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U.S./Israeli Denial of Islamic Revival Dooms Mideast Peace
Joel Gilbert

Despite the fervent hopes of both the Bush Administration and the Israeli government, there can be no denying the one and only relevant part of the equation for the future of the Middle East: the movement for Islamic Revival or "Islamism." From East to West, Islamism is on the march, getting ready for what it considers to be a coming fateful war for the future of Islam. In the West, we are familiar with Hezbollah, HAMAS, al Qaeda, the Muslim Brotherhood, the Taliban, and Islamic Jihad. However, there are thousands of organized Islamist movements throughout the Muslim world. There are three thousand in Pakistan alone. Islamism is an indigenous, grass-roots movement championed by both poor and educated Muslims throughout the Muslim world. "Islam is the solution!" is the Islamist call to action against Westernization and secular governments in the Muslim world, which provide the masses with little hope or future.

Islamists do not consider themselves to be revolutionaries in the sense of revolution changing society in a new way. Rather, Islamists strive to rebuild internally by applying traditional principles to reestablish the past strength and glory of Islam. To simply dismiss Islamists as extremists is short sighted. Islamists endeavor to build a constructive society based on justice, using the best moral values from Islamic tradition, history, and law. Early Islamist writer, Sayyid Qutb, in *Signposts on the Path*, wrote:

The leadership of Western man in the human world is coming to an end, not because Western civilization is materially bankrupt or has lost its economic or military strength, but because the Western order has played its part, and no longer possesses that stock of values which

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gave it its predominance... The turn of Islam has come!

Islamism is the only serious alternative to secular forms of government in the Middle East, and represents the innermost aspirations of Muslims across the Islamic world. Islamism has already achieved political power in Iran and Sudan, and exerts wide ranging influence and pressures upon secular leadership in Muslim countries. Though divergent ideas can be found, central beliefs of Islamism focus on these areas:

Government and Law – Islamism advocates the implementation of *Shariah* (Islamic law) and the restoration of the Koran as the sole authority for government in Muslim countries. A return to success necessitates a purification of Islamic society from secular government systems, legislation, and institutions borrowed from or imposed by the West. For Islamists, political upheaval – by the sword, if needed – is a necessary part of the purification of their society, hundreds of years in the making.

Wealth and Poverty – Islamists are strongly concerned about social issues, especially the gap between rich and poor. As responsibility for the needy is central in Islam, a society with rich elites and poor masses is unacceptable. Islamists have created welfare institutions in many rural areas and poor city neighborhoods.

Culture – All Muslims know of their history as a superior religious, military, and cultural force in the world. Islamists feel their culture is threatened by Western secular influences, especially Western values, political structures, social patterns, roles of women, secular lifestyles, and styles of dress.

Dominance of Unbelievers Over Muslims – Western military presence in Muslim countries constitutes an affront to Islamists. Islamists believe that dominance by unbelievers is blasphemous, as it can lead to abasement of faith, immorality, and violations of Holy Law.

The United States of America – Islamists often refer to the United States as “evil,” “the enemy of God,” and “the Great Satan”. Most Westerners have trouble understanding such passionate rhetoric, and simply dismiss it as comical. However, as the United States is the acknowledged heir and reigning master of Western civilization, it inherited the historic animosities against the West, becoming the target of objection and hate by Muslims.

Jewish/Western Conspiracy – Islamists view Israel as the center of a worldwide Jewish conspiracy, whose purpose is to infiltrate Muslim countries, destroy Islamic values, and instill the germ of Westernization, with the ultimate goal of eradicating Islam.

Israel – For Islamists, the very existence of an independent Jewish state called Israel is a theological and historical impossibility. Thus, Israel is unacceptable in any size or circumstance. In Islam's natural social order, the Jews' proper place can only be as protected tributaries (*dhimmi*) under the leadership of Islamic society, not as rulers of a

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sovereign state. Israel's elimination is the number one target, and obstacle, on the path to successful Islamic revival.

Since its Islamic revolution of 1979, Iran has been the undisputed leader of the Islamic revival. Iran is acquiring strategic weapons in order to shift the balance of power with Israel, believing that gaining the upper hand in the balance of power will precipitate Israel's destruction and Islam's revival. Iran believes Israel cannot absorb a major blow in its heart – the greater Tel-Aviv area – and survive the civilian casualties and destruction of infrastructure. Therefore, even without attacking Israel, the mere capability of Iranian missiles to lay waste to Tel-Aviv would create a “strategic umbrella,” preventing Israel from using its superior strategic assets in a conventional war. With Israeli missiles neutralized, in any war, Muslim countries could overwhelm Israel with their superior numbers, conventional armor and short range missiles.

Islamic revival can be understood by comparing it to “Christian revival.” During the Dark Ages, European civilization endured 500 years of stagnation and decline, due to dominance of the Catholic Church in Europe. Next, strife between Catholics and Protestants threatened to destroy Christian society. Finally, Christianity saved itself by separating Church and State and introducing the concept of “nationalism” a nation-state based on geographic boundaries, ethnicity, and language to determine personal identity and political loyalty.

Nationalism and the expulsion of the church from government in Europe was a success, resurrecting Christian Europe from decline. Three hundred years of world domination began with the Renaissance, the discovery of the Americas, then the industrial revolution, as Europe lead the world into the era of Modernity. Europe also exported its Western culture and concept of “nationalism” to the entire world. However nationalism, which evolved from Christianity's historic trials, would never integrate successfully into the world of Islam where loyalty could only be to God, the sovereign of the world and all mankind. While “Christian Revival” was successful due to expulsion of religion from governance, in Islam it is exactly the opposite – Islam was successful in its first 1,200 years precisely due to the dominance of religion in government and society, and experienced decline only with the advent of Western political systems, European nationalism, and secularism in the last 300 years.

Islam is now undergoing a society-wide revival, after 300 years of decline – returning to its historic formula for success, whereby Islam and religion govern the Islamic world. On its road to revival, Islam must reacquire Palestine to redeem itself from Westernization and the humiliation of a *dhimmi* state. Therefore, Western-style “peace” between Israel and the Islamic world is unattainable. Peace can only be achieved in Islamic terms (peace with justice), which requires the eradication of political independence of Jews and the domination of the Islam over them.

After Yasser Arafat's death in 2004, the Bush Administration

insisted on Palestinian elections. Predictably, the Islamist HAMAS party won the vote, the PLO and Mahmoud Abbas were the election losers. Despite this, the Bush administration and Israeli leaders are negotiating with the PLO, which is irrelevant to Muslims and Islamism. Therefore, Israel's future peace deals with the PLO will continue to collapse as have previous agreements which have ignored the undeniable reality of the Islamic revival.

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[FamilySecurityMatters.org](http://www.familysecuritymatters.org) Contributing Editor Joel Gilbert is the writer, director and producer of the new film FAREWELL ISRAEL: Bush, Iran and The Revolt of Islam. The trailer and info can be found at <http://www.farewellisrael.com>.

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