Whither Political Islam and the "Arab Spring"?

Ahmed H. al-Rahim

I saw the way to realize all my dreams. I would found a religion; I saw myself marching on the road to Asia, mounted on an elephant with a turban on my head, and in my hand a new Koran, which I would have composed to suit my own wishes. In my enterprises I would have combined the experiences of the two worlds, exploiting the domains of all history for my own profit.... The time I spent in Egypt was the most beautiful of my life, for it was the most ideal.

—Napoléon Bonaparte[1]

What has been widely dubbed the "Arab Spring" or "Arab revolutions" is, in many respects, a misappellation. The protests and, in some cases, revolts that began in Tunisia in December 2010 and swept through much of the Middle East and North Africa would be more accurately described as postcolonial, national revolts against the regimes of the largely Arab nationalist revolutions or, more accurately, the military *coup d'états* of the 1950s and 1960s that brought these republican regimes into power. To begin to understand the nature of the recent protests, we need to examine three major events or shifts in the history of the Middle East and North Africa. First is Napoléon's invasion of Egypt in 1798—the backdrop to much of the region's modern history—which ushered in modernity to what would, in time, become the territorial nation of Egypt and, more broadly, to the Muslim world. The second is the "Arab liberal age," or "Arab renaissance" (*al-nahḍa*, which the Tunisian Islamist party and movement took as its name), namely, the vibrant intellectual period of (Arab) Muslim thought about the challenges posed and opportunities offered by Western modernity, particularly in the

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socio-political, constitutional, and economic realms, extending from 1798 to 1939. This assimilation of Western thought and of the rethinking of Muslim tradition laid the intellectual foundation for much of the modern Middle East and North Africa, without which the recent protests and revolutions—and more importantly their demands for ending autocratic rule and for democratic, representative government—may not have been possible. And the third is the postcolonial context of nationalism and nation states in the Middle East and North Africa. The political discourse—or, more accurately, the grievances and demands of the protesters—has, in terms of language and political goals, markedly shifted away from the various strands of pan-Arabism and pan-Islamism that dominated much of the region's history in the second half of the twentieth century to a nationally—namely, Tunisian, Egyptian, etc.—based agenda with clearly defined, and in their eyes achievable, goals. After discussing these historical phases, I will outline three current political models in the Middle East that indicate possible future trajectories for political Islam today.

Napoléon's Invasion of Egypt and the Introduction of Modernity

General Bonaparte's invasion of Egypt in 1798, then under the suzerainty of the Circassian Mamlūks under the Ottoman Empire (r. 1299–1923),[2] is, in many respects, the watershed, or rupture, between the later Islamic middle ages and modernity.[3] This event ushered in Western-style modernity to the (Arab) Muslim world. While the invasion of Egypt was largely about expanding French economic and trade interests, through the Red Sea to India, against those of the British Empire, Napoléon, in his Proclamation to "all the people of Egypt," states that theirs is a "nation" which, until his arrival, has been subjugated by the political machinations of the Circassian Mamlūks who, through their "greed," have brought the "country" to ruin. He, Napoléon, is their liberator and Muslim (!) prophet of modernity:

> But God Almighty is merciful, just and wise. From now on, with his help, no citizen of Egypt (*ahālī Miṣr*) shall despair of being appointed to high position or of attaining lofty rank. Egyptian men of learning, or virtue, and of reason shall regulate the affairs of their own country, and in this way the whole *nation* (*umma*) will progress, as it did in former times…. Therefore, O shaykhs, judges, imams, merchants and notables of the country, inform your people that the French are equally faithful Muslims, as is proved by the fact that they have already invaded mighty Rome, where they laid waste the Papal See that has always incited Christians to wage war on Islam.[4]

The Proclamation is explicit and novel in defining the nation of "Egypt" and its "historical" inhabitants, the "Egyptians." Prior to this, the notion of a "country," or geographical entity, defined by its own political, national, and linguistic boundaries, outside of those of an expanding or, in the case of the Ottomans, shrinking empire or caliphate, wherein identity was largely, if not exclusively, defined in religious, communal terms, was a new and politically powerful one to the Muslim world. A Muslim, a Christian, or a Jew was

primarily defined by virtue of his religious creed and not necessarily by his ethnicity. He was, if a Muslim, a member of the larger Islamic world or polity (*umma*), generally being free to move among its various geographies and lands that Muslim empires have territorially, throughout their rise and fall, dominated, and, in general, if a Christian, a Jew, or a member of an Islamically recognized religion or of the "People of the Book," he was, in exchange for a poll-tax, given "protected" status (*dhimma*), exempting him from military service. This status, however, deemed him to be a second class "citizen," unequal, at least according to Islamic legal theory (but not always practice), in terms of his rights and full privileges, with a Muslim.[5]

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The proclamation also describes the French Republic as founded on "the principles of liberty and equality." This notion of equality and liberty, or civil rights, shared by all citizens, irrespective of their religious or ethnic affiliation, appeared to many Muslim clerics and judges to upset the natural, God-ordained order of their society. The notion that social equality and the rights of a "national citizen" are solely based on a shared geography, archeology,[6] language, and history, proved to be a major issue that Western modernity posed not only to Islamic jurisprudence but also to Islamic social and political history, as it had developed until this point.

The Arab Liberal Age: Assimilating Modernity

Muslim clerics and intellectuals of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries struggled to make sense of the concept of nationalism. An early example is that of the Egyptian cleric Rifāʿa Rāfiʿ al-Ṭahṭāwī (1801–1873),[7] who, between 1826 and 1831, led a student mission to Paris, during which he became proficient in French, and later went on to establish the School of Foreign Languages, which produced hundreds of translations of works in a myriad of fields—including the writings of philosophers associated with the French Revolution, namely, Voltaire, Rousseau, Montesquieu, and Condiac.[8] In trying to convey the idea of (Egyptian) nationalism, al-Ṭahṭāwī writes

> the homeland (*waṭan*) is the nest of man, where he toddled and from where he emerged, the congregation of his family, and a part of his soul. It is the homeland whose soil, food, and air have raised him, whose breeze has reared him and where he was raised.… [Egypt] is described by all in terms of [her] courage, enthusiasm, prudence, and leadership… [As such] she has earned the right to be respected by all nations and faiths, and the states and kings of the world.… Her people…adhere to the prophetic tradition (*ḥadīth*): "Love of the homeland is part of [religious] faith." By God's volition she will be secure and protected against the adversities of time.[9]

This text represents one of the earliest attempts to define the term nationalism in Arabic. Al-Ṭahṭāwī's use of the Koran and prophetic traditions as proof texts is evident throughout his work, in which he addresses not only nationalism but also the French Constitutional Charter of June 4, 1814; the rights of the people secured by parliament; rights and duties of citizenship; and freedom and social equality. While al-Ṭahṭāwī's emphasis was on the modern principles behind these ideas, as they would contribute to reforming Egyptian society and state, he would have to find, where possible, Islamic concepts and Arabic texts through which these ideas could resonate with his (Arab) Muslim audience. (The reverse is true of much of Muslim political thought in the second half of the twentieth century, where the emphasis has been on the Islamic principles behind the modern ones.)

In many respects, this approach has, in one form or anther, been the hallmark of Muslim writing and thought about modernity, democracy, and Islam, until the present. How was this homeland of Egypt to be defined as a nation with delineated borders? How would the modern bureaucratic state inspire its citizens to fight or be "martyred" for "their country" or even to conceive of "their own" collective history, or historical memory? Were Egyptians Arabs, Muslims belonging to the larger Islamic polity, or descendents of the Ancient Egyptians?[10] Answers to these and related questions would be sought and debated, mainly in terms of *ideology* (a term itself born out of the philosophical and political debates of the French Revolution), in the late nineteenth century and throughout much of the twentieth century.

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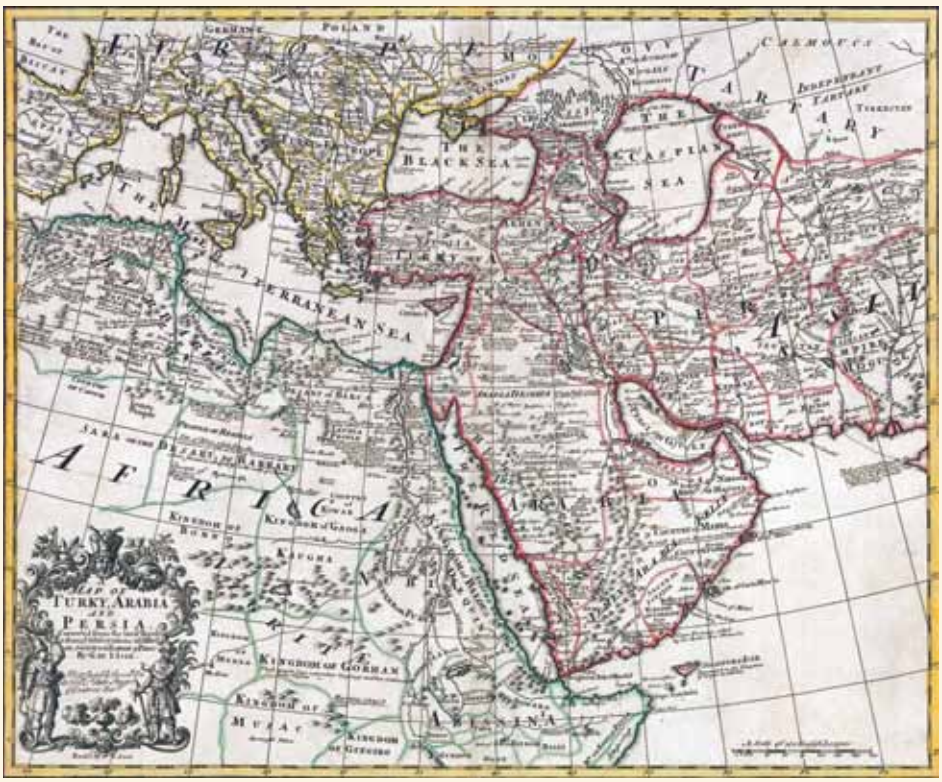
Just as there are creedal pillars in (Sunnī) Islam—traditionally five or, with *Jihād* (holy war), six—so there are in modernity as introduced to the Muslim world.[11] Its pillars include nationalism and nation states; science-based technology, mainly military; bureaucratic rationalism, both economic and administrative; and Western secularism and secular, scientific education. In terms of political theory, the most powerful ideas—on exhibit during the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt and, as of the writing of this essay, in the protests in Bahrain and Syria, and the rebellion in Libya—were constitutionalism, mainly the limiting of the sultan's or autocratic power; civil rights; equality; and liberty. These pillars would, at least in theory, come to support a different kind of edifice than that of Islamic political theory (or more accurately Muslim political praxis) in the late medieval period,[12] in which political and military power, *de facto*, rested with the sultan (literally meaning [military] power in Arabic). The establishment of modern universities would bring forth a new priestly class of intellectuals and scientists whose epistemological foundation for knowledge (*'ilm*) was not theology and Islamic law but the empirical sciences and philosophies of the West.[13] This new class would come to displace the traditional clerical establishment, its schools, in terms of its social prestige and most importantly its political influence over and patronage by those who ruled—causing an intellectual rift between secularism and religion in the modernizing Muslim world. Yet, both classes



Map of Turkey, Arabia, and Persia by Guillaume de L'Isle, 1721.
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of intellectuals, the secular and religious, struggled to answer the perennial, unanswerable question of why "Islamic civilization," in terms of its power, however defined, fell behind the West.[14]

While the French occupation of Egypt lasted nearly three years, its impact, intellectually and politically, would be far-reaching in terms of modernizing the Middle East and North Africa. But these changes would not be fully realized until the reign of the Khedive (Viceroy) Muḥammad ʿAlī (r. 1805–1848) and his household who, in one form or another, ruled Egypt until the 1952 republican Revolution, which ushered in the Pan-Arabism of Gamal Abdel Nasser (in office 1956–1970).[15] With his accession to power, Muḥammad ʿAlī began in earnest to bureaucratize and rationalize the old *iqṭāʿ* system of land farming, in which land was divvied out to members of the ruling military class, the Circassian Mamlūks. He established nearly all the governmental and nongovernmental bureaucratic institutions that are commonly associated with the rise of the modern state, including ministries, courts, universities, institutes of translation, a conscripted native army (no longer a slave army[16]), factories, and printing presses (the Ottomans had, by the 1720s, established a Turkish press).[17] The translation of European books, not only of the modern, technological sciences and military craft but also of philosophy, political thought, and Western literature, was a major thrust of Muḥammad ʿAlī's reforms. This translation movement, which is perhaps the greatest intellectual endeavor in the Arabic language since the Greco-Arabic translation movement of the ninth and tenth centuries,[18] laid the intellectual

foundation for the Arab liberal age and what was to come.[19]

Despite these attempts to modernize the Egyptian economy and integrate it into the global one, much of the political power remained in the hands of Muḥammad ʻAlī and his household and of those they favored. His autocratic rule and that of his sons and successors was to leave a lasting political legacy in Egypt. In many respects, what brought about the republican revolution of 1952 was the widening gap between the ideological objectives of the revolutionaries, namely, nationalism, socialism, and later pan-Arabism, and the entrenched political and economic malaise of the ancient regime—and some would argue that this tradition of autocratic rule, which was not entirely abandoned, was to play a decisive role in Egypt's revolution today. Thus for Muḥammad ʻAlī to modernize meant to have a centralized administered state, and to sustain that state, a modern army needed to be created along with an educated corps of officers, which effectively meant one based on a European model organized and trained by Western technocratic and military advisors.[20] But despite these attempts to modernize Egypt and similar ones throughout the region, the question of how to limit autocratic, unbridled power remained.

The Postcolonial Context of the "Arab Spring" and Political Islam

The centrality of nationalism in the recent protests and revolutions to the exclusion of pan-Arabism and pan-Islamism, which animated the politics of much of the second half of the twentieth century, cannot be overemphasized. The question is, given the apparent demise of these pan-ideologies, what sort of political culture will develop? First, we can dismiss, as have many of the protesters in Egypt and elsewhere, al-Qāʻida's utopian, pan-Islamist goals of collapsing the nation state system, largely imposed by the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916 (a favorite theme in the speeches and declaration of the current head of al-Qāʻida, Ayman al-Ẓawāhirī), and (re)establishing an imagined, unified caliphate stretching from Spain to Indonesia, associated with a bygone Islamic empire, across the "Muslim world." Second, while the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, founded as a "social movement," and not as a political party, by Ḥasan al-Bannā (1906–1949) in 1928,[21] and the sister organizations it inspired throughout the Muslim world, seek, at least in terms of their founding ideology, the reestablishment of the caliphate and the unification of the "Muslim polity," the Muslim Brotherhoods—from Morocco to Egypt to Iraq—have operated in practice as national Islamist organizations. Therefore, their ideological goals, however grand or utopian they may be, nearly always have to be judged against the limitations of the national, political context in which they operate.[22]

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Furthermore, for the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, the question of establishing an official political party (in addition to being a social movement "untainted," as they sometimes claim, by politics)—something that al-Bannā, who himself ran

in parliamentary elections, was explicit in rejecting, mainly because of the highly partisan nature of political parties during the period of the Egyptian monarchy—is now answered in the formation of the Freedom and Justice Party (FJP), which was announced on February 21, 2011. The forming of the FJP places the Muslim Brotherhood on equal electoral footing, in terms of having to draft a national party platform and specific policies. No longer will the independent candidates from the Muslim Brotherhood be able to win elections on the basis of the ambiguity of the organization's imagined or real, stated or unstated, policies; in other words, they will be held to account by the electorate, as will other, mainly older liberal and now Salafi (see below), Egyptian political parties.[23] That said, the Muslim Brotherhood's competitive advantage is that it is currently the best-organized political, social movement—and now party—in Egypt, that is, of course, after the former President Hosni Mubarak's now-dissolved National Democratic Party (NDP), which ruled Egypt for more than thirty years, neutralizing nearly all forms of political opposition, except (though they by no means went unscathed) the Muslim Brotherhood. The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood is one of the last of the Muslim Brotherhoods to form a political party and to officially compete in national elections.

What are the trajectories of political Islam in what appears to be a post-autocratic Egypt—a country that, at least historically, has been the bellwether for politics and now for nonviolent revolutions in the Arab world?

Other Islamists who have recently formed political parties include elements of Egypt's traditionally apolitical Salafi movement[24]—a textualist movement harking back to a model of religious conduct or virtue, however defined, which they associate with Islam's righteous forefathers, the *Salaf*.[25] The Salafis in Egypt have been largely funded and supported by the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and other Gulf states and their charities, and theologically and legally, these Salafis generally adhere to some version the Kingdom's brand of Salafi-Islam, Wahhābism. The Salafis by and large abstained from joining the protests in Liberation Square, mainly, according to them, on Islamic grounds that the protests represented a kind of sedition against "the ruler." But now that "the ruler," Mubarak, is no longer president (with many Salafis having suffered under his rule), they have accepted, as a *fait accompli*, the January revolution leading to his ouster and have announced that they would be forming political parties to compete in the parliamentary elections that are slated for October 2011. This form of Salafi political activism is new to Egypt, but has roots in many of the Gulf countries, most prominently in Kuwait, where Salafis have, through the ballot box, held some sway, mainly over social and religious policies.

What are the trajectories of political Islam in what appears to be a post-autocratic Egypt—a country that, at least historically, has been the bellwether for politics and now for nonviolent revolutions in the Arab world? As a bellwether, however, the Egyptians' success in removing President Mubarak, who ruled for nearly thirty years, from office is partly due to the fact that Egyptian society, aside from the Christian Coptic community (variously estimated to be 7–10 percent of the population) and very small minority of

Shīʿites, is uniformly Sunnī in creed and Islamic law. In other words, Egyptians largely were able to unite, on the basis of nationalism, unmarred by a deep divisive sectarian history, against Mubarak's regime; while in Syria sectarianism (and also economic class), though not always explicit, is an issue between the ruling Alawite minority (considered a "heretical" subsect of Shīʿism) and the majority Sunnīs; and in Bahrain, between the ruling Sunnī monarchs, who hailed from Najd in present day Saudi Arabia, and the majority Shīʿites, who themselves are divided by ethnicity, the native *Baḥārna* and the Persian Bahrainis, and by Shīʿite legal schools, the Traditionalists (Akhbārī) and

Rationalists (Uṣūlī),[26] respectively.

Nationalism as a theme has been most effective in the so-called Arab Spring in Tunisia and Egypt, where Islamic sectarianism is not, explicitly or implicitly, present, and there exists relative uniformity in terms of Sunnī identity, however defined. That is, sectarianism nearly always trumps nationalism—which is not to say that these forms of identity cannot co-exist at once, they clearly do, but the question, depending on the political and economic circumstances, is one of degree and emphasis, with the political minority that is the sectarian majority emphasizing national unity and the rulers, for the most part, the sectarianism of the majority (for example, in Bahrain)—because politically the stakes of losing power are too high for a minority that rules over a majority, or even a plurality, especially in cases where free and fair democratic elections are held (see Iraq example below).[27]

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Moreover, how will the Muslim Brotherhood, through its newly announced political wing, the FJP, compete with other, more religiously conservative, Salafī parties, and with the slowly reconstituting liberal and secular parties, which have, over the past nearly half century, been decimated, politically and financially? And how will the Muslim Brotherhood, which has since the 1980s participated in Egypt's political arena—and according to the rules of the game as set down by the now defunct National Democratic Party—adapt (through FJP) to an electoral situation that appears, at least ostensibly, to be less corrupt and certainly more even-handed, wherein the poll results are, in terms of allocation of seats and majorities in parliament, not preordained? Can the Muslim Brotherhood and its FJP, which is considered to be the best organized and disciplined political organization in today's Egypt, win half of the parliamentary seats it seeks to contest (presently the FJP is not running a candidate in the presidential election)? And if so, how will Egypt's ostensibly secular political system be protected if the FJP or a coalition of Islamist "civil" parties, impose—because politically they can—their version of an Islamic state, or of Islamic law, on all Egyptians? The latter scenario, even if one accepts the Muslim Brotherhood's and FJP's public commitments to the current Egyptian political system (which at the moment I do), presently appears to be unlikely, given the complexity and fragmented nature of Egypt's current political, ideological landscape.[28]

Modeling Political Islam

To attempt to answer some of these questions, I will outline three existing Middle Eastern political and democratic (not always in the liberal sense) constitutional models as they relate to the possible, if not probable, trajectories of political Islam in Egypt (and by extension also in Tunisia, but not in Syria or Bahrain [see above], while

presently the futures of Libya and Yemen remain unknown).

The first is the Turkish secular national model as founded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938) in 1923.[29] After abolishing the Ottoman "Caliphate" in 1924 (deemed a universal trauma for nearly all Islamists), Atatürk set out to define the modern Turkish national state as distinct territorially, linguistically, and ethnically from the rest of the Islamic world—a significant part of which had earlier formed much of the Ottoman Empire's domains, while other parts, or vestiges, of the Islamic world, most notably in India with the Khilāfat Movement (1919–1924),[30] looked to the Ottoman Caliph as a source of succor and the last remaining symbol of Islamic unity, around whom the Muslim polity should rally in the face of the ever-advancing Western, mainly British, imperialism and colonialism. Through these decisive actions, Atatürk no longer was burdened with governing the territories and failing economies outside the national borders of the Turkish Republic, nor with the moral duties and religious responsibility of upholding what semblance remained of Islamic unity and polity, which was the hallmark of the Ottoman Empire's pan-Islamism.[31] Turkey now would focus on becoming a modern, secular national state built along European lines and foundations.

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In terms of the ideological pillars of Turkish nationalism, or what would later be termed Kemalism, it is important to note that they lie with the Young Turk movement and its adoption of a mid-nineteenth century German philosophy known as *Vulgärmaterialismus*—a vulgarized version of materialism, scientism, and Darwinism, which upheld the role of modern science and, by implication, modern political institutions—while rejecting religion and Ottoman pan-Islamism—as a panacea for all of the cultural, economic, and political ills associated with the Ottoman Caliphate and the failure of its modern reforms. That is, modern science and nationalism were the key for Turkey to materially and politically catch up with the more advanced West. It is this thorough-going form of secularism, at the heart of which is the rejection of the role of religion, Islam or its political form, Islamism, that was and is, at least constitutionally, today the foundation of the Turkish national republic. This foundational ideology, coupled with a strong militarism and military (what is sometimes referred to as the "deep state"), has distinguished the development of Turkish political Islam from much of the rest of the Middle East (perhaps with the exception of Tunisia's secular experience). That is, Turkish national secularism, or Kemalism, has, at least constitutionally, forced the religio-political parties (some of which have been ideologically influenced by the Muslim Brotherhood) in Turkey, through their various iterations—from, among others, Turgut Özal's Motherland Party (*Anavatan Partisi*, ANAVATAN or ANAP), founded in 1983 and dissolved in 2009; to Abdullah Gül's Virtue Party (*Fazilet Partisi*, FP), founded in 1997 and dissolved in 2001; to Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's Justice and Development Party (AKP), founded in 2001 and presently the ruling

majority party—to politically "secularize."

This situation has led to a political environment where we have political Islamists without "Islam," or, for the most part, not explicitly campaigning in the name of religion—an example of which is the AKP's effective social conservative campaign themes of upholding public (Islamic) morality and virtue, whilst fighting systemic corruption largely associated with the oldest center-left Kemalist political party in Turkey, the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*, CHP). While this political, secular context, at least constitutionally, is not necessarily unique to Turkey (see Egypt's Constitution on proscribing religious parties but not "civil" ones), Kemalist secularism and nationalism, which has been at the center of constitutionalism and politics in Turkey, since its founding in 1923, is making the political Islamist experience there politically unique.

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The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood has recently (as other Brotherhoods have before) asserted that they will, through the founding of the FJP, follow the path and model of the AKP. However, the Turkish model will, in terms of the trajectory of political Islam in the Arab world, likely not prove to be adaptable, even given some of the "deep state" similarities that Egypt and Tunisia share with Turkey; that is, largely because the secularism, of the pan-Arabist and national, republican sort, has, in terms of its political utility and more importantly economic success nearly, if not completely, failed, or is failing, in, among other countries, Tunisia, Egypt, Libya, Syria, and Iraq (prior to the 2003 US invasion). That is to say, the nature of Kemalist nationalism and secularism, whose ideological underpinnings are German, is qualitatively different from that found in the Arab world and has in large part been effective in transforming Turkish society and economy and also, to a certain extent, the Islamists who at least in doctrine have opposed some of these Kemalist policies, particularly as related to society and culture—while secularism in the Arab world has not, to the same degree, had the same impact on society and law.[32]

The second constitutional model is the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran. The Iranian revolution ushered in the first full-blown attempt to implement a form of Islamic law and democracy. Although politically Shīʿite, it appealed at the time and perhaps still, in terms of its revolutionary zeal, to some Sunnī Islamists (more recently Hamas, a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, and Palestinian Islamic Jihād), including the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. However, Iran's form of Islamic democracy in practice has excluded nearly all forms of political oppositions not toeing the official revolutionary line of its founder, Ayatullah Khomeini (1902–1989), whose legacy and its interpretation are at the heart of Iran's ongoing political morass and protests associated, in part, with the Green Party. Iran has largely proffered a test case, to the region and to many political Islamists, of a failing Islamic democracy. Moreover, Iran's strategic alliance with and support for the minority Alawite regime in Syria,[33] which recently has attempted to violently extinguish the protests, mainly of the majority Sunnī population,[34] has alienated many Sunnī Islamists, furthering the Islamic sectarian chasm and making the Iranian regime unpopular, if not suspect, in the eyes of Arab publics. It is for these, and

related, reasons that the Islamic Republic of Iran appears to be becoming a political liability for Sunnī Islamists in the Arab world, like the Muslim Brotherhood and its FJP, as they campaign for the upcoming Egyptian parliamentary elections. The Iranian model will no longer be, if it ever really was, a religiously legitimate or politically viable one for Sunnī Islamists.

Thirdly, the post-2003 invasion model of parliamentary, democratic government in Iraq, in terms of competing secular and religious political parties and coalitions, represents perhaps the most significant example of political party diversity in the Arab world today. As Iraq's system of parliamentary government and practice of democracy has evolved, Iraqi politics appears—despite the recent political machinations of Nouri al-Maliki to be reappointed as Prime Minister—to have demonstrated that no single person and party, or even a collation of Shī'ite parties, including the so-called "Sistānī List,"[35] which represent Iraq's majority, can necessarily dominate the country's entire politics. Political life in post-Saddam Hussein Iraq is very much fragmented, where national interests are defined and political domination takes place through the ballot box and the building of coalition governments, more often irrespective of the secular and religious divides, but not always necessarily the sectarian or ethnic ones (the latter factor, of course, not as starkly present in the case of Egypt or Tunisia).[36] If the individuals and political groupings represented in the protests and which culminated in the revolution in Egypt—including many of those, like the Salafīs, who arrived late to these events—and now campaigns portend anything of the politics to come, it is that Egyptian political life is too diverse to allow one single political grouping or party to dominate the entire system, even with the Muslim Brotherhood being considered the best organized political machine in Egypt (the other, of course, was the NDP which, like the Baath Party in Iraq, is now outlawed). Thus, as in Iraq with its parliamentary system, alliances will have to be built not only between competing "civil" Islamist parties—who in spite of a shared conservative social agenda may not be able to unite to form a government—but also across the secular and religious divides in Egyptian society. The same is true for minority political parties, be they secular or representing Coptic interests[37]—whose agendas will have to be contested at the polls based on what is deemed by the electorate to be in the *national* interest. The prior political notion of "winner takes all," which led to the previous autocratic regime, no longer appears to be viable, short of a military takeover in Egypt (and possibly also in Tunisia). The political environment in the post-Arab Spring world, coupled with new technologies, the internet, and 24-hour satellite news television, appears to have opened the Pandora's box of political expression and organization, never to be fully closed again.

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We may soon, in Egypt and Tunisia, be able to talk more clearly about politics in

the Arab world in terms that are not necessarily absolute, not of the Islamist versus secularist (as was the want of President Mubarak and other autocrats in the region; an either/or proposition for the West), but in terms of right- and left-of-center national alliances, religious and secular, none of which appears, at least in the near future, to be able to dominate the entire political theater.

In short, what appears significant about this moment in the history of the Middle East and North Africa is the postcolonial nature of the protests to unseat decades of autocratic rule. There has been a shift from the pan-Arabist, pan-Islamist ideologies of the last century to a politics that is nation based in terms of its demands, political programs, and symbolism. This is not to say that the tension between the universal pull of pan-ideologies is extinguished from the region, only that it appears to have ceased to be relevant to the particular political, social context of these states—nationalism and the nation-state system is an irrevocable part of the modern "Muslim (Arab) world." It is for this reason and related ones that al-Qā'ida's al-Ẓawāhirī has most recently stepped back from his acerbic attacks on the Muslim Brotherhoods, praising the Egyptian people for their revolution, essentially arguing that al-Qā'ida's form of Islamism is at one end of the spectrum of Islamist ideology and action, with the other end being the politically (and democratically) engaged Muslim Brotherhood.[38] Nationalism and nationalist Islamism are, aside from al-Qā'ida's utopian ideology of collapsing the nation-state, Sykes-Picot system and reestablishing an imagined, unified caliphate, a major ideological factor as to why al-Qā'ida has been losing the "hearts and minds" campaign in the "Muslim world."

As for the trajectory of political Islam, the Turkish model will prove to be unadaptable in the postcolonial context of the Arab world, mainly because of the ideological nature of the thoroughgoing, German secularism upon which Atatürk founded the modern Turkish Republic. Iran's form of Islamic government has failed as a model for the Sunnī Islamists, largely for political, sectarian reasons and not necessarily for its domestic economic and ideological failures to promote its ideology (beyond Lebanon's Hizballah and the aforementioned Palestinian Islamist groups). And then there is the Iraq model of parliamentary politics, despite its demographic sectarianism, whose reality has been accepted by nearly all, including, and most importantly, the former political "majority" of the (now minority) Arab Sunnīs. It offers a model—a not always acknowledged or well understood model—in terms of the fragmented nature of politics and most importantly the competitive nature of secular and religious politics in Tunisia, Egypt, and possibly beyond in the current unfolding process that is the Middle East and North Africa today. Furthermore, the brief history of the Napoléonic invasion and the introduction of Western-style modernity, nationalism, and constitutional government to this region appears to have come full-circle in terms of the political, constitutional demands of the postcolonial Arab Muslim world—a world that itself is no longer what it was or imagined to be by historical memory.

Endnotes

1 Claire de Rémusat, *Mémoires de madame de Rémusat* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1880) 1:274 [translation mine].

2 J. Cole, *Napoleon's Egypt: Invading the Middle East* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

3 Ahmad Dallal, "The Origins and Early Development of Islamic Reform," *The New Cambridge History of Islam: Muslims and Modernity, Culture and Society since 1800*, ed. R. W. Hefner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 6:107–11.

4 ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Jabartī (d. 1825), *Al-Jabarti's Chronicle of the First Seven Months of the French Occupation of Egypt*, ed. and trans. S. Moreh (Leiden: Brill, 1975) 12–13; 8 [Arabic text] [emphasis added].

5 C. E. Bosworth, "The Concept of Dhimma in Early Islam," *Christians and Jews in the Ottoman Empire: The Functioning of a Plural Society*, ed. B. Braude and B. Lewis (London: Holmes and Meier, 1982) 1:37–51; and Y. Friedmann, *Tolerance and Coercion in Islam: Interfaith Relations in the Muslim Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) 13–86.

6 On the use of archaeology for the construction of modern identity and ideology, see, for example, Amatzia Baram, *Culture, History and Ideology in the Formation of Baʿthist Iraq, 1968–89* (London: Macmillan, 1991); and Magnus T. Bernhardsson, *Reclaiming a Plundered Past: Archaeology and Nation Building in Modern Iraq* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2005).

7 K. Öhrnberg, "Rifāʿa Bey al-Ṭahṭāwī," *Encyclopaedia of Islam,* second ed. (Leiden: Brill, 1960–2009) 8:523–525.

8 Albert Hourani, *Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age, 1798–1939* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967) 69–83.

9 Rifāʿa Rāfiʿ al-Ṭahṭāwī, "The Extraction of Gold, or an Overview of Paris," *Modernist Islam: A Sourcebook*, ed. Ch. Kurzman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) 33 [glosses are mine].

10 On this question, see Leila Ahmed, "On Becoming an Arab," *A Border Passage: From Cairo to America—A Woman's Journey* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999) 243–70; and generally J. M. Ahmed, *The Intellectual Origins of Egyptian Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960); and Charles Wendell, *The Evolution of the Egyptian National Image: From its Origins to Aḥmad Lutfī al-Sayyid* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1972).

11 For an insightful discussion of Islam and modernity, see Andrew Rippin, *Muslims: Their Religious Beliefs and Practices*, third ed. (London: Routledge, 2005) 176–98.

12 Patricia Crone, *God's Rule: Government and Islam: Six Centuries of Medieval Islamic Political Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004).

13 Donald Malcolm Reid, *Cairo University and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 139–53; and on medieval Muslim conceptions of knowledge, see Franz Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant: The Concept of Knowledge in Medieval Islam*, second ed. (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

14 For a new answer in this long and unabated debate, see Timur Kuran, *The Long Divergence: How Islamic Law Held Back the Middle East* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

15 Robert Hunter, *Egypt under the Khedives 1805–1879: From Household Government to Modern Bureaucracy* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1984).

16 Patricia Crone, *Slaves on Horseback: The Evolution of the Islamic Polity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

17 Ehud R. Toledano, *State and Society in Mid-Nineteenth-Century Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

18 See Dimitri Gutas, *Greek Thought, Arabic Culture: The Graeco-Arabic Translation Movement in Baghdad and Early ʿAbbasid Society (2nd–4th / 8th–10th Centuries)* (London: Routledge, 1998).

19 Ahmed H. al-Rahim, "Translating European Modernity: A Bibliographical Conspectus of Arabic Democracy Literature," forthcoming.

20 Khaled Fahmy, *All the Pashas Men: Mehmed ʿAli, His Army, and the Making of Modern Egypt* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

[21] Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (Oxford; Oxford University Press, 1969); and Brynjar Lia, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers: The Rise of an Islamic Mass Movement 1928–1942* (Reading: Ithaca, 1998).

[22] See Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam: Religion, Activism, and Political Change in Egypt* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

[23] Perhaps now the American policy debate of whether to engage the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood will be laid to rest, as they are now one political party among others with competing platforms, with whom we may be able to work on some policies but not others. See, for example, Robert S. Leiken and Steven Brooke, "The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood," *Foreign Affairs* 86.2 (2007): 107–21.

[24] The recently announced Salafī political parties include: *The Construction and Development Party* (Ḥizb al-Binā' wa-al-Tanmiya), *The Party of [Public] Safety and Development* (Ḥizb al-Salāma wa-al-Tanmiya), *The Party of Light* (Ḥizb al-Nūr), *The Party of Virtue* (Ḥizb al-Faḍīla), and *The Party of Authenticity* (Ḥizb al-Aṣāla). I thank professor Tarek Masoud of Harvard University for providing me with this list.

[25] Bernard Haykel, "On the Nature of Salafi Thought and Action," *Global Salafism: Islam's New Religious Movement*, ed. Roel Meijer (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009) 33–51.

[26] Heinz Halm, *The Shi'ites: A Short History* (Princeton: Wiener, 2007) 113–16.

[27] Ahmed H. al-Rahim, "The Sistani Factor" and "Inside Iraq's Confessional Politics," *Journal of Democracy* 16.3 (2005): 50–53 and 19.1 (2008): 170–74, respectively.

[28] Tarek Masoud, "The Road to (and From) Liberation Square," *Journal of Democracy* 22.3 (2011): 20–34; and Carrie Rosefsky Wickham, "The Muslim Brotherhood after Mubarak: What the Brotherhood is and How it will Shape the Future," *Foreign Affairs* 3 (2011).

[29] M. Şükrü Hanioğlu, *Atatürk: An Intellectual Biography* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011) 129–98.

[30] Azim Ozcan, *Pan-Islamism: Indian Muslims, the Ottomans and Britain (1877–1924)* (Leiden: Brill, 1997).

[31] Jacob M. Landau, *The Politics of Pan-Islam: Ideology and Organization* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

[32] Compare Maurits Berger and Nadia Sonneveld, "Sharia and National Law in Egypt," and Mustafa Koçak, "Islam and National Law in Turkey," *Sharia Incorporated: A Comparative Overview of the Legal Systems of Twelve Muslim Countries in Past and Present*, ed. Jan Michiel Otto (Leiden: Leiden University Press, 2010) 51–88 and 231–72, respectively; and Wael B. Hallaq, "Modernizing the Law in the Age of Nation-States," *Sharī'a: Theory, Practice, and Transformations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) 443–99.

[33] On the longest enduring alliance in the current Middle East, see Jubin M. Goodarzi, *Syria and Iran: Diplomatic Alliance and Power Politics in the Middle East* (London: Tauris, 2006).

[34] On the history of Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, see Umar F. Abd-Allah, *The Islamic Struggle in Syria* (Berkeley: Mizan, 1983).

[35] Al-Rahim, "The Sistani Factor," 50–53.

[36] Iraq is roughly comprised of 55–60 percent Arab Shī'ite, 15–20 percent Arab Sunnī, 15–20 percent Kurdish, and 5 percent Turkomen, with a remainder of about 5–8 percent Assyrian and Chaldean Christians, Sabians, Yazīdīs, and other religious groups.

[37] Sana Hassan, *Christians Versus Muslims in Modern Egypt: The Century-Long Struggle for Coptic Equality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) 103–22, 201–30.

[38] Al-Ẓawāhirī video, "Lose Not Heart, Nor Be in Despair," <http://www.shamikh1/vb/showthred/php?t=122108> (consulted on 15 August 2011).