



A Conflicts Forum Monograph

Wahhabism, Salafism and Islamism: Who Is The Enemy?

By Professor Ahmad Moussalli*

American University of Beirut

January, 2009

Conflicts Forum: Beirut - London - Washington

Wahhabism, Salafism and Islamism: Who Is The Enemy?

Professor Ahmad Moussalli*

American University of Beirut

This essay constructs and deconstructs three main discourses created by different and opposing trends in modern Islamic thought that are normally and mistakenly lumped together as Islamism, fundamentalism, salafism, neo-salafism, Wahhabism, jihadism, political Islam, Islamic radicalism and others. I will compare and contrast between them by developing a typology of major ideologies of active Islamic trends that centers specifically on Wahhabism and neo-Wahhabism, salafism and neo-salafism, and Islamism, both moderate and radical. Understanding these trends and their discourses will allow world powers, policymakers, academicians, intellectuals, terrorism experts, journalists, and many others to distinguish between and understand the logic of the radical and the moderate, the active and the inactive, the jihadi and the peaceful, the takfiri and the tolerant, the modern and the traditional, and the rational and irrational. This essay will also clarify the terminology used

*Dr Ahmad Moussalli is Professor of Political Science and Islamic Studies at the *American University of Beirut*. He has a PhD from the University of Maryland (College Park, Maryland); an MA from St. John's College, (Santa Fe, New Mexico); and a BA from Al-Azhar University (Cairo). His fields of expertise include Islamic Political History and Thought, Ideologies of Contemporary Islamic Movements, East/West relations, Globalization, and the Arab-Israeli Conflict. He has written extensively on issues of Islamist ideologies and politics, East-West relations, and Middle Eastern Politics. His numerous writings are published world-wide in tens of journals and collections and in publishing over fifteen books, including [U.S. Foreign Policy and Islamist Politics](#) (2008); [A History of Islamic Legal Theories](#) (2007); [Dialectics of Shura and Democracy: Democracy and Human Rights in Islamic Thought](#) (2007); [Encyclopedia of Islamic Movements in the Arab World, Iran and Turkey](#) (2005); [Islamic Movements: Impact on Political Stability in the Arab World](#) (2004); [Images of Islam in the Western World and Images of the West in the Islamic World](#) (2003); [The Islamic Quest for Democracy, Pluralism, and Human Rights](#) (2003); [Roots of the Intellectual's Crisis in the Arab](#) (2002); [Moderate and Radical Islamic Fundamentalism: the Quest for Modernity, Legitimacy and the Islamic State](#) (2001); [Islamic Fundamentalism: Myths and Realities](#) (1999).

Dr. Moussalli has been granted many honors, awards, and citations, including 2004 Fulbright Visiting Specialist Award: Access to the Muslim World, US; 2003 Selection of [The Islamic Quest for Democracy, Pluralism, and Human Rights: From Classical and Medieval Roots to Modern Discourses](#) as an Outstanding Academic Book by [Choice](#), The Current Reviews of Academic Books, USA; 2001 Selection of [Moderate and Radical Islamic Fundamentalism](#) as an Outstanding Academic Book by [Choice](#), The Current Reviews of Academic Books, USA; 2000; Selection of [Historical Dictionary of Islamic Fundamentalist Movements in the](#)

Arab World, Iran and Turkey as an Outstanding Academic Book by Choice, The Current Reviews of Academic Books, USA; 2000, Senior Fellowship, United States Institute of Peace, Washington, DC.

chaotically by different policy-makers, analysts, journalists, academicians, and intellectuals. Although all Islamic trends use similar literal doctrines and concepts such as jihad, Islamic state, *al-shari'a* or prophetic traditions, their connotations and discourses differ importantly from one trend to another. This makes their implications serious in action, massive in repercussions, and fundamental for understanding.

Salafism is a very diversified and complicated ideologically and religiously motivated trend and is thus not constructed by one unified discourse or group or authority. As a rule, all Wahhabis are salafists, but not all salafists are Wahhabis. Islamism is also another complex trend that includes moderate and radical movements, but it is not equivalent to Wahhabism: it is actually its antithesis. While Islamism and Wahhabism/salafism share a few theological and intellectual doctrines, they are theologically and politically very different. However, after September 11, 2001 and the invasion of Iraq, some Wahhabis and salafists merged together with radical Islamists and consequently have created neo-salafism and takfiri-jihadism. This complexity thus appears in the takfiri-jihadists that are composed of both neo-Wahhabis, neo-salafists, and radical Islamists. Again, not all takfiris are jihadist, and not all jihadists are takfiri. To understand these seemingly similar yet very complex religious, ideological, and political manifestations, the essay explains separately each ideology, outlines the basic discourse of their trend, and then shows in a comparative manner the similar and different principles and interpretations. The conclusion first shows how these trends and their movements and groups are manipulated by different governmental and non-governmental powers and, second, draws up the profiles of neo-salafist, neo-Wahhabi, and takfiri-jihadist and their practical impacts on the politics of the world today.

I. Wahhabism

Let's start with Wahhabism, which considers itself to be the true salafist movement. Wahhabism started as a theological reform movement, having the goal of calling (*da'wa*) people to restore the 'real' meaning of *tawhid* (oneness of God or monotheism) and to disregard and deconstruct 'traditional' disciplines and practices that evolved in Islamic history such as theology and jurisprudence and the traditions of visiting tomes and shrines of venerated individuals. Such disciplines and practices are classified as *shirk* (polytheism), *kufir* (unbelief in God), *ridda* (apostasy), and *bida'* (innovations). Its founder, Muhammad Bin Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792), forced people to adhere to a very strict and literal interpretation of "monotheism" and to fight *shirk*. His followers, who called themselves *al-muwahhidin* (the monotheists -- as if others, especially Muslims, are not), are labeled by others as Wahhabis.

While *tawhid* is the core concept of Islam, Abd al-Wahhab argues that the recognition of a unique creator without a partner is insufficient for correct belief and must be joined with 'pure' Islamic behavior. Following in the footsteps of Ibn Taymiyya, a medieval scholar, he viewed the visits to prophets' and holy saints' shrines as *shirk* and even declared that building shrines is not an Islamic act, but an act of "idolatry." He concludes that such customs in all Islamic countries indicated the impurity and even *kufir* (disbelief) of Muslims' behavior. Wahhabism prohibits many practices in which other Muslims engage, such as listening to certain types of music, drawings of human beings or other living things that contain a soul, praying while visiting tombs (including Prophet Mohammed's tomb), following any *madhahib* (schools) of Islamic jurisprudence, which in fact constitutes Sunni orthodoxy.

However, most sheikhs of his time and after rejected Abd al-Wahhab's view and some of them even judged the sheikh as an apostate (*murtad*), making his *takfir* (accusing others of unbelief) of Muslims invalid and illegitimate. For this reason the scholars of Mecca and Medina declared the Wahhabis as

unbelievers. The majority of Muslim scholars rejected the Wahhabi definition of *shirk* and *tawhid*. Wahhabi theology treats the Qur'an and Hadith as fundamental texts as understood by *al-salaf al-salih* (pious ancestors) and developed further by many various commentaries, including Ibn Abd al-Wahhab's. His book, *Kitab al-Tawhid* (Book of Monotheism), and the works of the earlier scholar Ibn Taymiyya and Ibn Qayim al-Jawziyya are the major referential authority of Wahhabism. Wahhabis differentiate themselves from orthodox Sunnis by calling themselves salafists, on the assumption that they follow the Prophets' Companions (*sahaba*), the Companions' followers (*tabi'in*), and the follower's followers (*tabi'i al-tabi'in*). *Al-salaf al-salih* are the model that Muslims should emulate.¹

Orthodox Sunni Muslims believe that they are the true bearers of pure Islam since the time of *al-salaf* and that they, therefore, have roots in *al-salaf*. They are represented however today by the four surviving authentic schools of Islamic jurisprudence: *Hanafi*, *Shafi'i*, *Maliki*, and *Hanbali* schools (*madhahib*). This is on the one hand. On the other, the Wahhabis -- who claim to be the champion of Sunni Islam -- perceive the Sunnis as having been wrong for over ten centuries and have been living a state of pre-Islamic paganism (*jahiliyya* [literally, ignorance]) since they moved away from the way of *al-salaf*. They even accused the majority of orthodox Sunni Muslims who were living under the Ottoman caliphate and the caliphate itself of reprehensible innovation (*bid'a*) and unbelief (*kufr*) because they had been living under a political system that is unknown to *al-salaf*.

Ibn Taymiyya (1263-1328) who was admired and followed by Muhammad Ibn Abd all-Wahhab as a role model strayed from orthodox Sunni Islam on important issues of creed (*aqidah*) and worship (*ibadat*) and was accused of reprehensible *bida'* and even *kufr* (unbelief). Unlike the majority of Muslims, Ibn Taymiyya and the Wahhabi's anti-orthodox and controversial theological and legal positions can be summarized in the following point: 1) the claim that Allah's attributes are "literal," thereby attributing God with created attributes and becoming anthropomorphist, and the claim that created things existed eternally with Allah; 2) the opposition to the scholarly consensus on the divorce

issue; 3) his opposition to the orthodox Sunni practice of *tawassul* (asking Allah for things using a deceased pious saint as an intermediary); 4) saying that Allah has a limit (*hadd*) that only He knows and that Allah literally sits on the throne (*al-kursi*) and has left space for Prophet Muhammad to sit next to Him; 5) the claim that Allah descends physically; 6) his classifying of oneness in worship of Allah (*tawhid*) into two parts: *tawhid al-rububiyya* and *tawhid al-uluhiyya*, which was never done by pious adherents or *al-salaf*.

It is important to emphasize that Wahhabis have differentiated themselves from other Muslims -- and even other salafists -- in their understanding of an unorthodox, literal understanding of God's attributes by saying Allah has human attributes. Ibn Baz, the main Wahhabi scholar and religious official during most of the twentieth century says that the Prophet's Companions and their followers believe in a direction for Allah, and that is the direction of elevation, for the exalted is above the throne without giving an example and without entering into modality. Another Wahhabi scholar, Muhammad Salih al-'Uthaymin, expresses his anthropomorphism by saying that Allah's establishment on the throne means that He is sitting 'in person' on His throne. However, Sunni orthodoxy does not attribute to God any direction or position. To an orthodox Sunni, God has always existed without the need for a place, and He did not take a place for Himself after creating it.

Moreover, Bin Abd al-Wahhab branded all Shia as unbelievers and *rafida* (rejectionists); for their *kufir* is directly linked to their lack of faith.² Baghdad's 'ulama' (religious scholars) criticized the Wahhabi theory that views all Muslims as polytheists and unbelievers.³ Consequently, it should be noted that *takfir* (excommunication) has been a prominent feature of Wahhabism in its original form and today in its neo-Wahhabi form.

More dangerously, out of this perspective on *tawhid-shirk* duality came the *hijra* (migration) from one's society and jihad against one's own people, under which Bin Abd al-Wahhab used to fight the 'infidel' Ottoman Caliphate, fighting the *jahili* (ignorant, pre-Islamic paganist) societies of the Arabian

Peninsula and forming an independent state. And following Ibn Taymiyya, Abd al-Wahhab legitimized the successfully revolting party as rightful in its rebellion against the legal imam, even though the imamate belongs to the caliph and sultan who held theoretically the majority, according to Sunni orthodoxy. This case is especially true for the revolting force that obeys Islamic *shari'a*.⁴ Saoud Bin Abd al-Aziz sent a harsh message to the Ottoman caliphate accusing it of unbelief, polytheism, and apostasy and called on it to convert to Islam.⁵ In conjunction to the *takfir* proclamation, he launched violent military campaigns and conquered most of the Arabian Peninsula. He sent messages calling on the Ottomans to be Muslims. Instead the Ottomans abolished his state. Again, it is obvious that *takfir* is also an organic part of Wahhabism in its original form.

In 1902 the Wahhabi movement resurfaced when Abd al-Aziz Bin Abd al-Rahman returned from Kuwait and initiated a series of organized incursions to spread Wahhabism and to establish the third Saudi Wahhabi state. However, Abd al-Aziz later clashed with the Wahhabi Ikhwan (brethren) who wanted to continue spreading Wahhabism and waging jihad against other Muslims. He stopped his incursions for the sake of establishing his rule and good international and regional relations, though he still used Wahhabism as a vehicle for legitimizing his political objectives. This behavior won him harsh criticism from the Wahhabi brotherhood. He was blamed for several mistakes: his tolerance towards al-Ihsa' Shiite community, dealing with the unbelievers by sending his son Saoud to Egypt and his other son Faysal to Britain, introducing the telephone and telegraph to the Hijaz, and following a policy of alliance and submission to British colonialism. The core issue at stake was, however, their ban from continuing jihad. He responded to the brotherhood's accusations by saying that he had obtained *fatwas* (religious edicts) from Wahhabi 'ulama' (religious scholars) naming him as the sole decisionmaker in matters concerning jihad.⁶ When the *fatwas* did not help, he shifted to a policy of confrontation in 1929. After defeating the brotherhood he turned Wahhabism into a state institution. Wahhabism was then forcefully changed from a movement of a revolutionary jihad and theological *takfiri* purification to a movement of a conservative social, political, theological, and religious *da'wa*

(call) and to a justifying the institution that upholds loyalty to the royal Saudi family and the King's absolute power.

Wahhabi clergymen fulfilled an active role and were highly regarded in society: they were the imams for the Friday and Jama'a prayers; they controlled legislation, education and religious education. They proved their loyalty during the Ikhwan's revolt in the 1920s, the neo-Ikhwan's occupation of the Grand Mosque of Mecca in 1979, the Second Gulf War in 1991, the Bin Laden issue, and the American attacks against Afghanistan and the Taliban in 2001. The non-state Wahhabi base's opinions on each and every issue diverged greatly from the regimes. Consequently, we see today a return to a neo-Wahhabi brotherhood's perspective in the forms of both original Wahhabism and original salafism, which together are we can label neo-Wahhabism and neo-salafism.

Ibn Baz, the late (d. 1999) Saudi mufti and government scholar par excellence was the major religious power behind spreading Wahhabi beliefs. The present spreading of Wahhabism took place under his leadership and as a direct result of his policies. He called non-Wahhabi Muslims pagans, apostates, deviants, innovators and libeled the scholars who disagreed with Wahhabi doctrines. He outlawed advice to rulers and the liberalizing of political institutions. As a former president of the Directorships of Scholarly Research, *Ifta'*, *Da'wa*, and *Irshad*, Ibn Baz is on record for issuing a *fatwa* declaring as un-Islamic the Palestinian people's uprising. In the late 1960s, he declared any and all forms of cooperation with the *kuffar* (unbelievers), the Soviets, prohibited.⁷

But in the early 1990s Ibn Baz legally permitted un-Islamic forces to fight Iraq, because of "necessity" (a legal doctrine allowing the prohibited). While the Wahhabi clergy accepted non-Muslim foreign armed forces to land in their territories, they rejected the rule of the majority in democratic regimes, subsequently considering democracy as contrary religion to God's and monotheism. Parliaments are no more than places for clear *shirk* and *jahiliyya*.⁸ While seeking to overthrow the regime, opposition movements still espoused the fundamental doctrines and objective of Wahhabism. As offshoots of the

Wahhabi ideology, these movements used both peaceful and violent reformist methods and evolved into sub-movements that had different goals and different stands: some were opposition while others remained loyalists. However, Ibn Taymiyya has remained an inspiration to Wahhabi, salafist, neo-salafist, neo-Wahhabi, and radical Islamist groups. Wahhabism in its original form and today's neo-Wahhabism hold the same views. Ibn Taymiyya, as a primary reference for the radical Sunni movements, has been quoted to justify the assassination of Anwar Sadat in 1981, to accuse regimes and Muslims of *kufr* and *jahiliyya*, and even to condemn the Saudi leadership and call for its overthrow.⁹

Examples of Wahhabi objections to the Saudi regimes include "Muthakkarat al-Nasiha," the "Memorandum of Advice" that prominent clerics presented to King Fahd in 1993, to object against the Saudi government's decision to seek the help of the "infidel" Americans in the second gulf war against Iraq in 1991, and on the 'ulama's' *fatwa* that allowing non-Muslims inside the Kingdom during operation Desert Storm.¹⁰ This group called for a revival of original Wahhabism that had deviated from its original course and was being used by the authorities to tame the clergy. It originated from the circles of clergymen and religious scholars in Najd. They submitted a preliminary memo demanding reform of the system through several steps: the formation of a shura council, the review of the laws' compatibility with Islamic *shari'a*, the just distribution of public funds and the restructuring of media and of foreign policy, away from alliances (with non-Muslim) not sanctioned by *al-shari'a*.¹¹

Ibn Baz issued a statement faulting the memo's style and calling for obedience to the leaders and for giving advice inside the privacy of the house. The authorities arrested many of the groups' followers, some of whom were set free in exchange for their promise to cease all actions. On the other side, Muhammad al-Mas'ari fled the Saudi Arabia and found refuge in London where he established the Salafists' first public tribune. In a later stage, this group was divided into three wings: 1) the Sa'd al-Faqih wing, representing the Brotherhood's line, 2) the Muhammad al-Mas'ari wing, forming the Legal Rights Committee in London, 3) the Osama Bin Laden wing, calling for revolutionary

opposition. The last wing extended its Wahhabi popular bases, especially among the Arab Afghans who had helped liberate Afghanistan from the Soviet occupation. Thousands of mujahidin returned to their country, only to discover that “The Land of the Two Sanctuaries” was directly under occupation by the Americans. Bin Laden sent an open letter to the Saudi government in 1997, explaining the frustration felt by that group of the Wahhabi opposition. The letter became the foundational letter on whose grounds the revolutionary armed movement, the neo-Wahhabi/neo-salafist al-Qaida organization, was born.

In 1998, Bin Laden announced the creation of *The Islamic Front for Jihad against the Jews and the Crusaders*, and issued a fatwa stating that it is the Muslims' duty to kill Americans and their allies. His organization was behind the attacks on the Americans embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 and the terror operation against the Pentagon in Washington and the World Trade Center in New York on September 11, 2001. Several Saudi imams and sheikhs were critical of the government's position vis-à-vis the Americans. They called for support of Afghanistan and for the launching of a jihad to fight the Americans. The spiritual leader Hammoud Bin Aqla al-Shu‘aibi issued a jihadi *fatwa* against the U.S. and its allies in the region. The *fatwa* also described all those who supported the infidels against the Muslims as infidels themselves.¹² As a result of this action, al-Shu‘aibi was removed from the Council of Higher ‘ulama’ and asked to stop issuing *fatwas*. Another al-Qaida sympathizer, Sheikh Abi al-Barra' al-Najdi, published a book entitled *al Kawashif al-Jaliyya fi kufr al-Dawla al-Saudiya* (Clear Proofs of the Unbelief of the Saudi State) in which he detailed the Wahhabi opposition's true thoughts against the Saud family and its followers. He accused the Saudi government of apostasy and called on it to remove itself from the Arab League and the Organization of the Islamic Conference -- since both were ruled by infidels. He praised the Saudi Afghans who had returned to their country trained for fighting because they had lost trust in all those that praise the unjust rulers.¹³

American pressure on the Saudi regime to enforce democratic principles has not fared well. Both the religious Wahhabi establishment and the royal family have rejected any real democratic change.

Salafist religious sheikhs, like Abu Muhammad al-Makdisi, declared that democracy is a religion apart from God's and monotheism. He described the democratic rule of the people as a part of *kufir* and *shirk*, opposed to the Muslim faith.¹⁴

II. Salafism

Salafism started as a trend that finds in the concept of *al-salaf al-salih* (the pious predecessors) the instrument to either understand the true interpretation and practice of Islam or to reject the cumulative experience of the Muslim community. In one sense, the concept is used to 'purify' Muslims from their present realities, histories, theologies, jurisprudence, and contexts in order to move them ironically into either a backward and regressive religious, moral, social, and political trajectory (as in the case with Wahhabism and other groups), or into a forward and progressive religious, moral, social, and political forward trajectory -- as is the case of Islamic reformism or modernism of Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, Muhammad Abdu, Muhammad Iqbal, and Muhammad Rashid Rida and their religious and secular disciples. Consequently, the concept of *salaf* could lead an individual, a group or community forward or backward. Therefore, while many Muslim reformers or modernists employed the concept of *salaf*, that does not make them salafists—a fact that remains unrecognized by the vast majority of experts on Islam. This is why some scholars wrongly describe al-Afghani and Abdu as the fathers of *salafiyya*—they are definitely not, and all their thinking is a movement away from the salafism of Wahhabism or the traditionalism of Sunni thought.

Islamic reformism called for a return to *al-salaf* to resolve the theological, juridical and sectarian problems and deconstruct the problem of *takfir* that took place between different schools since the beginning of Islam. Traditional and salafist scholars stood against this trend because it took away their power as the custodian of Islamic jurisprudence, the tool used for personal, social, and political legislation that is legalized by the four founders of the main schools of jurisprudence: Abu Hanifa, Malik, Ibn Hanbal, and al-Shafi'i. The reformers saw jurisprudence as a continuous process of revision and adjustment to political and social problems. Unlike the salafists, they have not been

frozen in history and their ideal is not located in the first three generations of Islam (*al-salaf*). Jamal al-Din al-Afghani or Muhammad Abdu and others were driven by modern tools of Western civilization: science, technology, social organization, free expression, and democracy. They aimed at equal interaction and respect with the West, the true model that they have emulated. They further called for progress and advancement through participating in world civilizations. They did not view the conflict with the West as spiritual and religious but primarily as political, centering on colonialism and imperialism.

All formations of salafism are based on reforming individuals and communities on the basis of returning to the pure Islam of the Qur'an and prophetic *sunna* as understood and practiced by *al-salaf al-salih*. Like the Wahhabis, other salafists believe that the trajectory of the Islamic communities after the pious salaf moved rather into diverse forms of polytheism (*shirk*), reprehensible innovation (*bid'a*), and superstition (*khurafa*). Thus, neglecting 'the purist' interpretation of Islam, that of *al-salaf al-salih*, is tantamount to neglecting Islam itself. Consequently, all religious, intellectual, social, doctrinal, political conflicts have resulted from the failure to follow the method of *al-salaf al-salih*.¹⁵

If this is the case then, only the salafists are true Muslims; for they believe that only the salafist method is the method of *Ahl al-Hadith/Sunna*,¹⁸ and consequently belong to the 'saved' sect or *al-firqa al-najiya*.¹⁶ The salafist *da'wa* in its original -- but not the original Wahhabi--form -- centers on peaceful guidance away from corruptions that have affected pure religious beliefs and practices. It focuses on teaching 'true' Islam, by referring to the comprehensive principles of creed in order to answer all problems facing the community; to purify Muslim beliefs and practices from the infiltration of the elements of reprehensible innovations (*bid'a*) and unbelief (*kufr*), and consider debating such beliefs and practices as fallacious; to revive the practices of the Prophet Muhammad and disseminate the message of solidarity and unity of the community on the basis of its loyalty to the Prophet Muhammad, *al-wala'*, and hostility towards heresy and unbelief, *al-bara'*.¹⁹ The doctrine of *al-wala' wa al-bara'* has provided the basis for the salafists' choice to live in a small tight-knit community

(*jama'a*). They are convinced that the community system will protect them from *bida'* and reinforce their unity in the face of Muslim enemies.⁴¹

By living in their own societies, they believe that this is the effective way to avoid any resemblance to infidels. For the same reason, they also reject all entertaining distractions: music, theatre and places of pleasure and entertainment such as cafés, discotheques, and dance clubs. Perfume, the cinema, television and photographs are considered part of infidel cultures.¹⁶ The salafists emphasize that the roots of their concern with the community system lies more in a willingness to withdraw from corrupting innovations and to live in accordance with the example of *al-salaf al-salih*, rather than in a revolutionary activism to create a totally Islamic society.

The doctrine of *al-wala' wa al-bara'* developed by the salafists is reminiscent of the thoughts expressed by Ahmad Ibn Taymiyya. He developed the idea that the dissimilarity between believers and unbelievers must be total. In his book entitled *Iqtida' al-Sirat al-Mustaqim*, he explained in detail all aspects of differences that should be drawn by Muslims in their encounters with non-Muslims. According to him, Muslims, for instance, should speak Arabic in preference to any other language and should cut their hair and leave beards to grow long in a manner different from that of Jews and Christians. The followers of these two religions (*Ahl al-Kitab*) were seen by Ibn Taymiyya as active agents of unbelief who posed a threat to Islam.¹⁷

Unlike the original Wahhabi *da'wa*, the salafist *da'wa* is distinguished by its apolitical nature and by not giving priority to politics. Again, like the Wahhabis, other Salafists' doctrine of *tawhid* mean to accept and believe in the oneness of God and His absolute authority. Then they divide *tawhid*—the indivisible—into three sub-concepts: *tawhid 'ubudiyya* (unity of worship), meaning a true servant of Allah must single out Allah in all acts of worship and He alone should be worshiped with complete and utter loyalty; *tawhid rububiyya* (unity of lordship), meaning that a faithful Muslim must accept

that Allah as the creator of all things and that sovereignty over them belongs only to Him. *Asma' wa al-sifat* (unity of Allah's names and attributes) means a faithful Muslim believes in Allah's names and attributes mentioned in the Quran and the authentic *sunna*, in accordance to their Arabic meaning. Without any of these sub-concepts, a Muslim loses his true creed. Submission to God, therefore, is not a personal or public act but the focal point that engulfs members of Muslim society in all aspects of their lives. Consequently, the distinction between the personal and the public is replaced by the distinction between the religious and the non-religious. However, the theological perspectives of most non-Wahhabi salafist groups are closer to the Sunni orthodoxy, especially on rejecting divine anthropomorphism, and they uphold rather the majority's view as developed by theologians like al-Ash'ari and al-Maturidi.

Furthermore, the salafists strongly condemn whatever they regard as deviation from the principles of *tawhid*. One such example is that they reject *taqlid* of *madhahib* (schools of jurisprudence), which is a well-established principle by orthodoxy. For the salafists, this principle implies a submission to something other than God. They likewise reject *ijma'* (consensus), and *qiyas* (analogical deduction) by claiming that all religious matters must be resolved in the light of prophetic traditions or *ahadith*. More importantly, they also reject (*ijtihad*) independent legal reasoning, as advocated by Muslim reformists. From their point of view, *ijtihad* involves reason, which should play no role in religious matters. Therefore, they criticize the rationalism of Afghani, Abdu, and even Muhammad Rashid Rida, the pioneers of Islamic reformism, who were 'contaminated' by innovations propounded by the Mu'tazilites, a rationalist sect of Islam, (*bida al-Mu'tazila*), which eclipsed the role of *sunna*.¹⁸

The most important aspect that should be stressed here is that while emphasizing the importance of *tawhid* as the pillar of Islam, the salafists seek to eliminate its political meaning — an act that is diametrically opposite to what Islamism believes in. Politics is not seen as the way to good life and consequently they de-emphasize political activism and instead focus on religious *da'wa*. They are convinced that to believe in these sub-concepts of *tawhid* is first the way free individual and social life

from polytheism and reprehensible innovation, and guarantees true Islamic faith, the basis of a truly Islamic life.¹⁹

Unlike, the Islamists, the salafists acknowledge no bay'a (oath of allegiance), a well-known historical doctrine that requires all members of a movement to take a vow of loyalty to their leader. For bay'a might entail a serious deviation from the principle of al-wala' wa al-bara' because al-bay'a necessitates a declaration of loyalty to a jama'a leader under all circumstances, even if the leader commits sinful acts. Furthermore, the salafists believe that the doctrine of the al-wala' wa al-bara' should lead to refraining from any role in partisan politics (hizbiyya). They strongly reject party politics, especially Islamic movements' claims that give priority to politics. They view party politics as a fanatic call that opposes salafiyya and is closer to *bida* and violates *al-wala' wa al-bara'* on the basis of their loyalty to a particular leader or ideology rather than to the Quran and *sunna*.²⁰

Again, unlike Islamism, the salafists argue that party politics is a manifestation of polytheism. For it uses Islam as a tool to set up fanatical groups with particular political interests, which leads to the fragmentation and weakness of the Muslims. One movement that is often criticized by the salafists is al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin (the Muslim Brotherhood), the most important and the first Islamist movement in modern times. They accused it of *bid'a* and its tendency to direct the loyalty of its followers to certain leaders at the expense of the Quran, the sunna and the example of al-salaf *Salih*. Even salafist scholars of the caliber of Bin Baz, Muhammad Nasir al-Din al-Albani, al-'Uthaymin, and Salih Fauzan al-Fauzan issued *fatwas* prohibiting salafists to show any sympathy for Ikhwan al-Muslimin and similar Islamist movements.

From the salafist perspective, the Ikhwan al-Muslimin's quest for the reestablishment of caliphate is political in nature and dangerous to pure Islamic *da'wa*, which will cause bloody conflicts among Muslims. Instead, Muslims should be consistent with their core agenda to maintain the purity of Muslim religious beliefs and practices and to wage war against all forms of polytheism, innovations,

and deviations, while reviving the prophetic *sunna*. Furthermore, their quest for the caliphate led al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin to support the Iranian revolution, which gave legitimacy to ‘all the forms of infidelity of this revolution and the hostility of its proponents to the principle of the *ahl al-sunna wa al-jama‘a*’. For the salafists, the unification between Sunnis and Shiites is an absolute mistake, because Shiites have deviated concretely from true Islam and consequently consider the political system established by Ayatollah Khomeini to be infidel.²¹

From the salafist perspective, the devastating impact of party politics and the revolutionary spirit of Islamism was manifested in the rebellion launched by the Jihad Group in Egypt that perpetrated the assassination of Anwar Saddat, the Juhayman al-‘Utaybi-led attacks on the Grand Mosque in Mecca, Muhammad Ibn Surur al-Nayef Zayn al-‘Abidin and Abd al-Rahman Abd al-Khaliq’s criticism of the Saudi Arabian royal family and its religious establishment, and the victory of FIS in Algeria. Historically, the salafists, and again unlike the Islamists, have not only developed a moderate stance towards existing rulers, but even argued that Muslims must obey their rulers, whether just or unjust, on the condition that they do not command committing any sin. Even when the rulers commit errors and act cruelly, only advice, and not revolt or revolution, is the right way to rectify the rulers’ misconduct. Not only this, but contemporary senior Wahhabi ‘*ulama*’, including Ibn Baz and al-Fauzan, hold the view that to criticize a legitimate ruler might bring about anarchism, an act that is an absolute deviation from the salafist *manhaj* (method). Their idea for this non-revolutionary posture is again Ibn Taymiyya, who living under a despotic ruler and dying in jail, he forbade Muslims to take action against their legitimate ruler.²²

Nonetheless, the salafists’ main political advocacy is the strict application of *al-shari‘a*, and submission to it is of compulsory nature. It is the only law to which Muslims should submit, as it represents *tawhid al-‘uluhiyya*. Consequently, those rulers do not apply *shari‘a* into the realm of (*takfir*).²³ In theory, the salafists therefore cannot avoid using the *takfir* doctrine as a consequence the

rulers' rejection of *shari'a*. However, their rejection of these rulers falls short of accusing them of unbelief. They distinguish two categories of unbelief: *kafir al-i'tiqadi* (creedal unbelief) and *kafir 'amali* (practical unbelief): the first category is no longer considered a faithful Muslim, the second one is still measured as a Muslim, but a Muslim who commits sinful acts.

Unlike the majority of the Islamists, the salafist view of *al-shari'a* leads to rejecting democracy and other human ideologies; for they submit only to the will of God, and not to that of the majority, since the majority are generally in error. Instead the salafists opt for any ruler (*waliy al-amr*) who upholds *al-shari'a* and who is chosen by a rather ill-defined concept of *ahl al-hall wa al-'aqd*, or a group of prominent religious scholars and military and political leaders.²⁴ The ruler's authority is derived the form of viceregency (*khilafa*), or power indirectly delegated by God. Consequently, people must obey their ruler, whether just or despotic; there can be no reason to resist him.²⁵

A total rejection of democracy distinguishes the salafists from members of mainstream Islamist movements such as al-Ikhwan al-Muslimin in the Arab world and Jamaat-i Islami in Pakistan. Moderate groups within these movements participate in general elections, which are viewed as a legitimate way to win control of power and the ability to implement *al-shari'a* peacefully and by a popular choice.²⁶ Another concept that distinguishes salafism from mainstream Islamism and the traditional Islamic perspective is jihad. Traditionally, jihad, which is divided up into two levels, greater jihad of the inner struggle to purify the soul and lesser jihad of the external defense or fighting, is not only directed towards the external enemies but also towards anyone who is unjust against the Muslims, even if he is a Muslim himself. Salafism focuses rather on purifying the soul through isolation if society is corrupt, therefore they have more or less cordoned themselves off from the non-virtuous society, hoping to establish their own virtuous society without revolting against the former.

Jihad in its meaning as a holy war received particular attention in the debates of classical Muslim jurists. They divided this jihad into two kinds: offensive and defensive. Offensive jihad is identical to

the war against unbelievers in an effort to expand the territory of a Muslim state in order to bring as many people under its rule as possible. Participating in this jihad is considered a voluntary collective duty (*fard kifaya*), which is fulfilled if a sufficient number of people take part in it. If it is not fulfilled, all Muslims are sinning. The defensive jihad takes place when a territory of Muslims is attacked by the enemy, and participating in this jihad becomes a compulsory individual duty (*fard 'ayn*) for all Muslims capable of fighting. In both cases jihad requires the approval of a legitimate ruler and has always been regulated by a host of ethical prerogatives and legal sanctions.²⁷

Unlike classical jurists, Muslim modernist thinkers, including Muhammad Abdu and Muhammad Rashid Rida, were inclined to emphasize the defensive nature of jihad. They were of the opinion that peaceful coexistence is the normal state between Islamic and non-Islamic territories and jihad is only to be waged as a reaction against outside aggression. They envisaged various forms of aggression against Muslims, such as a direct attack on the territory of Islam or the oppression of Muslims residing outside the frontiers of the Islamic state. To them, the offensive jihad, as understood by classical Muslim jurists, has no place in Islam. While emphasizing the defensive nature of jihad, they broadened its meaning to include all kinds of moral and spiritual struggle.²⁸

Historically, other than the Wahhabis, other salafists view jihad as a defensive war waged against non-Muslims attacking Muslims. The nature of the salafists' jihad is diametrically different from jihad launched by racial Islamist groups active in fighting a war against Muslim rulers. Jihad is not equivalent to rebellion. Even though there is a necessity for Muslims to wage jihad when attacked, the salafists still stress the need to wait for the approval and command of a legitimate ruler. In their eyes, jihad launched without the approval of a ruler would potentially bring chaos. In this sense, their concept of jihad is no different from the classical one, which underlines that jihad can only be waged under the leadership of the legitimate *imam*. However, the salafists argue that in spite of the absence of the ruler's approval, jihad still can be waged if the ruler has strayed into infidelity or simply

wickedness, because the approval of an infidel ruler is no longer needed. In this case Muslims might appoint a temporary *imam* who would unite them.³⁰

Nonetheless, the ‘non-political *da‘wa*’ of the salafists could so easily provide the foundation for political jihadi action when *tawhid* is violated. In their interpretation, *tawhid* requires total submission to God, which is initially understood as a commitment to believe in God by avoiding all elements that smack of *shirk* and *bida*. Yet this commitment is not confined purely to the individual sphere, it is also social. It requires a faithful Muslim to devote himself to the efforts to purify Muslims’ religious beliefs and practices from such corrupting elements. If this purpose is to be achieved, *da‘wa* is essential, since the purity of a Muslim’s beliefs and practices constitutes background for regaining the glory of Islam.

Nevertheless, the emphasis on the purity of Muslim beliefs and practices is only an early stage in a long process toward a successful end. It is the stage at which the followers are recruited to join the community of *tawhid*. Having succeeded in gaining admittance to this community, the doctrine of *al-wala’ wa al-bara’* is heavily emphasized as one of the pillars of Muslim belief and binds the followers closely together. Although the salafists do not recognize the existence of *bay‘a*, the doctrine of *al-wala’ wa al-bara’* is good enough to create the loyalties of the followers to the community. Their loyalties are reinforced even more by the doctrine of *Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jama‘a*. Believing in this doctrine, the followers are completely convinced that they are Muslims who belong to the only group whose salvation is guaranteed since they belong to the community of *Ahl al-Sunna wa al-Jama‘a*.

On the basis of the doctrine of *al-wala’ wa al-bara’*, firm distinctions are drawn between the members of the community and outsiders. The members of this community associate the outside people with *shirk* and *bid‘a* whose lives are considered to be removed from true *tawhid*. The medieval heritage of Ibn Taymiyya’s ideology, which developed in a period of high tension between Muslims and

Christians, has added another dimension. The purity of this community is believed to guarantee the immunity of its members from the influences of infidels, to be identified with Jews and Christians.

From their perspective Jews and Christians are two main enemies of Islam that are constantly awaiting an opportunity to undermine the Muslim *umma*. The particular pattern of dress, performance, and social relationships adopted by the salafists express the feeling that they are constantly threatened by external influences spread by the enemies of Islam.²⁹

It should be noted that the identity emphasized here is not something that can be shared with other people, even those with the same characteristics. By exploring the issue of *hizbiyya*, the salafists distinguish themselves from members of any other Islamic movements adopting similar doctrines and ideology. The main ideologues of Islamist movements become the primary targets of their criticism. In their attitude toward these ideologues, the salafists criticize the political commitment they developed to such an extent they appear to be an anti-political group. Yet this claim does not guarantee their immunity from politics since some elements in their ideology have ambiguous meanings, particularly in relation to the notion of *al-shari'a* and jihad.

The above explanation is completely different from Islamism. The political commitment of the Islamist ideologues generally stems from their interpretation of *tawhid*, which necessitates a submission to *al-shari'a* (*hakimiyya*). The idea of the oneness of God and of His exclusive sovereignty is meant to reinstate Islam as a political system. The same thing is emphasized by the salafists. But they do not continue the logic developed by the ideologues that submission to *shari'a* requires the establishment of an Islamic state (*tawhid al-hakimiyya*). The salafists regard an Islamic state as unnecessary. It is a futuristic promise of God to those who succeed in walking on the straight path in a consistent manner.

While having the same understanding as members of other Islamic groups in terms of the necessity to submit to *al-shari'a*, however the salafists face some difficulties in dealing with a question on the

refusal of a ruler to follow *al-shari'a*. It is heavily emphasized in their discourse that there is no possibility in light of *al-shari'a* to legitimately revolt against such a ruler, except when his infidelity is established without doubts. This idea is important, because within a certain context it makes it possible for the salafists to withdraw from their initial position. Considering their ambivalent position, it is not difficult to envisage the salafists' resort to political activism and militancy. They legitimize this resort by associating jihad with *da'wa* and argue that jihad constitutes a form of Islamic propagation to build an ideal, alternative society free from Western cultural influence and control. It is aimed at giving a correct understanding of prescriptions covering *'aqida* (creed), *'ibada* (worship), and *mu'amala* (social interaction). In this case, many salafists and even Wahhabis easily have entered into the radical Islamism, and consequently created many takfir-jihadi neo-Wahhabi and neo-salafist and radical Islamist groups. And this is exactly what happened to the Arab Afghans and al-Qaida and other salafist jihadist groups.

Hamas' success in winning free elections is, indeed, a landmark event and took place within a political culture unique in the Arab region. The democratic process in the Arab world began in 1992 with the first free elections in Algeria, in which the Islamic Salvation Front (Front Islamique du Salut—FIS) won the majority. Elections in Jordan followed in 1993; there the Islamic Action Front of the Muslim Brotherhood seized over one-third of the seats in the parliament. The Egyptian elections in December 2005 strengthened the Muslim Brotherhood in that country as well, despite the waves of arrests and other intimidation tactics used by authorities to limit the brotherhood's potential power. In Iraq, the Iraqi Muslim Brotherhood -- the Islamic Party -- also supported the elections in the face of considerable opposition from within the Sunni community and many attacks on its members and its platform by various insurgent jihadi groups.³⁰

The democratic elections in Iraq and the Palestinian Authority, the semi-democratic elections in Egypt, and especially the policies of the United States and the actions of the brotherhood have generated considerable discussion and concern over “Western democracy” in salafist-jihadi circles.

Al-Qaida and the neo-salafist jihadist movement pose a threat not only to the West and to Arab governments, but also to mainstream Islamic movements belonging to the school of the brotherhood. In the case of Iraq, jihadists have reached a consensus against participation in the democratic process regardless of what form it takes. But the electoral success of Hamas -- an essentially jihadi movement, albeit one focused on local objectives and only against Israel -- has presented an Islamist alternative to this rejection of democracy, and thus posed a serious challenge to the neo-salafist jihadist movement.

The dogmatic rivalry between Hamas and al-Qaida -- two of Israel's most obstinate adversaries-- underscores al-Qaida's deep hostility both to democracy and to any kind of pluralist society. This tension is not new; it reflects, rather, an ongoing ambivalence toward Hamas over the past three to four years.³¹ On one hand, Hamas has conducted most of the military activity against “the Jewish State” while adhering to jihadi tenets. It has also served as a model of jihadi sacrifice with its martyrs carrying out over two hundred suicide bombings. On the other hand, however, Hamas is viewed as too closely aligned with Palestinian nationalism, conducting a “Jihad for the Homeland” instead of a “Jihad for Allah.” Many neo-salafist jihadists see Hamas as an obstacle to al-Qaida's infiltration of the Palestinian Authority. It is a movement that cooperates with Shiite Iran and Hizbollah. Hamas is also an integral part of the Muslim Brotherhood, which has a strong tendency to support democratic processes in the Arab world.

Islam's interaction with democracy is of key importance for neo-salafist jihadist groups, which hold as sacred doctrine their rejection of both Western democracy and man-made laws in favor of the principle of *al-shari'a*. Power derived from human beings rather than from Allah is, for them, a form of *kufir* or heresy.³² In response to American efforts to bring democracy to the Arab world, salafists, neo-salafists, and Wahhabis and neo-Wahhabis contend that democracy is not only a heresy, but is also an integral part of the new “crusader” campaign of colonialism and the historical conspiracy against the Muslim world. Even more moderate Islamic elements in the Arab world, especially

mainstream Saudi and Egyptian clerics and scholars, support this view, which contributed to the controversy surrounding the last Iraqi elections.

In recent years, meanwhile, several famous *fatwas* from neo-salafist and neo-Wahhabi scholars have been issued against democracy and against elections. *salafist* scholars and activists made intensive use of these *fatwas* in order to criticize the Palestinian elections in general and Hamas' participation in particular. On January 18, 2006, the webmaster of the al-Maqrizi Center in London, which is headed by the Egyptian radical Islamist Dr. Hani al-Siba'i, posted on the jihadi forum *al-Hisbah* the names of tens of Islamic salafist clerics that oppose democracy.³³

III. Islamism

Very much along Hasan al-Banna's line of thinking, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, also greatly affected by Rida and al-Afghani, centered its thought and actions on the political aspect of Islam to promote a modern renaissance. Thus, the Muslim Brotherhood urgently advocated the importance of establishing an Islamic state as the first step for implementing *al-shari'a*. While focusing its intellectual reinterpretation on returning to Islamic fundamentals, the brotherhood selectively filtered into modern Islamic thought a few major Western political doctrines like constitutional rule and democracy. These doctrines are seen as necessary tools for modernizing the Islamic concept of state.

Meanwhile, the brotherhood's antagonistic dealing with the Egyptian government led some of its members to splinter under the leadership of Sayyid Qutb. Qutb continued to uphold the need for establishing an Islamic state and rejecting any dealings or intellectual openness with the West. For him, the Islamic state is not a tool but a fundamental principle of creed. It signals the community's submission to God on the basis of *al-shari'a* and represents political and ideological obedience to God. Without such a submission and obedience any constitution is illegitimate and the state loses any shred of legitimacy and enters into paganism, or *jahiliyya*. Ayatollah al-Khumayni limits further the confines of a legitimate Islamic government. While *al-shari'a* theoretically legitimizes a government,

only the rule of the jurist actualizes its legitimacy. Within the Islamic world today, the demands of the mainstream Islamist movements in Algeria, Tunisia, Jordan, and Egypt are derived from al-Banna's discourse on the Islamic state, constitutional rule, and multi-party politics; radical Sunni movements follow the discourse of Sayyid Qutb and Shiite political movements follow that of Ayatollah al-Khumayni.

Moderate Islamist political thought postulates pluralism and democracy as religious rights and, consequently, views their normative character as categorical. However, modern Islamic understanding of democracy and pluralism depends on the possibility of modern interpretations of the sources of religion and major extensions of the meanings of some basic doctrines. These doctrines include consultation (*shura*), consensus (*ijma'*), difference (*ikhtilaf*), minorities (*ahl al-dhimma*), enjoining the good and forbidding evil (*hisba*), and similar doctrines. However, one finds that some scholars and thinkers attempt to show that the historical *Shari'a* is not capable of coping with doctrines like human rights, pluralism, and democracy.

From an moderate Islamist point of view, and unlike those of Wahhabism and salafism, political rule became a religious duty because of people's agreement on the matter. Similarly, arbitration was chosen by the people to settle many of the most important and formative events in the history of Islam. Consequently, arbitration as well as government rests on the people's contractual authority to shape and reshape its life. While its multiple interpretations have ironically divided the community into many sects, the legitimacy of communal arbitration and judgment became almost incontestable, although later on it was historically waived in the interest of the increasing power of states. However, its legitimate employment by the majority was never questioned and might be therefore re-instituted today in order to deal with the issues of political legitimacy and the exercise of political power.

Taking into consideration the nature of political power, numerous Muslim political thinkers and jurists tried as much as possible to make rulers good practitioners of Islamic law, in the sense of abiding to

the basic notions of *al-shari'a* that could protect the individuals and societies from state tyranny. Other thinkers and jurists attempted to justify the state's oppressive nature by referring to the conditions that Muslims lived under -- such as today's traditional religious Wahhabi and salafist institutions. For instance, when Muslims were discussing the human nature of political power and the need to reform it in accordance with *shura* (consultation) and *ijma'* (consensus) the West was still holding to the notion of the divine nature of power. When Islamic thought then acknowledged the rights of minorities as a consequence of accepting Christianity and Judaism as recognized religions, the West looked only at Muslims as infidels, and Islam was not recognized or allowed to be practiced - even as misconstrued images of other religions.

Shura and *ijma'* represent two key Islamist doctrines that Muslims can use today for the religious development of democratic notions of government and politics as well as human rights. For they take away the divine perception of political government and reduce its legitimacy to people's choice. The doctrine of *ikhtilaf* (difference) opens the door wide for the acceptance of pluralistic understanding of not only power and government but, more importantly, the multiplicity of religion and the philosophies of life. Furthermore, doctrines of opposition and human or legitimate rights could be used today in accordance with modern standards of thought and living in order to make them workable, in the first place, and then to develop them further in order to change the vicissitudes of modern living and government. These doctrines could be an escape not only for minorities but also majorities from the tyranny of the modern state in the Islamic world.

Democracy and pluralism, the basic ideological doctrines in the ever-increasing globalized world, are not only fundamental doctrines of modern Western political philosophy but are now emerging primary concerns of modern Islamic political thought. While the process of blending modern Islamic thought with democracy and pluralism appears to astonish many politicians, intellectuals, and ordinary people, it is currently underway and is one of the main intellectual occupations of intellectuals and political parties in the Islamic world. Furthermore, the awareness of the need for democracy goes beyond the

theoretical to become a demand of Muslims themselves, especially, vis-à-vis their governments. A majority view in Islamic intellectual circles, including even major Islamist theoreticians, with various expressions that adopt emergent Islamic doctrines on democracy, pluralism, and human rights, is now making its way in Islamic studies.³⁴ All justifications for tyrannical thought and authoritarian politics are collapsing, since they are now perceived to be main historical impediments to the development and freedom of Muslim communities as well as good religious life.

Again, although divine governance (*hakimiyya*) is viewed as an absolute political doctrine, so is the doctrine of *shura*. In fact, the good realization of the former becomes dependent on the good exercise of the latter. Modern Islamist interpretations of *shura* normally absorb democracy within a political and religious context. Like democracy, *shura* should provide legitimate religious means towards the control of government, since legitimacy is made dependent on popular approval. By denying any contradiction between democracy and constitutional rule, on the one hand, and *shura* and divine law, on the other, modern thinkers absorb the principles of natural law in their re-interpretations of religious revelation. While the Islamists transform Islam into a system capable of absorbing modern philosophy, politics, economics, science, and history without disclaiming the validity of Islam, they also modernize interpretations of Islam and bring into it principles such as democracy and pluralism that have become essential for modern political living.

The arguments that make Islamic culture and Islam despotic by definition are erroneous, and many classical and modern concepts and doctrines as well as institutions are the result of human manipulation and not divine predestination. Qur'anic doctrines such *shura*, *ijma'*, *tahkim*, *bay'a*, *ikhtilaf* and others are religiously demanded. However, the historic and institutional practice of these doctrines has mostly shown the possibility of their manipulation by governments and their elite. Thus, for instance, *shura* -- a doctrine that demands the participation of society in running the affairs of its government -- became in reality a doctrine that is manipulated by political and religious elites to secure their economic, social and political interests at the expense of other segments of society, as is

the case with Wahhabism and salafism today. *Bay'a*, a doctrine that should have been used to indicate people's voluntary approval of their ruler, became a formal act of forceful subjection to the ruler. Today, *shura* is not viewed merely as a religious concept but reflects the public will. The state institutionalization of *shura* and *ijma'* provides the state with a normative role in making basic choices in people's life. Thus, some mechanisms and institutions should be made within the state to acquire formal legitimacy. If *al-shari'a* is also institutionalized in the state, all attempts should be made to prevent making legitimacy an issue of formality only. More importantly, a political contract should be the legitimate means for assuming power. Because Islam is the constitutional reference for modern Islamists, Islam, as a constitution should be upheld in all public choices. All of the concepts are rejected by both Wahhabism and salafism.

From a moderate Islamist perspective, if *shura*, for instance, is a Qur'anic doctrine -- and if the state does not refer to people's choices -- then the state is illegitimate. The 'religionization' of democracy in the form of *shura* is a quest for popular empowerment vis-à-vis the oppressive state. This form of popular empowerment, derived from a Qur'anic doctrine, offsets the power of the state, derived from its coercive power. This is why the moderate Islamist trend that adopts democracy and pluralism does not view these issues as an exercise of academic nature. More importantly, it views them as a quest for liberation through democracy, tolerance through pluralism, and respect through human rights. They are made as solid as the Qur'anic doctrines through their association with religious interpretation and their authentication in the Qur'an and the *sunna*.

The real issue and the decisive element in distinguishing a radical Islamist view from a moderate one revolves primarily around the conditions and principles of transforming a religiously motivated political agenda into daily life. As we have seen, even Islamism employs diverse methodological and practical processes to intellectual and political formulas. One of these is based on conceptual exclusivity and *otherness*, whether philosophically, morally or politically, that permits all unusual means to fulfill the real "*umma*," Because radical Islamism perceived its own real and imagined

isolation as a result of social disunity and exploitation, the political violence and illegitimacy of regimes, personal impiety and corruption, it has reified, mostly under severe conditions of torture and human, religious, and political violations its religious discourse into a purified theology of politics. Without its political contextualization, Islam cannot, from its point of view, survive in the consciousness of the individual and society.

Shura is not merely a religious concept or a mechanism for elections; it reflects for the radical Islamists the public will, a much more superior concept than individual freedom or social agreement. More importantly, it represents the divine will, and as such, any deviation from the divine is a religious violation. The individual cannot but submit to this will; in fact, he is only an appendage to it, with his freedom depending on it. While this will may opt for a political contract with a ruler, it cannot, because of what it represents, allow pluralism and basic differences that may lead to disunity. The establishment of an Islamic state becomes for radicalism the fulfillment of this divine will, and again, individuals and groups are consequently subordinated to the state.

Processed through the lenses of *al-shari'a*, the radical Islamists believe that the institutionalization of *shura* and *ijma'* provides the state, which expresses the general will, with a normative role in making basic choices in people's life. The formal legitimacy that the state acquires makes it in fact unaccountable to anyone but God or obedience to *al-shari'a*, itself institutionalized in the state. Thus, henceforth, legitimacy becomes an internal state affair and not a social and public issue, though originally it may have been so. Therefore, insofar as the state is not going against *al-shari'a*, no one can legitimately overthrow it, and it supervises in this context the morality of people and the application of *Shari'a*. Thus individual religiosity is transformed by the radical Islamists into a communal public will, itself transformed into state control, both moral and political. Parties, associations and other civil institutions have no intrinsic validity in this hierarchy, and may only operate in a supplementary manner. In this senses, radical Islamism, salafism, neo-salafism,

Wahhabism, and neo-Wahhabism converge on rejecting party political and ideological and political differences.

However, to use all these groups as representatives of political Islam is completely wrong, for the mainstream Islamism adopts party politics and parliamentarian life. These groups use of violence has been reified into theory, which has now a life of its own. Both these groups and most of Muslim regimes are committed to recycling intellectual and practical violence and exclusivity. Violence, whether by secular or religious groups, has been exercised most of the time in reaction to the context of states' terror. 'Abud al-Zumar, an Egyptian radical Islamist serving a forty-year term in jail, attributes the violence of the radical groups to the violence of the Egyptian regime. For him, Islamist violence is directed against those who have already liquidated Islamists.³⁵

On the other hand, the absence of a pluralistic society and of democratic institutions is cited by the moderate Islamism as the real cause for violence. While this trend has for long been excluded from political participation, it still calls for its inclusion as well as of others into politics and formal institutions. Its involvement in civil society and its call for human rights, pluralism and democracy are still seen as the road to salvation of the community and individuals. Their inclusionary views do not postulate an eternal or divine enmity between Islam's institutions and systems, and the West's institutions and systems. Properly grounded, what is Western becomes indeed Islamic. The moderate Islamists as well as Muslim modernists may blend the culture of the East with that of the West. For they are providing Islamic arguments for the adoption human rights, pluralism and democracy, not mutual exclusivity. The conflict between the East and West is viewed either as being primarily political or economic, but not religious or cultural. The two have common monotheistic grounds upon which multi-cultural and religious cooperation and co-existence might be built.

Moderate Islamist interpretive discourses on revivalism focus essentially on the termination of the normativeness of the past both as a history and system. Of course, they exempt the Qur'an and the

Sunna from such a termination, since they view them metaphysically and meta-historically as formative and constitutive fundamentals of Islam and its main authentic sources. As such, they enjoy an affirmative and a negative interpretive and formative function on a multitude of realities -- such as *shura* is democracy or *shura* is not what has been practiced. In fact, they have to be superimposed on internal and external events in order to make sense of and evaluate those events. Thus, moderate Islamism conceives them as non-historical but eternal principles of Islam that must be used to create good societies and rectify evil ones. Again, the moderates use such principles to deny the existence, whether in the past or the present, of a perfect society --with the noted exemption of that of the Prophet -- or complete collective Islamic self-awareness. However, they employ them as well in order to push for achieving modern Islamic democratic and pluralistic societies and a newly developed self awareness and human rights. For they permit an unending process of renewal based on interpretation and reinterpretation.

Again, the most important measure of *tawhid* manifests not in the individual's private conscience but in his commitment and actions towards the Islamization of state and society. For a deep theological commitment to Islam must involve the economic, social and political concerns of society. Practical Islamic activism signifies the deep-rootedness of belief, while shallow and ceremonial non-active commitment to Islam weakens belief, if not destroys it altogether. Although divine governance has become for moderate Islamism an absolute political doctrine, so has the doctrine of *shura*. In fact, the good realization of the former becomes dependent on the good exercise of the latter. Moderate Islamism developed *shura* to absorb democracy within Islamic political and even epistemological thought, and consequently, to take the initiative from its advocates. It has also provided legitimate religious means towards the control of government since legitimacy is linked to popular approval. By denying any contradiction between democracy and constitutional rule, on the one hand, and *shura* and divine law on the other, moderate Islamism became capable of postulating their correspondence. All of these have become parts of the Islamists' non-historical discourses that transform Islam into a system capable of absorbing what is best in philosophy, politics, economics, science, and history without the

need to disclaim the validity of Islam itself. On the contrary, this shows to the Islamists the true non-historical and metaphysical power of the Islamic revelation as an eternal message capable of meeting the needs that arise from development.

In this fashion moderate Islamism negates the usefulness of traditional jurisprudence and transforms a modern religious jurisprudence into an ideologically derived political discourse. Unlike salafism and Wahhabism, and in such an explanation of the true essence of Islam one cannot fail to notice how politics informs all of Islamist religious doctrines, even that of the metaphysical. Because no individual by himself can understand the real metaphysical meaning of a text, the only credible meaning becomes the one resulting from politics, i.e., a consensual agreement, through *shura*. However, this cannot be properly conducted without the machinery of the state. For the rendering of categorical and lasting interpretation of a text requires a continuous ratifying process of all Muslim generations and the continuous existence of the Islamic state.

IV. Neo-Salafism/Neo-Wahhabism vs. Radical Islamism

The war in Afghanistan against the Soviet Union in 1979 brought together, for the first time, all sorts of Islamic groups together to under the umbrella of jihad. Radical Islamist groups from many Islamic countries, including Egypt and Algeria along with Wahhabi and salafist fighters from diverse Muslim regions, including Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, fought alongside the Afghan mujahidin. The Arab Afghans blended together Salafism of Abdallah Azzam, the Wahhabism of Osama Bin Laden, and the radical Islamism of Ayman al-Zawahiri. Today, the most notorious manifestation of that deadly combination is al Qaida along with its ideological and military affiliates that have spread throughout the Muslim world. These new-salafist, neo-Wahhabi and radical Islamist ideologies and formations are the *takfiri* jihadist. They are trying to establish a religious state and have managed to turn themselves into an outlet for different parties in the region, and indirectly became involved in different context. They represent the transformation of rather different contradictory Islamic trends into radical

takfiri jihadism. Al-Qaida could only partially be understood as a production of the failure of moderate Islamism, official Wahhabism, and conservative salafism in their established forms today along with Islamic traditionalism to bring about serious positive changes in the Muslim world's political systems and way of life. Furthermore, takfiri jihadism has created a new front in the Muslim world's encounters with the West. However, part of this front lies within the Muslim world itself, namely, the current political regimes, both religious and secular.

We all should remember that the rise of Islamic activism in 1970s had originally been part of U.S. foreign policy to counter the socialist expansion of the Soviet Union in Muslim countries with major contributions and support of Muslim countries, specifically Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. The victory of the mujahidin against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in 1979 introduced many radical Islamists and neo-salafists and neo-Wahhabis to the international arena and made them a central player, both politically and militarily. Ironically, these groups that fought in Afghanistan had been trained and provided sophisticated weaponry by the Americans and pro-American Muslim and Western countries and were empowered with a deadly ideology and a religious justification that later haunted its creators. Al-Qaida and its takfiri jihadist groups are the most obvious creatures of an ill-designed U.S., Western, and 'moderate' Arab and Muslim policy. This kind of deadly policy is now being repeated in many parts of the region.³⁶ There have been reports, for instance, that a number of so-called moderate Sunni Arab regimes have been quietly supporting more radical salafist elements in the region, as a counter to the perceived rise of Iranian influence.

Leslie H. Gelb, past president of the Council on Foreign Relations, took note of this when he said that the Bush administration's policy was less pro democracy than "pro American national security. The fact is that *it would be terribly dangerous if Hizbollah ran Lebanon.*" The fall of the Siniora government would be seen, Gelb said, "as a signal in the Middle East of the decline of the United States and the ascendancy of the terrorism threat. And so any change in the distribution of political power in Lebanon has to be opposed by the United States — and we're justified in helping any non-

Shiite parties resist that change. We should say this publicly, instead of talking about democracy.” The rise of salafism has been noted in Lebanon. Traditional salafists have long been a factor in Lebanon, but were cowed into silence during Syria's military presence of the country, which ended in 2005 in the weeks after the assassination of the elder Hariri. Sunnis and Shiites are also locked in a political struggle, and fear of the powerful Shiite militia Hizbollah may well be driving moderate Sunnis into the salafist camp.³⁷ As a result, Al-Qaida-backed Sunnis pose a significant threat. The fighting between the Lebanese army and the al-Qaida affiliated Fatah al-Islam organization in Nahr al-Bared in north Lebanon, and the attacks against UNIFIL forces in south Lebanon, reflect the challenges of radical jihadi neo-salafist, neo-Wahhabi radicalism on the stability of the country and the region.³⁸

The occupation of Iraq by the coalition forces in 2003 gave al-Qaida and other takfiri jihadist groups the opportunity to infiltrate Iraq and start a holy war . The now deceased Abu Musa'ab al-Zarqawi, the al-Qaida commander in Iraq, extended the operational capabilities of his organization to other countries in the region using their territory for building infrastructures, and as a transit point for mujahidin fighters. Lebanon was one of the countries that al-Qaida used to recruit volunteers, to conduct terror attacks against Western targets in Lebanon and to operate from their state against Israel. The war between Israel and the Hizbollah in summer 2006 made al-Qaida a key hard-line actor against the agreement between Hizbollah and Israel. On the fifth anniversary of the September 11th attacks, Bin Laden's deputy, Ayman al-Zawahiri, called on the Lebanese to reject UN Resolution 1701 that brought an end to the month long war between Israel and Hizbollah. Zawahiri said the Lebanese should not “bow to Western pressure” and called on them to organize a "popular holy war against Israel and the West. The greatest catastrophe in Resolution 1701, " he said, "is that it recognizes the state of Israel and isolates the mujahidin in Palestine from the Muslims of Lebanon.” Since the 2003 war in Iraq and the withdrawal of the Syrian forces from Lebanon, Syria has adopted a policy of indirect support for the jihadi insurgency in Iraq and Lebanon, as a part of an initiative to destabilize the “new orders” in both states.

The Lebanese arena constitutes a relatively comfortable operating theatre for radical Islamic organizations affiliated with al-Qaida. The fighting between the Lebanese army and Fatah al-Islam, a neo-salafist and neo-Wahhabi organization has posed a serious threat to the fragile Lebanese political structure. The Israel-Hizbollah War in Lebanon (July-August 2006) followed by UN Resolution 1701 has created a new situation in Lebanon. Hizbollah has lost part of its control over the southern part of Lebanon with the deployment of the Lebanese army and the UN forces in the South. In contrast with Hizbollah's acquiescence to the decisions of the Lebanese government and the UN resolution, al-Qaida and its allies are not committed to the ceasefire agreement with Israel.

For al-Qaida and its supporters in Lebanon, the new environment in the country has been a "window of opportunity" to expand their influence and activities against Israel, the UN forces and Western targets in Lebanon. The developments in Lebanon have attracted jihadi elements who are determined to carry their jihad into Lebanon and Syria, ever closer to their prime goal – Israel. The ability of the Fatah al-Islam combatants in confronting the Lebanese army in Nahr al-Bared for more than four months has encouraged other al-Qaida-affiliated organizations in Lebanon to promote their jihad within the Lebanese theater and against Israel. Armed neo-salafist networks continue to operate beyond the ruins of the Nahr al-Bared refugee camp with relative impunity.³⁹

Most leading Lebanese salafist preachers studied theology in Arabia, under the guidance of traditional Wahhabi clerics, and received subsidies from private Saudi donors. Da'i al-Islam Shahhal had very close ties with the late grand mufti Bin Baz, who arranged for hundreds of Lebanese and Palestinian students to enroll in Islamic studies programs at Saudi universities during the civil war (including Dai al-Islam al-Shahhal). Radical Sunni Islamism was already on the upswing in Ain al-Hilweh camp. Following the U.S.-led ouster of Saddam Hussein in 2003, the neo-salafists focused on sending operatives to fight in Iraq and a few played leading roles in the Arab jihadist wing of the insurgency. The participation of many Lebanese Sunni Islamists in Iraq paved the way for the emergence in Lebanon of neo-salafist networks that adhere to the zealous *takfirism* espoused by the Abu Musab

Zarqawi, the leader of al-Qaida in Iraq. In 2004, dissident Asbat al-Ansar members and Dinniyeh militants formed a new movement calling itself *Jund al-Sham*, a name previously used by Zarqawi's followers. Furthermore, Jund al-Sham declared Shiites and Christians to be "unbelievers."⁴¹

The former premier Hariri's killing in February 2005 led to a chain of events that allowed the salafists to take on a new role. The Syrian forces' withdrawal from Lebanon allowed salafists the chance to participate in public life, especially when the titular majority faced a problem in the 2005 parliamentary elections. Victory hinged on mobilizing high Sunni turnout. With al-Jama'a al-Islamiyya and many traditional Sunni politicians boycotting the elections, the Sunnis reportedly reached out to salafists. Within this context, al-Qaida benefited from Lebanon as a human and financial transit point.⁴² The fundamental convergence of interests underlying the partnership between Sunni moderates and the salafists, Wahhabis, neo-salafists, and neo-Wahhabis -- and their hatred of and antagonism to the Shiites -- grew even stronger after the outbreak of the 2006 Israel-Hizbollah war. This said, the March 14 coalition in Lebanon struggled to bolster Sunni unity after the Israel-Hizbollah war. The political Islamists effectively splintered, with a majority of al-Jama'a leaders (led by Mawlawi) backing the coalition and a minority al-Jama'a faction (led by Fathi Yakan) and Tawhid movement backing the Hizbollah opposition axis. Thus, salafist-Wahhabi support for the government became more critical than ever and provided a high level of mobilization to neo-salafist groups.

For instance, Shakir al-Absi's Fatah al-Islam was composed of hundreds of volunteers of Lebanese, Palestinian, and a substantial minority of Saudis and citizens of various other Arab and Islamic countries.⁴³ When Fatah al-Islam massacred many soldiers, the Lebanese army besieged and destroyed Nahr al-Barid camp.⁴⁴ Even as they tacitly condone and rationalize the formation of underground Sunni militias, Saudi backed salafist preachers continue to express solidarity with the Sunni dominated government and opposition to Hizbollah. The alternative, according to salafist sheikh Omar Bakri, is "to be silent and let the Shiites overtake the Sunnis."⁴⁵ While this unswerving loyalty may seem an asset in building solidarity within the Sunni community, it is in fact a preventing bridging differences

with other confessions. The proliferation of armed Sunni networks and the government's tolerance of them makes Shiites less willing to seriously entertain disarmament, and not the other way around -- as the Saudis and the American believe.

This document has been produced with the financial assistance of the European Union. The contents of this document are the sole responsibility of Conflicts Forum and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the European Union.

Endnotes

¹ Bin Rainy Dahlan Ahmad, *The Wahhabi Fitna*, Madbouli Bookstore, Cairo, p. 7. Ibn Ghannam, *The History of Najad*, p. 284. Ibn Taymiyya's *Books and Essays on Fiqh*, the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Waqf, Da'wa and Irshad, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, V.27, p. 16. Zubair Qamar, "Wahhabism: Understanding the Roots and Role Models of Islamic Extremism"; Bin Abdul Wahab Suleiman, *Fasl al-Khitab Fil Radd Ala Muhammad in Abd al-Wahhab*, Dar al-Saqi, Beirut, p. 5.

²Muhammad Bin Abdul Wahhab, "Al-Radd Ala al-Rafida", Saudi Edition; Lacy, Robert. *The Kingdom: Arabia & the House of Sa'ud*, p. 59; Jamal E. Zahawi, *The Doctrine of Ahl al-Sunna Versus the 'salafist' Movement*. Translated by Sheikh Muhammad Hisham Kabbani. As-Sunna Foundation of America, 1966. For example, orthodox Sunni scholar Abu Ala Bukhari accused people of unbelief (*kufir*) if they called Ibn Taymiyya "Sheikh". Imam Zahid al-Kawthari accused Ibn Taymiyya's positions on the creed to be tantamount to apostasy; Kepel Gilles, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*, p. 72.

³Muhammad al-Hussein Kashif al-Ghataa, *al-Aqabat al-Anbariyya Fil Tabaqat al-Jaafariyya*, Dar al-Yaqtha al-Arabiyya, Damascus; Abd al-Aziz Ibn Abdullah Ibn Baz. "Sheikh Muhammad Ibn Abdul-Wahhab." Available: www.alinaam.org.za/library/hist_bio/Ibnwahhaab.htm.

⁴Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmouat al-Fatawa*, V.4, pp. 450-452; Hisham M Kabbani, *Islamic Beliefs and Doctrines According to Ahl al-Sunna: A Repudiation of "salafist" Innovations*, Vol. I. As-Sunna Foundation of America, (1996); Nadav Safran. *Saudi Arabia: The Ceaseless Quest for Security*. Cornell University Press: Ithaca, NY. 1988. p. 11.

⁵Ibn Machghal al-Saoud Fayssal, "Rasael Aimmat Da'wa t al-tawhid", Saudi Edition, p. 79.

⁶Abdullah, Anwar, *Ulamas and the Throne*, Dar al-Rayhan, Beirut, p. 471.

⁷Sayyid Yusuf al-Rifa'i in his [Nasiha li Ikhwanina 'Ulama' Najd \("Advice to Our Brothers the Scholars of Najd"\)](#).

⁸Mohammad Rida Annahaoui, *The Non-Deomcratic Shura*, Saudi Edition, pp. 42-50; Muhammad Assem al-Makdissi, *Democracy As A Religion*, Dar al-Saqi, London, p. 2.

10. Al-Makdissi, p. 2.

¹⁰ Abdulla Anwar, *Ulamas and the Throne*, p. 394 .

¹¹-Yamani May, *Mutating Identities*, Dar al-Rashad, Cairo, pp. 66-6.

¹² *As Safir* Newspaper, 15/10/2001.

¹³Abul Barra al-Najadi, *Al Kawashif al-Jaliya Fi Kufir al-Dawla al-Saudiya*, Dar As Safa, London, 1994.

¹⁴Muhammad Assem al-Makdessi, *Democracy As A Religion*, Idem, p. 8.

¹⁵ “From Apolitical Salafism to Jihadist Activism;” John O. Voll, ‘Renewal and Reform in Islamic History: *Tajdid and Islah*’, in John L. Esposito, *Voices of Resurgent Islam* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 32.

¹⁶ On their rejections on those things, see the *fatwas* of the Ahlu Sunna published in *Salafy*.

¹⁷ Thomas F. Michel, S.J., *A Muslim Theologian’s Response to Christianity: Ibn Taymiyya’s al-Jawab al-salih* (New York: Caravan Book, 1984), pp. 84-5.

¹⁸ Seyyed Vali Reza Nasr, *Mawdudi and the Making of Islamic Revivalism* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), pp. 57-8.

¹⁹ See Benyamin Abrahamov, *Islamic Theology: Traditionalism and Rationalism* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998), p. 2. Chapter V 139. See also Fauzan Saleh, *Modern Trends in Islamic Theological Discourse in 20th Century Indonesia, A Critical Survey* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), p. 68; “From Apolitical Salafism to Jihadist Activism,” 140. The discussion about the meaning of this term can be found in various salafist websites. See, for instance, www.salafist.net, www.salafitalk.net, www.salafiduroos.net, and www.islamworld.net.

²⁰ Roel Meijer, *From al-Da‘wa to al-Hizbiyya, Mainstream Islamic Movements in Egypt, Jordan, and Palestine in the 1990s* (Amsterdam: Research for International Political Economy and Foreign Policy Analysis, 1997); “From Apolitical Salafism to Jihadist Activism.” 144. See also Gerad Auda, ‘The Normalization of the Islamic Movement in Egypt from the 1970s to the Early 1990s’, in Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (eds.), *Accounting for Fundamentalism: The Dynamic Character of Movements* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 367-377.

²¹ “From Apolitical Salafism to Jihadist Activism,” 146.

²² Taqiy al-Din Ahmad Ibn Taymiyyah, *Minhaj al-Sunna al-Nabawiyya fi Naqd Kalam al-Shia al-Qadariyya*, vol. 3 (Cairo: al-Qahira, 1962), p. 391.

²³ W. Madelung, ‘Imama’, *Encyclopedia of Islam*, III: 1169b, CD-ROM Edition v.10 (Leiden: Brill, 1999); R. Hrair Dekmejian, *Islam in Revolution: Fundamentalism in the Arab World*, second edition (New York: Syracuse University Press, 1995), p. 37; “From Apolitical Salafism to Jihadist Activism,” 148.

²⁴ Ahmad Bin Baz, *The Political and Constitutional Systems in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, Dar al-Matbouat al-Sharkiyya, Beirut, 2004, p. 228

²⁵ Ahmad Moussalli, *Radical Islamic Fundamentalism* (Beirut: AUB, 1992), p. 151. Charles J. Adams, ‘Mawdudi and the Islamic State’, in John L. Esposito (ed.), *Voices of Resurgent Islam* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 105.

²⁶ Moussalli, *Radical Islamic Fundamentalism*, 156; Nasr (1996), pp. 76-7. See also “From Apolitical Salafism to Jihadist Activism,” 152. See also Victor E. Makari, *Ibn Taymiyyah’s Ethics* (California: Scholars Press, 1983), p. 124.

²⁷ Majid Khadduri, *War and Peace in the Law of Islam* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1955), pp. 56-7. See also Rudolph Peters, *Jihad in Classical and Modern Islam* (Princeton: Markus Wiener Publishers, 1996), pp. 3-17.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 115-27. See also “From Apolitical Salafism to Jihadist Activism,” 154. See his book, particularly chapter on jihad, *Zad’ al-Ma’ad fi Hady Khayri al-‘Ibad* (Beirut: al-Muassasa al-Risala, 1987); Moussalli, *Radical Islamic Fundamentalism*, pp. 205-6.

²⁹ “From Apolitical Salafism to Jihadist Activism,” 156-158.

³⁰ Reuven Paz “salafist -Jihadi Responses to Hamas' Electoral Victory,” Published on Wednesday, November 01, 2006, [Current Trends in Islamist Ideology vol. 4](http://www.currenttrends.org/vol4/CurrentTrendsInIslamistIdeologyVol4.htm). Hudson Institute, Washington, DC, 2005.

³¹ On the issue of Hamas and al-Qaida, see also: Reuven Paz, “Hamas vs. al-Qaida: The Condemnation of the Khobar Attack,” PRISM Special Dispatch, vol. 2, no. 4 (June 2004); see online at http://www.eprism.org/images/PRISM_Special_dispatch_no_3-2.pdf.

³² See, for example, *The Doubts Regarding the Ruling of Democracy in Islam*, 2nd ed. (London: al-Tibyan Publications, 2004). No author.

³³ See the list on-line at <http://www.alhesbah.org/v/showthread.php?t=48196>; for the best list of neo-salafist Jihadist writings on democracy and elections, see the section on "democracy" at al-Maqdisi's website—Minbar al-tawhid wal Jihad—<http://www.tawhed.ws/c?i=91>. Abu Omar Seyf, a Jordanian cleric behind the Arab volunteers in Chechnya who was killed there in 2005, wrote the most recent book on the issue *al-Nizam al-Dimuqrati Nizam Kufr* at <http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=3639>; <http://www.tawhed.ws/r?i=1508&c=1573>; Hamed al-Ali, *Ma'saq Hamas* (Hamas' Dilemma"), 27 January 2006, online <http://www.alhesbah.org/v/showthread.php?t=49903>, *Risalat al-Ummah al-Jihadiyyah*, at www.alomh.net/forums/.

36. See, for instance, al-Ghannushi, *Al-Hurriyyat al-'Ammah fi al-Islam*; Fahmi al-Huwaidi, *Al-Islam wa al-Dimocratiyya*; and *Al-Hayat*, 11 October 1996, 21; 12 October 1996, 21.

³⁵ *Al-Safir*, 25 September, 2993, p. 10 and *Al-Diyar*, 25 September, 1993, p. 14.

³⁶ Robert Marquand, The tenets of terror: A special report on the ideology of jihad and the rise of Islamic militancy,

³⁷ Daragahi is a Times staff writer: daragahi@latimes.com LATimes.com

³⁸ Shaul Shay, "The Threat of al-Qaida and its Allies in Lebanon," Perspectives Paper No. 34, September 19, 2007, <http://www.biu.ac.il/SOC/besa/perspectives34.html>.

³⁹ Gary C. Gambill, "salafist-Jihadism in Lebanon," *Middle East Review for International Affairs (MERIA) Journal*, Vol. 3 No. 1, January-March 2008.

⁴⁰ A. Nizar Hamzeh, "Lebanon's Islamists and local politics: a new reality," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 21, No. 5 (2000), pp. 739-759. Hizbollah's platform contained not a hint of Islamic influence; al-Arabiya TV, 13 April 2007; "Fighting at Nahr al-Bared splits Tripoli into two camps," *The Daily Star* (Beirut), 3 July 2007. For more on Salafists outside of north Lebanon, see Bilal Y Saab and Magnus Ranstorp, "Securing Lebanon from the Threat of salafist Jihadism," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, Vol. 30, No. 10, pp. 825-855, 2007.

⁴¹ By November 2004, according to the London-based Arabic daily *al-Hayat*, "dozens" of Lebanese Sunnis and "tens" of Palestinians from Lebanese refugee camps were already fighting in Iraq. The report also mentioned the deaths of Palestinians Muhammad Farran and the son of Ansarallah leader Jamal Suleiman. *al-Hayat* (London), 8 November 2004. Emily Hunt, "Can al-Qaida's Lebanese Expansion Be Stopped?" *PolicyWatch* #1076, Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 6 February 2006.

⁴² *Al-Hayat* (London), 27 August 2006. Michael Young, "Destruction and deceit in North Lebanon," *The Daily Star* (Beirut), 24 May 2007. For their links to Asbat al-Ansar, see "Clashes leave Fatah in poor position," *The Daily Star* (Beirut), 22 May 2003; Graham E. Fuller, "The Hizbollah-Iran Connection: Model for Sunni Resistance," *The Washington Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (Winter 2006-2007), p. 147; "Lebanon's New War," *al-Ahram Weekly*, 24-30 May 2007.

⁴³ Bernard Rougier, *Everyday Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam among Palestinians in Lebanon*, translated by Pascale Ghazaleh (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), pp. 49, 85.

⁴⁴ This was confirmed definitively by the identification of militants captured and killed in the recent violence. Of 20 Fatah al-Islam members who appeared before a military court on May 30, 2007, 19 were Lebanese. National News Agency, 30 May 2007. Of 25 militants whose bodies had been recovered by the Lebanese authorities as of May 26, four were identified as Saudis, according to the Saudi ambassador in Lebanon. *Al-Hayat* (London), 27 May 2007; although Lebanese troops imposed a tight blockade of the camp in March, eyewitnesses in the camp said that a large shipment of weapons arrived in early May. *Al Hayat* (London), 27 May 2007. Officials of the UN Relief and Works Agency (UNWRA) later expressed astonishment that such a large influx of men and material went undetected by either the Lebanese government's surveillance of the camp or the mainstream Palestinian militias inside that liaison with the authorities. *The Washington Times*. [24 May 2007. "A New Face of Jihad Vows Attacks on U.S.," *The New York Times*, 16 March 2007; Seymour M. Hersh, "The Redirection: Does the new policy benefit the real enemy?" *The New Yorker*, 5 March 2007; "Fatah al-Islam snipers claim two Lebanese soldiers as fighting rages on," *The Daily Star* (Beirut), 26 June 2007.

⁴⁵ "There's a relationship between ourselves and Sheikh Saad [Hariri] when it's needed," Dai al-Islam al-Shahal told *The Washington Post* in June 2007. "The biggest Sunni political power is Hariri. The biggest Sunni religious power are the Salafists. So it's natural." "Radical Group Pulls In Sunnis As Lebanon's Muslims Polarize," *The Washington Post*, 17 June 2007, p. A16. "Fighting in Nahr al-Bared Splits Tripoli into Two Camps," *The Daily Star*, 3 July 2007.

© *Conflicts Forum*, www.conflictsforum.org, January 2009

Conflicts Forum:

Beirut + 961- 3-803-028

London + 44 - 207-871-9558

Washington +1- 202-470-1114