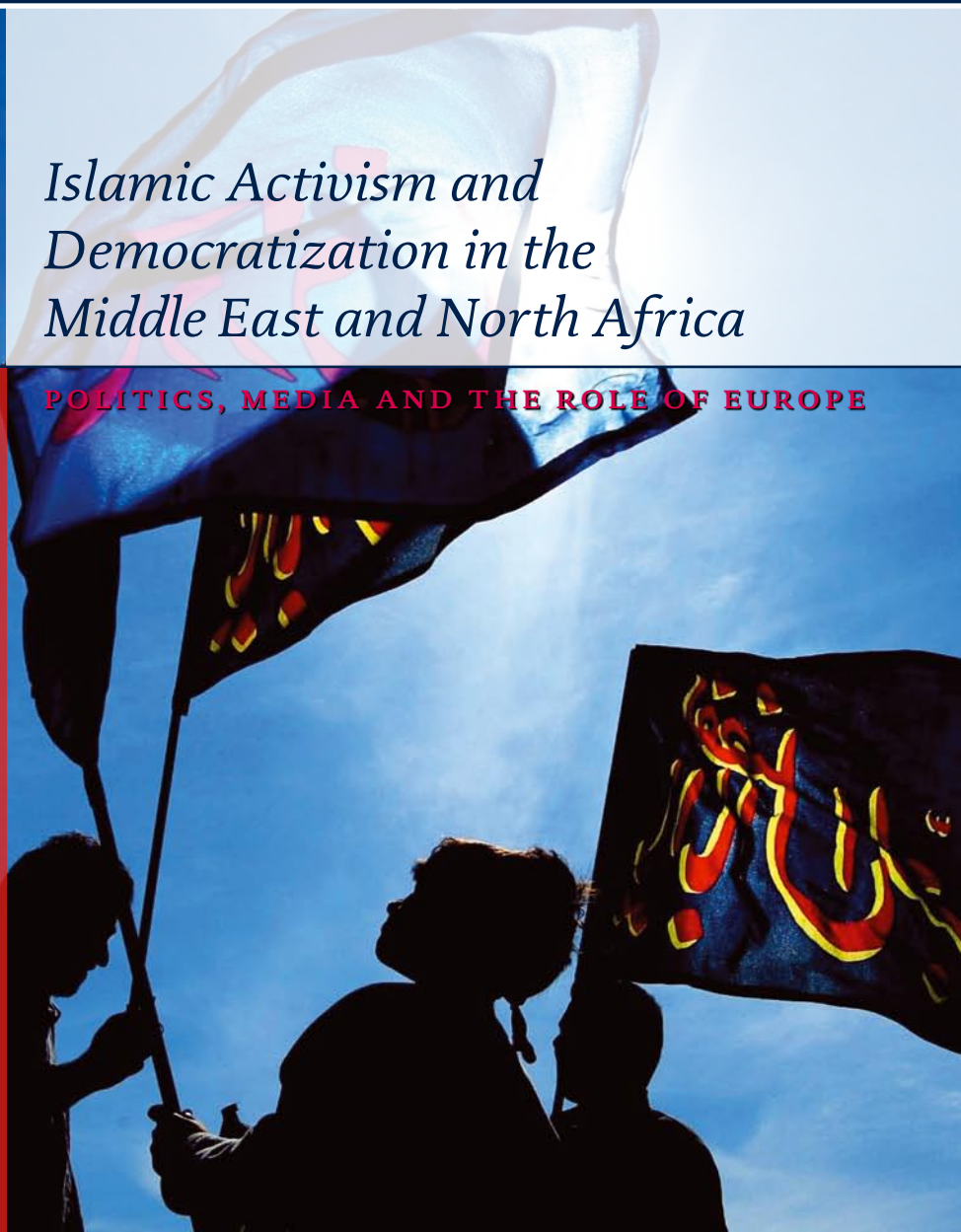


*Islamic Activism and  
Democratization in the  
Middle East and North Africa*

**POLITICS, MEDIA AND THE ROLE OF EUROPE**





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Symposium FORUM and WRR  
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# CONCEPTS

<b>1.</b>	<b>Introduction</b> <i>Wim van de Donk</i>	5
<b>2.</b>	<b>Opening</b> <i>Sadik Harchaoui</i>	11
<b>3.</b>	<b>Dynamism in Islamic activism</b> <i>Jan Schoonenboom</i>	13
<b>4.</b>	<b>Religious political landscape in the Middle East and North Africa</b> <i>George Joffé</i>	17
<b>5.</b>	<b>Political liberalization in Jordan</b> <i>Mohammad Abu-Rumman</i>	25
<b>6.</b>	<b>Commentary on the first lectures of Joffé and Abu-Rumman</b> <i>Bertus Hendriks</i>	31
<b>7.</b>	<b>The battle for the media in Europe, the Middle East and North Africa</b> <i>Joris Luyendijk</i>	39
<b>8.</b>	<b>Which policy should Europe pursue in the Middle East?</b> <i>George Joffé</i>	43
<b>9.</b>	<b>The role of Europe with regard to Islamic movements</b> <i>Mohammad Abu-Rumman, Director of al-Ghad Daily-Jordan</i>	55
<b>10.</b>	<b>Conclusion</b> <i>Jan Schoonenboom</i>	61
	<b>About the authors</b>	65



# 1. INTRODUCTION

*Wim van de Donk, Chairman of the Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR)*

## **Background to the conference: the WRR report on Islamic activism**

In recent years violent Islamic activism has unleashed a perilous process of action, reaction, and confrontation. Not only international relations, but also relations between population groups within states are under great pressure. Fear of Islam has also increased in Europe along with mistrust between Muslims and non-Muslims. Opinion leaders, politicians, and citizens render harsh judgments regarding 'Islam', which is often considered incompatible with core values like democracy and human rights. Against this background, the WRR published its report to the government entitled *Dynamism in Islamic Activism. Reference Point for Democracy and Human Rights* (April 2006). This report examines both the historical backgrounds as well as recent research concerning the relationship between the Islamization of politics, the state and law on the one hand, and democracy and human rights throughout the Muslim world on the other. It focuses on three dimensions of Islamic activism since the 1970s: the development of Islamic-political thought, of Islamic law and of Islamic-political movements within the Sunni and Shiite groups. Key questions in the report are: does Islamic activism offer reference points for rapprochement with the concepts of democracy and human rights? If so, which policies can, in the long run, reduce the tension surrounding Islamic activism both within the Muslim world itself and in its relations with the West? The research showed that Islamic activism does indeed offer reference points for democratization and human rights. Each of the three investigated dimensions shows, in this respect, great diversity and dynamism. The council, helped by the Van Vollenhoven Institute of Leyden University, presented a whole series of empirical accounts as well as theoretical analysis that showed that there is no principal a priori that excludes the possibility of a rapprochement of Islam, democracy and human rights. Even though this rapprochement is taking place in highly turbulent and fragile contexts and processes, and that these are only tentative reference points and

much uncertainty still exists, it is inaccurate to assume that 'Islam' in a general sense is at odds with the acceptance of democracy and human rights.

The Council also stressed that Islamic political movements in the Muslim world do not form a homogenous, unalterably radical, and always violent threat. Transnational Jihadist movements do, of course, exist; they exert a disproportionate influence by spreading terror and violence. Alongside this, however, there are many Islamic movements with very diverse aspirations, including groups seeking gradual reforms of the existing, repressive political regimes. Moreover, many of these have abandoned their initially radical attitude in favor of a pragmatic political standpoint. The movements most strongly oriented towards the national political arena, such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and the Justice and Development Party in Morocco, have shifted the most in the direction of accepting democratic principles and norms. In doing so, they distance themselves from absolute truths. Following the examples of formally recognized religiously-oriented parties in Turkey, Jordan, Yemen and Malaysia, they are trying to become broad, democratically and reform-minded parties that are willing to form coalitions.

The member states of the EU cannot permit themselves to stand aloof from these developments. An inwardly focused Union which renounces external ambitions only creates an illusion of security that does not remove existing vulnerabilities. Furthermore, aloofness means that Europe fails to make use of its potential to support promising developments in the Muslim world. The most obvious and natural starting point for an active and constructive European policy is the region of the Middle East and North Africa, Europe's neighboring Muslim countries. There are at least two caveats to such a role. First, recent history has shown once again that democracy cannot be permanently imposed from outside. It needs to emerge primarily from within societies. Second, the EU's so-called Euro-Mediterranean Policy was originally also designed to curtail the popularity and influence of Islamic activist movements. It tried to promote democracy and human rights by fostering economic integration across the region, and it mainly addressed the repressive regimes and their political



allies. It thus developed no real track record of engaging with Islamic movements and testing their true political intentions.

These caveats, then, confront us with several pertinent questions for research and debate. Clearly, the EU and its member states could start by engaging with all those non-violent Islamic political parties and movements willing to participate in the political process. However, what if such engagement really damages the EU's relations with the governments in the region? Or what if these non-violent Islamic parties secretly aim for 'one off' free elections in which they obtain power and are unwilling to organize new democratic elections? How can we avoid that moderate, Islamic political parties are simply co-opted or repressed by those regimes, just like many secular political parties before them? Will this foster rather than dampen extremism at the fringes, and what will this mean for Europe's security agenda?

### ***The conference contributions***

It is these issues and dilemmas that were addressed at a follow-up conference to the WRR's report that was held on 8 November 2006. It was organised jointly by the WRR and FORUM Institute for Multicultural Development, and it was generously supported by the Dutch ministry of Foreign Affairs. The papers brought together in this conference report are based on the lectures and comments by eminent scholars and experts on the Middle East and North Africa. On behalf of the WRR and FORUM, I sincerely thank all these speakers for their insightful contributions.

In both of their introductory statements, Sadik Harchaoui (FORUM) and Jan Schoonenboom (WRR) introduce the key questions debated at the conference. Are we witnessing the beginning of democratization in Islamic guise, and the end of authoritarian regimes in North Africa and the Middle East? Will the rise of Islamic political movements fundamentally change the character of these societies and polities? Which Islamic movements and parties may be conducive to political reform and under which circumstances will they thrive? And what role can and should European countries and the EU play in promoting democracy and human rights?

In his first contribution, George Joffé provides a broad overview of democratization efforts within the major countries of North Africa and the Middle East. He arrives at the rather sober conclusion that over the last years, most regimes in the region have exploited European and American security concerns and fears of terrorism by engaging in mere superficial political reforms. Thus, they have willingly avoided changes in the underlying structures of repression and co-optation, and have produced 'façade democracies'. Mohammad Suleiman Abu-Rumman's contributions give a detailed examination of the complex and changing role of the Muslim Brotherhood in the Jordanian political landscape. He points out that the security concerns of Jordan's pro-Western King Abdullah since the year 2000 have resulted in growing political repression and increasing animosity between the regime and the Brotherhood.

8

In his comments on the papers by Joffé and Abu-Rumman, Bertus Hendriks argues that there can be no viable democracy in the Middle East if it excludes Islamic movements. He also reminds us that as early as 1992, the electoral success of the FIS party in Algeria made the United States and the EU member states buy into the theory that Islamic movements are one-dimensional and static, and that they merely use the legitimate, democratic means of the ballot box to seize power and hold on to it (the so-called 'one man, one vote, one time' scenario). The result is that Western governments have refused to see or acknowledge the complex and changing roles of Islamic movements throughout the region. This blind spot is not simply enhanced by deliberately biased or lazy media coverage of events in the region, as is sometimes argued. As Joris Luyendijk shows in his analysis of media reporting on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, by their use of topics, angles and words, journalists on both sides of the conflict are almost inevitably 'filtering' the news and inadvertently taking sides.

Whether they are pessimistic or optimistic about the future of the region, it is quite striking that all contributors call for a far more active and constructive European role. So far, the EU has been more concerned about short-term stability and security than about its declared objectives of promoting democracy and human rights. The EU has failed to play a visible role in the pressure for political change. In the

wake of September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001, it has engaged in cooperation with the police and security services in the Middle East and North Africa and in a common deportation process of assumed terrorists. In addition, several European governments now regularly deport asylum seekers back to countries such as Egypt, Lybia, Jordan and Lebanon, yet without obtaining guarantees that the human rights of these people will be respected. Thus, EU member states' commitment to fundamental European values seems distinctly unconvincing when put to the test.

I am convinced that it is both a matter of credibility and 'realpolitik' for EU member states and their publics to discuss and redefine their own long term strategic interests in Europe's Southern neighborhood. This should also include a commitment to actively engage with all legitimate political (opposition) movements. It is my sincere hope that this conference report will contribute to such a discussion.



## 2. OPENING

*Sadik Harchaoui, Chairman of FORUM Institute for Multicultural Development*

Debates about democratization and renewal of the political system have gained momentum in a number of Islamic countries in recent years. Besides the political conjuncture after the September 11<sup>th</sup> attacks in the United States, the internal developments within the Islamic countries have played an important role in this, especially in countries where Islamic movements play a catalyzing role in the current processes of change.

The external pressure and the internal evolution lead to various dilemmas and paradoxes, not only for the Islamic and the secular movement, but for the current political systems in the Islamic and in the Western world as well. On a global scale, the political climate is influenced considerably by Islamic movements, either through the violent or the political variety of Jihad. As far as this political variety of Jihad is concerned, it can be noted that political Islamic movements determine the political agenda in a number of Islamic countries. They have succeeded very well in incorporating in their political argument the frustrations that are very much alive amongst the population. Many Muslims are sensitive to an Islamic political route, but do not endorse the violent method of Jihad movements like Al-Qaeda. They choose a democratic route for a number of reasons.

The Islamic movements pave the way with a broad spectrum of strategies, projects of change and political choices for renewal. Nevertheless, a certain pattern behind this diversity can be recognized. In these trends towards democratization, intellectual questions fundamentally linger in the background. The processes of democratization require a thorough intellectual reflection. The theoretical rooting of democracy in Islamic belief and the reconciliation of democracy with modernity are major intellectual conditions for the success of the process of democratization. Also, the classic domains of knowledge, which form the foundation of both the political and the violent ideo-

logies of Islam, will have to be calibrated to the modern world in relations between Muslims and non-Muslims. The removal of theocracy from policies requires reflection and intellectual recontemplation amongst theologians. New concepts, methods and instruments from classic Islamic law, like the *Fiqh*, will be rehabilitated. Other concepts that play an important role here include the *Ijtihad*, which means the intellectual effort in view of new legal finding, and the *Maslaha*, the general interests of people.

Another point of attention is that in Western thinking about democracy, the possibility of an Islamic way to democracy and modernism will have to be taken into account. The ongoing processes can end up in a separate and specific development of a secularization process and model, which is measured by Islam and Islamic countries. The secularization process is indeed an universal process that is familiar with various historical experiences. The rise of the Islamic movements can involve the development of another system for democracy with an Islamic character. Are we facing the shadow forecast of the system, or do we still have to wait for long? And, more importantly, what can we Europeans do to strengthen the process of democratization in the Middle East and in North Africa? If we do not know the answers yet, then let us debate with each other about the right questions to be asked.

### 3. DYNAMISM IN ISLAMIC ACTIVISM

*Jan Schoonenboom, Council member WRR*

The theme “Islamic Activism and Democratization in the Middle East and North Africa” is of extreme importance nowadays, given that many of the conflicts in the world (as well as within our own borders), are circling around this issue. An important question here is: what do we mean by democratization? In my opinion we mean inclusive democratization. Inclusive democratization is a process that also encompasses Islamic political movements. The reason that it is so important is because we assume that in the long run this form of democratization may contribute to de-radicalization.

Governments of Islamic countries have a long history of attempts in forcing Islamic movements outside the political spectrum. This is indeed a factor causing radicalization, and it also stimulates absolute religious attitudes among Islamic movements. However, if these movements are allowed to participate in the political process, changes might take place. It is then possible that they will evolve from rather absolute religious positions to more pragmatic stances on political issues, because if they are obliged to participate in the political spectrum, they are obliged to form political programs. They are then also obliged to consider cooperation with other parties and perhaps form coalitions with these parties. The middle ground will then become important for them for electoral reasons, and finally they have to give account for their actions to the electorate. All these factors together may contribute to moderation, to political pragmatism.

Despite this important possibility, there are many questions and doubts in the West as well as among people in Muslim countries themselves about the democratic potential of these Islamic movements. For instance, to what extent is their agenda ultimately a moral and religious one, and not a political one? Are they not really principally opposed to popular sovereignty, or to universal human rights? We like to call these the core values of our Western systems. Other questions then asked are: do they have a hidden agenda, a scenario of

one man, one vote, one time? When they are in power, are they then ready to surrender power after new elections? And do they really abstain from using violence?

The image here is that Islam can almost be identified with fundamentalist violence. Many of these doubts are still articulated in the West, in the Netherlands, and also in Muslim countries. The WRR report *Dynamism in Islamic Activism* was issued in April of 2006. In this report we examined whether there are reference points in Islamic Activism for democratization and human rights. Our answer was that there are indeed important reference points for democratization and human rights.

One of our findings concerned the Islamic political movements. We noticed that a very remarkable development could be observed: from initially revolutionary to rather reformist nowadays. If you take a look at the characteristics of the initial movement in the seventies and eighties, then the *Umma* was the unit that these movements wanted to revolutionize. These movements did not shun from the use of violence, if it was needed in their eyes. They were very strongly opposed to the state; the state was perceived as their enemy. They also had all the characteristics of a movement, and not of a political party. The *Sharia*, Islamic law, was considered superior, as the only law that should be strived at, instead of, for instance, human rights.

The movements also had absolute political claims. Take for instance a name like Hezbollah, the party of God. A party that calls itself the party of God will not allow any other party. Nowadays there are many Islamic movements in many countries, which have completely different characteristics. These movements are working within the state, and they want to use the state in order to get obtain reforms. Many have abandoned the use of violence, they have accepted peaceful ways for realizing their political programs, and they want to operate within the constitutional framework of the state. These parties are thus becoming more like real political parties and even use concepts like democracy and rule of law. Ayatollah Khomeini called the concept of human rights a 'devilish concept', but nowadays the discourse is completely different. Many Islamic movements want to



strive for human rights as well, and they are increasingly prepared to form coalitions with other parties as well as to compete with them.

This is a remarkable change, but we should not forget that some of the negative characteristics of these parties have not disappeared; the characteristics of Jihadist movements and transnational Jihadist movements such as Al-Qaeda. But the positive characteristics can increasingly be found in parties such as the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, the PJD in Morocco, Al-Wasat in Egypt, but in parties such as Hamas and Hezbollah as well. If we take a look at the example of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, we see there that Islamic law gives Muslims freedom of religious innovation and of *Ijtihad*, the right to interpret the holy sources. The legitimacy of the state depends, according to them, on the people. Therefore in their concept sovereignty no longer only belongs to God, but to the people, which is a very interesting change. They are also of the opinion that democracy is rooted in the Quranic *Shura*, which is the concept of consultation. This *Shura* is seen by many of them as an instrument of popular sovereignty where the people elect, scrutinize and correct their leaders, when and if necessary. Therefore this is very close to what we consider the core of the concept of democracy. Based on findings like these, we concluded in our report that it is possible and very important to include Islamic movements of this kind in efforts to democratize Islamic countries.

When we published our report in April 2006, it provoked heated debates and discussions. Many of these reactions labeled the WRR report as over-optimistic, as an example of wishful thinking, and as biased. Many commentators simply could not believe that Islam, democracy and human rights could ever be reconciled. Now we have a splendid opportunity to discuss whether we were right or not.



## 4. THE RELIGIOUS POLITICAL LANDSCAPE IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

*George Joffé, Professor at King's College, London and Cambridge University, Cambridge*

### **'Reforms without reform'**

Today, we live in an interactive and global world. That is in itself a self-evident statement, but I think something else follows from that: any comments on the domestic situation inside the Middle East and North Africa must be seen inside the context of the contemporary global situation. It seems to me that the role of the West (meaning primarily the United States and Europe) in determining events inside the Middle East and North Africa has become dominant, and to a very large extent the kinds of reactions we perceive in the region represent a reaction to what the West has done. This has been particularly true since the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001, and it follows from those events that Western policy is predominantly concerned with security issues. It also means that almost all external pressure is securitist and it is dominated by an overriding concern about international terrorism. In my opinion this has had one very important consequence: as a result of this obsession with security, virtually all pressure on Middle Eastern and North African governments for them to alter their patterns of governance has disappeared. Instead both the United States and the European Union have generally accepted an analysis of the security situation inside the Middle East and North Africa which reflects the assumptions of states and regimes in the region itself. This is very significant, because it means that whereas in the past there was an attempt to alter patterns of governance, today that pressure is almost gone.

What does this mean? I will have to look at this in terms of regimes and opposition. As far as the regimes are concerned, the evidence seems to be that presently, virtually all regimes inside the region now have a static attitude towards the process of governance. They do not see any need for fundamental change. The regimes understand that external pressure for change is now purely rhetorical. Think only of

the comments made by Condoleezza Rice two years ago, when she announced that the United States, having spent sixty years in search of stability of the region, now realized that the issue was really democracy. And then think of the pattern of American policy thereafter: it in fact emphasized stability. The role of democracy as demonstrated in Egypt earlier this year, and in Lebanon last year, turned out to be a purely rhetorical concern. We have to face the fact that the European prioritization, democratic governance and respect for human rights which has dominated the agenda ever since 1995, is now also primarily rhetorical by nature, as far as Europe is concerned. At the operational level, concern for stability and security has replaced it. That means that governments in the region have adjusted to the rhetoric too, but they have come to understand that the rhetoric itself has no teeth. As far as these governments are concerned, they can engage in what is being described as 'reforms without reform', which means that the superficial evidence of reform is sufficient and the content itself is not important. Again we can see that in what happened in Egypt in the presidential elections of 2006. The way these elections were manipulated by the Egyptian government to demonstrate to outside powers, particularly the United States, the dangers of genuine electoral choice in Egypt, meant that the Egyptian government was afterwards able to ban subsequent local elections on the grounds that they were too dangerous.

In other words, Middle Eastern and North African regimes have learned to distinguish between form and substance. They ignore the latter for the benefit of the former, and by doing that, they demonstrate an apparent awareness of the concerns of outside powers. In reality they do not really have to make any changes to adjust to them. This means that there have been a series of superficial changes. For example, it is quite striking that in many countries today there is a relative freedom of speech of a kind that was not seen in the 1980s or the 1990s. Consider the case of Algeria. It has one of the freer presses inside North Africa and yet in reality the Algerian state is as intolerant of opposition as it always was. Algerians themselves refer to their political institutions as façade democracy for that very reason. Consider as well what happened to the Kafaya Movement in Egypt. The leader of the Alghad party was allowed to voice his views, but then he was

himself imprisoned and the party was marginalized and effectively crushed. The Twelfth of March Movement in Lebanon underwent a very similar fate. I think those facts demonstrate the way in which regimes are fully aware of the implications of the changes in the global situation today, and the way in which they can exploit them.

My opinion is that even in circumstances where regimes appear to have undergone political change, the reality is they have not. In Jordan, Morocco and the Gulf States there appeared to be what has been called a generational change towards the end of the 1990s. In other words, in monarchical regimes old rulers disappeared, new rulers took their place and there appeared to be a potential for political change. Even in Syria the same was argued, with the departure of Hafez al-Assad. But in fact if you look at what has actually occurred in these countries, what is striking is that the underlying structures again have not changed at all. In Jordan and Morocco, the monarchy is still dominant. More than dominant, it is absolute: it stands above the law. This means that whatever changes that have taken place lower down, inside the institutional and constitutional structures of the countries concerned, they are contingent. It can be changed at the whim of the monarch. In Syria there has in fact been no real change at all, despite all the promises.

### ***Different arenas***

Then, worst of all, where real changes have occurred, the West has distinguished itself by its rejection of it. Here I think particularly of what occurred in Palestine at the beginning of this year. Whether we like Hamas or not, we cannot deny a genuine democratic choice on the part of the Palestinian people. We could, rather than simply rejecting it (which is what Europe has done), attempt to understand it, and then adjust to it. But we did not do that. What we did was to send a signal to the regimes of the region that change is not necessary. Before we can consider what the effects of this have been on opposition groups, we need to consider certain distinctions that have to be made in the nature of political opposition inside the region, given the environment that I have just described. We can distinguish between three different arenas as it were.

First there are oppositions that have been co-opted by states. Then there are movements which would like to express opposition in a formal political arena, but which have been repressed in some way. Finally there are the genuine alternatives that still exist. The fact that they have been allowed to continue is a statement about the superficial changes in the Middle Eastern scene. Most states have in effect learned that they can live with opposition, provided it has been properly domesticated. It is tolerable and it can even be useful in releasing domestic tension. Indeed, the process of domestication can itself involve repression. Think of the situation inside Saudi-Arabia in the beginning of the 1990s, which involved the committee for legitimate reform. It was in effect repressed, and thereby domesticated. In Egypt the Kafaya Movement demonstrated very similar features.

But there is an alternative; there is no need to use just repression. You can, as in the case of Jordan and the Islamic Action Front, or in the case of Algeria and the *Mouvement de la Société du Paix*, simply co-opt your opposition. It is possible to integrate them into the process of government. Then they will become loyal supporters of existing structures, and their loyalty is a consequence of their continued existence. Indeed, both techniques can be used: repression and co-optation. In the electoral processes that have taken place this year in Yemen, Egypt and in Algeria and Tunisia in 2004, evidence of that was seen. Even worse, all these elections were monitored by the European Union or one of its bodies, and in each case they were approved as legitimate and fair, no matter what they were in reality.

In short, it seems to me that these movements that have been co-opted by-and-large represent existing and prior elites. The old structures were seen as part of the process in the early days of institutionalization of politics inside the region. Because they are old, and because they represent outdated ideas, they have now become tolerable and acceptable. But the new movements that have emerged with much greater effect (particularly since 1967) in the 1990s and in this decade have not yet been accepted by states as reliable and viable partners. Those movements are religious in nature. Indeed, it has been pointed out that in the 41 Islamic countries that exist worldwide, 21 of them have Islamic movements seeking formal registration of political

parties. Of course, far fewer actually achieve it: in some countries the very idea is simply excluded. I think here of Tunisia, which in effect since 1990 has denied the right to exist of any party which explicitly bases its program on ethnicity, linguistics or a religious statement. They are not allowed in any way to acquire formal status or existence, and as such they are excluded from that area of the political debate. The same is true in Syria. It seems that this is a way of ignoring a very large part of the oppositions that exist and which in some way seek participation in the political process.

### ***Religious or political movements?***

It is time to consider why these movements are as they are, which is predominantly religious, and what they represent. The secular elites have been co-opted and thereby marginalized, discredited by their past failure of the ideologies that they served, for example socialism. The liberal elites have been isolated because they have lost contact with the wider public, or indeed never had it, and therefore lacked popular resonance. We need to understand the religious movements by-and-large have those advantages and that it is for that reason that they are acceptable. They reflect to a large extent the socio-cultural background of the societies in which they operate. These movements have an authenticity in terms of the way in which they articulate demands, and the problems they perceive inside society.

The movements are often part of a long tradition of reform that goes back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century, which was then itself a reaction to European penetration. As such, they formed part of a linear pattern of development that in many respects makes them authentic, legitimate and acceptable. I think here particularly of the Muslim Brotherhood, created in 1928 as the first organized Islamic political movement. It had of course an Islamic agenda: it wished to re-Islamize society, and it is perhaps an important point to realize that most of these movements in their essence are initially and primarily concerned with society rather than politics. But at the same time they have to address political issues. This raises another important point: they are essentially political movements, not religious. Alongside them, whether organized or not, there are spontaneous movements as well. The Islamic charities, the mosque-based movements, they deal with social needs

and social demands. In other words, Islam becomes a social force, which is articulated in circumstances where social demands become political demands as well. To a large extent it seems that the same is true in the Shii world, where the role of Islam as a political ideology stems from the Islamic revolution in 1979. But it also stems from national crisis and violence. Hezbollah was a reaction to both Western interference and to the crises that existed inside Lebanon in the 1980s. The situation in Iraq is evidence enough of the fact that these social movements, which have formed the Shii majority in the country, inevitably became political because of the nature of the secular regime that preceded them, and because of the nature of the invasion which allowed them to compete for power.

Given these circumstances, we need to ask the question what these Islamic movements really represent in the countries concerned. If indeed regimes can co-opt moderates, then the space left to them becomes more and more marginal, and there is always a danger that it will become more and more extreme. But in essence it seems to me that Islamic movements today compete for power. They are in effect legitimate alternatives and I think here particularly of the example in Morocco. In Morocco it is quite likely that this year an Islamic government, the second inside the Middle East, will be the dominant party or the dominant movement inside the political system. Their mechanisms release a social tension as well, which is particularly true in Algeria and Egypt. And most importantly of all, these movements are the genuine mode of expression of popular grievance and popular preference.

All those factors suggest that the issue of violence, which dominates the European debate, is actually marginal. These movements cover a far wider range of issues than this, and indeed they always did. There was never a single Islamic movement. Not even in 1928, with the Muslim Brotherhood, which after all is the source and origin of many of the movements in the contemporary world. The idea of democracy was never alien to them. It is worth bearing in mind that the Salafia Movement saw itself as a vehicle by which an authentic Islamic form of democracy could be achieved. As early as 1976 Malik Benabbi in Algeria was also arguing for a sophisticated interpretation of the sacred



rites to allow for the idea of a democratic process. He saw no contrast between the two, and his ideas after all formed the basic ideas of the Front Islamique du Salut, the movement the government banned in 1992 with European support.

Such movements, in short, cover a wide range of ideas, and they are fundamentally political today. More importantly, they are by-and-large modernist. They are attempting to deal with problems inside the contemporary world; they are not simply throwbacks to a past age as they are often portrayed to be. Therefore, in this context, the issue of their religious dimension is much more a question of a mode of legitimization than it is a statement of substance. They legitimize themselves through a rhetoric that is acceptable and accessible to a majority of people. But their object is to achieve political change of the kind that modern societies require, and three modes of action can be found in them.

First of all, some of them, in the margin, have tried to seize the state. Those have been excluded to a large extent, because of a past failure. Let us not forget that up until this decade, there has been Islamic violence really only in two countries inside the Middle East and North Africa, namely in Egypt and Algeria.

Secondly there are those that wish to recover society, like the Muslim Brotherhood. They wish to see a traditional moderation applied to the process of the organization of societies in the Middle East and North Africa.

Finally there are those that challenge the political process, because they wish to participate in it. I think in that context that particular faction is now becoming the dominant trend. What it seeks is participation in a political process, in which it accepts its right to participate and its right to lose. It is not prepared to accept the same rules of the game as secular parties do, and that is to isolate it and ignore that it is dangerous. Because then those who supported it simply look to other, more radical, alternatives.

One of the great tragedies is that European states and the European Union have up until the present not been able to engage with such movements, and have not been able to test them, in order to see what they are really going to achieve. In other words: they have not been

able to try and understand why they do what they do, and why they are where they are. There is of course a contest between secularization and Islamization. But that is not a contest about the nature of these movements, it is a contest simply over the way we interpret the significance they really have. Therefore, given the success of the Justice and Development Party in Turkey, and the likelihood that Morocco next year will have a government of a very similar kind, it seems to me that we need to engage, and not engage simply in the securitization of the relationship between Europe, the United States and the Middle East.

## 5. POLITICAL LIBERALIZATION IN JORDAN

*Mohammad Abu-Rumman, Director of al-Ghad Daily-Jordan*

In this lecture I will examine more closely the Jordanian experience in political reform and the role of Islamic movement in that respect.

As we say in Arabic: George Joffé has peeled the scab off a wound, and has opened the door to a state of pessimism about the Arab reality. I recently saw an Egyptian film called “Jacobean Building”. In one of the scenes of the film the hero, who is from an old aristocratic family, looks at Cairo and says that Cairo in the forties was much better than Cairo is now. That is what I fear most: that we in the Arab world are going backwards instead of going forward. A year ago there was a lot of optimism in the Arab world with the birth of political reform in the area. Lots of western circulars and magazines spoke of an on-coming Islamic democratic spring in the area. But unfortunately, what happened is that we went backwards. In Iraq we are facing a civil war, in Lebanon we are before a big sectarian division, in Egypt and Jordan and other Arabic countries there is an apostasy from the political reform project, and the main reason for all this is that American pressure or calls for reform has been declared dead under the effect of the crisis of the Iranian nuclear program.

Perhaps this pessimistic introduction may lead us to a pessimistic topic but I shall try at the end of this debate to find solutions or windows for future change. The title of this lecture is the political reform in Jordan and the role of the Islamic movement, the Muslim Brotherhood, and the only legitimate movement in the political work. The question that is often asked in the West is whether the alarmists accept the democratic game, and does the democratic game accept the alarmists. The bad news is that there is no democratic game in the Arab world to start with, so we cannot speak about the role of the Islamists in it.

**Political reform**

Relatively speaking the political regime in Jordan is in a better state than most of the Arabic regimes. It is a constitutional inherited monarchy regime, its government and the new King are pro-Western, and the government is not bloody as some of the Arab regimes. There is some political endurance inside the state; there is an elected parliament, in which the opposition is very effective. There is also a certain degree of freedom, which does not go beyond the red lines, there are fierce opposition unions, there is a political opposition movement controlled by the Muslim Brotherhood groups, and there are different political parties, but despite all that there is a severe monarchy regime. All the threads are in the hand of one King. No matter how far the political game goes and returns, the affairs stay in the hand of the King. There is a big role for the security apparatus which is effective and controls a political life: it decides who reaches the government and who does not, it restricts personal freedom and there is an election law which leads to a weak parliament, no matter how much the opposition raises its voice. That is because the opposition does not play any role in decision-making. In short, there are a lot of restraints on the freedom of speech and the movements of parties, because there is no transfer of power.

If we define political reform as having two elements, namely enlarging the base for decision-making and the ability to question the ruler, then I think we have a very flawed political reform in Jordan, to say the least. Perhaps some people hear about the national agenda as part of the political reform, others hear about debates, forums and meetings as part of the political reform in Jordan. I think this is only for external marketing, to beautify the current political situation. At best we are going around in a circle and not going any step forward. If the situation is like that, and in my opinion it is like that, then how do we explain the existence of an effective Islamic movement in parliaments and unions that has an important social and political existence? How can we speak about steps which have to follow the coming political reform in Jordan? How can we encourage and support political reform in Jordan?

These six questions summarize the main subject of this lecture:

- 1) What is the place of the Jordanian example in the relationship between the regime and the Islamists in the frame of the Arab policy in general?
- 2) How did the relationship between the regime and the Islamic movements develop, and what are the conditions that control this relation?
- 3) What is the nature of political debate inside the Muslim Brotherhood and how did it develop?
- 4) What are the characteristics of the current crisis between the regime and the Muslim Brotherhood, its dimensions and dynamics?
- 5) Is the Muslim Brotherhood a force in the direction of democracy or a hindrance to it?
- 6) What is the possible European role in order to push the political reform in Jordan forward?

As you see the topics are many and various but I shall try to summarize them as much as possible.

Regarding the first question about Arab examples concerning the relationship between political Islam and governing: I think there are four main examples. The first is the example of dismissing and forbidding the Islamic movements, whether it is by law or political activity, as has happened in Tunisia, Libya and Syria. There are no Islamic movements in law there and they are not allowed to perform any political activity in the society.

The second example concerns dismissal by law with the permission of little political movement, which means they are not allowed to form parties by law but they are allowed limited political participation, like in Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

The third example regards limited and controlled political participation, meaning they are allowed to form something resembling a party in the parliament according to the law and they allowed political participation in law and in reality, as in Jordan, Morocco, Kuwait, Yemen and Bahrain. The fourth and final example concerns the regimes where the Islamic Movement holds power, like Iraq and Palestine.

The second item I will discuss is a quick summary based upon the nature of the relation between the Jordanian regime and the Muslim

Brotherhood, and the conditions that control this relation. The Muslim Brotherhood was established in Jordan in 1946, and it was a group that benefited from the start from the approval and patronage of the King and a good relationship with the ruling system. From the beginning it was a legal and legitimate movement. Despite the fact that the Islamic movement in Jordan is effective, exists according to the law, and has a good relationship with the regime, the values that govern this relation are not democratic values.

The relationship between the Muslim Brotherhood and the regime went through many stages. The first stage was that of establishing the group, which was small and under the royal patronage. This stage lasted from the end of forties till the beginning of the fifties. The second stage started in the fifties and lasted until 1989, and it was a stage of alliance and investment. The regime was suffering a crisis of isolation from the neighboring countries, and there were problems with Nasser and the Arab Baath Socialist party. There were also national parties in Syria and Iraq, so the Jordanian regime found in the Muslim Brotherhood a main alliance against the national and leftist parties inside and antagonistic Arab regimes outside. At the same time the Muslim Brotherhood found an alliance in the Jordanian regime because of the bad reputation of the Muslim Brotherhood in neighboring countries. This relationship continued until 1989. In the fifties and sixties there was alliance against the communists and nationalists, in the seventies there was an alliance against the leftists Palestinian organizations in Jordan. The regime guaranteed that the Muslim Brotherhood could fill the gap after the departure of the Palestinian organizations from Jordan.

The relation between the regime and Muslim Brotherhood started to deteriorate at the beginning of the eighties. However, in 1989 a revolution took place in the south of Jordan as a protest against the rising of prices and economic situation. This revolution led to the return of constitutional and democratic life in Jordan. King Hussein realized that the collapse of the Soviet Union would lead to democratization in the area, and that is why he hurried to adapt to a return to democratic life. The election of 1989 was a shock to the regime, as the King realized that the group which he looked after, protected and gave the

right to work had become the main popular force in the state. It had no competition, whereas the leftist and national parties became weak and unable to recruit people. The second Gulf war in 1990 led to the participation of Muslim Brotherhood for the first time in the government. However, this was the end of the golden period in the relation between Muslim Brotherhood and the regime, and their relationship started to spiral downwards quickly.

The consequence of the third stage could be seen in 1989, but its peak was from the nineties until 2000 when King Abdullah took power. The third stage can be described as the growing gap between the Muslim Brotherhood and the regime. The concepts and politics of both parties were miles apart, and the regime began to make rules and decree laws to limit the power of Muslim Brotherhood in order to weaken them in society and the state. The first law was that on election “one man one vote”. This law aimed to limit the power of the Muslim Brotherhood and it succeeded in doing that. Then there were the laws on students unions to weaken the Muslim Brotherhood in universities, as well as the laws of welfare organizations. In 1997 the Muslim Brotherhood boycotted the elections in protest against the deterioration of the democratic situation. The situation continues to deteriorate until 2000 when King Abdullah came to power. At first he did not have a lot of experience in the internal political situation, and therefore he depended mainly on the security apparatus to run the internal conflict. A consequence of this was that the file of the Muslim Brotherhood changed from political to a security one. This change has had a negative effect on the relationship between the Muslim Brotherhood and the regime. The pro-Western attitude of the King led to his negative attitude towards them. For the first time, many confrontations took place between the Muslim Brotherhood and the regime, which caused some people to die and many to be wounded in many areas. The deterioration in the West Bank also had a negative effect on the situation in Jordan. The number of people who were pro-Hamas inside the Muslim Brotherhood increased. In 2003 they participated again in the parliamentary election and gained 17 seats, however, the relation kept deteriorating until it reached a real crisis between the two parties.





## 6. COMMENTARY ON THE FIRST LECTURES OF JOFFÉ AND ABU-RUMMAN

*Bertus Hendriks, Middle East expert*

### **Commentary on the lecture of George Joffé**

In response to the lecture by George Joffé I have a few remarks. I will begin by discussing the issue of securitization. In my opinion everything has come to be seen in a different light since September 11<sup>th</sup>. That is quite obvious, but I would like to elaborate on it a little bit. I would like to take the case of Algeria as an example, because when the Algerian FIS revolution and the ballot box presented itself, Europe and the United States both had the same response. They bought into this theory that all Islamic movements are monolithic movements and that they are of the variety ‘one man, one vote, one time’. Therefore it was not possible to engage an argument in favor of these movements, as raised by George Joffé, and in my opinion it is also an argument that the series of studies by the WRR provided a lot of input for.

In the Algerian case a negative attitude developed across Europe because the other members of the European Union had sub-contracted the Algerian file to the French. I think that in the French case we at least had the influence of a different kind of fundamentalism, the secularist fundamentalism, which made it more difficult for the French to engage with this new phenomenon that made itself clear in the ballot box. As a result of this rigid attitude and the refusal to see more into those Islamic movements, to see that they are evolving, a number of chances have been missed. That is because even though the FIS and especially the more violent movements may have been defeated, the problems of Algeria have not been solved. Even though there were some promising efforts during the Algerian crisis, these have been completely turned down by the Algerian regime. This happened in the same way that the 9/11 crisis has now allowed those regimes to reassert themselves and reappropriate the reform agenda.

In a meeting in Rome efforts were made to bring together the Islamic trend with the other secular parties in order to formulate an issue out of the crisis, which was mainly a political crisis. This was turned down from the very beginning, with the consent and active participation of the French, and therefore of Europe. In my opinion this is unfortunate because it does not allow for the kind of internal reform that I see as a potential in Islamic movements. We now have reforms without reform, as George Joffé has said. We also have democracy without democrats, especially in the three countries that are our core concern today: Morocco, Egypt and Jordan. I call all three of these countries monarchies. Even though Egypt is in name a republic, it is in essence a monarchy, as we will soon witness when the son of Mubarak will most likely take over.

In essence these countries have regimes in which we see this new phenomenon of reforms without reform and democracy. This means that all the trappings of a real reform are there, and especially some of those vital ingredients of democracy such as a thriving free press. This can be seen in Morocco and Egypt, and even in Jordan there is a relatively bigger space for public expression and free expression than elsewhere. When we look at another issue, for example changes in the status of women, we see that there are very interesting developments in Morocco concerning the change of the *moudawwana*, the personal status. We can also take a look at Tunisia, where the issue of women is something of an alibi. It is excellent that the situation in Tunisia for women is much better and accomplished by law, but on the other hand we should not forget that Tunisia for all intents and purposes is a police state, and has very little to do with democracy. There we see these trappings of democracy; we see the form and not the substance. This form has also not been brought about by the generational change that many people have faith in. The kind of change that people like Bashar al-Assad, Abdullah II and Mohammed VI have not brought. In the beginning it seemed there was a promise of change and openness to real reform. Well, we have been severely disappointed, to the extent that we question whether we believed it at the beginning.

I think that where real change and autonomous change has taken place, the West has refused to see it, or has refused to accept it. This can be seen clearly in the example that George Joffé gave when he referred to the situation in Palestine with Hamas. It is also the case in Egypt with the Muslim Brotherhood. It is the mother of all Islamic movements, and it is extremely important to see the developments in Egypt within the Muslim Brotherhood. We must try and open up a little bit to get away from this very black-and-white view. It cannot be denied that the Muslim Brotherhood has known a very profound transformation, and it is very short-sighted to pretend that all of this is rhetoric. We must stop pretending as if this does not hide the fact that the real driving power behind the Muslim Brotherhood is the wait for D-day, when they will seize power and then we will forget about democracy. I think it is worthwhile to explore whether if something walks like a duck, talks like a duck, it could even be seriously behaving like a duck, or it could at the very least become a real duck, a democratic duck.

The refusal to investigate this sufficiently is in my view very short-sighted and does not help. The more so since in all the reform agendas in the West there is a need to promote autonomous movement, not something parachuted from outside. Now we know that for all the money that is provided and for all the NGOs in the different Arab and Middle Eastern countries, we have to draw the simple conclusion that this is a marginal phenomenon, at least for the moment. People are supported; they are not able to support the autonomous drive inside their country themselves. I do not like to belittle, but last year in the Egyptian elections I went to one of my friends to support him in his electoral struggle. He was campaigning in the area where he was born, a popular area. He has a perfect record, but the sad thing was when my colleague and I came to the meeting, our mere presence added significant percentage points to the total audience. The same happened with the Kafaya Movement. It is a very important movement and it is very interesting what they are doing and what they have brought about, but when Kafaya entered the elections in Egypt last year, they struggled to attract the attention of bigger audiences in the political marketplace.

It is all very nice that these very decent, democratic people have our support, but at the same time we know that it is a marginal phenomenon.

This is all in contrast to the Muslim Brotherhood, which in its various manifestations is a very autonomous force, and a force that is evolving. They are the most important movement in civil society, with their presence in the professional syndicates, in the trade unions and other different layers of society. And we need to explain why, when political movements go and start their march through the institutions, all other movements such as communist and secular movements are going to be transformed in the process, and why this would not apply to the Islamic movement. I think that is something to pay attention to.

### ***Commentary on the lecture of Mohammad Abu-Rumman***

With regard to the lecture by Abu-Rumman: I think that the point of his contribution is that while we cannot talk of an Islamic movement in general, it helps to take a look at the details of a particular case, and see how it dissolves into a lot of nuances, shades, difficulties. This would help us not to be seized by naiveté, and to keep an open eye. When he gave his overview of what happened in Jordan, he also shared that the West has not always been averse to dealing with Islamic movements. Throughout the Cold War, the Muslim Brotherhood, in its different manifestations, was a very welcome partner in combating Arab nationalism and in combating the threats from the left. The other reason why it is shortsighted to completely exclude the Islamic movements from engagement, and from being part of a legitimate political process, is that it is also helping to prevent another process. In the Jordanian case we learned that the Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic Action Front in their programs failed to provide exact answers to many of the outstanding problems, like unemployment and such. That is of course a challenge to most of the Islamic movements: that they do not have to answer because they have been excluded from power. However, I do think it is important to point out that the advantage of the current Islamic movement is that they have not been submitted to the test. Therefore the spell of the Islamic dream and Islam as a solution has not had the occasion to be broken.

In the period of the good relations with King Hussein of Jordan, there was a participation of the Islamists in the government. The minister of Education has not left an imperishable impression in those days, and I think it is also important to promote this process.

I talked about how the regimes in the Arab world have re-appropriated the reform process in the way that George Joffé outlined, which is a very unfortunate thing. I am a neo-conservative, in the sense that in my opinion the neo-conservatives were right when they said that the problem in the Arab and Islamic world is not so much the stability, but the stability of the wrong kind which breeds actions such as the attacks on 9/11. We all remember that fifteen of the nineteen terrorists came from Saudi-Arabia. That is a problem, and I think they raised a very important issue. In my opinion democracy could be an answer to this problem. It is not the magical answer, but it is certainly part of any answer. There is no viable democracy in the Middle East when we exclude the Islamic movements. Therefore it is alright to applaud a homeopathic dose of democracy in, for example, the case of Saudi-Arabia, because they exclude women, and do not want to engage with the real players such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, or Hamas in Israel.

I would like to add a few remarks here about Hamas and about the Israeli-Palestine conflict in general. The regimes, as well as other actors in the Middle East, have been allowed to take over the reform agenda and have had lots of elections without anything to choose from. For example, Israel has been completely successful in taking over this issue. We all remember the days when Yasser Arafat was donating blood immediately after 9/11. That was a long time ago, and he saw the danger immediately. He was not able to prevent it, and the same is the case with Hamas. I think, as George has underlined as well, that these movements are not necessarily religious movements. The rhetoric is religious but the real moving forces are political issues and political concerns. This has been completely overridden by the reactions of Israel and the United States, and the reading that Israel and the United States have imposed on the Hamas phenomenon, as they have done with the Hezbollah phenomenon. This does not allow us to see what the real dynamics are. I would say that it is not only shortsighted

to do this, I think in the case of the Hamas and Hezbollah it is sheer irresponsibility to adopt this kind of selective reading prism. Coming back to the issue of civil society: because countries such as Morocco, Egypt and Jordan are very dependent on Western aid, we should perhaps have some leverage. However, we do not even use that. When Saad Eddin Ibrahim, who is a secular scholar and head of the Ibn Khaldun Centre in Egypt for promoting democracy, was arrested for making a film trying to persuade people to go and vote, the European Union as well as the USA – he is an American citizen as well as an Egyptian citizen – have not been overactive, to put it mildly. When a secular candidate in the Egyptian elections (Ayman Nour and his al-Ghad party) was imprisoned under the flimsiest of pretexts, there was a deafening silence on the part of the Western society. Therefore we can conclude that even with our friends we are very economical in our support.

I will now make a few remarks about the Moroccan case, which is a very interesting one. I am not sure that I completely share the assessment of George Joffé about the PJD party. Perhaps I do share his expectations that it is very likely that they will obtain a plurality and perhaps a majority in the upcoming elections in Morocco. However, I am not sure that it is of the same significance as the Turkish example, because in the Turkish example we clearly have a different institutional set-up than in the Moroccan case. In the Moroccan, Egyptian and all the personal power republics, the King or King-president and security services are basically setting all the agendas. In the Turkish case, while the Turkish army is of course still an important force in the background, there are certain institutional guarantees, and therefore the position of the Turkish Party of Justice is much bigger and much more important than in the Moroccan case. In the Moroccan case the possibilities of co-optation are bigger but at the same time perhaps less significant.

I think the publication of the whole WRR report is an extremely important event and I would like to conclude with what I think is the very tenure of this very conference. In my opinion Holland is somewhat in the forefront here in Western Europe in trying to face the issue and to lay out what the dilemmas are. And I think that it is

a healthy and absolutely necessary thing because I think we should leave out the black-and-white approach not only in politics but also in analysis, because although it may be very rewarding on an emotional level to talk about Islamo-fascism, just as it is perhaps rewarding in a time of crisis to talk about the axis of evil, it is no substitute for a cool-headed analysis. I hope that this conference will contribute to that.





## 7. THE BATTLE FOR THE MEDIA IN EUROPE, THE MIDDLE EAST AND NORTH AFRICA

*Joris Luyendijk, Journalist and writer*

In this lecture I am going to discuss media, filters and distortions, and in order to do so I would like to highlight some of the distortions and biases in media reporting. To show this, I will use a text from CNN. The reason I want to use this text and then analyze it in some detail is to show that the problems with media reporting go deeper than is often assumed. Often people say: if only journalists would do their best and would try harder to honor their own methods and codes (their own methods and codes being: to hear both sides, to stick to the facts and to separate fact from opinion), then we would have a neutral, good picture of what is going on in the Middle East. I think the problems go on a level deeper, and that is why I will use this text. It is about a great laboratory of biased media reporting in the Palestine and Israel conflict.

*Text: Israel is refusing to say when its incursion into Gaza will end. Israeli forces have kept up air and ground attacks into the strip for five straight days. Israel says the offensive is intended to stop rocket attacks from Gaza. Palestinians say at least forty people have been killed since Wednesday.*

These are four lines about Gaza, and I think they show the first filter very neatly. It is possible to say that we must separate facts from opinion, but then what facts do you present? This text was amidst two other items, one about Saddam Hussein who received the death penalty, and the other was about Noriega's chances of being re-elected. Some people may say: forty people have been killed in Gaza since Wednesday, but probably a lot more were killed in Darfur, or in Colombia or North Korea, to name just a few examples. These people were killed far away from any cameras. The selection of this particular item and this particular act of violence puts much more emphasis on Israeli attacks and violence. This suggests that among all the nations in the world, Israel is among the most violent and

the bloodiest, whereas if you would take a look at the figures after one year, Israel is probably not even in the top twenty. Last summer Lebanese civilians were killed on TV by Israeli bombings in the South for weeks, even though at the same time in Darfur much greater massacres were taking place. However, Darfur was not in the news. Therefore it is possible to say that we must separate facts from opinions, but in the selection of the facts your opinion shines through.

Then, after a selection has been made, there is the matter of the angle. Superficially it seems in the text that Israel is hearing both sides here. We hear from Israel the reason why they are doing all this, and then we also hear from the Palestinian side. However, Israel is allowed to give a motive for its actions, which makes their actions more understandable, whereas the Palestinians are only allowed to state a fact. Imagine it would be the other way around. It is simply unimaginable that forty Israelis killed in suicide bombings would be covered in such a way.

Therefore there are clear journalistic choices behind this façade of hearing both sides, of separating fact from opinion, and of sticking to the facts. This means an Israeli civilian killed by a suicide bombing receives a very different treatment by the media. Different facts are selected, different angles are taken.

Finally, there is the choice of wording. If we look again at the CNN text, the word 'incursion' appears. When last summer Hezbollah killed and kidnapped Israeli soldiers, I don't recall anyone calling that an incursion. The word 'offensive' suggests that there are two armies, that this is a classical, symmetrical conflict. Then when the Gaza strip is mentioned, there is no word about Israel indirectly still occupying it and controlling all the land, air and sea routes. The word 'attack' suggests an equivalent between the Palestinian rocket attacks and the Israeli attacks, whereas qualitatively these are incredibly different. This is proven by the fact that hardly anybody ever dies from Palestinian rockets, and since Wednesday forty Palestinians died from Israeli rockets. Finally there is the most revealing 'forty people'. When this happens in Israel, the media speak of civilians, soldiers or children. I find it hard to remember when there was a suicide bom-

bing where they just mentioned ‘people’. We are always told whether there are children or women involved.

This is just one tiny example of how the method of saying we separate facts from opinion and we hear both sides actually does not quite bring you the sort of neutral, unbiased view of the world that CNN and Al-Jazeera promise you. Al-Jazeera is often called the CNN of the Middle East, and I agree with this description, but only on the provision that Al-Jazeera is also selecting facts from a certain angle with certain terms. One of the great challenges these days for media is that if you would take an airplane and fly over the Middle East, you would see that some people say ‘occupied Palestine’, ‘the Zionist entity’, ‘Israel’, ‘the promised land’, ‘the occupied land’, ‘the disputed land’ or ‘the liberated land’. Different camps have different words, and one of the major difficulties these days for news media is that they have to choose between those words, but by choosing those words they are implicitly taking sides with the camp that using that word as well.

I hope this is a starting point to go beyond the conventional criticism of media saying ‘journalists don’t try hard enough’. The trouble is even when we try very hard and follow our own codes, we still end up with a filtered image, because we have to choose between topics, angles and words.



## 8. WHICH POLICY SHOULD EUROPE PURSUE IN THE MIDDLE EAST?

*George Joffé, Professor at King's College, London and Cambridge University, Cambridge*

I will talk about what the European Union has been, and what that might mean for the current situation. I think I need to begin by defining what Europe itself really is, how it sees itself, how it is constructed and for what purpose.

### ***The internal and external dimensions of Europe***

We all know that the European Union is really a product of the experiences of World War II. It was an attempt to resolve the tensions, conflicts and contradictions in Europe by constructing a kind of integrated body, based on two principles: the idea of economic integration through a free market with the purpose of trying to build common economic interests, and the idea of democratic governance and respect for human rights as being essential values which are vital for the construction of a viable political system. Since then some other values have emerged which were also an important part of the European ideal, for example the ideas of unity and diversity, and the acceptance of difference instead of just tolerance. The idea of secularism and tolerance is associated with it as well. These seem to me to be declamatory values, crucial to the European project, but here I have to open my first caveat. I wonder if things today are quite as valued as we think they are, and my reason for saying that will become apparent later on.

Europe itself also has an external dimension, and in my opinion there are three relationships that European states throughout the European Union wish to deal with. Bearing in mind that European states retain their sovereignty, the way in which the European Union addresses these issues has to reflect the limitations on its action. Europe has become expert over the decades in responding with long-term policies that also reflect its initial founding values and fundamental principles. The three relationships that really matter here are

the relationships with the East (the Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia), the way in which the European Union deals with the Transatlantic relationship (the latter is a legacy of the Cold War, but also reflects a belief in shared values from the Cold War), and finally the relationship southwards in the Mediterranean towards the Middle East and towards North Africa.

### ***The relationship with the Middle East and North Africa***

All three of those relationships are really statements about European security, and as such they are also statements about the way in which Europe as a unit can address its security concerns. Of those three relationships, the one I regard as most problematic is the one with the Middle East and North Africa. What are its components? Europe has always been concerned about the question of migration into Europe in security terms, and with the question of integration of migrants inside Europe. Those two issues should be considered mirror images of the same common problem. However, there is a second dimension to this: there is the question of spillover effects from the situation inside the Middle East and North Africa. Indeed, if you look at the conclusions of the Valencia summit in 1998, it is quite clear what those are. They involve concerns over not just migration, but over the smuggling of drugs and people, international crime, and the final element, transnational terrorism. All those issues have concerned Europeans ever since the treaty of Rome in 1957, and Europe has sought a series of responses to deal with them. Up until 1995 the primary instrument was to try and construct some kind of economic relationship that would in effect stimulate development, thereby removing the need for migration, and through the process of stimulating economic development reduce and dissipate the tensions inside the South and Mediterranean region. The purpose of this was quite simply to enhance European security.

With the end of the Cold War it became evident that some of the constraints on Europe, namely the whole question of the implication of the Cold War inside the Middle East, had disappeared. Although Europe realized that the major problems of the region were ones it could perhaps address alone (I think there particularly of the Arabic-Israelic dispute, which the United States adopted very quickly after

1991). Nonetheless it was clear to European thinkers that some kind of holistic approach would be possible. In fact, the holistic approach that was designed by France and Spain and adopted at the Barcelona Declaration in 1995 consisted of two previous experiences run together. On the one hand there was the question of the construction of the European Union in itself, the argument that economic integration, accompanied by democratic governance and respect for human rights, was the key to the removal of tension. On the other hand there was the experience of the Helsinki conference in 1975 and the whole development of the concept of cooperation over security and confidence building inside Europe, which actually emerged as a proposal for a conference about security and cooperation inside the Mediterranean in 1990. It was later subsumed in the Barcelona Process. This is a policy of the European Union, which is one of its most developed aspects of policy, but one that is the least understood by Europeans themselves.

### ***The Barcelona Process***

The Barcelona Process is a policy that comprises three different sets of measures. One set of measures addresses economic development, and it proposes encouragement for free trade in industrial goods on a multi-bilateral basis. This means that the European Union will form free trade agreements, with individual states, to encourage the development of their industrial sectors. It does not encourage the development of their agriculture because that would clash with their common agricultural policy, and of course European states will not accept that.

The second set is a multilateral set. It is a set of measures to build confidence in the Mediterranean, to address political and security issues common to all Mediterranean states, including the European Union. The third set addresses issues of a mutual awareness of society and culture across the Mediterranean. It is integral to this set that it is based on the development of respect, and that it is based on the development of the idea of a common system of governance throughout the Mediterranean basin. The Barcelona Declaration is quite specific about this: it talks about the creation of a shared zone of peace, prosperity and stability in the Mediterranean. In the economic Association Agreements that form the core of the economic basket

of the process, there is explicit reference to political change. Article 2 of every Association Agreement requires the South Mediterranean partner to agree to encourage democratic governance and respect for human rights, and a provision has been included in the agreement that the European Union may take action if that is not honored. Thus it would appear that the Barcelona Process quite directly requires political change in the Mediterranean.

Before I will analyze to what degree this has been honored, I need to point towards a subsequent development. This policy was meant to run from 1995 up until the year 2010. It was expected that by that time economic integration across the Mediterranean would have resulted in economic integration within the states of the South Mediterranean and that the other two holistic, multilateral baskets, would have achieved their fruits. In other words, the South Mediterranean would by then have become a zone of democratic governance and respect for human rights. Unfortunately other events intervened in 2001. There was the question of the attacks on New York, and there was the question of a European response. Indeed, there began to be doubts whether the Barcelona Process, which was a very slow process, could produce the kind of security guarantees that Europe now appeared to need. Europe also realized at that time that the United States too had begun to develop its own soft security policies towards the Middle East and North Africa. Of course, these have been foreshadowed in the Peace Process at the beginning of the 1990s, but then they died away. And when the Barcelona Process was introduced, the United States was deliberately excluded. However, the United States now began to conceive its own policies of a similar kind. In 2002, the United States proposed a Middle East partnership initiative, which eventually became part of the broader Middle East-North Africa initiative. This policy, carried out by Colin Powell at the end of 2002, proposed that the United States should sign bilateral relationships with South Mediterranean states to address four areas of activity. First of all, it should encourage economic growth and development on a free trade area basis. Secondly, it was also to address the issue of governance, by requiring democratic governance and respect for human rights. Thirdly it would also look into the empowerment of women, and finally it would address the question of education.



There were of course quite certain quite specific policy goals behind the American proposal, but it is easy to see that, similar enough to the European proposal, it would offer states of the South Mediterranean a choice. If they did not like what Europe had to offer, they could opt for the American alternative. The European Commission took fright and construed a new policy of its own. The new policy was very similar to that of the United States and it abandoned the holistic model. It looked instead for bilateral relationships. It proposed to guarantee European security by offering surrounding states in the East and in the South all the advantages of membership of the EU, except access to the institutions. In other words, the *acquis communautaire* was to be offered to them without any participation in the decision-making process, but with full implications of access to the European single market. This should not be accomplished any longer by a fixed agreement, but with a series of mutually agreed action plans, in which the states concerned could propose what they thought they could do, and the European Union would then measure their success and grant them corresponding access accordingly.

What remains of the Barcelona Process and the new European Neighborhood Policy in 2007 is to be brought together into a single bilateral policy, and I think one can draw some conclusions from that. First of all, where is the multilateral policy the Barcelona Process was prescribing through the Association Agreements and their article 2? The new European Neighborhood Policy is elective, which means that it is possible to choose what you want to do. This is achieved through the action plans and through positive conditionality. It seems to me that in terms of what I deem the crucial elements of the Barcelona Process, the emphasis on democracy and promotion of respect for human rights has now basically been abandoned, because South Mediterranean states can choose not to comply. That is their right under the Neighborhood Policy. Now we are left with the original European assumption that political transformation can occur simply through economic development. The evidence, it seems to me, is that this cannot be the case.

***Encouraging democratic governance and respect for human rights***

Therefore we need examine to what extent the Barcelona proposals of encouraging democratic governance and respect for human rights have actually been honored up until 2001. There was a declaratory statement that they should be honored, but we need to see to what extent Europe actually did achieve that. Before 2001, the European Union support for democratic governance and respect for human rights in the South Mediterranean region was notable by its absence. I cannot think of any substantive example where Europe actually intervened to achieve those objectives. It did not intervene in the Arab-Israeli dispute. It did not do so, partly because Europe tends not to intervene in that particular dispute (because its members disagree as to what they can do), and partly because of the refusal of Israel to listen to European Union prescriptions. This is caused by the Israelis distrust of the Union in the wake of the Venice declaration in 1980.

What about the other countries? Only one occasion when the European Union made any public statement about respect for human rights and democratic governance comes to mind, and that was in 1998, at the height of the massacres in Algeria. Then the European Union was forced by public opinion in Europe to send a troika to Algiers in order to investigate the situation. This was quite an interesting example of European effectiveness. The troika was constructed from the directors from the Middle East, from the previous presidency, the current presidency and the future presidency of the European Union. Algeria took one look at the delegation and said: "That is too low key, we cannot deal with these people" and insisted that Foreign Ministers should go instead, which they did. The Foreign Ministers went to Algiers, and they were there for eight hours. Seven of those hours were occupied by negotiations with the Algerian government, and one hour alone was given to the opposition. The Algerian government dictated the terms. I think the Algerian government carried out an extremely effective public relations coup. However, I do wonder why it is that Europe, given its power and given its ability to actually impose sanctions through the Association Agreements, did nothing at all at the most acute period of the crisis there. In other countries, such as Tunisia, which is regularly condemned by human rights organizations for its policies, Europe never said any-

thing in public. European diplomats will always argue that they did not say anything in public, but that they worked behind the scenes. If they did, the effect was invisible. It has been argued that in Morocco European pressures achieved the beginnings of political change there. I doubt this. In my opinion this was really achieved by international and domestic NGOs, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International.

In my view, we need to ask: why was Europe not prepared to stand by its own principles? It seems to me that the main reason for this was that, as usual, Europe was far more concerned about short-term stability than it really was about the declaratory objectives of the respect for human rights and the encouragement of democratic governance. This extended beyond just the question of governments in the region, with whom Europe can act, towards other movements as well as to civil society in general. The Ibn Khaldun Center was mentioned, and how the Egyptian government simply arrested Saad Eddin Ibrahim, even though he was discharging a European Union contract. There are other examples too, like the case of the European Union's inability to intervene in Algeria over the question of the declaration of a military coup, banning the outcome of a democratic election. Then there is the much more recent case of Hamas. In every case the real concern has been to maintain stability at almost any cost, including that of the principles of the Union itself.

It is possible to ask if that really matters. It is after all what great states and great powers do, and I agree with that. However, I do think it matters what has occurred since 2001. In case you think I am being excessively self-indulgent and liberal-minded, let us look and see the way in which Europe has responded to the question of a threat from global terrorists. Leaving aside the question of how real that threat may be, the European response has been quite remarkably swift and thorough. Within days of the events of September 11<sup>th</sup>, the European Council had been able to establish a common declaration of terrorism and it had introduced common penalties for terrorist offences. It also introduced common procedures to deal with them. Shortly afterwards, through the justice and home affairs pillar, it applied the principles of externalization, which means that internal European

polices are then directed towards relations with neighboring states. The European Union had set up police relationships, security service relationships, common deportation processes and it had also accepted the fundamental complaints from South Mediterranean states (Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Algeria in particular) about the European domestic policy towards political Islam. It had, in effect, accepted a common analysis, and therefore accepted a common response. All question of pressure against regimes had been abandoned, for the sake of dealing with what it perceived to be a greater threat.

If this is the case, since 2001 Europe has been operating two policies in contradiction with each other. On the one hand, there is still the formal declaratory belief in the issue of democratic governance and respect for human rights; on the other hand there is the practice of a security agenda, in which the security agenda predominates. Let us not forget that we are talking about a part of the world in which at least three governments now regularly deport asylum seekers (sometimes even those that have been accepted as asylum seekers) back to their countries of origin, without guarantees of proper treatment. My own country has agreements to deport people to Egypt, Libya, Jordan and Lebanon, and it is trying to have an agreement to deport people to Algeria as well. That is no doubt a perfectly reasonable act of statesmanship. However, to do this with no guarantee that those people have their human rights respected seems to be a dereliction of fundamental state responsibility inside the context of Europe. Other states have engaged secretly in the process of special rendition, and although they may publicly deny it, the evidence is fairly overwhelming. That sits rather ill with European principles. My own country has debated publicly whether or not evidence obtained under torture, admittedly not in Britain, can be used in British courts. That seems to be a dereliction of a fundamental European principle as well. Indeed, a principle established in the 13<sup>th</sup> century stated that evidence extracted under torture cannot be used in court. Given those considerations, I think it is a legitimate question to ask to what extent Europe really believed in its own declaratory policies. However, the question remains: does it matter?

### ***The declaratory policies of Europe***

It seems to me that it does, and the reason it matters is that Europe has to deal with a neighboring world. And in that neighboring world, if you want to carry weight, you have to be able to demonstrate that the policies we say we follow are the policies that we do follow, and that those policies are also ones we ourselves respect. My complaint is that this no longer seems to be the case, and it is not simply a question of dealing with the outside world. Here I come to a point I made earlier: Europe is a complex society. It has within it minority communities, many of whom derive from the world with which we now entertain relations that seem to be ambiguous at least. Given that ambiguity, we are bound to find the ambiguities in external policy reflected in internal policy as well. This becomes a part of a much wider issue, of how Europe actually deals with the ideas now dominant inside the region. Thus in a way, European failure to deal with the issue of its own principles and respect for democracy and human rights makes it even more difficult for Europe to deal with the question of the way in which it interprets the significance of Islamic movements, both within Europe and outside it. This is important, because if we do not find a way of dealing appropriately with these things, we are left only with security as the main target of policy. Security will alienate and alienation in a sense leads to extremism, and yet extremism is the objective that we all try to avoid. Once again, we cannot simply deal with it by using the argument that we are as we are, that we have our values and principles, and others who do not accept them at face value must therefore leave or simply learn to accept.

In short, we need to develop a much more sophisticated approach, both inside Europe and outside it, to ways in which we deal with this problem. Therefore I will propose six measures that we ought to consider. The first repeats something I mentioned earlier: we need to reconsider the way in which we understand our own basic assumptions and values. This applies particularly to the concept of tolerance, because nowadays there is very often a hidden agenda of intolerance instead. This is perceptible to those outside, and therefore we need to consider what we mean by it. A point has been made before that the great European achievement had in fact not been tolerance as much as indifference. By becoming transformed into tolerance, it became

a political issue of a kind it had not been before. In my opinion there might be something about this that could be worth considering.

My second point is that we need to evaluate the balance between securitization policies both within and outside Europe, and the relationships implied by this balance with governments where we wish to see change.

Thirdly, we need to restate what we understand by processes of democratization and respect for human rights. We have to rethink this whole agenda in the light of both of our internal re-examination and what should be become our growing awareness of what the Islamic and other agendas on these issues might be. We need to engage in-depth with Islamic movements, to understand and appreciate not so much their differences but their similarities. Moderate Islamic movements are suspiciously similar to the experience of Christian Democracy inside Europe, and I do not mean the Italian variety here.

My fourth point is that we need to consider how we relate to the communities inside Europe as much as the ones outside. We know we have a problem in identifying our interlocutors abroad, but we also have a problem in Europe. It is a little understood fact that until very recently there was no formal relationship between minority communities in Europe and the European Union, particularly if they were Muslim. Even today there is an argument as to whether those communities are monolithic. Do we engage with the Muslim community and with its different ethnic varieties? However, by the very nature of Islam there are no formal representatives. Most of those with whom we engage, either at the national or the European level, tend to be people who are self-appointed. The question is whether this is appropriate and whether there are people who we should be talking to. We have not yet come to terms with how we investigate this or establish it.

My fifth point is that we need to consider the distinction between the political objectives of such movements and the ideologies that they articulate.

The sixth and final point is that we need to reconsider very fundamentally the Transatlantic relationship. Not because I wish to suggest that we should reject the United States, but because Europe has quite specific interests of its own, and those interests need to be addressed by Europe. There will be some very uncomfortable outcomes, think only of the tensions that will arise in the Eastern Mediterranean. However, if Europe does not do this, then it is going to be condemned to irrelevance in the context of the Middle East and North Africa. And it is very doubtful indeed whether it will be able to sort out its own domestic problems too.

There is potential for sanctions in the Association Agreements, and inside the Common Foreign and Security Policy there is no provision for qualified majority voting, which means that unanimity is required for any measure to be taken. This of course explains for a large part why no measure has been taken. Naturally national interests tend to predominate, not only in this particular field. Let me point out that Italy recently has been very anxious to persuade the European Union to remove the arms embargo on Libya, which it did successfully. This happened because Libya quite cynically used the migration issue to Sicily and elsewhere as a mechanism to point out what would happen if the embargo would not be removed. This indicates that there is indeed a manipulation that goes on here. It also means that there is a failure at a practical level in terms of policy. There is no easy answer to that. We know from the experience of the European Constitution that it is extremely difficult to reform European institutions. This is hardly surprising because they have been built up and tried and tested over decades. Understandably states are going to be loath to change them unless they really have to, and no state is prepared to abandon sovereignty. Therefore these kinds of issues, which seem to touch on sovereignty, are very difficult to alter. I can only suggest that the only effective way is an internal examination, which enables people to become aware that they have a self-interest in understanding these issues and in participating in altering European attitudes towards them. It is a very slow process. I can really think of no other. All I can say is that Europeans generally do have an interest but they are not yet aware of it, and therefore we need to make them aware of it. This conference is a small step towards accomplishing just that.





## 9. THE ROLE OF EUROPE WITH REGARD TO ISLAMIC MOVEMENTS

*Mohammad Abu-Rumman, Director of al-Ghad Daily-Jordan*

In my second lecture I will discuss again the role of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan politics, as well as the possibilities for the EU in dealing with such movements.

### ***Jordan and the Muslim Brotherhood***

When the Muslim Brotherhood participated in the government, there was a debate about whether they wanted to participate in the government or not.

One of leaders of the Eagle Brothers wrote a book forbidding the participation, but one of the Dove Brothers answered stressing the necessity of participation in order to accomplish their goals. Afterwards two new streams appeared inside Muslim Brotherhood that came forth from the two previous streams. The first of these new streams is the middle liner which consists of young leadership in the Muslim Brotherhood. The second one came into being after the leader of Hamas was expelled from Jordan in 1999. This stream sympathizes with Hamas and calls for its return. This concentration of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan wants to support the Palestinian cause.

These two main streams in the Muslim Brotherhood both accept democracy and multilateralism but their difference lies in the question whether the Muslim Brotherhood should be a movement that works according to the government's conditions or a movement connected to Hamas and other Islamic movements in general.

The moderate stream in Jordan consists mostly of Jordanians of Jordanian roots, but the second stream represents Jordanians of Palestinian roots and they sympathize with Hamas and Palestinian cause.

In the year 2002 elections took place and the stream that sympathizes with Hamas controlled the leadership of the Muslim Brotherhood. But after the success of Hamas, the middle stream gained back the control instead of Hamas sympathizers inside the Muslim Brotherhood. The reason for this is that this shift towards Hamas introduced

new questions: What is our role in Jordan? If Hamas has chosen the political form and constituted a government, should we keep concentrating ourselves on the Palestinian cause? Isn't it time now to concentrate on Jordanian affairs?

A few months after the new Muslim Brotherhood leadership installed itself, problems started to arise between them and the Jordanian government for many reasons. The first one was that the president of the Islamic Work Front was appointed. He is very close to Hamas and that caused the resentment of Jordanian security system. The second reason was that two deputies visited the condolences ceremony of al-Zarqawi, who is well known in Iraq. This raised the question whether the Muslim Brotherhood supports terrorist actions. This leads us to the final crisis between the Muslim Brotherhood and the government. In my opinion the regime has a great problem with the Muslim Brotherhood because in the past the relationship was built on the heritage of the Cold War (meaning alliances against nationalists and leftist movements), but after the war there was no new basis for a relationship between them. For example, what are now the common elements between the Muslim Brotherhood and the Government? The second cause is the fear of the Jordanian regime of the close relationship between the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas, especially after Hamas took power in Palestine. They fear that they might extend this stream to Jordanians and that may stimulate their appetite to govern themselves. The third cause is that the Jordanian regime thinks that the Muslim Brothers were able to build a government inside the Government. They have big social institutions, a political party with thousands of members, and universities.

After the State lost its economic role as result of privatization, there was a chance for the Muslim Brotherhood to occupy this huge social space. Therefore the regime seeks to limit their power once again. In return the Muslim Brotherhood holds a negative view of the regime. They believe the regime sympathizes with US and that it has good relations with Israel as well. The Muslim Brotherhood also believes they deserve far more political representation they have had up until now, and that is why they want to increase the space for political reform.

There are still two other points that are closely related to our debate, and I shall summarize them here. The first point regards the question whether the Muslim Brotherhood is a force that is in favor of democracy, or whether it is a force that hinders it.

On the level of their intellectual discourse the Muslim Brotherhood issued a book which represents their vision of political reform. This book shows that the Muslim Brotherhood has advanced a great deal in the theoretical and philosophical field, in that they accept multilateralism in all its political and ideological and religious forms and they accept a stabilized form of democracy as well. They also speak without restraint about civil and human rights, and they demand political and structural reforms in the regime. But in my view the problem lies in the gap between their theoretical acceptance of democracy and the political reality of the Muslim Brotherhood. Their public address is still far from reality and its conditions. They do not acknowledge the peace process in Israel but at the same time they do not present any alternative to the governing system, which economically depends on American aids. They refuse to improve the current situation and complain about poverty and unemployment, without offering any economic alternative to the current program. They speak about a Jordanian role against the American foreign policy but they do not explain how a small country can protect itself in this area. The discourse of the Muslim Brotherhood is still far from political reality, politically and idealistically; they are still unable to put their discourse in the frame of political movement.

Another problem lies in the fact that their rhetoric is very conservative. Even when they speak about democracy they do not provide deep Islamic juridical interpretations. They were the first to attack the daring ideological interpretation of Hassan Al Turrabi; the dominant ideological and political stream inside the Muslim Brotherhood is the conservative Salafite. This is a big problem, because there is no courage either in the interpretation nor in the Islamic renewal. If we compare them with the Justice and Development Party in Turkey or Morocco, we find the Muslim Brotherhood took a conservative stance in matters relating to ideological and juridical interpretations. Another problem is that the Muslim Brotherhood has alliances with the national and leftist ideology. However, the left in Jordan is not

like the left in Europe. They still believe in Marxist theory. Therefore, their attitude towards the US and European vision is an extremist one.

### ***The role of Europe***

What is the role Europe can possibly play in this framework? In short, I think that on the direct political level the EU and the main European countries should stress the difference between their policies and those of the US in the area. In my view the rigid image of the EU in the Arab world is different from the rigid image of US. The way people view the French and German role is somehow positive in comparison to that of the US, which supports Israel all the time. There is no trend of hostility to Europe like that towards American foreign policy. In my view Europe has to review its attitude towards Hamas and the blockade against the Hamas government. There is a difference between giving incentives to Hamas to go forward and giving the impression to the Arab people that we are against any Islamic movements participating in a government. An important question is: why does Europe object to an Hamas government and not against persons like Lieberman, who participates in the government of the Kadima Party and who is famous for his extremist and racist views?

I think that there is a huge strategic gap in the area, and Europe can play a great role here by introducing a moderate political vision in the relation with the Arab people and in resolving the Arab – Israeli conflict. Europe can also play a role in Iraq if it presents an adequate vision that can surpass the American stumbling. European civil society can issue reports about human rights in the area. These reports are effective in observing the violation of human rights and public freedom, in order to put pressure on Arab governments to continue the political reforms project. This is an important role that can be played by the European human rights and civil society organizations because the media plays an important role in the Arab area.

A final important point is that the EU can begin an official or unofficial dialogue with young groups in the Islamic movements and can have a real controversial dialogue with its leaders in order to correct the image these Islamic movements have of the European Union.

I believe that dialogue is the main and effective tool for understanding the conditions that produce Islamic movements in the area.

In conclusion, if we compare the Jordanian experience to that in some Arabic countries, we find that the best experience is that of the Justice and Development Party in Turkey as an Islamic liberal democratic party. It faithfully adopted Laicism in its political discourse and bears a close resemblance to the Christian Democratic parties in Europe. In the middle ground we find the Moroccan Justice and Development Party which has made good progress in political, pragmatic and ideological interpretation while the Muslim Brotherhood movements in Jordan, Egypt and some other Arabic countries still need a lot of support. Therefore, either we accept Islamic political movements that have moderate political discourse and turn in the direction of pragmatics, or we face broken-down and worn-out regimes that produces Islamic extremities like Al-Qaeda, al-Zarqawi and Bin-Laden groups. These regimes export the internal crisis inside their regimes to western regimes. Europe has to choose which stream it wants to deal with; whether it wants to deal with people like Oerdagan, Saadeldien Othmani or Tariq Ramadan, or with al-Zarqawi, Bin-Laden and similar movements.



## 10. CONCLUSION

*Jan Schoonenboom, Council member WRR*

Islam is a hot topic, and therefore anything that can be labeled as Islamic is news. As Joris Luyendijk explained: the image of Islam as a religion related to violence, intolerance and all those other qualifications, is reproduced again and again. Joris gave us a very disturbing message, and we now know that there are only a few correcting mechanisms. It was pointed out that politicians should use the anthropological enterprises more. This should be the case, but it means asking a lot from politicians.

That is why we are living in a very dangerous world, in which it is a fact that the information about Islamic activism is not only partially selective, but also fundamentally biased. The mechanisms in this selective process are systemic mechanisms and they frame our mindset on a daily basis, and we are almost unconscious of the process that we are subjected to. That is the disturbing news. It is also disturbing because as a result of this process many people now think that Islam represents a danger. This is not only the case in the Netherlands, but in the rest of Europe as well. It is another result of many issues that have nothing to do with Islam but with injustice, but which are framed as Islamic. Then there is another result: because this image of Islamic activism being reproduced time and again, we are inclined to think that we are on the positive side of the line. The Islamic world is the aggressor, and we are defending ourselves. We have human rights, we have democracy, and unfortunately the Islamic world does not. That is what is reproduced and what is influencing our mindset. The question is whether there is a recipe to solve this. In my opinion there is no recipe in the short term. There might be a recipe in the long term. We must not fool ourselves into thinking that this situation can be changed overnight.

We agreed that many Islamic movements have undergone an enormous transformation or metamorphosis. Even Francis Fukuyama has said that there has been a change from martyrs to mayors. Even

though this change has almost gone unnoticed, it has become commonplace now. We all see that there have been enormous changes in the attitude of Islamic movements. Therefore the message of our report is accepted to a certain extent and by a certain audience. Unfortunately, the audience which believes otherwise has not been represented here. Therefore trying to persuade the people who hold the other position is difficult, and it remains a task for all of us in the oncoming period. Acknowledging that this change had taken place is not to send a message to Muslim countries but to send a message to our own leaders in Europe. In my opinion it has been shown that there are many points of reference, and many agree with this. If Europe really would want to follow up the recommendations to engage with these movements, then that would be a very important message. It is a message which we should repeat time and again, because there is a great amount of reluctance to accept it.

One thing we have learned as well is that the movements are not the problem. There are of course problematic movements, but we should realize that the problem lies with us and our reluctance to perceive it properly. The securitization of our relationship with the Islamic world is an enormous problem. The West is deeply involved in these negative events and developments in Muslim countries and if we recognize that, we can also change our behavior, hopefully not too late. This leads to the question: what can and should Europe do? Were the comments about the WRR-report being wishful thinking correct? I do not think that the attitude of trying to engage with these Islamic movements is wishful thinking or too optimistic. It is a matter of realpolitik. We should be aware that Europe really has an enormous stake in trying to engage with the Islamic activism: we have 12 million Muslims within European borders, and Europe is surrounded by many Muslim countries. These countries are very autocratic, with rapidly growing populations, and with economies which are unable to provide for these growing populations. There is the example of Turkey, for instance. If and when Turkey becomes a member of the EU, Iraq becomes our neighbor, and the Middle East is almost the Eastern part of the West. Therefore we should recognize this changing geographical, geopolitical situation. Europe is surrounded by Muslims and a lot of Muslims are living inside its borders. This means



that Europe is very vulnerable for radicalization, and we have an enormous stake in this matter. It is not a matter of wishful thinking, or of being optimistic, it is a matter of having to act on it. We must act, otherwise we are going into a very negative and dangerous future. The question is again whether Europe is able to do this, and who should do this. What should our politicians do, and what role is the European Union taking on? What are they discussing every day and night in all the meetings that they are obliged to attend? My answer is: almost nothing.

Are there other actors which should take the lead? It is very convincing to hear that outside pressure might help. I am afraid that the only way to get Europe to act is when there is a combination of outside pressure and inside pressure to act from the population, NGOs and us. It struck us as authors of this report that there is an enormous enthusiasm among NGOs, and among networks. This enthusiasm should be utilized and should be turned into a product. Nobody knows whether this is even possible, but we have to try. When we attended a conference in Istanbul where all the Islamic and Muslim countries were represented alongside the European Union, there was a collective cry of almost all Islamic countries: 'Europe, stand up. Let your voice be heard. We need an alternative'. The lesson of recent history is that democracy cannot be imposed and that democratization should be an indigenous process. But at the same time we must see when this process is taking place. Europe does have the ability and the capacity to see it. It no longer has a history of imposing democracy and human rights, but there is a collective cry for Europe to act in this dangerous world.

When we see how reluctant the European leaders are, it is our responsibility, wherever we work, to exert pressure on our governments to act and to stand up. We must also be aware of the fact that it is a long-term process. It takes a whole series of initiatives, year after year, and we must not expect overnight successes. However, it is a responsibility of all of us, and I urge all of us to take that responsibility.



## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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Mohammad Abu-Rumman has been the director of al-Ghad Daily-Jordan since 2004. Before he was committed as director to the Unit of the Islamic Movement/al-Umma Studies Center in Jordan and as freelance journalist for several Arabic newspapers. He is a specialist in the field of Islamic movements and US policy toward Middle East. Abu-Rumman wrote several books. His latest book *Political Change in Abi al-A'la al-Maoudodi's Thought* was published in 2003.

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Wim van de Donk studied Political Science and Public Administration at the Radboud University Nijmegen. In 1997, at the Radboud University Nijmegen, he obtained with credit his doctorate, with the thesis *De arena in schema. Een verkenning van de betekenis van informatisering voor beleid en politiek inzake de verdeling van middelen onder verzorgingshuizen*. For this thesis he received in 1998 the G.A. van Poelje-yearprize of the Vereniging voor Bestuurskunde. He is professor Social Public Administration at the Faculty of Law at the Tilburg School of Politics & Public Administration, University of Tilburg. As of January 2003 he was appointed to the Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR), where he is engaged in the religion project. As of September 2004 he is Chairman of the Council.

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Sadik Harchaoui studied Law at the University of Utrecht, specialising in Criminal and Civil Law. From 1998 onwards he has been affiliated to the District Court at Zwolle, working as a trainee Officer of Justice. He started as a deputy public prosecutor for the Zwolle-Lelystad District Court in June 2000. Besides his judicial work, Harchaoui has since 1997 been employed at the Willem Pompe Institute, Department of Criminology, Utrecht University, as a researcher and teacher. Harchaoui is a board member of various NGOs. He is co-author and editor of many scientific articles and books on a variety of

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Bertus Hendriks is a Dutch journalist and Middle East expert. He has worked as a teacher of Middle Eastern studies at the University of Amsterdam and has lived for a year in the Egyptian capital Cairo before he started working for the Radio Nederland Wereldroep as head of the Arabian department, a job he still holds. His area of expertise consists of the entire Middle East, including the Maghreb states. Hendriks is often a guest of the Dutch NOS news and the current affairs program NOVA to give a further explanation of what is happening in the Middle East at that time.

In the past he has also been the manager of the Dutch Palestine Committee.

### **George Joffé**

George Joffé comes from England, where he works as a visiting professor at King's College in London. He is also attached to the Center of International Studies of Cambridge University. He used to be deputy director and director of studies of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House until 2000, and he is researching the transnational risk in the Mediterranean, in legal systems and migrant communities and Euro-American relations. Last but not least, he is an associate fellow of the Middle East and North African program at the Royal United Service Institute, and a member of Instituto Estudos Estratégicos e Internacionais in Lisbon where he manages the EUROMESCO network.

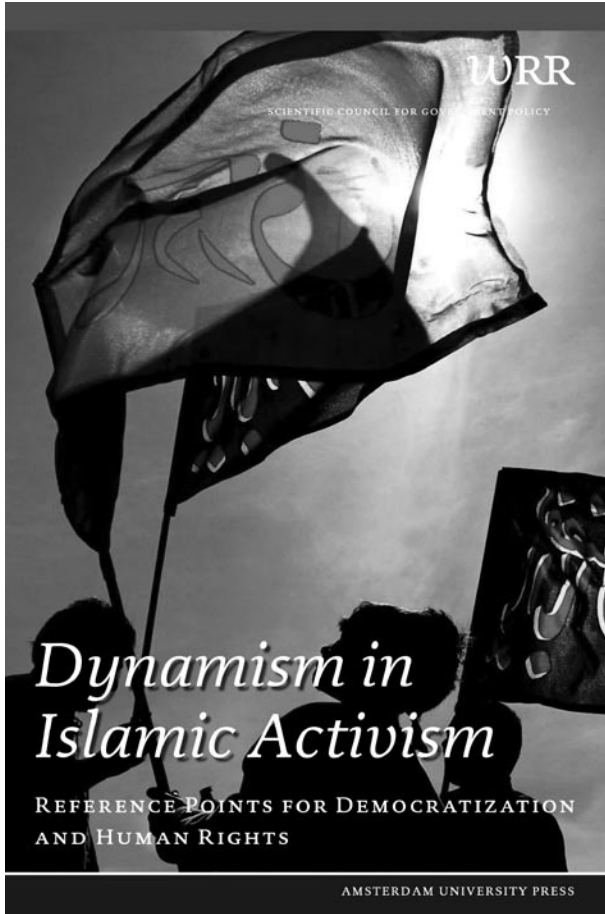
### **Joris Luyendijk**

Joris Luyendijk was a correspondent in the Middle East (Cairo, Beirut and East-Jerusalem) for five years, where he worked for the Volkskrant, NRC Handelsblad, Radio 1 news and NOS news. Luyendijk has written several books, of which the latest *Het zijn net mensen* was

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### **Jan Schoonenboom**

Jan Schoonenboom (1942) studied Social Science at the University of Groningen. From 1967-1973 he worked at the ministry of Social Affairs and Health. Since 1973 he works for the Scientific Council for Government Policy as member of the academic staff and in 2005 he was appointed member of the Council. The main themes were emancipation of women, development of values and norms, mass media, enlargement of the European Union, development aid, environmental policy, durability and recently the international development of political Islam. In 2004, under his guidance, the report *Europe, Turkey and the Islam* was published. From 1985 till 1995 he was professor Toekomstverkenningen en Beleid at the Wageningen University and Researchcenter. His oration was titled *Tussen utopie en dystopie*. In 1993 he was appointed Officier in de Orde van Oranje Nassau.



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