid, pp. 192-226; Metin Heper, “Islam and Democracy in Turkey: Toward a Reconciliation”, *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 51, No. 1, Winter 1997, PP. 32-45; Alan Makovsky, “How to Deal With Erbakan”, *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 1, March 1997, PP. 3-8; Alan Makovsky, “Erbakan in the Ropes”, *Policy Watch #239*, Washington Institute For Near Eastern Policy, March 12, 1997.
16. Ihsan Dagi, “Turkey’s AKP in Power”, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 19, No. 3, July 2008, pp. 25-30.
17. Angel M. Rabasa and F. Stephen Larrabee, *The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey*, p. 45.
18. M. Hakan Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*, p. 161.
19. See ibid, pp. 144-201; Angel M. Rabasa and F. Stephen Larrabee, *The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey*, pp. 60-7.
20. Graham E. Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic*, p. 51.
21. Henri J. Barkey, “Turkey’s Moment of Inflection”, *Survival*, Vol. 52, Issue 3, 2010, pp. 39-50.
22. Ihsan Dagi, “Turkey’s AKP in Power”, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 19, No. 3, July 2008, pp. 25-30.
23. Henri J. Barkey, “Turkey’s Moment of Inflection”, *Survival*, Vol. 52, Issue 3, 2010, pp. 39-50.
24. Morton Abramowitz and Henri J. Barkey, “Turkey’s Transformers”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 88, Issue 6, Nov/Dec 2009, pp. 118-128.
25. See Soner Cagaptay and H. Akin Unver, “July 2007 Turkish Elections: Winners and Fault lines”, The Washington Institute For Near East Policy, *Research Notes, Number 14*, July 2007; Gareth Jenkins, “Turkey’s Latest Crisis”, *Survival*, Vol. 50, Issue 5, 2008, pp. 5-12; David Shank land, “Islam and Politics in Turkey: the 2007 Presidential Elections and Beyond”, *International Affairs*, Vol. 83, Issue 2, 2007, pp. 357-371.
26. See Emiliano Alessandri, “Democratization and Europeanization in Turkey After the September 12 Referendum”, *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 12, No. 4, 2010, pp. 23-30.

27. See Bulent Aras, “Davutoglu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy”, SETA, *Policy Brief No. 32*, May 2009; F. Stephen Larrabee , “Turkey Rediscovers the Middle East”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 86, Issue 4, July/August 2007, PP. 103-114; Omar Taspinar, “Turkey’s Middle East Policy: Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism”, *Carnegie Papers, Number 10*, September 2008, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.
28. See Angel M. Rabasa and F. Stephen Larrabee, *The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey*, pp. 75-90; F. Stephen Larrabee, “Turkey’s New Geopolitics”, *Survival*, Vol. 52, Issue 2, 2010, pp. 157-180; “Turkey and the Middle East: Ambitions and constraints”, *Europe Report No. 203*, April 2010, International Crisis Group; Saban Kardas, “Turkey: Redrawing the Middle East Map Or Building Sandcastles?”, *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 17, Issue 1, Spring 2010, pp. 115-136.
29. Joshua W. Walker, “The United States and Turkey: Can They Agree to Disagree?”, Centre For Economics and Foreign Policy Studies, November 2010.
30. Gordon Philip, “The United States and Turkey: A View from the Obama Administration”, a lecture delivered at the Brookings Institution, March 17, 2010.
31. Joshua W. Walker, “Reexamining the U.S.-Turkish Alliance”, *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No. 1, Winter 2007-2008, PP. 93-109.
32. Graham E. Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic*, p. 162.
33. Angel M. Rabasa, and F. Stephen Larrabee, *The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey*, pp. 75-6.
34. See Omer Taspinar, “Turkey’s Middle East policies Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism”, *Carnegie Papers, Number 10*, September 2008, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace; Yilmaz Colak, “Ottomanism vs. Kemalism: Collective Memory and Cultural Pluralism in 1990s Turkey”, *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 42, Issue 4, July 2006, pp. 587-602.
35. See Bulent Aras, “Davutoglu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy”, SETA *Policy Brief No. 32*, May 2009.
36. F. Stephen Larrabee, *Troubled Partnership*, p. 12.
37. Quoted in Philip H. Gordon and Omar Taspinar, *Winning Turkey*, p. 32
38. Quoted in ibid, p. 32.
39. Stephen J. Flanagan, and Samuel J. Brannen, “Turkey’s Shifting Dynamics: Implications for U.S.-Turkish Relations”, Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2008.

40. Graham E. Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic*, p. 156.
41. Quoted in John C.K. Daly, "U.S.-Turkish Relations: A Strategic Relationship Under Stress", The Jamestown Foundation, February 2008.
42. See Graham E. Fuller, "Our Fraying Alliance with Turkey", *Los Angeles Times*, October 19, 2007.
43. Carol Migdalovitz, "Turkey: Selected Foreign Policy Issues and U.S. Views", *Congressional Research Service*, August 29, 2008.
44. See Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shifrinson, "The Kurds and Regional Security: An Evaluation of Developments since the Iraq War", Crown Center for Middle East Studies, Brandeis University, December 2006; James Brandon, "Iran's Kurdish Threat: PJAK", *Terrorism Monitor*, Volume IV, Issue 12, June 15, 2006, pp. 1-11.
45. The Iran-Libya Sanctions Act of 1996 stipulated that any foreign company investing more than 20 million dollars in Iran's gas and oil sector is subject to U.S. sanctions.
46. See Spencer P. Boyer and Brian Katulis, "The Neglected Alliance", Center for American Progress, December 2008; Daphne McCurdy, "Turkish-Iranian Relations: When Opposition Attract", *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Vol. 7, No. 2, Summer 2008, pp. 87-106.
47. See Mustafa Kibaroglu and Baris Caglar, "Implications of A Nuclear Iran for Turkey", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 15, Issue 4, Winter 2008, pp. 59-80; Graham E. Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic*, pp. 7-14.
48. See Sami Moubayed, "Turkish-Syrian Relations: The Erdogan Legacy", *Policy Brief No. 25*, October 2008, SETA Foundation for Political, Economic, and Social Research; "Turkey and the Middle East: Ambitions and Constraints", *Europe Report No. 203*, April 2010, International Crisis Group.
49. Quoted in Steven A. Cook and Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall, "Generating Momentum for New Era in U.S.-Turkish Relations", *CSR NO. 15*, June 2006, Council on Foreign Relations, pp. 22-3.
50. Quoted in Philip H. Gordon and Omer Taspinar, *Winning Turkey*, p. 34.
51. Ibid. p. 34.
52. Quoted in Hasan Kosebalaban, "The Crisis In Turkish-Israeli Relations: What Is Its Strategic Significance?", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 17, Issue 3, Fall 2010, pp. 36-50.

53. See Sally McNamara and Others, “Countering Turkey’s Strategic Drift”, *No. 244*, July 26, 2010, Heritage Foundation; J. Scott Carpenter and Soner Cagaptay, “Regenerating the U.S.-Turkey Partnership”, *Policy Note No. 2*, November 2010, the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.
54. See U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs, “Turkey’s New Foreign Policy Direction: Implications for U.S.-Turkish Relations”, July 28, 2010.
55. See Judi Rudoren and Mark Lander, “With Obama as Broker, Israelis and Turkey End Dispute”, *the New York Times*, March 22, 2013.
56. See Michael R. Gordon, “Kerry Moves to Help Turkey and Israel to Restore Ties”, *the New York Times*, April 6, 2013.
57. Fawaz A. Gerges, *The End of America’s Moment?,* Obama and the Middle East”, p. 198.
58. Quoted in ibid. p. 198.
59. *The New York Times*, “Turkey’s Leadership”, September 20, 2011.
60. Fawaz A. Gerges, “*The End of America’s Moment?,* Obama and the Middle East”, pp. 198-99.
61. See Stephen J. Flanagan and Samuel J. Brannen, “Turkey’s Shifting Dynamics: Implications For U.S.-Turkey Relations”, Center For Strategic & International Studies, June 2008; Bahri Yilmaz, “The Relations of Turkey with the European Union: Candidate Forever?”, *Working Paper Series # 167* (2008), Center for European Studies at Harvard University.
62. Philip H. Gordon, and Omar Taspinar, *Winning Turkey*, p. 41.
63. See Presidency conclusions, Helsinki European Council, 10 & 11 December 1999, Paragraph 12.
64. See Presidency Conclusions, European Council in Copenhagen, 21-22 June 1993.
65. Presidency Conclusions, Brussels European Council, 16-17 December 2004, p. 4.
66. See Graham E. Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic*, pp. 145-9; Philip H. Gordon and Omer Taspinar, “Winning Turkey”, pp. 38-48.
67. See Vincent Morelli, “European Union Enlargement: A Status Report on Turkey’s Accession Negotiations”, *Congressional Research Services*, January 10, 2011; Joshua W. Walker, “Reexamining the U.S.-Turkish Alliance”, *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No. 1, Winter 2007-2008, PP. 93-109.

68. Sally McNamara, and Others, “Countering Turkey’s Strategic Drift”, Backgrounder No. 2442, July 26, 2010, The Heritage Foundation.
69. Ibid.
70. Igor Torbakov, “Making Sense of the Current Phase of Turkish-Russian Relations”, *Occasional Paper*, October 2007, the Jamestown Foundation.
71. See Svante E. Cornell, “Geopolitics And Strategic Alignment In The Caucasus And Central Asia”, *Journal Of International Affairs*, Volume IV, Number 2, June-August 1999.
72. See Graham E. Fuller, “*The New Turkish Republic*”, pp. 129-49; Mustafa Aydin, “Turkey’s Caucasus Policies”, *Unisci Discussion Papers, No. 23*, May 2010, Kadir Has University, Istanbul.
73. Steven A. Cook, & Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall, “Generating Momentum for a new Era in U.S.-Turkish Relations”, p. 6.
74. Ibid, p. 6.
75. Philip H. Gordon, and Omer Taspinar, *Wining Turkey: How America, Europe, and Turkey Can Revive a Fading Partnership*, p. 16.
76. See Spencer P. Boyer and Brian Katulis, “The Neglected Alliance: Restoring U.S.-Turkish Relations to Meet 21st Century Challenges”, Center for American Progress, December 2008; Carol Migdalovitz, “Turkey: Selected Foreign Policy Issues and U.S. Views”, *Congressional Research Services*, August 29, 2008; Joshua W. Walker, “The United States and Turkey: Can They Agree to Disagree?”, Center for Economic and Foreign Policy Studies (edam), November 2010.
77. Graham E. Fuller, *The New Turkish Republic*, p. 153.
78. Ibid, p. 154.
79. F. Stephen Larrabee, *Troubled Partnership: U.S.-Turkish Relations in an Era of Global Geopolitical Change*, p. 6.
80. Ian O. Lesser, “Turkey, the United States and the Delusion of Geopolitics”, *Survival*, Vol. 48, Issue 3, 2006, pp. 83-96.
81. See F. Stephen Larrabee, *Turkey as a U.S. Security Partner*, pp. 25-8; Spencer P. Boyer and Brian Katulis, “The Neglected Alliance”, Center for American Progress, December 2008.

82. Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, "Friends No More? The Rise of Anti-American Nationalism in Turkey", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 64, No. 1, Winter 2010, PP. 51-66.
83. F. Stephen Larrabee, *Troubled Partnership*, p. 9.
84. F. Stephen Larrabee, *Turkey as a U.S. Security Partner*, p. 7.
85. Philip H. Gordon, and Omer Taspinar, *Wining Turkey*, p. 28.
86. See Francis G. Burwell, "The Evolution of U.S.-Turkish Relations in a Transatlantic Context", April 2008, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S.; Carol Migdalovitz, "Turkey: Update on Crisis of Identity and Power", *Congressional Research Service*, September 2008.
87. President Barack Obama, "Remarks to Turkish Parliament", Ankara, April 6, 2009.
88. See Nuh Yilmmaz, "U.S.-Turkish Relations: Model Partnership as an Empty Signifier", *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 2011, pp. 19-25.
89. Quoted in Joshua W. Walker, "The United States and Turkey: Can They Agree to Disagree?, November 2010, Center for Economics and Foreign Policy studies.
90. Quoted in ibid.
91. See U.S. House Committee on Foreign Affairs, "Turkey's New Foreign Policy Direction: Implications for U.S.-Turkish Relations", July 28, 2010.
92. See ibid.
93. *Turkey Update*, "The Genocide Vote in Congress and U.S.-Turkish Relations", March 8, 2010, Center for Strategic and International Studies.
94. Quoted in ibid.
95. Mehmet Ali Birand, "Everything Changed when Israeli Lobby Turned Away", *Hurriyet Daily News*, Wednesday, November 24, 2010.
96. "America and Israel Haters Relying On Anti-Turkish Lobbies", *Hurriyet Daily News*, December 16, 2010.
97. See Alexander Iskandaryan and Sergey Minasyan, "Pragmatic Policies vs. Historical Constraints: Analyzing Armenian-Turkish Relations", Caucasus Institute, Yerevan, January 2010.
98. See M. Hakan Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*, pp. 1-13.
99. Ihsan Dagi, "Turkey's AKP in Power", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 19, No. 3, July 2008, pp. 25-30.

100. See Soner Cagaptay and Others, “Turkish Foreign Policy Under the AKP: The Rift with Washington”, *Policy Note No. 3*, January 2011, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

101. See Shadi Hamid, “The Rise of Islamists”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 90, Issue 3, May/June 2011, PP. 44-47.

102. Transatlantic Trends, the German Marshall Fund of the United States, August 2010.

103. See Ioannis N. Grigoriadis, “Friends No More? The Rise of Anti-American Nationalism in Turkey”, *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 64, No. 1, Winter 2010, pp. 51-66.

104. See Bulent Aliriza, “Turkey’s June 12 Elections”, Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011.

105. See Stephen J. Flanagan (editor), “Turkey’s Evolving Dynamics: Strategic Choices for U.S.-Turkey Relations”, Center for Strategic and International Studies”, March 2009.

106. See Soner Cagaptay, “Secularism and Foreign Policy: New Elections, Troubling Trends”, *Policy Focus # 67*, April 2007, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

107. See Ziya Onis, “Multiple Faces of the New Turkish Foreign Policy: Underlying Dynamics and a Critique”, *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 13, No. 1, 2011, pp. 47-65.

108. See Mark Landler, “New Challenges for Obama and Turkey’s Premier”, *The New York Times*, September 19, 2011.

109. See Sinan Ulgen, “A Place in the Sun or Fifteen Minutes of Fame?: Understanding Turkey’s New Foreign Policy”, *Carnegie Papers, Number 1*, December 2010, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

110. See Kemal Kirisci, “Turkey’s Demonstrative Effect and the Transformation of the Middle East”, *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 2011, pp. 33-55.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

Roots of Geopolitical Image

Contextualizing America's Islamist Posture

America's posture towards contemporary Islamist political activism appears to be a product of a multitude of diverse components that have interacted, shaping the ultimate U.S Islamist orientation. In-depth understanding of these geopolitical dynamics is critical to both understanding the fundamental determinants that shape the U.S. grand posture towards Islamist activism, and predicting potential trajectories of American-Islamist relations. Clearly, notwithstanding the tactically different approaches that the post-Cold War administrations have adopted, the U.S. strategic attitude towards Islamists' attainment of power has remained constant: no Islamist government is to be allowed to emerge in the Middle East. Alternatively, the exceedingly growing Islamist voice has been contained through various forms of cosmetic reforms that, on the one hand, hastened the political outlook of the autocratic setting, and, on the other, decelerate the Islamists' escalation to power. Indeed, the U.S. appears to have been lured by the 'managed reform' the incumbent regimes carried out merely to absorb the external pressures, and contain the massively widespread internal demands for reform.[1]

In geopolitical terms, the persistent U.S. reluctance to genuine change that leads to re-distribution of power has essentially been attributed to the predominance of the Islamist force, where Islamists are predicted to be the potential winner of democratization. Apart from the technically diverse approaches that the post-Cold War individual administrations embraced corresponding to their respective interpretations of the Islamic phenomenon, the U.S. strategic preference constantly preferred stability over democracy, impeding an Islamist rise to power. The U.S. geopolitical posture towards Islamism is not a mere political variable dictated by the prevailing balance of power. Rather, it is a geopolitical constant, rooted in a combination of historical, ideological, cultural, and political underpinnings.

Precisely, the U.S opposition to Islamist rule seems to have been underpinned by the stereotypically geopolitical image of 'Islam in power' that evolved in frictional contexts

throughout various historical phases, and was reinforced by such contemporary patterns as the Iranian revolution of 1979, the Taliban's model of governance in Afghanistan (1994-2001), and Al-Qaeda's violent character – just to name a few, where Islamic politics have been equated with such maladies as theology, terrorism, intolerance, anti-modernism, and anti-democracy. In short, the U.S. perception of 'Islamism in power', and the consequent U.S. geostrategic posture towards Islamists, this research concludes, are, to a great extent, shaped by a mixture of cultural and ideological forces. Foreign Policy Analysis approach, with its focus on a broad variety of geopolitical and political factors, provides a contextually relevant ground for analyzing, understanding, and explaining the dynamics that impact foreign policy formulation and implementation.[2]

The Geopolitical Triangle

A combination of historical, political, and ideological factors interdependently shaped America's perception of contemporary Islamic activism. The resultant geopolitical image seemed to have featured Islamism in power as a source of threat to American culture, American core interests, and American hegemonic status, notably in the Middle East. By and large, Islamism has been depicted in western political literature as an undemocratic, intolerant, anti-modern, and violence-oriented movement, seeking to establish a global theological state that would ultimately destruct the prevailing universal values of freedom, tolerance, pluralism, and human rights. The western conceptual stance on Islamic activism, as a political force, is influenced by the stereotypical image of Islam in the West's collective memory. Indeed, Islamism has dogmatically been conceptualized within the context of the Western-Islamic historical, political, and ideological contentious relations, reinforcing the typical image of the 'green menace'.

Post-Cold War American administrations appear to have lacked a comprehensively well-designed theoretical vision with respect to addressing the Islamic resurgence. Instead, they opted for an ad hoc, pragmatic-based strategy, where individual cases were approached within their respective geopolitical context. To be sure, successive administrations shared the geostrategic preference of 'impeding Islamists' ascendance to power', perpetuating the authoritarian status quo. This American chronic malady of preferring stability over democracy contributed to the eruption of the Arab spring at the outset of 2011.

Impact of the Historical Legacy

Throughout history, Islam and the West have persistently been engaged in various military, political, ideological, and cultural confrontations. These conflicts were not mere manifestations of interest-driven aspirations. Rather, they were, to considerable extent, energized by religious and cultural zeal. Upon its rise in the seventh century, Islam expanded both territorially and culturally. Byzantine territories were conquered, where major cities such as Damascus and Jerusalem fell to the Muslim armies.[3] After four centuries, the West, under the leadership of the Church, retaliated by what came to be known as the Crusades – a series of military campaigns that, over a span of 200 years (1095 – 1273), entangled the West in bloody conflicts with the Muslim world. In the Muslim collective conscience, Crusades are notoriously identified with the Christian West's imperialist tendency. The concept was reaffirmed by George W. Bush "when he referred to 'this crusade, this War on Terrorism' in the first week after 9/11."[4]

Marking the end of the Byzantine Empire, the conquest of Constantinople (1453), constituted a historical landmark in the Western-Islamic conflict, serving as a source of cultural and psychological mutual alienation. The Christian recapture of Spain (1492), after 800 years of Muslim reign, "stands out in the Muslim minds as the single most stunning and grievous loss. …… The word 'Andalusia' still evokes in Muslim minds past greatness and glory, as well as deep sadness at the passing of one of the highpoints of medieval Islam."[5] Launched by the French invasion of Egypt (1798), the European colonization of the Muslim world deeply distorted the then existing Islamic-based cultural and political institutions. This included legislative, educational, economic, and socio-political systems. Napoleon's invasion of Egypt, and the subsequent European colonization of the Middle East were introduced as 'civilizing missions' to the backward Muslims, raising them "to the level of a universal culture and civilization".[6] The colonial legacy, in particular, contributed to the deterioration of the Western-Islamic political and cultural relations.

In brief, historical resentments lie at the heart of the mutually tarnished geopolitical images, fuelling the concept of 'Otherness'., History is one of the most powerful dynamics that influences the process of conceptualizing the 'other', where historical events and their relevant consequences provide the raw material for creating mutual geopolitical images. The great tensions between the United States and the Muslim world, as President Barack Obama observed,

are "rooted in historical forces that go beyond any current policy debate. The relationship between Islam and the West includes centuries of coexistence and cooperation, but also conflict and religious wars. More recently, tension has been fed by colonialism that denied rights and opportunities to any Muslims."[7]

The Political Dimension

U.S. policy circles seem to have viewed Islamist activism through three lenses: Islamism in power, particularly Iran, Sudan, and Taliban of Afghanistan; Islamists' attitude towards U.S. unilaterally coercive policy in the Middle East; and the security of Israel. These three factors interactively constitute the political side of the 'geopolitical triangle' that composes the complementary image of Islamism as conceptualized by U.S. policy circles.

The various experiments of Islamists in power have had a considerable impact on the U.S. perception of Islamist activism as a socio-political vehicle for change. These experiments generated a generically stereotypical 'geopolitical image' of Islamism in power. The Iranian revolution of 1979, ant its consequent hostage crisis created in the western mind a notoriously stereotyped image of the Islamic state. The political setting that Khomeini invented in the aftermath of revolution further reinforced the theocratic character of the state, where Iran appeared as an internationally defiant entity. Furthermore, anti-Americanism has categorically become an entrenched characteristic of the revolutionary Iran's geostrategic posture. The combination of Islam and power seem to have been encapsulated in the Iranian experiment as the first contemporary manifestation of Islamism in power. Ten years later (1989), another Islamic movement, the Sudanese National Islamic Front, came to power via a military coup. Despite its efforts to maintain a moderate character, the Sudanese Islamist government failed to appeal to the U.S. The Taliban regime of Afghanistan (1994-2001), which attained power by force, presented an extremist version of Islamist politics. The three cases in question failed, to varying degrees, to fulfill the globally endorsed western standards of democracy, freedom, and human rights.[8] However, the Turkish Justice and Development party (AKP), which, unlike the previous three cases, ascended to power through the ballot box, appeared to have relatively succeeded in reconciling Islam with western democracy, offering a relatively appealing image of 'Islamism in power'.

The second lens through which Islamism has politically been viewed was Islamists' common attitude towards U.S. regional behavior. Constant U.S. support for the pro-American authoritarian regimes resulted in obstructing genuine democratic transformation, impeding Islamists' accession to power. The U.S. invasion of Afghanistan (2001), and Iraq (2003) further discredited the former's regional status. Furthermore, George W. Bush's Global War on Terror (GWoT), coupled with his administration's 'Freedom Agenda' – both were perceived by the vast majority of Muslims as pretexts to dismantle the Muslim world politically and culturally – heightened anti-Americanism tremendously, " not only among the minority of extremists but also among the majority of mainstream Muslims."[9] Islamists assumed a leading role in confronting U.S. regional policy, presenting themselves as an anti-American political locomotive.

Finally, the Israeli factor tends increasingly to influence U.S. perception of and approach to Islamism, militating against U.S.-Islamist potential rapprochement. Islamists' constant reluctance to recognize Israel's right to exist, coupled with their unwavering support for Hamas's strategic choice of armed resistance enraged U.S. policy makers, obstructed the U.S.-orchestrated peace process, posed a continual threat to Israel's security, and, as a result, debilitated U.S. regional geostrategic calculations. Indeed, "to a great extent, a receptive American political class now views the Middle East and their country's role in it through Israel's eyes."[10] Islamists' fundamental posture towards the Arab-Israeli conflict is a principle-centered religious commitment, where Islamic textual doctrines, as interpreted by the vast majority of Islamists, forbid official recognition of foreign occupation of Muslim territories. Nonetheless, moderate Islamists, including Hamas, have demonstrated a willingness to reach tactical settlements with Israel. The U.S. government, on the other hand, driven by local politics, notably the role of the Jewish lobbies in Washington[11], will likely remain committed to Israel's security as determined by Tel Aviv.[12] These two contradicting formulas - Islamist inability to recognize Israel's right to exist and U.S. moral commitment to Israel's security - will continue to serve as a source of friction, further jeopardizing the already contentious U.S.-Islamist trajectory.

The Ideological Divergence

The nature of Islam as an all-encompassing religion and a comprehensive way of life has invariably been the most critical obstacle to the secularization of the Muslim-majority societies. Islam as such has persistently been serving as a mobilizing force against foreign cultural and political annexation. Alternatively, it offers an Islamic-based political ideology, the commitment to which is considered to be an inevitable religious obligation. The essential vocabularies of Islamic political ideology include: the ultimate sovereignty of God (rather than the people); implementation of sharia code of laws; and conformity to Islamic cultural values and worldviews. In such countries as Turkey, secularism, which was enforced by the state apparatuses, failed to dismantle the Islamic-oriented socio-cultural constructs. The rise of the Turkish Islamic-origin Justice and Development Party (AKP) is a case in point.[13] Hence, the dual character of Islamism as a religious/political force cannot be defused so long as Islamists remain committed to their doctrinal ideological predispositions.

The Islamist worldview is primarily shaped by Islam's political character, where separation of religion and state, and differentiation between religious and temporal authorities do not exist. Indeed, Islamism endorses the 'Divine Command Theory', whereby both moral and political judgments are fundamentally based on God's commands, whereas the globally recognized western worldview is based on rationalism, where human reasoning, irrespective of the religious view, is the source of judgment.[14] Adhering to its Islamic-oriented political ideology, Islamism was conceived to be an opposing force to the secular universal values. This anti-secular tendency of Islamism resulted in portraying it "as a potential threat to the cultural, moral, religious foundations of Western civilization that must be successfully defused."[15] Clearly, the primary source of the American-Islamist discord is the ideological divergence on such political fundamentals as: the sources of legislation and moral judgment (sharia or rationalism); the nature and scope of both public and personal liberties; gender equality; definition of modernization (is it necessarily identified with Westernization?); rights of minorities; limits of religious and cultural tolerance; and the engagement of religion as a source of political mobilization, civilizational inspiration, and ideological guidance.

In brief, secularization and Islamization will remain antithetical, perpetuating American-Islamist ideological divergence on the very definition of political modernity. For the two primary

sources of Islam, the Quran and Sunna (Prophet Actions and sayings), are antipathetic to western civilization's foundational concepts of: secularism; rationalism (as a method to seek truth and acquire knowledge); and the absolute sovereignty of people. This ideological divergence, coupled with the contentious historical legacy and tense political ties has reinforced the geopolitical image of Islamism as a defiant force. U.S.-Islamist discord is not a mere clash of interests. Rather, its cultural and ideological dimensions are evident. American geopolitical perceptions of Islamism as an anti-modernization force have not only shaped American cultural attitudes towards Islamic activism, but, perhaps more crucially, oriented U.S. Middle East geostrategic preferences.

Obama's Orientations towards Political Islam: Facing His Formative Moment

Unlike his post-Cold War predecessors, President Barack Obama faced historically unprecedented changes in the Middle East. By the end of his second year in office, the Arab Spring erupted, deposing pro-American autocrats, and hence shifting the balance of power in favor of grassroots political forces, including Islamists. Indeed, the Arab Spring marked the end of the American-fostered power structures in the Middle East. By the time Obama came to power (January 2009), anti-Americanism was at its peak. His predecessor's Middle East foreign policy, notably the invasions of Afghanistan (2001), and Iraq (2003) and the Global War on Terror (GWoT), extremely heightened the anti-American sentiment in the Arab and Muslim world, and severely discredited America's moral authority. Therefore, Obama's main concerns were to enhance America's image, and to restore relations with Muslims all over the globe, breaking sharply with the George W. Bush administration's neoconservative legacy. The Obama administration adopted a realist approach to foreign policy, where the president repeatedly "made clear his Liberal-internationalist preference for multilateralism and peaceful engagement as the preferred modes for dealing with other countries, whether friends or adversaries."[16] Departing from his predecessor's 'Freedom Agenda', Obama, in his Cairo speech, signaled his disinterest in democracy promotion. However, understandably, the Arab Spring and its consequent transformations redefined the Obama administration's posture towards the Middle East.

Obama's Foreign Policy Vision

Theoretically, political realism and Liberal-internationalism form the basis of Obama's foreign policy. Hence, he sought to distance himself from both Bill Clinton's humanitarian interventionism and George W. Bush's unilateral neo-conservatism. In a speech in 2006, Obama argued for "a strategy no longer driven by ideology and politics but one that is based on a realistic assessment of the sobering facts on the ground and our interests in the region. This kind of realism has been missing since the very conception of this war [against Iraq], and it is what led me to publicly oppose it in 2002."[17] During his presidential campaign, in 2007, Obama declared, "the truth is that my foreign policy is actually a return to the traditional bipartisan realistic policy of George Bush's father, of John F. Kennedy, of, in some ways, Ronald Reagan."[18]

'Change we can believe in' constituted the primary theme that conceptually guided Obama's domestic and overseas visions. In a speech delivered in January 2008, during his presidential campaigns, Obama asserted, "Yes, we can heal this nation. Yes, we can repair this world. Yes, we can."[19] This statement encapsulated Obama's perception of his mission as a president of the United States. In foreign policy arena, his main concern was to enhance America's geopolitical image, which was tarnished by his predecessor's coercive diplomacy and military adventures in Afghanistan and Iraq. Hence, Obama sought to break with George W. Bush's militarized foreign policy in the Middle East. Rhetorically, 'change' continued to be the defining theme of Obama's worldview. But, geopolitical realities on the ground relatively constrained his freedom of choice, creating "inevitable tension between his soaring rhetoric and desire to depart fundamentally from the policies of the Bush administration, on the one hand, and his instinct for governing pragmatically, on the other."[20]

Endeavoring to bridge the gap between his aspiration to shape a multilateral world order, and the tumultuous nature of world politics, Obama developed what Martin Indyk, Kenneth Lieberthal, and Michael O'Hanlon labeled 'progressive pragmatism', where he had to adjust his idealist rhetorical themes to pragmatic approaches to such complicated issues as Iran's nuclear weapons, Arab-Israeli peace process, counterterrorism, and democracy promotion in the Middle East. Or as they put it, "Obama has proven to be progressive where possible but pragmatic when necessary."[21] For instance, he supported regime change in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, whereas he

embraced a cautious posture towards the uprisings in Yemen and Bahrain, and the armed revolution in Syria. Indeed, Obama's inconsistent approach to the Arab Spring signaled the 'cautious realism' that largely characterized his worldview.[22]

The magnitude of change Barack Obama achieved may not meet the expectations he raised at the outset of his presidency. This should be understood within the context that presidential visions are challenged by regional and global shifting dynamics. Hence, Obama's success and failure need to be viewed through the lenses of the respective political realities he confronted. By and large, President Obama relatively succeeded in pursuing his higher vision: "to shape a new, multilateral global order with America still in the lead, especially in matters of hard power, but sharing more responsibilities and more burdens with others where possible or necessary."[23] To be sure, no American president can be decisively identified as either a realist or an idealist. Geostrategic choices tend to be influenced by a variety of domestic and international forces. Thus, American foreign policy is the product of a conscious debate within the administration, reflecting a wide range of competing views, where the involved agencies and officials of various ideological tendencies compete for the ear of the president.

The Realist-Idealist Debate

In selecting his national security team, Obama surrounded himself with talented and experienced individuals from various trends: a team of rivals. He selected Hillary Clinton as Secretary of State, and James B. Steinberg as her deputy. Both Clinton and Steinberg, to varying degree, held a realist inclination. Robert Gates, a republican realist from the George W. Bush administration, was asked to remain as Defense Secretary. Admittedly, Gates brought to the administration a valuable relevant experience in foreign policy. He served in the first Bush administration as Deputy National Security Advisor to Brent Scowcroft, and in the final year Gates was appointed, with Scowcroft blessing, as CIA Director. Scowcroft, as James Mann suggested, excreted a significant conceptual influence on Obama's perception of foreign policy, reinforcing the realist dimension of the President's worldview. "By the time Obama took office…..... Scowcroft had become Washington's gray eminence, the symbol of contemporary realism. He was revered in the foreign policy community, praised by columnists and honored and consulted by quite a few Democrats, including Barack Obama. ..... Scowcroft had recommended former Marin Corps commandment James Jones as Obama's national security advisor, and the president-elect, who

hardly knew Jones, went ahead with the appointment."[24] As holdovers from the precious administration, Robert Gates and James Jones represented, to some extent, a continuity of George W. Bush's military policy, notably with respect to managing the Afghanistan and Iraq wars.

The group of realists in the Obama White House also included Thomas Donilon, who succeeded James Jones as National Security Advisor, and his deputy, Denis McDonough. Both men belonged to Obama's inner circle, hence their influence stemmed from their personal closeness to the president rather than the official power of their respective positions. Donilon, in particular, was widely viewed as a major realist force in the White House. Yet, he was known as an efficient coordinator rather than a strategist in the mold of Kissinger, Brzezinski, Scowcroft, or even Condoleezza Rice, George W. Bush's first National Security Advisor.[25] McDonough served as a foreign policy advisor to the Obama presidential campaign. Hence, he gained the reputation that he had strong connection to the president, ensuring that the presidential vision and desire were carried out. Justifying the administration's inconsistent Middle East policy, McDonough once stated that decisions were not "based on consistency or precedent. We make them based on how we can best advance our interests in the region."[26]

Throughout the first two years of his presidency, Obama’s rhetoric continued to emphasize idealism, whereas his actual policy seemed to be based on realist analysis. The Presidential remarks in Ankara (April 2009), Cairo (June 2009), and the UN (September 2010) were cases in point. This gravitation towards realism appeared to have stimulated democracy and human rights proponents within the administration, generating measured debate between cautious realism (mainly associated with Robert Gates and Tom Donilon), and liberal interventionism, which tended to be advocated by: Suzan Rice, Obama’s second National Security Advisor; Samantha Power, who replaced Rice as the U.S Ambassadors to the UN; Ann-Marie Slaughter, the Director of Policy Planning at the State Department (she resigned in February 2010); and Michael McFaul, who was appointed as the U.S Ambassador to Russia in December 2011. Although they differed in their specific attitudes towards political freedom and democracy promotion, these officials tended to be united by their faithful commitment to humanitarian-intervention as both moral obligation and geostrategic measure to protect human lives, reinforce U.S. Leadership role, and restore U.S. geopolitical image.[27]

Prior to the Arab Spring, the antirealists "were often on the losing side of internal debates. They amounted to a minority school within the administration: They were admirers of Obama but less so of the realist direction of his foreign policy."[28] Significantly, the realist-idealist debate further escalated as a result of the Arab Spring which rocked the Middle East at the outset of 2011. Indeed, this Middle Eastern historic moment challenged both Obama's foreign policy priorities (notably the 'pivot' to Asia), as well as his avowed idealist commitment to democracy and human rights. The Egyptian and Libyan tumultuous events, in particular, posed crucial challenges to Obama's leadership competence, where he had to confront opposing attitudes within his national security team while deliberating various geostrategic approaches to these two cases.

Seemingly, the decision-making process in the Obama White House enabled the antirealists assertively to present their views. "Careful, and sometimes lengthy, deliberation marked Obama's style of decision making. He insisted on multiple advocacy by requiring his staffers to argue their cases in front of him. …….. Perhaps the most striking characteristic of Obama's decision-making style was his personal involvement in the details of policy."[29] Suzan Rice and Samantha Power seemed to have assumed a leading role in shaping Obama's posture towards Egypt, where he called for Mubarak's immediate departure, and Libya, where he confronted the option of humanitarian intervention, demonstrating a willingness to resort to military measures. In brief, the realist-idealist debate within the Obama national security team between realism and liberal-interventionism significantly contributed to the administration's geostrategic perceptions, where "this time, the democracy proponents …… had support from the president himself."[30]

The Arab Spring: Obama's Formative Moment

In the Middle East, Obama's foreign policy tended to be preoccupied with a multitude of challenges: the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq; counterterrorism; Iran's nuclear program; and the peace process. Yet, the President distanced himself from democracy promotion and human rights protection. In his Cairo speech (June 2009), president Obama asserted, "I know there has been controversy about the promotion of democracy in recent years, and much of this controversy is connected to the war in Iraq. So let me be clear: no system of government can or should be imposed upon one nation by any other. …America does not presume to know what is best for everyone, just as we would not presume to pick the outcome of a peaceful election."[31] Ironically,

"the one thing Obama seemed uninterested in – promoting democratic changes in the Middle East – turned out to be the one thing that occurred on his watch anyway,"[32] reshaping the administration's geostrategic preferences in the Middle East.

To be sure, President Obama seemed to have sensed the potential trends that would blight the region as a result of lack of genuine democratic reforms. In August 2010, the President forwarded a memorandum called 'Political Reform in the Middle East and North Africa' to his foreign policy team, analyzing the political stagnation and warning of the negative implications for U.S. interests. In his five-page memo, Obama observed:

> Progress towards political reform and openness in the Middle East and North Africa lags behind other regions and has, in some case, stalled. … [There was] evidence of growing citizen discontent. … Increase repression could threaten the political and economic stability of some of our allies, leave us with fewer capable, credible partners who can support our regional priorities, and further alienate citizens in the region. Moreover, our regional and international credibility will be undermined if we are seen or perceived to be backing repressive regimes and ignoring the rights and aspirations of citizens. … [Failure to accommodate the potential scenarios] could have negative implications for U.S. interests, including for our standing among Arab public.[33]

The above presidential statement revealed that: the Middle East regained its geostrategic relevance in Obama's foreign policy agenda; in compliance with his realist school of thought, the President viewed the region's needs for democratic transformation through the lenses of U.S. vital interests rather than America's moral commitment to democracy promotion; and the President appeared to have developed an in-depth understanding of the region's geopolitical characteristics, and hence demonstrated a desire to consider political reform as a means to maintain U.S. regional status. Subsequently, Obama "instructed his staff to come up with 'tailored country by country' strategies on political reform. He told his advisors to challenge the traditional idea that stability in the Middle East always served U.S. interests."[34] The President's memo and the consequent debates it generated within the Obama white house, not only challenged the traditional U.S. preference of 'stability over democracy', but, perhaps more importantly, advanced the Obama administration's understanding of the Middle East geopolitical dynamics, and influenced the U.S. perception of the Arab Spring – the political earthquake that erupted four months later, profoundly altering the region's geopolitical landscape.

Indeed, the Arab Spring that swept the Middle East at the outset of 2011 is significantly the most formative historic turning point that the region witnessed since decolonization. Its implications for U.S. hegemonic posture are evident. As William J. Burns, Deputy Secretary of State, asserts, "we have all witnessed a wave of historic change in the Middle East ……. 2011 has been a truly transformative year. ……..it is a transformation truly driven from within. …….it certainly matters enormously to us."[35] To America's dismay, the autocratic political setting upon which U.S. regional formulas were based, abruptly disappeared. An entirely new geopolitical landscape has evolutionarily emerged. The parliamentary elections in Tunisia (October 2011), and Egypt (November 2011- January 2012), where the Muslim Brotherhood and its affiliates achieved victories, evidently demonstrated the likely features of the region's emergent geopolitical landscape, and revealed the proportional weights of the contesting political forces. Subsequently, U.S. geostrategic preferences will have to be subordinated to different calculations – a political context dominated by moderate Islamists. The Arab revolutions will likely alter the region's security formulas: the roles of Turkey and Iran; the destiny of Arab-Israeli conflict; and the U.S. presence in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the Persian Gulf. That said, the U.S. is bound to adjust its Middle East orientations. As President Obama maintained, "a failure to change our approach threatens a deepening spiral of division between the United States and Muslim communities."[36]

Despite the ambivalent and skeptical nature that characterized its initial posture towards the Arab revolt, particularly in Tunisia and Egypt, the Obama administration seems to have, at the rhetorical level, sensed the outrageously motivational dynamics that mobilized the grass-roots, non-violent, and determined revolutionary forces that swept the Arab world at the outset of 2011. President Obama's Middle East Speech articulates his stance on the Arab Spring:

> We know that our own future is bound to this region by forces of economics and security; history and faith. ..... There must be no doubt that the United States of America welcomes change that advances self-determination and opportunity. ..... it will be the policy of the United States to promote reform across the region, and to support transition to democracy. ..... We must also build on our efforts to broaden our engagement beyond the elites, so that we reach the people who will shape the future.....even if we disagree with them. ..... The United States of America was founded on the belief that people should govern themselves. Now, we cannot hesitate to stand squarely on the side of those who are reaching for their rights.[37]

Will the U.S. translate this political rhetoric into an actual policy? History suggests otherwise. Indeed, it has been this discrepancy between the official pronouncements and the pursued policy that has accumulatively eroded U.S. moral authority; discredited its image as a democracy promoter; and defused its self-claimed benevolent mission, further heightening anti-American sentiment. Clearly, the U.S. approach to the crystallizing Middle East geopolitical landscape entails an objectively elaborate foreign policy analysis, identifying both the key intellectual and socio-economic dynamics that mobilized the outraged public; and the potentially leading political forces that will dominate the scene in the foreseeable future.

The Arab awakening is the most critical geopolitical challenge the Obama administration has faced in the Middle East to date. For pragmatic considerations, the administration ultimately overcame its hesitation and "put the United State's voice behind the demands for freedom and democracy across the Arab world and assisted in toppling unpopular dictators in Egypt, Libya, and Yemen."[38] Unlike his predecessor, President Barack Obama "portrayed himself as a realist in the Eisenhower-Kennedy-Reagan-Bush 41 tradition, rather than Bush 43 mold."[39] Emphasizing this approach, the president, in his Cairo speech of June 2009, asserted "no system of government can or should be imposed by one nation on any other."[40] The Obama administration's supportive attitude towards the Arab awakening, therefore, reveals an essential development in the U.S. Middle Eastern foreign policy with respect to both understanding the emergent geopolitical dynamics that increasingly shape the region's political landscape, and dealing with the growingly ascending Islamist forces.

The Egyptian and Saudi regimes, in particular, have always constituted critical anchors to American interests in the regional stability. Successive American presidents, therefore, tolerated these regimes' authoritarian character, oppressive measures, and systematic violations of human rights. But with the eruption of the Arab revolution, as Condoleezza Rice observed, "throughout the Middle East the fear of free choices can no longer justify the denial of liberty."[41]

Egypt: “Now Means Yesterday”

In Egypt, at the early stages of the revolution, the Obama administration tended to strike a balance between supporting the popular demands for reform, and protecting the pro-American autocratic regime of Hosni Mubarak. At the immediate aftermath of the collapse of Ben Ali in

Tunisia, Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, stated, "our assessment is that the Egyptian government is stable and is looking for ways to respond to the legitimate needs and interests of the Egyptian people."[42] On January 25th 2011, the first crucial day of Egypt's revolution, President Obama delivered his State of the Union Address in which he praised the Tunisian Revolution, "where the will of people proved more powerful than the writ of a dictator. And tonight, let us be clear: the United States of America stands with the people of Tunisia, and supports the democratic aspirations of all people."[43] Although he expressed America's support for 'the democratic aspirations of all people', Obama did not embrace an officially unambiguous stance towards Egypt, reflecting the administration's hesitant position towards the Egyptian revolution. The Egyptian protesters were disillusioned with the U.S. attitude.

The above two statements of Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama clearly revealed the administration's indecisiveness and lack of strategic clarity. Unlike Bin Ali of Tunisia, the Egyptian regime was viewed as an anchor of stability and a staunch ally. Therefore, "Obama decided not to call for Mubarak to step down. Instead, the U.S. would encourage a transition led by Mubarak's newly installed Vice-President, Omar Suleiman."[44] Hence, the White House decided to send Frank G. Wisner, the former U.S. Ambassador to Egypt, to persuade Mubarak to leave peacefully. Wisner's mission failed, as Mubarak insisted on completing his presidential term, prompting the Obama administration to adopt a confrontational attitude, and publically calling for an immediate 'orderly transition'.

As events intensely unfolded, where mass demonstrations overwhelmingly prevailed Egypt's major cities, particularly the Tahrir Square in Cairo, the White House realized that the protest movement would accept nothing less than the ouster of Mubarak. Hence, Obama decided to be on the right side of history. He, despite the dismay of the U.S. close allies, including Saudi Arabia and Israel, launched a series of presidential remarks, identifying with the protesters' rights to freedom and democracy, and calling for Mubarak's immediate departure. On February 1, 2011, the president assertively maintained, "an orderly transition must be meaningful, it must be peaceful, and it must begin now."[45] The Press Spokesman, Robert Gibbs, reinforced the president's message next day: "when we said now, we meant yesterday."[46]

Mubarak was expected to announce his resignation on February 10, 2011. But he didn't, prompting an outrageously massive reaction throughout the country. Obama immediately

responded: "we belief that this transition must immediately demonstrate irreversible political change and a negotiated path to democracy."[47] The Egyptian president ultimately stepped down on February 11, 2011, and the "Egyptian military took charge of the country for what was said to be a transition period until elections could be held. Arguably, it was a coup d'état, carried out in the name of the Egyptian people and on behalf of democratic change."[48] Indeed, the second military coup of July 3, 2013, which ousted Egypt's first democratically elected president, Mohammed Morsi, appeared to be an extension of the previous one, demonstrating the military's domination of the political scene. As a result of this coup, Egypt was plunged into political instability and uncertainty.

Prior to the outbreak of the Arab Spring, the Obama administration sensed that Egypt was on the brink of change. Egypt's parliamentary elections of 2010, which were rigged by the regime, clearly revealed that, as James Steinberg, then Deputy Secretary of State, predicted, "something was going to happen there……..Everyone recognized that Egypt was going to be a crisis sometime in the next couple of years. There was a sense of imminence."[49] Also, the Obama national security team held a series of debates over the U.S. Middle East orientation and the dynamics of changing in light of the presidential memorandum of August 2010. These debates seemed to have concluded that the U.S.-backed authoritarian regimes were increasingly losing ground to the growingly ascending forces of change. As Samantha power recognized, "we were going to have a deal soon with the political succession in Egypt, and the social drivers of discontent were becoming uncontainable. It was clear that it was just getting harder and harder to keep a lid on things. We were more and more implicated by our friendship with authoritarian regimes that were using ever more brutal tactics to repress their people."[50]

Seemingly, the realists within the Obama administration, including Tom Donilon, Robert Gates, and to a lesser extent, Hillary Clinton and Joe Biden, tended to embrace a cautious approach to revolutionary change in Egypt, favoring instead a transition that would be overseen by the regime. On the other side were the liberal-interventionists, who were pushing for democratic transformation. This group included Rice, Power, and McFaul, with whom Obama ultimately sided. For Obama, Egypt was a case where democratic values converged with strategic interests.[51] In brief, the Obama administration contributed to the non-violent success of the Egyptian revolution through two approaches: the political and moral support that was

manifested by the official pronouncements, most notably the presidential remarks; and the influence that the Pentagon exerted on the Egyptian military's behavior.

Libya: Leading From Behind

Six days after Mubarak's overthrow (February 17, 2011), Libyan demonstrators took to the streets in large numbers, protesting against Qaddafi's repressive regime. Qaddafi's security forces responded with brutal violence, firing indiscriminately into the civilian demonstrators. Hence, within a few days, the conflict developed into an armed revolution, and Qaddafi decided to crush the protest movement. On February 26, the UN Security Council adopted a resolution that froze Libyan assets, imposed an arms embargo on Libya, and referred Qaddafi and his senior aides to the International Criminal Court. Nonetheless, Qaddafi's excessive use of force escalated, generating international calls for the UN Security Council to impose a no-fly zone over Libya. This endeavor was particularly supported by the Arab League, France and Britain. On March 3, president Obama declared, "Muammar Qaddafi lost legitimacy to lead and he must leave office,"[52] launching a series of geostrategic measures that ultimately led to the ouster of Qaddafi's regime.

Clearly, Libya exposed the Obama administration to a multitude of geostrategic, political, and moral challenges, testing both Obama's willingness to use military power, and his capability to strike a balance between his realist vision and moral obligation to protect human lives. Humanitarian-intervention, therefore, began to be discussed within the administration, further extending the realist-idealist debate. On the one side, realists such as Robert Gates, and to a lesser degree, Tom Donilon and Denis McDonough, were opposed to military intervention in Libya, warning that such an act would entangle the U.S. in yet another war in the Middle East. In a series of public remarks, Gates questioned the strategic significance of both the proposed no-fly zone and humanitarian intervention. In a speech on February 25, 2011, he argued, "in my opinion, any future defense secretary who advises the president to again send a big American land army into Asia or into the Middle East or Africa should have his head examined."[53] Also, in a Congressional testimony on March 10, 2011, James Clapper, the Director of National Intelligence, testified that Qaddafi's forces were "likely to prevail."[54]

On the other side, proponents of human rights supported the use of force to prevent the humanitarian atrocity that Qaddafi's security forces threatened to commit in Benghazi. As I stated earlier, Obama's leadership style permitted views of diverse trends to be presented. Hence lower-ranking officials such as Suzan Rice, then U.S. Ambassador to the U.N, and Samantha Power, then a NSC staffer, had their voices heard, influencing the president's geostrategic choices. Influenced by their respective experience in Rwanda and Bosnia, both Rice and Power supported the use of force, as a last resort, to prevent mass killing. Hillary Clinton, reluctant at first, joined the fray and sided with Rice and Power.[55] Ultimately, the three female officials overcame internal opposition from Robert Gates and Tom Donilon. Hence, "Obama, on the night of March 15, [2011], approved military action against Libya that would not only set up a no-fly zone but also authorize 'all necessary measures', thus permitting forces to hit targets on the ground."[56]

On March 17, 2011, the UN Security Council adopted Resolution 1973, authorizing all necessary measures in Libya, including military action, to protect civilians. U.S. intervention in Libya marked a turning point in Obama's foreign policy: it reinforced America's global leadership, despite the nation's financial difficulties and its involvement in tow wars in Afghanistan and Iraq; manifested the administration's commitment to multilateralism, where the U.S. shared the burden with its allies, notably the NATO and the Arab League; and featured the moral dimension of Obama's foreign policy, where the president, despite his realist tendency, grounded his military action on humanitarian justifications.

The GCC States: The Divergence of Values and Interests

The Gulf, with its strategic vitality and geopolitical complications, remains the source of challenge to Obama's foreign policy with respect to its approach to the Arab Spring, representing the case where values and interests diverge. The pro-American monarchic regimes of Bahrain and Oman experienced widespread protest movements, calling for profound political and economic reforms. Particularly, the dynastic rule of Al Khalifa in Bahrain was seriously threatened by the Shia majority, which was alleged to be mobilized by Iran[57]. The stability of Bahrain is critical to Saudi Arabia, a staunch ally of the United States.

Three factors appeared to have shaped the Obama administration's posture towards Bahrain's case: the alleged role of Iran; the Saudi support of the status quo; and the demonstration effect the Bahrain's uprising may potentially provide, destabilizing the pro-American monarchic regimes of the Gulf. "The fifth fleet base is the main US strategic interest in Bahrain, and the United States has traditionally been concerned that a fully democratic Bahrain might not continue to host the base."[58] Thus, Bahrain's revolution constituted a case where "interests trumped values …… that realist judgment governed Obama's approach to the revolt in Bahrain."[59] Nonetheless, U.S. officials, including the president, publicly criticized the Bahrain government for its mass arrest, use of force against peaceful freedom-seeking demonstrators, and called instead for dialogue and political reforms. The Obama administration's approach to Bahrain's revolt exemplified the U.S. chronic dilemma of 'preferring stability over democracy'. As president Obama observed in his Middle East speech, "there will be times when our short-term interests don't align perfectly with our long-term vision of the region."[60]

On the whole, the pro-American Gulf monarchies are not aloof from the Arab Spring movements. Rather, demands for democratic reform have steadily been growing. Although some Gulf states, notably Kuwait, Bahrain, and Oman, "had managed to contain most of the protests that had spilled into their streets in the immediate aftermath of the revolutions in North Africa …the international commentariat seem to have finally become aware of the rising discontent among large swathes of Gulf nationals, and better plugged into regional grassroots campaigns and emerging opposition groups."[61] Indeed, substantiated political criticism of the ruling elites' approaches to constitutional reform and distribution of wealth has steadily been growing and become commonplace. With the Obama administration's inconsistent approach to the Arab Spring, the United States will likely face a moral challenge in the Gulf region with respect to its posture towards both human rights violations and the public demands for genuine democratic change, most notably in Saudi Arabia, the most vital American ally in the region. As Bruce Riedel argued, "Today, the Arab Awakenings pose the most severe test for the Kingdom [of Saudi Arabia] since its creation. The same demographic challenges that prompted revolutions in Egypt and Yemen apply in Saudi Arabia: a very young population and very high underemployment…. The other monarchs of Arabia would inevitably be in jeopardy if revolution comes to Saudi Arabia. …..the Saudi royal family has shown no interest in sharing power or in an elected legislature."[62]

The Syrian Case

The Obama administration embraced a supportive stance towards the popular uprising in Yemen and the armed revolution in Syria. In Syria, President Bashar al-Assad seemed to have taken from Egypt and Tunisia the perverse lesson. Thus, his security forces became increasingly brutal and committed severe humanitarian atrocities against civilians, generating greater armed opposition to the regime. The uprising began on March 16, 2011. On May 19, 2011, in his Arab Spring speech, Obama condemned the Syrian regime's brutality: "the Syrian regime has chosen the path of murder and the mass arrests of its citizens. …… the Syrian people have shown their courage in demanding a transition to democracy. President Assad now has a choice: he can lead that transition, or get out of the way. …….. Otherwise, President Assad and his regime will continue to be challenged from within and will continue to be isolated abroad."[63] On August 18, 2011, the White House issued a statement in which the president, for the first time, asked Bashar al-Assad to step down, and implied that the U.S. won't intervene in Syria: "the time has come for President Assad to step aside. ……. It is up to the Syrian people to choose their own leaders, and we have heard their strong desire that there not be foreign intervention in their movement."[64]

With the absence of serious international challenge to the Syrian regime, the latter's violence escalated considerably. Its chemical weapons attack in August 2013, which killed more than 1000 civilians, evidently revealed the Syrian regime's brutality. Provoked by this humanitarian atrocity, Obama first threatened to launch airstrikes (conditional to Congressional approval) to punish the Syrian regime, but then the military alternative retreated in favor of the Russian proposal that would force Syria to give up its chemical weapons.[65]

Clearly, Syria presented a case where the administration's rhetoric and concrete policy mismatched. To be sure, Obama's approach to Syria was defined not by moral considerations, but rather by America's vital interests as determined by the geopolitical realities on the ground. Syria's geopolitical centrality lies in: its geostrategic location, where it borders Turkey, Israel, Iraq, Lebanon, and Jordan; its role in the Arab-Israeli conflict as a front-line state; and its alliance with Iran, which turned the country into an Iranian orbit. Furthermore, the Islamist identity of the Syrian opposition appeared to have aroused America's concern about the post-Assad era. In short, regime change in Syria will have great impact on the region's geopolitical landscape and balance of power. Hence, uncertain implications of regime change in Syria may

continue to influence America's posture towards Syria. Nonetheless, "while the arc of the Syrian revolution is likely to be a long and bloody one, the outcome – Assad's overthrow – seems very likely if not necessarily imminent."[66]

Conclusion

The Arab Spring and its consequent transformations reshaped Obama's foreign policy priorities. Yet, they posed challenges to the traditional geopolitical conceptualizations that historically guided American geostrategic preferences, including the preference of stability over democracy, and the perceived Islamic threat. To be sure, the Arab spring provided the U.S. with an historic opportunity to "reverse the deadly cycle of misperceptions, and set a new beginning, a new chapter of relations with the people of the region. Nevertheless, it is unclear whether the Obama administration has made a strategic decision to restructure American foreign policy and fully back democratic forces in the Middle East. There are contradictions and inconsistencies in the administration approach toward the region."[67] Although, the President's reconciliatory language, notably his Ankara (April 2009) and Cairo (June 2009) remarks, and his rhetoric embrace of the region's popular protest against authoritarianism constituted a noticeable development in the U.S. foreign policy, the administration's general posture has been viewed as an effort to ride the popular wave, lacking sustainable moral commitment.

Unarguably, the Obama foreign policy evolved in such a manner that acknowledged the prevailing political realities on the ground, reflecting the President's realist tendency. With the respect to the Arab Spring, the administration had little choice but inevitably to adhere to the existing realities. The rise of Islamists to power in such states as Egypt, Tunisia, Libya, and potentially Syria and Yemen will transform these countries, notably Egypt, from American-influenced regimes to independent major players with regional ambitions, challenging the U.S. hegemonic status in the Middle East and North Africa. By and large, the U.S. Middle East foreign policy will continue to be challenged by: the Arab-Israeli conflict; Iran nuclear program; the Arab revolt consequent transformations; and the persistence of anti-Americanism.[68]

In geopolitical terms, misreading of the post-Arab spring's balance of power will result in policy failure. Precisely, the geopolitical context within which the Arab revolt ought to be perceived is threefold. First, it will be simplistic to view the Arab Revolt as a mere protest

movement mobilized by the deteriorating living conditions, and hence seeking socio-economic reforms. Without denying the impact of the socio-economic factors, the Arab Revolt is a comprehensive public backlash against the entirely dysfunctional autocratic system that dominated the region, leading to entire failures in almost all aspects of life: political tyranny; economic deterioration; systematic violations of human rights; and corrupt and inefficient judicial, educational, and bureaucratic systems. This mass movement seems to have been a culmination of the historically undeterred generational endeavors to confront the despotic rule that, for centuries, hijacked Muslims' freedom of choice. The Arab Revolt marked the end to the American-backed autocratic status quo. A genuine democratic change, therefore, is inevitable. Thus, the choice is no more between stability and democracy, but, as Hillary Clinton, then Secretary of State, suggested, "between reform and unrest. …….. The truth is that the greatest single source of instability in today's Middle East is not the demand for change. It is the refusal to change."[69]

Second, in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, and as a consequence of it, moderate Islamism will likely remain unrivalled. For the cultural constructs of the masses that mobilized the public revolutions seemed to have been rooted in Islam as the primary source of both political inspiration and cultural guidance. Precisely, the Arab Spring appeared to be a rejection of: authoritarianism; violent radicalism, as exemplified by Al Qaeda and its like-minded groups; foreign, notably American, intervention, which was conceived to be the main backer of the despotic rule; and the anti-Islamist secularism, which denied Islam as a political reference. The impressive electoral victories of the mainstream Islamists in Tunisia (Al Nahda, October 2011), Morocco (Justice and Development Party, November 2011) and Egypt (Muslim Brotherhood, November/December 2011, and January 2012) revealed the Islamist-oriented political inclination of the grass roots. Indeed, "the democratic wave sweeping the region has brought Islamists to the fore. ……..for all their anti-Americanism, mainstream Islamists have strong pragmatic streak. …… [Thus], the United States –and the rest of the international community – will need to finally come to terms with Islamists."[70]

Third, political realities will play a crucial role in shaping Islamist worldviews, tempering both their interpretation of *Sharia* and their perception of U.S. supremacy as a global power. Nonetheless, as an ideological-oriented movement drawing principally on Islam as a normative

touchstone of the religiously endorsed political behavior, Islamism, by and large, will likely act in conformity with its Islamic fundamentals. Hence, "even if Washington and the Brotherhood find ways to live with each other, big foreign-policy breakthroughs are unlikely. …….. Opposition to U.S. policy in the region is the cornerstone of [the Brotherhood's] agenda."[71] Divergence on such regional issues as the Arab-Israeli conflict, the U.S. approach to Iran and the American presence in Afghanistan and Iraq will continue to serve as sources of frictions. Yet, as Hillary Clinton maintained, "with so much that can go wrong, and so much that can go right, support for emerging Arab democracies is an investment we cannot afford not to make."[72] To be sure, both Islamists and the U.S. need equally to share the burdens of this ideological-based political divergence.

Summing up, "the year 2011 was the dawn of a promising new era for the region, and will be looked on down the road as a historical watershed, even though the rapids downstream will be turbulent."[73] Indeed, the Arab revolt dramatically re-shaped the region's geopolitical landscape, where the U.S. strategic capacity to influence events diminished considerably. Indeed, the Arab spring significantly shifted the regional balance of power in favor of the mainstream Islamists – a political reality to which the U.S. needs to adapt conceptually and empirically. By and large, the Obama administration's approach to the Arab revolution revealed a sense of political realism and understanding of the increasingly emerging geopolitical forces, most notably moderate Islamists, which will likely dominate the region's political scene in the foreseeable future.

One may discern that Obama's second term appointments signaled presidential desire to maintain a balance between cautious realism and idealist interventionism. The two major proponents of humanitarian intervention, Suzan Rice and Samantha Power, were promoted to National Security Advisor and U.S. Ambassador to the UN respectively. Nonetheless, the appointments of John Kerry at the State Department, Chuck Hagel at the Defense Department, and John Brennan at the CIA revealed Obama's commitment to the realist approach to foreign policy.

U.S.-Islamist Relations: Confrontation or Reconciliation?

The argument of this thesis is that the U.S. geostrategic posture towards Islamism was primarily rooted in a misleading geopolitical image of political Islam as perceived by American

intellectual and policy communities. Western debates on contemporary Islamic activism tend to be conducted within the contexts of the West's historical experience, where Islamic cultural and ideological vocabularies have been interpreted in terms of Western-based political modernity. Conceptualizing Islamism within the secular-oriented intellectual paradigms, debating the phenomenon out of its contextual parameters, "has distorted [the U.S.] understanding of the Arab-Islamic world primarily because the history and legacy of religion-state relations in that part of the World has been quantitatively different."[74] Consequently, the U.S.-backed endeavors to defuse the comprehensive nature of Islam, and to isolate Islamists through political exclusion proved to be counterproductive. Evidently, "large majorities [of Arab societies] support the idea that Sharia Law should be a source (albeit not the source) of legislation"[75]

During the last two decades, this study concludes, both the U.S. Middle East orientations and the mainstream Islamists' political discourse developed, to varying degrees, a sense of realism, demonstrating a 'pragmatic tendency' to comply with the prevailing political realities. With the demise of the rightly-guided Caliphate (661), and the consequent predominance of the dynastic authoritarian rule, the Muslim democratic experiment ceased to evolve, and, as a result, Muslims' collective political values flourished within autocratically exclusionary political settings. With the absence of democratic legacy, the contemporary Islamist political discourse has drawn on two sources: Islamic textual principles as presented by the Quran and Sunna; and the globally recognized universal values of democracy, freedom, pluralism, human rights, and the rule of law. "Mainstream Islamism has in principle accepted the compatibility of the sharia and democracy. ..... Where Islamic law does not provide univocal answers, the democratically chosen Islamist legislature is supposed to use its discretion to adopt laws infused by Islamic values"[76]

Moderate Islamists' electoral behavior, as revealed by the Egyptian, Algerian, and Turkish cases, indicated that their commitment to democratic politics is reasonably genuine. Similarly, participating Islamists in such countries as Jordan (Islamic Action Front), Morocco (Justice and Development Party), Palestinian Territories (Hamas), Yemen (Yemeni Congregation for Reform), and Kuwait (Islamic Constitutional Movement) reportedly acted in conformity with democratic rules. Indeed, mainstream Islamists seem to have transcended the tension between the Divine sovereignty, where laws must be enacted in accordance with *Sharia*, and the majority rule, where legislation is freely conducted by democratically elected parliament. While

ideologically remaining committed to their religious predisposition of God's sovereignty and the implementation of *Sharia*, they increasingly emphasized their willingness to subordinate their empirical behavior to the democratic institutions.[77] Nonetheless, while politically identifying with universal values and democratic institutions, Islamists' distant aims of restoring Islamic global supremacy and regaining the civilizationally pioneering status will likely remain strategic constants, shaping, at the abstract level, Islamists' worldviews, and guiding their geostrategic calculations.

For its part, U.S. foreign policy towards Islamism tended to view the latter as a 'security threat' rather than a 'political challenge'. Thus, the presidential strategies of Bill Clinton and George W. Bush aimed at impeding Islamists' ascendance to power. The Obama administration, by contrast, developed a relatively pragmatic approach to the combination of 'Islam and power'[78]. Indeed, the administration's official pronouncements, including the presidential relevant remarks, signaled an evolutionary realistic approach to the region's massive transformations that will highly likely empower Islamist parties. In his testimony before the House Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, Michael H. Posner, the Assistant Secretary of State for the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, stated, "this administration is playing a crucial role in supporting the forces of democratic reform, ... our policy is pragmatic, and it is in keeping with American principles, values, and interests."[79]

In practical terms, five factors appear to have contributed to this relatively realistic development of the U.S. Middle East orientation. First, the typical U.S. policy of supporting oppressive authoritarianism, preferring 'stability over democracy', proved to be misconceived, ill-designed, and hence counterproductive. Second, the irresistibly popular momentum of the Arab revolts constrained U.S. freedom of action considerably, rendering U.S. geostrategic preferences limited. Third, economically distracted by its financial crisis, and strategically debilitated by the burdens of the two simultaneous wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the U.S. geopolitical capacity, as the world’s most preponderant power, relatively diminished.[80] Fourth, the Turkish 'demonstration effect' played a crucial role in pacifying the West's deep-seated fears of 'Islamism in power'.[81] Fifth, the relatively democratic evolution of Islamists' political discourse, identifying with universal values, reinforced accommodotionist voices within the U.S intellectual

community, calling for genuine integration of the mainstream Islamists into an inclusively pluralistic setting.

The supportive attitude that characterized the Obama administration's approach to the Arab Spring constitutes a relatively significant development in the U.S. Middle East orientation. Unlike his predecessors, notably Jimmy Carter in the Iranian revolution of 1979, and George H. W. Bush in the Algerian crisis where Islamists accomplished a stunning victory in the parliamentary election of 1991, Obama transcended his reluctance and assertively recognized the protesters' right to 'genuine democratic transformation'. Forsaking longstanding American allies in Egypt, Tunisia, and Yemen, and 'leading from behind' in Libya, the administration came to terms with the region's geopolitical reality, where moderate Islamism will likely be the leading political force in the post-Arab spring era. With the re-election of Barack Obama (in November 2012) this pragmatic trend will likely flourish, paving the way for American-Islamic reconciliation. However, the relative decline of American global hegemony constrained the U.S. freedom of action[82], further empowering Islamists.

Conducted within the context of Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA), this research predicts that the trajectory of U.S.-Islamist relations will primarily depend on the extent to which U.S. domestic structures, notably the White House, the State Department, the Congress, and the foreign policy intellectual community, are willing to review their typical geopolitical conceptualization of 'Islamism in power'. While the White House, the State Department, and some American scholars of Islamism pragmatically recognized the post-Arab spring's dynamics that empowered Islamists' socio-political significance, the Congress and rejectionists appeared to have failed to acknowledge the cultural connotations and political consequences of the Arab revolt. Particularly, the U.S. Congress, as the Turkish case showed, was preoccupied with fears that Islamism in power will jeopardize U.S. regional hegemonic status, pose an existential threat to Israel's security, and undermine liberal democratic values.[83]

Conclusion

Contextualizing the historical, political, and ideological dynamics that informed U.S. conceptualization of 'Islamism in power', shaping the latter's 'geopolitical image', this study concludes that U.S.-Islamist potential rapprochement is proportional to the mutual cultural

recognition between the Western and Islamic civilizations. Western and particularly American, conceptual approaches to the Islamic resurgence have largely been captured by such historical, political, and ideological phobic forces that obscured the reasonably democratic evolution of the contemporary Islamic political discourse. True, pragmatic forces, such as common interests and political realities on the ground, will hasten U.S.-Islamist pragmatic ties. But, the U.S. conceptual realization of Islam as a source of ideological guidance, political inspiration, and cultural reference remains the prerequisite for a genuinely deep-rooted reconciliation with the Muslim world. Precisely, the U.S. needs not to insinuate itself into Islamic socio-political and cultural domains, seeking to re-construct Muslims' ideological and cultural norms. For establishing Islamic-oriented governance, to the vast majority of the mainstream Muslims, is not an alternative but an imperative, complying with God's command. This geopolitical reality reflects the political character of Islam.

This research has sought thoroughly to examine the very geopolitical dynamics that primarily informed the U.S. conceptualization of the contemporary 'political Islam', and their consequent implications for the U.S. foreign policy geostrategic preferences, particularly in the Middle East, where Islamic activism has significantly been unrivalled. Ultimately, what needs to be emphasized is that the geopolitical conceptualization of Islamism (as a political force) needs to be contextualized in three essential parameters. First, Islam possesses the capacity to provide political inspiration, upgrading its dynamics to operate in diverse conditions, and hence maintaining its centrality as an omnipotent source of inspiration.

Second, mainstream Islamism needs not to be misinterpreted as a mere consequence of economic deprivation and/or political alienation. Rather, it is a genuine expression of Muslims' nostalgic political aspiration. Third, a clear distinction needs to be made between violent radicalism and the mainstream moderate Islamists who denounce violence, endorse electoral democracy as a means to gain power, recognize the globally approved standards of human rights, developing progressive understanding of the world balance of power, and global political dynamics, and hence demonstrating willingness to integrate: conceptually with the western-oriented universal values; and empirically with the American-led international system.

Summing up, this research concludes that U.S. foreign policy implementation, with respect to its approach to Islamism, has fundamentally been rooted in a multitude of historical, political,

ideological, and cultural forces that can be more relevantly analyzed, understood, and explained within the contexts of: Western-Islamic historical conflict; the political nature of Islam; and the geopolitical and cultural dynamics that prevailed in the Middle East. U.S. Middle East strategies, in particular, operate in a socio-political atmosphere where religious-based worldviews play decisive roles in constructing geopolitical perceptions and shaping policy choices.[84] U.S. geopolitical perception of Islamism in power, and Islamist cultural and political attitudes towards both American power and U.S. foreign policy appeared to be informed by each party's respective cultural judgment and ideological predispositions, without denying the impacts of such material forces as power, security, and economic interests. As a dynamically progressing issue, U.S.-Islamist relations possess the capacity to transform the region's geopolitical landscape. Hence, objective understanding of the very forces that determine the U.S.-Islamist potential trajectories is critical to both the U.S. regional status, and the region's stability.

At the end of this research it might be useful to cite the statement of Benjamin Franklin, one of the most significant founding fathers: "**He who sacrifices freedom for security is neither free nor secure**."[85]

Notes

1. See Marina Ottaway and Amr Hamzawy, *Getting to Pluralism: Political Actors in the Arab World*, pp. 13-40.
2. See Chris Alden and Amnon Aran, *Foreign Policy Analysis: New Approaches*, pp. 105-8.
3. See Graham E. Fuller, *A World Without Islam*, pp. 77-94
4. Ibid. p. 115.
5. Graham E. Fuller, *A Sense of Siege*, pp. 30-1.
6. Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations*, p. 54.
7. President Barak Obama, "Remarks in Cairo University", June 4, 2009, Cairo, Egypt.
8. See Graham E. Fuller, *The Future of Political Islam*, pp. 97-118.
9. John L. Esposito *The Future of Islam*, p. 57.
10. Scott McConnell, "The Special Relationship with Israel: Is It Worth the Costs?", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XVII, No. 4, Winter 2010.
11. See John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt, "The Israeli Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy", March 2006.
12. See John W. Dumbrell and Alex R. Schafer, *America's Special Relationships*, pp. 173-90; Ronald R. Krebs, "Israel's Bunker Mentality", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 90, Issue 6, Nov/Dec 2011, pp. 10-18.
13. See M. Hakan Yavuz, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*, pp. 144-70.
14. See James Rachels & Stuart Rachels, *The Elements of Moral Philosophy*, pp. 48-61.
15. Elizabeth Shakman Hurd, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations*, p. 47.
16. Paul R. Viotti, *American Foreign Policy*, p. 210.
17. Quoted in Ryan Lizza, "The Consequentialist; How the Arab Spring Remade Obama's Foreign Policy", *the New Yorker*, May 2, 2011.
18. Quoted in ibid.
19. Barack Obama "New Hampshire Primary Speech", *the New York Times*, January 8, 2008.
20. Martin S. Indyk, Kenneth G. Lieberthal, and Michael E. O'Hanlon, *Bending History: Barack Obama's Foreign Policy*, p. 6.
21. Ibid. p. 6.

22. See Fareed Zakaria, “Stop Searching for an Obama Doctrine”, *the Washington Post*, July 7, 2011.
23. Martin S. Indyk, Kenneth G. Lieberthal, and Michael E. O’Hanlon, *Bending History: Barack Obama’s Foreign Policy*, p. 11.
24. James Mann, *The Obamians: the Struggle Inside the White House to Redefine American Power*, p. 165.
25. See Ibid. pp. 226-8.
26. Quoted in Ibid, p. 274.
27. See Ibid, pp. 167-70.
28. Ibid. p. 167.
29. James P. Pfiffner, “Decision Making in the Obama White House”, *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 41, Issue 2, June 2011, p. 260
30. James Mann, *The Obamians: the Struggle Inside the White House to Redefine American Power*, p. 266.
31. President Barack Obama, “Remarks in Cairo University”, Cairo, June 4, 2009.
32. Martin S. Indyk, Kenneth G. Lieberthal, and Michael E. O’Hanlon, *Bending History: Barack Obama’s Foreign Policy*, p. 113.
33. Quoted in Ryan Lizza, “The Consequentialist: How the Arab Spring Remade Obama’s Foreign Policy”, *The New Yorker*, May 2, 2011.
34. Ibid.
35. William J. Burns, “Remarks delivered at Middle East Institute”, November 16, 2011.
36. President Barak Obama, “Remarks on the Middle East and North Africa”, May 19, 2011, www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/05/19/remarks-president-middle-east-and-north-africa.
37. Ibid.
38. Martin S. Indyk, Kenneth G. Lieberthal, and Michael E. O’Hanlon, "Scoring Obama's Foreign Policy", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 91, Issue 3, May/June 2012, pp. 29-43.
39. Indyk, Martin S., Kenneth G. Lieberthal, and Michael E. O'Hanlon, *Bending History: Barack Obama's Foreign Policy*, p. 143.
40. President Barack Obama, “Remarks in Cairo University”, Cairo, June 4, 2009.
41. Condoleezza Rice, "Remarks At the American University of Cairo", June 20, 2005.

42. Quoted in "Egypt's Unstable Regime", *Washington Post*, January 25, 2011.
43. President Barack Obama, “State of the Union Address”, January 25, 2011.
44. Ryan Lizza, “the Consequentialist: How the Arab Spring Remade Obama’s Foreign Policy”, *the New Yorker*, May 2, 2011.
45. President Barack Obama, "Remarks on the Situation in Egypt", February 1, 2011.
46. Press Secretary, Robert Gibbs, Press Briefing, February 2, 2011.
47. President Barack Obama, "Statement on Egypt", February 10, 2011.
48. James Mann, *The Obamians: The Struggle Inside The White House To Redefine American Power*, p. 269.
49. Quoted in ibid, p. 260.
50. Quoted in ibid, p. 258
51. See ibid, pp. 264-8.
52. Quoted in Martin S. Indyk, Kenneth G. Lieberthal, and Michael E. O’Hanlon, *Bending History: Barack Obama’s Foreign Policy*, p. 160.
53. Robert Gates, Speech, West Point, February 25, 2011, www.defense.gov/speeches/speech.aspx?speechid=1539.
54. James R. Clapper, Testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, March 10, 2011, http://www.armed-services.senate.gov/Transcripts/2011/03%20March/11-11%20-%203-10-11.pdf.
55. See Maureen Dowd, “Fight of the Valkyries”, *the New York Times*, March 22, 2011.
56. James Mann, *The Obamians: The Struggle Inside The White House To Redefine The American Power*, p. 291.
57. See Jane Kinninmont, “Bahrain: Beyond the Impasse”, Chatham House, June 2012.
58. Ibid.
59. Martin S. Indyk, Kenneth G. Lieberthal, and Michael E. O’Hanlon, *Bending History: Barack Obama’s Foreign Policy*, p. 153.
60. President Barack Obama, “Remarks on the Middle East and North Africa”, May 19, 2011, www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/05/19/remarks-president-middle-east-and-north-africa.
61. Christopher M. Davidson, “Why the Sheiks Will Fall?”, *Foreign Policy*, April 26, 2013.

62. Bruce Riedel, “Memorandum to the President”, Brooking Institution, January 17, 2013.
63. President Barack Obama, “Remarks on the Middle East and North Africa”, May 19, 2011. The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/05/19/remarks-president-middle-east-and-north-africa.
64. President Barack Obama, “Statement on the Situation in Syria”, August 18, 2011. The White House, Office of the Press Secretary, www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/08/18/statement-president-obama-situation-syria.
65. See Peter Baker, “The Rare Public View of Obama’s Pivots on Policy in Syria Confrontation”, *The New York Times*, September 11, 2013; Dalia Sussman, “49% in Poll Fault Obama on Policies Outside U.S.”, *The New York Times*, September 24, 2013; David E. Sanger, “For Obama, an Evolving Doctrine on Foreign Policy”, *The New York Times*, September 24, 2013.
66. Martin S. Indyk, Kenneth G. Lieberthal, and Michael E. O’Hanlon, *Bending History: Barack Obama’s Foreign Policy*, p. 179.
67. Fawaz A. Gerges, *The End of America’s Moment: Obama and the Middle East*, p. 169.
68. See ibid. pp. 89-114.
69. Remarks by Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, the National Democratic Institute, November 7, 2011.
70. Shadi Hamid, “The Rise of Islamists”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 90, Issue 3, May/June 2011, pp. 40-47.
71. Lorenzo Vidino, “Five Myths about the Muslim Brotherhood”, *the Washington Post*, March 6, 2011.
72. Remarks by Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, the National Democratic Institute, November 7, 2011, http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2011/11/176750.htm.
73. Sheri Berman, “The Promise of the Arab Spring”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 92, Issue 1, Jan/Feb 2013, pp. 64-74.
74. Nader Hashemi, "The Arab Revolution of 2011: Reflections on Religion and Politics", *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 2011, 15-21.
75. Ibid.
76. Noah Feldman, *The Fall and Rise of the Islamic State*, p. 119.
77. See Marina Ottaway and Amr Hamzawy, *Getting to Pluralism*, pp. 69-96.

78. See, for instance, the Obama's Remarks on Egypt (February 12, 2011), Remarks on Libya (March 28, 2011), Middle East speech (May 19, 2011), and Remarks to UK Parliament (May 25, 2011).
79. Hearing before the House Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, "Shifting Sands: Political Transitions in the Middle East, Part 2", May 5, 2011.
80. See Adam Quinn, "The Art of Declining Politely: Obama's Prudent Presidency and the Waning of American Power", *International Affairs*, Vol. 87, Issue 4, July/August 2011, pp. 803-824.
81. See Seymen Atasoy, "The Turkish Example: A Model for Change in the Middle East", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XVIII, No. 3, fall 2011; Fadi Hakura, "Turkey and the Middle East: Internal Confidence, External Assertiveness", *Briefing Paper*, Chatham House, November 2011.
82. See Adam Quinn, "The Art of Declining Politely: Obama's Prudent Presidency and the Waning of American Power", *International Affairs*, Vol. 87, Issue 4, July/August 2011, pp. 803-824.
83. Hearing before the House Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, "Shifting Sands: Political Transitions in the Middle East, Part 1", April 13, 2011.
84. See Shibley Telhami & Michael Barnett, *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, pp. 169-200.
85. Quoted in John L. Esposito, *The Future of Islam*, p. 164

Bibliography

Primary Sources

Baker, James A., Middle East Quarterly, Vol. 1, No. 3, September 1994.

Biden, Joseph, "Speech At AIPAC Policy Conference", March 4, 2013, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/03/04/remarks-vice-president-aipac-policy-conference.

Burns, William j, "U.S. Strategy for a Changing Middle East", Remarks Delivered at the Middle East Institute, November 16, 2011, http://www.mei.edu/transcripts/65th-annual-conference-game-changer-politics-and-policy-new-middle-east-awards-banquet.

Clinton, Hillary Rodham, "Foreign Policy Address", Delivered at the Council on Foreign Relations, July 15, 2009, http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2009a/july/126071.htm.

Clinton, Hillary Rodham, "Keynote Address", National Democratic Institute, November 7, 2011, http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2011/11/176750.htm.

Clinton, Hillary Rodham, "Remarks to American Israeli Public Affairs Committee", March 22, 2010, http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2010/03/138722.htm.

Department of Defense, "Sustaining U.S. Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense, January 2012, http://www.defense.gov/news/Defense_Strategic_Guidance.pdf.

Djerejian, Edward p, "The US and the Middle East in a Changing World", Department of State Dispatch, Volume 3, No. 23, June 8, 1992.

Gibbs, Robert, "Press Briefing", February 2, 2011, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/02/02/press-briefing-press-secretary-robert-gibbs-222011.

Lake, Anthony, "Building a New Middle East: Challenges for US Policy", Department of State Dispatch, Volume 5, August 1994.

Lake, Anthony, "From Containment to Enlargement", Department of State Dispatch, Volume 4, No. 39, Article 3, September 1993, http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/ERC/briefing/dispatch/1993/html/Dispatchv4no39.html.

National Security Council, "National Strategy for Victory in Iraq", November 2005, http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/nation/documents/Iraqnationalstrategy11-30-05.pdf.

National Security Directive 26, the White House, October 2, 1989, http://www.fas.org/irp/offdocs/nsd/nsd26.pdf.

National Security Strategy for a New Century, the White House, December 1999, http://www.fas.org/man/docs/nssr-1299.pdf.

National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement, the White House, February, 1995, http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/library/policy/national/nss-9502.pdf

National Security Strategy, the White House, March 1990, http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/pdfs/national_security_strategy_90.pdf.

National Security Strategy, the White House, March 2006, http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/nsc/nss/2006/index.html.

National Security Strategy, the White House, May 2010, http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/rss_viewer/national_security_strategy.pdf.

National Security Strategy, the White House, September 2002, http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/nsc/nss/2002/.

Pelletreau, Robert, "American Objectives in the Middle East", Remarks before the CENTCOM Annual Southwest Asia Symposium, Tampa, Florida, May 14, 1996, http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/ERC/bureaus/nea/960514PelletreauUSPolicy.html.

Pelletreau, Robert, "Dealing with the Muslim Politics in the Middle East: Algeria, Hamas, Iran", Address at Council on Foreign Relations, New York, May 8, 1996, http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/ERC/bureaus/nea/960508PelletreauMuslim.html.

Pelletreau, Robert, "Development in the Middle East", Statement before the House International Relations Committee, June 12, 1996, http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/ERC/bureaus/nea/960612PelletreauMiddleEast.html.

Pelletreau, Robert, "Not Every Fundamentalist Is a Terrorist", Middle East Journal, Vol. 2, No. 3, September 1995, pp. 69-76.

Pelletreau, Robert, "Political Reform in the Middle East: America's Stake", Remarks delivered at the Foundation for Democratization and Political Liberation in the Middle East, October 20, 1995, http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/ERC/bureaus/nea/951020PelletreauReform.html.

Pelletreau, Robert, "Recent Events in the Middle East", Statement before the Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, June 14, 1994, http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/ERC/bureaus/nea/940614PelletreauEvents.html.

Pelletreau, Robert, "Symposium: Resurgent Islam in the Middle East", Middle East Policy, Vol.3, Issue 2, June 1994.

Pelletreau, Robert, “U.S. Policy toward Algeria”, Statement before the Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian affairs of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Department of State Dispatch Volume 7, No. 16, Article 2, April 15, 1996, http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/ERC/briefing/dispatch/1996/html/Dispatchv7no16.html.

President Barack Obama, "Remarks on the Situation in Egypt", February 1, 2011, www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/02/01/remarks-president-situation-egypt.

President Barack Obama, ‘Remarks on Libya”, March 28, 2011, www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/video/2011/03/28/president-obama-s-speech-libya#transcript.

President Barack Obama, “a New Strategy for Afghanistan and Pakistan”, Remarks delivered at the White House, March 27, 2009, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-a-new-strategy-afghanistan-and-pakistan.

President Barack Obama, “Inaugural Address”, January 20, 2009, http://www.whitehouse.gov/blog/inagural-address.

President Barack Obama, “Remarks at Cairo University: a New Beginning”, Cairo, June 4, 2009, www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-at-Cairo-University-6-04-09.

President Barack Obama, “Remarks on Egypt”, Feb 11, 2011, www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/02/11/remarks-president-egypt.

President Barack Obama, “Remarks on the Middle East and North Africa”, May 19, 2011, the White House, Office of the Press Secretary, www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/05/19/remarks-president-middle-east-and-north-africa.

President Barack Obama, “Remarks to AIPAC Policy Conference”, March 4, 2012, www.whitehouse.gov/photos-and-video/video/2012/03/04/president-obama-2012-aipac-policy-conference.

President Barack Obama, “Remarks to AIPAC Policy Conference”, May 22, 2011, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/05/22/remarks-president-aipac-policy-conference-2011.

President Barack Obama, “Remarks to the U.N. General Assembly”, September 23, 2010, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2010/09/23/remarks-president-united-nations-general-assembly.

President Barack Obama, “Remarks to Turkish Parliament”, April 2009, www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-By-President-Obama-To-The-Turkish-Parliament.

President Barack Obama, "Speech to UK Parliament", May 25, 2011, www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/05/25/remarks-president-parliament-london-united-kingdom.

President Barack Obama, "State of the Union Address", January 25, 2011, http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/01/25/remarks-president-state-union-address.

President Barack Obama, "State of the Union Address", January 27, 2010, www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/remarks-president-state-union-address.

President Barack Obama, Remarks to the United Nations General Assembly, September 25, 2013, www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/09/24/remarks-president-obama-address-united-nations-general-assembly.

President Barack Obama, State of the Union Address, February 12, 2013, the White House, Office of the Press Secretary, www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2013/02/12/remarks-president-state-union-address.

President Barack Obama, Statement on the Situation in Syria, August 18, 2011, the White House, Office of the Press Secretary, www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2011/08/18/statement-president-obama-situation-syria.

President Bill Clinton, "Remarks to the Jordanian Parliament", October 26, 1994, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=49373#axzz2hvpua569.

President Bill Clinton, "Second Inaugural Address", January 20, 1997, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=54183#axzz2jipmWBUc.

President George H. W. Bush, "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress", March 6, 1991, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=19364.

President George H.W. Bush, "Remarks to the Joint Session of Congress", September 14, 1990.

President George W. Bush, "Address to a Joint Session of Congress", September 21, 2001, http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/speeches/09.20.01.html.

President George W. Bush, "Fighting Terrorism", Remarks in National Defense University, March 8, 2005, http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/speeches/03.08.05.html.

President George W. Bush, "Keynote Address", delivered at the Newseum, Washington D.C. December 5, 2008, http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/events/2008/12/05%20middle%20east/1205_middle_east_bush_keynote.pdf

President George W. Bush, "Remarks to Saban Forum", December 5, 2008, http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2008/12/20081205-8.html.

President George W. Bush, "Second Inaugural Address", January 20, 2005, http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2005/01/20050120-1.html.

President George W. Bush, "Speech in UAE", January 13, 2008, http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/speeches/01.13.08.html.

President George W. Bush, "State of the Union Address", January 29, 2002, http://georgewbush-whitehouse.archives.gov/news/releases/2002/01/20020129-11.html.

President Harry Truman, "Speech Before the Congress", March 12, 1947, http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/trudoc.asp.

President Jimmy Carter, "State of the Union Address", January 23, 1980, http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=33079#axzz2jpmWBUC.

Rice, Condoleezza, "Remarks at the American University of Cairo", June 20, 2005, http://2001-2009.state.gov/secretary/rm/2005/48328.htm.

U.S. Congress, "The Muslim Brotherhood", Testimony by Nathan Brown to the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence Subcommittee on Terrorism, HUMINT, Analysis, and Counterintelligence, April 2011. http://intelligence.house.gov/sites/intelligence.house.gov/files/documents/SFR20110413Brown.pdf.

U.S. Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, "Turkey's New Foreign Policy Directions: Implications for U.S.-Turkish Relations", July 28, 2010, http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CHRG-111hhrg57688/html/CHRG-111hhrg57688.htm.

U.S. Congress, House Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia, "Shifting Sands: Political Transitions in the Middle East", Hearing, Part 1, April 13, 2011, and Part 2, May 5, 2011, http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CRPT-112hrpt126/html/CRPT-112hrpt126.htm.

U.S. Congress, Testimony by Ambassador Daniel Benjamin to the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations' Subcommittee on Foreign Affairs, November 17, 2009, http://www.foreign.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/BenjaminTestimony091117a.pdf.

Books

Al-Barghouti, Tamim, *The Umma and the Dawla: the Nation State and the Arab Middle East*, London, Pluto Press, 2008.

Andrews, Charles M., *The Colonial Background of the American Revolution*, New Haven and London, Yale University Press, 1931.

Barnett, Michael N., *Dialogues In Arab Politics*, New York, Columbia University Press, 1998.

Belz, Herman, *Constitutionalism and the Rule of Law in America*, Washington, D.C., Heritage Foundation, 2009.

Benard, Cherly, *Civil Democratic Islam: Partners, Resources and Strategies*, Rand Corporation, 2003.

Bennett, David H., *The Party of Fear: The American Far Right from Nativism to the Militia Movement*, New York, Vintage Books, 1995.

Bloomfield, Lincoln, *U.S. Policy In the Gulf Region*, U.A.E., The Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, 1997.

Brzezinski, Zbegniew, *Strategic Vision: America and the Crisis of Global Power*, New York, Basic Books, 2012.

Brzezinski, Zbegniew, *The Choice: Global Domination or Global Leadership*, New York, Basic Books, 2004.

Brzezinski, Zbegniew, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives*, U.S.A, BasicBooks, 1997.

Brzezinski, Zbigniew, *Power and Principle: Memoirs of the National Security Advisor 1977-1981*, New York, Farrar. Straus. Giroux, 1983.

Brzezinski, Zbigniew, *Second Chance: Three Presidents and the Crisis of American Superpower*, New York, BasicBooks, 2007.

Chapra, M. Umar, *Muslim Civilization: The Causes of Decline and the Need for Reform*, United Kingdom, the Islamic Foundation, 2008.

Cook, Steven A. & Elizabeth Sherwood-Randall, *Generating Momentum for a New Era in U.S.-Turkey Relations.*, New York, Council on Foreign Relations, CSR NO.15, June 2006.

Cooley, John K., *Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America, and International Terrorism*, London and Virginia, Pluto Press, 2000.

Cordesman, Antony H., *U.S. Forces in the Middle East*, Colorado, Westview Press, 1997.

Dumbrell, John W., *Clinton's Foreign Policy: Between the Bushes, 1992-2000*, UK, Routledge, 2009.

Dumbrell, John, & Axel R. Schafer, *America's Special Relationship: Foreign and Domestic Aspects of the Politics of Alliance*, London and New York, Routledge, 2009.

Dumbrell, John, *American Foreign Policy: Carter to Clinton*, London, Macmillan Press LTD, 1997.

Dumbrell, John, *The Making of US Foreign Policy*, Manchester and New York, Manchester University Press, 1990.

El-Affendi, Abdulwahha and Others, *Islamic Movements: Impacts on Political in the Arab World*, U.A.E, the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, 2003.

Esposito, John L. and Dalia Mogahed, *Who Speaks for Islam?: What a Billion Muslims Really Think*, New York, Gallup Press, 2007.

Esposito, John L., *Islam and the West after September 11: Civilizational Dialogue or Conflict*, U.A.E., the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research", 2002.

Esposito, John L., *The Future of Islam*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2010.

Feldman, Noah, *The Fall and Rise of the Islamic State*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 2008.

Flournoy, Michele A. and Shawn Brimley, *Finding Our Way: Debating American Grand Strategy*, Center for New American Security, 2008.

Fuller, Graham E. & Ian O. Lesser, *A Sense of Siege: The Geopolitics of Islam and the West*, San Francisco, Westview Press, 1995.

Fuller, Graham E., *A World without Islam*, New York, Little, Brown and Company, 2010.

Fuller, Graham E., "Algeria: The Next Fundamentalist State?", U.S.A., Rand Corporation, 1996.

Fuller, Graham E., *The Future of Political Islam*, U.S.A. , Palgrave Macmillan, 2004.

Fuller, Graham E., *The New Turkish Republic: Turkey as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World*, Washington, D.C., United States Institute Of Peace Press, 2008.

Fuller, Graham E., *US Policy towards Political Islam*, U.A.E, the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, 2002.

Gerges, Fawaz A., *America and Political Islam: Clash of Cultures or Clash of Interests?*, UK, Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Gerges, Fawaz A., *The End of America's Moment?: Obama and the Middle East*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2012.

Gordon, Philip H., and Omer Taspinar, *Winning Turkey: How America, Europe, and Turkey Can Revive A Fading Partnership*, Washington, D.C., Brooking Institute Press, 2008.

Haass, Richard N., *War of Necessity … War of Choice: A Memoir of Two Iraq Wars*, New York & London, Simon & Schuster, 2009.

Hadar, Leon, *Sandstorm: Policy Failure in the Middle East*, U.S.A, Palgrave, 2005.

Halberstam, David, *War in A time of Peace: Bush, Clinton, and the Generals*, New York, Scribner, 2001.

Hardy, Roger, *The Muslim Revolt: A Journey through Political Islam*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2010.

Haykal, Mohammad Husayn, *The Life of Mohammad*, Illinois, North American Trust Publication, 1976.

Haynes, Jeffery, Peter Hough, Shahin Malik, and Lioyd Pettiford, *World Politics*, New York and London, Pearson, 2011.

Hofstadter, Richard, *The American Political Tradition and the Men Who Made It*, New York, Vintage Books, 1989.

Huntington, Samuel P., *The Clash Of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1996.

Hurd, Elizabeth Shakman, *The Politics of Secularism in International Relations*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 2008.

Ikenberry, G. John, *Liberal Order & Imperial Ambition*, U.S.A, and UK, Polity Press, 2006.

Indyk, Martin, *Innocent Abroad: An Intimate Account of American Peace Diplomacy in the Middle East*, New York and London, Simon and Schuster, 2009.

Indyk, Martine S., Kenneth G. Lieberthal, and Michael E. O'Hanlon, *Bending History: Barack Obama's Foreign Policy*, Washington D.C., Brooking Institution Press, 2012.

Jentleson, Bruce W., *American Foreign Policy: The Dynamics of in the 12st Century*, New York and London, W. W. Norton and Company, 2000.

Johnson, Lock K., *Seven Sins of American Foreign Policy*, New York, Pearson Longman, 2007.

Jones, Jeremy, *Negotiating Change: The New Politics of the Middle East*, London & New York, I.B. Tauris, 2007.

Kagan, Robert, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 2003.

Kagan, Robert, *The Return of History and the End of Dreams*, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 2008.

Kaufman, Scott, *Plans Unraveled: The Foreign Policy of Carter Administration*, Illinois, Northern Illinois University Press, 2008.

Kennedy, Paul, *Preparing for the Twenty-first Century*, New York, Vintage Books, 1993.

Kennedy, Paul, *The Rise and Fall of the Great Powers*, New York, Vintage Books, 1989.

Kepel, Gilles, *Jihad: The Trial of Political Islam*, London and New York, I.B. Tauris, 2003.

Kissinger, Henry, *Does America Need A Foreign Policy?: Toward a Diplomacy for the 21st Century*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 2001.

Krauthammer, Charles, *Democratic Realism and American Foreign Policy for A Unipolar World*, Washington, D.C., American Enterprise Institute Press, 2004.

Lahoud, Nelly, and Anthony H. Johns, *Islam in World Politics*, London and New York, Routledge, 2005.

Larrabee, F. Stephen, *Troubled Partnership: U.S.-Turkish Relations in an Era of Global Geopolitical Change*, Rand Corporation, 2010.

Lewis, Bernard, *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror*, New York, The Modern Library, 2003.

Mandelbaum, Michael, *The Frugal Superpower: America's Global Leadership in a Cash-Strapped Era*, New York, PublicAffairs, 2010.

Mann, James, *The Obamians: The Struggle Inside The White House To Redefine American Power*, U.S.A., Penguin Books, 2012.

Matusow, Allen J., *The Unraveling of America: A History of Liberalism in the 1960s*, New York, Harper Torchbooks, 1986.

Miller, Aaron David, *The Much Too Promised Land: America's Exclusive Serach for Arab-Israeli Peace*, New York, Bantam Books, 2008.

Nakhleh, Emile, *A Necessary Engagement: Reinventing America's Relations with the Muslim World*, New York, Princeton University Press, 2009.

Ottaway, Marina and Amr Hamzawy, *Getting to Pluralism: Political Actors in the Arab World*, U.S.A., United Book Press, 2009.

Petras, James, *The Arab Revolt and the Imperialist Counterattack*, Clear Day Books, U.S.A. 2011.

Pfiffner, James P., *Intelligence and National Security policymaking on Iraq: British and American Perspectives*, Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2008.

Pickthall, Muhammad M., *The Glorious Quran: Text and Explanatory Translation*, New York, Muslim World League, 1977.

Pinto, Maria do Ceu, *Political Islam and the United States: A Study of U.S. Policy towards Islamist Movements in the Middle East*, UK, Ithaca Press, 1999.

Priest, Dana, *The Mission: Waging War and Keeping Peace with America's Military*, New York & London, W.W. Norton and Company, 2003.

Rabasa, Angel and Others, *Building Moderate Muslim Networks*, Rand Corporation, 2007.

Rabasa, Angel M. and Others, *Muslim World after 9/11*, Rand Corporation, 2004.

Rabasa, Angel, and F. Stephen Larrabee, *The Rise of Political Islam in Turkey*, U.S.A, Rand Corporation, 2008.

Singleton, JR., Royce and Others, *Approaches to Social Research*, New York, Oxford University Press, 1988.

Smith, Steve, Amelia Hadfield, and Tim Dunne, *Foreign Policy: Theories. Actors. Cases*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2008.

Speaks, Larry, *Speaking out: inside the Reagan White House*, New York, Charles Scribner's Sons, 1988.

Stampp, Kenneth M., *The Causes of the Civil War*, New York, A Touchstone Book, 1986.

Strickland, Lukas, *Approaching Islamic Activism: A Case for Social Movement Theory*, U.S.A, VDM Verlag Dr. Muller, 2009.

Telhami, Shibly & Michael Barnett, *Identity and Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, Ithaca and London, Cornel University Press, 2002.

Tessler, Mark, *A History of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, Indiana, Indiana University Press, 2004.

Twinam, Joseph Wright, *The United Sates and the Gulf: Half a Century and Beyond*, U.A.E., the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, 1997.

Tyrrell, Ian, *Transnational Nation: United States History in Global Perspective since 1789*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007.

Viotti, Paul R., *American Foreign Policy*, U.S.A. and UK, Polity Press, 2010.

Volpi, Frederic, *Political Islam Observed*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2010.

Wickham, Carrie Rosefsky, *Mobilizing Islam: Religion, Activism, and Political Change in Egypt*, New York, Columbia University Press, 2002.

Williams, William Appleman, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy*, New York & London, W. W. Norton & Company, 1988.

Wittes, Tamara Cofman, *Freedom's Unsteady March: America's Role in Building Arab Democracy*, Washington, D.C., Brooking Institution Press, 2008.

Woodward, Bob, *Bush at War*, New York, Simon &Schuster, 2002.

Wright, Robin, *Rock the Casbah: Rage and Rebellion across the Islamic World*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 2011.

Yavuz, M. Hakan, *Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey*, UK, Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Journals, Articles, and Reports

Abramowitz, Morton and Henri J. Barkey, "Turkey's Transformers", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 88, Issue 6, Nov/Dec 2009.

Adeed, Dawisha, "The United States in the Middle East: The Gulf War and Its Aftermath", *Current History*, Vol. 91, No. 561, January 1992.

Ajami, Fouad, "Iraq and the Arab's Future", *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 82, Issue 1, Jan/Feb 2003, pp. 2-18.

Akin, James E., "The New Arabia", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, No. 3, Summer 1991.

Al Mosadak, Hassan, "U.S.-Algerian Relations: A Pragmatic Politics", *North African Affairs*, Sunday, 7-13/10/2007.

Al-Anani, Khalil, "Is Brotherhood With America Possible?", *Arab Insight*, Vol. 1, No. 1, spring 2007.

Al-Anani, Khalil, "The Myth of Excluding Moderate Islamists in the Arab World", *Working Paper No, 4*, March 2010, The Saban Center for Middle East Policy, the Brookings Institution.

Albright, Madeleine, "The Testing of American Foreign Policy", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 77, Issue 6, November/December 1998.

Alessandri, Emiliano, "Democratization and Europeanization in Turkey after the September 12 Referendum", *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 12, No. 4, 2010.

Aliriza, Bulent, "The Genocide Vote in Congress and U.S.-Turkish Relations", Center for Strategic and International Studies, March 8, 2010, http://csis.org/files/publication/100308_Genocide_Vote_Congress_US-Turkish_Relations_0.pdf.

Aliriza, Bulent, "Turkey's June 12 Elections: Will Erdogan Maintain His Ascendance?", Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2011, http://csis.org/files/publication/110602_TurkeysJuneElections.pdf.

Aly, Abd al-Monem Said and Manfred W. Wenner, "Modern Islamic Reform Movement: The Muslim Brotherhood in Contemporary Egypt', *The Middle East Journal*, Vol. 36, No. 3, summer 1982.

Aly, Abdel Monem Said, "An Ambivalent Alliance: The Future of U.S.-Egyptian Relations", Analysis Paper Number 6, January 2006, the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution, http://www.brookings.edu/fp/saban/analysis/abdelmonem20060131.pdf.

Amr, Hady, "The Need to Communicate: How To Improve U.S. Public Diplomacy with the Islamic World", Saban Center for Middle East Policy, Brooking Institution, Analysis Paper, No. 6, January 2004,

Amr, Hady, "The Opportunity for the Obama Era: Can Civil Society Help Bridge Divides Between the United States and a Diverse Muslim World?", Brookings Doha Center Analysis Paper No. 1, November 2009, http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/research/files/papers/2009/11/civil%20society%20amr/11_civil_society_amr.pdf.

Aras, Bulent, "Davutoglu Era in Turkish Foreign Policy", SETA, *Policy Brief No. 32*, May 2009.

Arch, Puddington, "Freedom in the World 2008", Freedom House, Washington, U.S. 2008, http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2008.

Atasoy, Seymen, "The Turkish Example: A Model for Change in the Middle East", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XVIII, No. 3, fall 2011.

Aydin, Mustafa, "Turkey's Caucasus Policies", *Unisci Discussion Papers, No. 23*, May 2010, Kadir Has University, Istanbul.

Ayoob, Mohammed, "The Future of Political Islam: The Importance of External Variables", *International Affairs*, Vol. 81, Issue 5, October 2005.

Backer, James A. and Lee Hamilton, "The Iraq Study Group Report", 2006, http://www.usip.org/isg/iraq_study_group_report/report/1206/index.html

Baker, Peter, "A Rare Public View of Obama's Pivots on Policy in Syria Confrontation", *the New York Times*, September 11, 2013.

Bar, Shmuel, "America's Fading Middle East Influence", Hoover Institution, Policy Review No. 166, April 2011, http://www.hoover.org/publications/policy-review/article/73161.

Barkey, Henry J., "Turkey's Moment of Inflection", *Survival*, Vol. 52, No. 3, June-July 2010.

Berger, Samuel R., "A Foreign Policy for the Global Age", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 78, No. 6, November/December 2000.

Bill, James A. and Rebecca Bill Chavez, "The Politics of Incoherence: The United States and the Middle East", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 56, No. 4, autumn, 2002.

Boll, Mary Jane, "Middle East Free Trade Area: Progress Report", *Congressional Research Services*, (CRS), the Library of Congress, July 3, 2006.

Bowmen, Steven and Catherin Dale, "War in Afghanistan: Strategy, Military Operations, and Issues for Congress", *Congressional Research Services*, the Library of Congress, December 3, 2009, http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/R40156.pdf.

Boyer, Spencer P. and Brian Katulis, "The Neglected Alliance: Restoring U.S.-Turkish Relations to Meet 21st Century Challenges", Center for American Progress, December 2008, http://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/issues/2008/12/pdf/turkey.pdf.

Brandon, James, "Iran's Kurdish Threat: PJAK", *Terrorism Monitor*, Vol. IV, Issue 12, June 15, 2006.

Brown, Nathan J., Amr Hamzawy, and Marina Ottaway, "Islamist Movements and the Democratic Process in the Arab World: Exploring the Gray Zones", *Middle East Series, No. 67*, March 2006, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace & Herbert-Quandt-Stiftung, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/cp_67_grayzones_final.pdf.

Bruce, Riedel, "Revolution in Riyadh", Brookings Institute, January 2013, http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2013/01/revolution-in-riyadh.

Brzezinski, Zbegniew, "From Hope to Audacity: Appraising Obama's Foreign Policy", *Foreign Policy*, Vol. 89, Issue 1, Jan/Feb 2010.

Brzezinski, Zbigniew, Brent Scowcroft and Richard Murphy, "Differentiated Containment", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 76, No. 3, May/June 1997.

Burwell, Francis G., "The Evolution of U.S.-Turkish Relations in a Transatlantic Context", April 2008, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S, http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/pdffiles/pub861.pdf.

Buzan, Barry, "Will the Global War On Terrorism be the New Cold War?", *International Affairs*, Volume 82, No. 6, 2006.

Byman, Daniel and John R. Wise, "The Persian Gulf in the Coming Decade: Trends, Threats, and Opportunities", Rand Corporation, 2002, http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/monograph_reports/2005/MR1528.pdf.

Cagaptay, Soner and H. Akin Unver, "July 2007 Turkish Elections: Winners and Fault lines", The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, *Research Notes, No. 14*, July 2007, http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/pubs/ResearchNote14.pdf.

Cagaptay, Soner and Others, "Turkish Foreign Policy under the AKP: The Rift with Washington", *Policy Note No. 3*, January 2011, the Washington Institute for Near Eastern Policy, http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/pubs/PolicyNote03.pdf.

Cagaptay, Soner, "Secularism and Foreign Policy in Turkey: New Elections, Troubling Trends", *Policy Focus # 67*, April 2007, the Washington Institute for Near Eastern Policy, http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/pubs/PolicyFocus67.pdf.

Carpenter, Scott J. and Soner Cagaptay, "Regenerating the U.S.-Turkey Partnership", *Policy Note No. 2*, November 2010, the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/pubs/PolicyNote02.pdf.

Chase, Robert S. and Paul Kennedy, "Pivotal States and U.S. Strategy", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 75, No. 1, Jan/Feb 1996.

Christopher, Warren, "America's Leadership, America's Opportunity", *Foreign Policy*, Issue 98, Spring 1995.

Colak, Yilmaz, "Ottomanism vs. Kemalism: Collective Memory and Cultural pluralism in 1990 s Turkey", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 42, No. 4, July 2006.

Cordesman, Anthony H., "Winning the War on Terror: A Fundamentally Different Strategy", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XIII, No. 3, fall 2006.

Cordesman, Anthony, "Saudi Arabia, the US, and the Structure foe the Gulf Alliances", Center for Strategic and International Studies, February, 1999.

Cornell, Svante E., "Geopolitics and Strategic Alignment in the Caucasus and Central Asia", *Journal of International affairs*, Vol. IV, No. 2, June-August 1999.

Dalacoura, Katarina, "U.S. Foreign Policy and Democracy Promotion on the Middle East: Theoretical Perspectives and Policy Recommendations", *Ortadogu Etutleri*, Vol. 2, No. 3, July 2010.

Dalacoura, Katrina, "The 2011 Uprising in the Arab Middle East: Political Change and Geopolitical Implications", *International Affairs*, Vol. 88, Issue 1, January/February 2012.

Daly, John C.K., "U.S.-Turkish Relations: A Strategic Relationship under Stress", the James Town Foundation, February 2008, http://www.jamestown.org/uploads/media/Jamestown-DalyUSTurkeyUpdate.pdf.

Davidson, Christopher M., "Why the Sheikhs Will Fall", *Foreign Policy*, April 26, 2013, http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2013/04/26/why_the_sheikhs_will_fall.

Debartolo, David M., "Perceptions of U.S. Democracy Promotion, Part One: Middle Eastern Views", May 2008, Project On Middle East Democracy, http://pomed.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2008/05/pomed-perceptions-i-middle-east.pdf.

Department of State, "Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI)", 2002, www.MEPI.State.gov

Diamond, Larry, "Why Are There No Arab Democracies?", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 21, No. 1, January 2010.

Dowd, Maureen, "Fight of the Valkyries", *the New York Times*, March 22, 2011.

Dumbrell, John, "Unilateralism and America First?: President George W. Bush's Foreign Policy", *The Political Quarterly*, Vol. 73, Issue 3, July 2002.

Dunn, Michael Collins, "Algeria's Agony: The Drama So Far, The Prospects for Peace", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. 3, Issue 3, October 1994.

El-Ghobashy, Mona, "The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers", *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 37, Issue 3, 2005.

El-Shatir, Khairat, "No Need To Be Afraid Of Us", *The Guardian*, Wednesday, November 23, 2005.

Esposito, John L. and James P. Piscatori, "Democratization and Islam", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 45, No. 3, Summer 1991.

Esposito, John L., "Political Islam: Beyond the Green Menace", *Current History*, January 1994.

European Parliament, "Report on the Alleged Use of European Countries by the CIA for the Transportation and Illegal Detention of Prisoners", January 26, 2007, http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//NONSGML+REPORT+A6-2007-0020+0+DOC+PDF+V0//EN.

European Union, Presidency Conclusions, "Brussels European Council", 16-17 December, 2004, http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/turkey/presidency_conclusions16_17_12_04_en.pdf.

European Union, Presidency Conclusions, "European Council in Copenhagen", 21-22 June, 1993, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/UeDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/72921.pdf.

European Union, Presidency Conclusions, "Helsinki European Council", 10 & 11 December, 1999, Paragraph 12, http://www.consilium.europa.eu/Uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/ACFA4C.htm.

F. Gregory Gause III, "The Illogic of Dual Containment", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 73, No. 2, March/April 1994.

Fisher, Louis, "Deciding on War against Iraq: Institutional Failure", *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. 118, No. 3, 2003.

Flanagan, Stephen J. and Samuel J. Brannen, "Turkey's Shifting Dynamics: Implications for U.S.-Turkish Relations", Center for Strategic and International Studies, June 2008, http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/080606_turkeyshiftingdyn.pdf.

Flanagan, Stephen J., "Turkey's Evolving Dynamics: Strategic Choices for U.S.-Turkey Relations", Center for Strategic and International Studies, March 2009, http://csis.org/files/media/csis/pubs/090408_flanagan_turkeyreport_web.pdf.

Fluehr, Lobban Carolyn, "Islamization in Sudan: A Critical Assessment", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 44, No. 4, autumn 1990.

Fouad, Ajmi, "The Arab Spring At One", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 91, Issue 2, Mar/Apr 2012.

Fukuyama, Francis and Michael Mcfaul, "Should Democracy Be Promoted Or Demoted?", *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 31, No. 1, Winter 2007-2008.

Fukuyama, Francis, "The End of History", *The National Interest*, 16, summer 1989.

Fuller, Graham E., "A World without Islam", *Foreign Policy*, January/February 2008.

Fuller, Graham E., "Islamists in the Arab World: The Dance around Democracy", *Middle East Series, No. 49*, September 2004, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/cp49_fuller_final.pdf.

Fuller, Graham E., "Our Frying Alliance with Turkey", *Los Angeles Times*, October 19, 2007.

Gaddi, John Lewis, "Grand Strategy in the Second Term", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 84, Issue 1, Jan/Feb 2005.

Gary, David H. and Erick Stockman, "Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb: The Evolution from Algerian Islamism to Transnational Terror", *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations*, Vol. 2, No. 4, December 2008.

Gerges, Fawaz, "The end of the Islamist Insurgency in Egypt?: Costs and Prospects", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 54, No. 4, autumn 2000.

Gordon, Michael R., "Kerry Moves to Help Turkey and Israel to Restore Ties", *the New York Times*, April 6, 2013.

Grigoriadis, Ioannis N., "Friends No More?: The Rise of Anti-American Nationalism in Turkey", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 64, No. 1, Winter 2010.

Haass, Richard N., "The New Middle East", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 85, Issue 6, November/December 2006.

Haass, Richard, "The Squandered Presidency: Demanding More from the Commander-in-Chief", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 79, No. 3, May/June 2000.

Haass, Richard, "What To Do With American Primacy?', *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 1999.

Hadar, Leon T., "What Green Peril?", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 3, summer 1993.

Hakura, Fadi, "Turkey and the Middle East: Internal Confidence, External Assertiveness", *Briefing Paper, Chatham House*, November 2011, http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/public/Research/Europe/bp1111_hakura.pdf.

Hamid, Shadi and Amanda Kadlec, "Strategies for Engaging Political Islam", Project on Middle East Democracy & Frederic Ebert Stiftung, January 2010, http://pomed.org/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/strategies-for-engaging-political-islam.pdf.

Hamid, Shadi, "Engaging Political Islam to Promote Democracy", Policy Paper, July 2007, Progressive Policy Institute, http://www.mafhoum.com/press10/303S24.pdf.

Hamid, Shadi, "The Rise of Islamists", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 90, Issue 3, May/June 2011.

Hamzawy, Amr and Nathan J. Brown, "The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood: Islamist Participation in a Closing Political Environment", *Carnegie Paper, No. 19*, March 2010, Carnegie Endowment for international Peace, http://www.voltairenet.org/IMG/pdf/Egyptian_Muslim_Brotherhood.pdf.

Hamzawy, Amr, "The Key to Arab Reforms: Moderate Islamists", *Policy Brief No. 40*, August 2005, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/pb40.hamzawy.FINAL.pdf.

Haqqani, Husain and Fradkin Hillel, "Islamic Parties: Going Back to the Origins", *Journal Of Democracy*, Vol. 19, No. 3, July 2008.

Hashemi, Nader, "The Arab Revolution of 2011: Reflections on Religion and Politics", *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 13, No. 2, 2011.

Hemmer, Christopher, "U.S. Policy towards North Africa: Three Overarching Themes", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XIV, No. 4, winter 2007.

Heper, Metin, "Islam and Democracy in Turkey: Toward Reconciliation", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 51, No. 1, winter 1997.

Hess, Andrew Christie, "Islamic Civilization and the Legend of Political Failure", *Journal of Near Eastern Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 1, January 1995.

Hunter, Robert E., "A New American Middle East Strategy", *Survival*, Vol. 150, No. 6, December 2008-January 2009.

Hunter, Shireen T., "Islamic Fundamentalism: What It Really Is and Why It Frightens the West?, *SAIS Review*, Winter/Spring 1986.

Huntington, Samuel p., "The Clash of Civilizations", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 3, summer 1993.

Huntington, Samuel p., "The Lonely Superpower", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 78, Issue 2, March/April 1999.

Hurriyet Daily News, "America and Israel Haters Relying on Anti-Turkey Lobby", December 16, 2010.

Ihsan, Dagi, "Turkey's AKP in Power", *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 19, No. 3, July 2008.

Indyk, Martin, "Watershed in the Middle East", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 71, Issue 1, 1991/1992.

Indyk, Martine, Kenneth G. Lieberthal, and Michael E. O'Hanlon, "Scoring Obama's Foreign Policy", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 91, Issue 3, May/June 2012.

International Crisis Group, "Turkey and the Middle East: Ambitions and Constraints", *Europe Report No. 203*, April 2010.

Iskandaryan, Alexander, and Sergey Minasyan, "Pragmatic Politics vs. Historical Constraints: Analyzing Armenian-Turkish Relations", Caucasus Institute, Yerevan, January 2010, http://test.c-i.am/research/paper%201_eng.pdf.

Jenkins, Gareth, "Turkey's latest Crisis", *Survival*, Vol. 50, Issue 5, October 2008.

Jentleson, Bruce W., Andrew M. Exum, Melisa G. Delton, and J. Dana Stuster, "Strategic Adaptation: Toward a New U.S. Strategy in the Middle East", Center for a New American Security, June 2012, http://www.cnas.org/files/documents/publications/CNAS_StrategicAdaptation_JentlesonExum_0.pdf.

Kandeel, Amal A., “Egypt at Crossroads”, *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XVIII, No. 2, 2001.

Karads, Saban, “Turkey: Redrawing the Middle East Map Or Building Sandcastle?”, *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XVII, No. 1, Spring 2010.

Katulis, Brian, “Democracy Promotion in the Middle East and the Obama Administration”, A Century Foundation Report, 2009, http://www.tcf.org/assets/downloads/tcf-Katulis.pdf.

Kibaroglu, Mustafa and Baris Caglar, “Implications of a Nuclear Iran for Turkey”, *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XV, No. 4, Winter 2008.

Kinninmont, Jane, “Bahrain: Beyond the Impasse”, Chatham House, June 2012, http://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/public/Research/Middle%20East/pr0612kinninmont.pdf.

Kirkpatrick, David D., “Named Egypt’s Winner, Islamist Makes History”, *The New York Times*, June 24, 2012.

Kodmani, Bassma, “The Dangers of Political Exclusion: Egypt Islamist Problem”, *Middle East Series, No. 63*, October 2005, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/Cp63.Kodmani.FINAL.pdf.

Kosebalaban, Hasan, “The Crisis in Turkish-Israeli Relations: What is strategic Significance?”, *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XVII, No. 3, Fall 2010.

Kramer, Martin, “Coming To Terms: Fundamentalists or Islamists?”, *Middle East Quarterly*, Spring 2003.

Kramer, Martin, “Islam’s Sober Millennium”, *The Jerusalem Post*, December 31, 1999.

Krauthammer, Charles, “The Unipolar Moment”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, Issue 1, 1990/1991, pp. 23-33.

Krebs, Ronald R., “Israel’s Bunker Mentality”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 90, Issue 6, Nov/Dec 2011.

Krisci, Kemal, “Turkey’s Demonstrative Effect and the Transformation of the Middle East”, *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 13, No. 2/2011.

Kristol, William and Robert Kagan, “Toward Neo-Reaganite Foreign Policy”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 75, Issue 4, July/August 1996.

Lake, Anthony, “Conceptualizing U.S. Strategy in the Middle East”, the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, August 1994.

Land, David Shank, “Islam and Politics in Turkey: The 2007 Presidential Election and Beyond”, *International Affairs*, Vol. 83, No. 2, 2007.

Landler, Mark, “New Challenges for Obama and Turkey’s Premier”, *The New York Times*, September 19, 2011.

Larrabee, F. Stephen, “Turkey’s New Geopolitics”, *Survival*, Vol. 52, No. 2, April-May 2010.

Larrabee, Stephen F., “Turkey Rediscovers the Middle East”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 86, Issue 4, July/ August 2007.

Leiken, Robert S. and Steven Brook, “The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 86, No. 2, March/April 2007.

Lesser, Ian O., “Turkey, the United States, and the Delusion of Geopolitics”, *Survival*, Vol. 48, No. 3, Autumn 2006.

Lewis, Bernard, “Free At Last”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 88, Issue 2, March/April, 2009.

Lewis, Bernard, “Freedom and Justice in the Middle East”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 84, Issue 3, May/June 2005.

Lewis, Bernard, “Islam and Liberal Democracy”, *the Atlantic Monthly*, February, 1993.

Lewis, Bernard, “License to Kill: Usama Bin Laden’s Declaration of Jihad”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 77, No. 6, November/December 1998.

Lewis, Bernard, “The Roots of Muslim Rage”, *the Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 266, No. 3, September, 1990.

Lizza, Ryan, “The Consequentialist: How the Arab Spring Remade Obama’s Foreign Policy”, *the New Yorker*, May 2, 2011.

Lynch, Marc, “America and Egypt after the Uprisings”, *Survival* Vol. 53, No. 2, April-May 2011.

Makovsky, Alan, “Erbakan on the Ropes”, Policy Watch 239, Washington Institute for Near Eastern Policy, March 12, 1997, http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/erbakan-on-the-ropes.

Makovsky, Alan, “How To Deal With Erbakan?”, *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. 4, No. 1, March 1997.

Makovsky, Alan, “U.S. Relations With Erbakan’s Turkey”, The Washington Institute for Near Eastern Policy, *Policy Watch 213*, August, 1996, http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/u.s.-relations-with-erbakans-turkey.

Mazrui, Ali A., “Islamic and Western Values”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 76, No. 5, September/October 1997.

McConnell, Scott, "The Special Relationship With Israel: Is It Worth the Costs?", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. XVII, No. 4, winter 2010.

McCurdy, Daphne, "Turkish-Iranian Relations: When Opposition Attract", *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Vol. 7, No. 2, summer 2008.

McNamara, Sally, Ariel Cohen, and James Philips, "Countering Turkey's Strategic Drifts", No. 244, July 26, 2010, Heritage Foundation, http://thf_media.s3.amazonaws.com/2010/pdf/bg2442.pdf.

Mearsheimer, John J. and Stephen Walt, "Unrestricted Access: What the Israel Lobby Wants, It Too Often Gets", *Foreign Policy*, July/August 2006.

Mearsheimer, John J. and Steven M. Walt, "The Israeli Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy", March 2006, http://Ksgnotes1.harvard.edu/Research/wpaper.nsf/rwp/RWPo6-o11.

Mehmet, Ali Birand, "Everything Changed When Israeli Lobby Turned Away", *Hurriyet Daily News*, Wednesday, November 24, 2010.

Merril, Dennis, "The Truman Doctrine: Containing Communism and Modernity", *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 36, Issue 1, March 2006.

Migdalovitz, Carol, "Algeria: Current Issues", *Congressional Research Services*, April 16, 2009, http://research.policyarchive.org/18547.pdf.

Migdalovitz, Carol, "Turkey: Selected Foreign Policy Issues and U.S. Views", *Congressional Research Services*, August 2008, http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL34642.pdf.

Migdalovitz, Carol, "Turkey: Update on Crisis of Identity and Power", *Congressional Research Service*, September 2008, http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RL34646.pdf.

Miller, Judith, "The Challenge of Radical Islam", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 2, Spring 1993.

Milton, viorts, "Fundamentalism in Power: Sudan's Islamic Experiment", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 74, No. 3, May/June 1995.

Morelli, Vincent, "European Union Enlargement: A Status Report on Turkey's Accession Negotiation", *Congressional Research Service*, January 10, 2011, http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS22517.pdf.

Moubayed, Sami, "Turkish-Syrian Relations: The Erdogan Legacy", *Policy Brief No. 25*, October 2008, SETA Foundation for Political, Economic, and Social Research.

Murphy, Richard and F. Gregory Gause III, "Democracy and the U.S Policy in the Muslim Middle East", *Middle East Policy*, Vol. V, No. 1, January 1997.

National Intelligence Council, "Trends in Global Terrorism: Implications for the United States", April 2006, http://www.governmentattic.org/5docs/NIE-2006-02R.pdf.

New York Times, "Turkey's Leadership", September 20, 2011.

Ney, Joseph, "The Decline Of America's Soft Power", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 83, Issue 3, May/June 2004.

Onis, Ziya, "Multiple Faces of the New Turkish Foreign Policy: Underlying Dynamics and a Critique", *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 13, No. 1/2011.

Ottaway, Marina and Amr Hamzawy, "Islamists in Politics: The Dynamics of Participation", Middle East Program, No. 98, November 2008, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/islamist_participation.pdf.

Ottaway, Marina, "Democracy Promotion in the Middle East: Restoring Credibility", *Policy Brief No. 60*, May 2008, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/pb_60_ottaway_final.pdf.

Ottaway, Marina, "Middle East Democracy Promotion Is Not A One Way Street", *Policy Brief 82*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, November 2009, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/mideast_democracy_promotion1.pdf.

Ottaway, Marina, "The More Things Change … Political Reform in the Arab World", *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 26, Issue 2, Summer 2009.

Peter L., Han, "Securing the Middle East: The Eisenhower Doctrine of 1957", *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 36, Issue 1, March 2006.

Philip, Gordon, "The United States and Turkey: A View from the Obama Administration", A Lecture Delivered at the Brookings Institution, March 17, 2010, http://www.brookings.edu/~/media/events/2010/3/17%20turkey/0317_turkey_gordon.pdf.

Pierre, Andrew J. and William B. Quandt, "Algeria's War on Itself", *Foreign Policy*, Issue 99, Summer 1995.

Pipes, Daniel, "Islam and Islamism: Faith and ideology", *National Interest*, spring 2000.

Pipes, Daniel, "Islam vs. Islamism", *the Washington Times*, May 13, 2013.

Pipes, Daniel, "There Are No Moderates: Dealing With Fundamentalist Islam", *National Interests*, Fall 1995.

Porter, Patrick, "Long War and Lon Telegrams: Containing Al-Qaeda", *International Affairs*, Vol. 85, No. 2, March/April 2009.

Powell, Colin, “A Strategy for Partnership”, *Foreign Affairs,* Vol. 83, No. 1, January/February 2004.

Quinn, Adam, "The Art of Declining Politely: Obama's Prudent Presidency and the Waning of American Power", *International Affairs,* Vol. 87, Issue 4, July/August 2011.

Rice, Condoleezza, “Promoting the National Interests”, *Foreign Affairs,* Vol. 79, No. 1, January/February, 2000.

Rice, Condoleezza, “Rethinking the National Interests”, *Foreign Affairs,* Vol. 87, Issue 4, 2008.

Riedel, Bruce & Others, “The Middle East: What Is Our Long-Term Vision?”, *Middle East Policy,* Vol. 3, Issue 3, October 1994.

Rodman, Peter W., “Middle East Diplomacy after the Gulf War”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 70, Issue 2, Spring 1991.

Rodman, Peter W., “Policy Brief: Don’t Destabilize Algiers”, *Middle East Quarterly*, Vol. 3, No. 4, December 1996.

Rudoren, Judi and Mark Lander, “With Obama as Broker, Israelis and Turkey End Dispute”, *the New York Times,* March 22, 2013.

Rugh, William A., “Egyptian Politics and American Diplomacy”, *Middle East Policy,* Vol. XIX, No. 2, summer 2012.

Rutherford, Bruce K., “What Do Egypt’s Islamists Want?: Moderate Islam and the Rise if Islamic Constitutionalism”, *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 60, No. 4, Autumn 2006.

Sanger, David E., “For Obama, an Evolving Doctrine on Foreign Policy”, *the New York Times,* September 24, 2013.

Sayari, Sabri, “Turkey’s Islamist Challenge”, *Middle East Quarterly,* Vol. III, No. 3, September 1996.

Sharp, Jeremy M. “U.S. Democracy Promotion Policy in the Middle East: The Islamist Dilemma”, *Congressional Research Services*, June 2006, http://www.history.navy.mil/library/online/democ%20in%20middle%20east.htm.

Sharp, Jeremy M., “The Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative: An Overview”, *Congressional Research Services* (CRS), the Library of Congress, February 15, 2005

Sharp, Jeremy M., “The Middle East Partnership Initiative: An Overview”, *Congressional Research Services*, the Library of Congress, July 20, 2005, http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS21457.pdf.

Shehata, Dina, "The Fall of the Pharaoh", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 90, Issue 3, May/June 2011.

Shifrinson, Joshua R. Itzkowitz, "The Kurds and Regional Security: An Evaluation of Developments since the Iraq War", Crown Center for Middle East Studies, Brandeis University, December 2006.

Shirley, Edward G., "Is Iran's Present Algeria's Future?", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 74, No. 3, May/June 1995.

Sonn, Tamara, "Islamic Fundamentalism and Political Islam", *History Compass*, Vol. 4, Issue 1, December 2005.

Sussman, Dalia, "49% in Poll Fault Obama on Policies outside U.S.", *the New York Times*, September 24, 2013.

Swelam, Ashraf, "Egypt's 2010 Parliamentary Elections: The Landslide", *Occasional Papers 2*, January 2011, Egypt's International Economic Forum.

Taspinar, Omar, "Turkey's Middle East Policy: Between Neo-Ottomanism and Kemalism" *Carnegie Papers, No. 10*, September 2008, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/cmec10_taspinar_final.pdf.

The German Marshal Fund of the United States, "Transatlantic Trends", August 2010, http://www.communitas-bg.org/uploads/files/Transatlantic%20Trends/2010_English_Top.pdf.

Torbakov, Igor, "Making Sense of the Current Phase Turkish-Russian Relations", *Occasional Papers*, October 2007, the Jamestown Foundation, http://www.jamestown.org/uploads/media/Torbakov-OP.pdf.

Ulgen, Sinan, "A Place In The Sun For Fifteen Minutes Of Fame?: Understanding Turkey New Foreign Policy", *Carnegie Papers, No. 1*, December 2010, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/turkey_new_foreign_policy.pdf.

United Nations Development Program, Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, "Arab Human Development Report 2002: Creating Opportunities for Future Generations", 2002, http://www.arab-hdr.org/publications/other/ahdr/ahdr2002e.pdf.

United Nations Development Program, Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, "Arab Human Development Report 2003: Building a Knowledge Society", 2003, http://www.arab-hdr.org/publications/other/ahdr/ahdr2002e.pdf.

United Nations Development Program, Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, "Arab Human Development Report 2004: Towards Freedom in the Arab World", 2004, http://www.arab-hdr.org/publications/other/ahdr/ahdr2004e.pdf.

United Nations Development Program, Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, "Arab Human Development Report 2005: Towards the Rights of Women in the Arab World", 2005, http://www.arab-hdr.org/publications/other/ahdr/ahdr2005e.pdf.

United Nations Development Program, Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, "Arab Human Development Report 2009: Challenges to Human Security in the Arab Countries", 2009, http://www.arab-hdr.org/publications/other/ahdr/ahdr2009e.pdf.

Vidino, Lorenzo, "Five Myths about the Muslim Brotherhood", *the Washington Post*, March 6, 2011.

Walker, Joshua W., "Reexamining the U.S.-Turkish Alliance", *The Washington Quarterly*, Winter 2007-2008.

Walker, Joshua W., "The United Sates and Turkey: Can They Agree To Disagree?", Crown Center for Middle East Studies, November 2010, http://www.brandeis.edu/crown/publications/meb/MEB46.pdf.

Walt, Stephen M., "Tow Cheers for Clinton's Foreign Policy", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 79, No. 2, March/April 2000.

Washington Post, "Egypt Unstable Regime", January 25, 2011.

Waxman, Dov, "The Real Problem in U.S.-Israeli Relations", *the Washington Quarterly*, Spring 2012.

Welch, David, "Terrorism in Algeria", Department of State Dispatch, October 30, 1995, http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/ERC/briefing/dispatch/1995/html/Dispatchv6no44.html.

Wittes, Tamara Cofman and Michele Dune, "Democracy in Egypt: Necessary Ingredient in a U.S.-Egyptian Partnership", the Brooking Institution, 2009, http://www.brookings.edu/research/opinions/2009/08/17-egypt-wittes.

World Economic Forum, "Islam and the West: Annual Report on the State of Dialogue, January 2008, http://www.weforum.org/pdf/C100/Islam_West.pdf.

Wright, Robin, "Islam, Democracy, and the West", *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 3, Summer 1992.

Ydinli, Ersel A., "A Pragmatic Shift for the Turkish Generals and an End to the Coup Era in Turkey", *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 63, No. 4, autumn 2009.

Yilmmaz, Bahri, "The Relations Of Turkey With The European Union: Candidate Forever?", *Working Papers Series # 167* (2008), Center for European Studies at Harvard University, http://aei.pitt.edu/11789/1/CES_167.pdf.

Yilmmaz, Nuh, “U.S.-Turkish Relations: Model Partnership as an Empty Signifier”, *Insight Turkey*, Vol. No. 1, 2011.

Zeghal, Malika, “Islamist Parties: Participation without Power”, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 19, No. 3, July 2008.

Zoubair, Yahia H., “Algeria and U.S. Interests: Containing Islamic Radicalism and Promoting Democracy”, *Middle East Policy*, Vol. IX, No. 1, March 2002.