

2-1-2014

An Examination of Western Representation of the Muslim Brotherhood Through Various Media Outlets, Popular Literature and How has Recent History and Outside Influences Affected the Viewpoint Presented to the Public?

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An Examination of Western Representation of the Muslim Brotherhood
Through Various Media Outlets, Popular Literature and
How has Recent History and Outside Influences Affected the Viewpoint Presented to the Public?

By

Lynn Perkins

A master's thesis submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Middle Eastern Studies in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts,
The City University of New York

2014

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This manuscript has been read and accepted by the Graduate Faculty in Middle Eastern Studies in satisfaction of the requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

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Abstract

An Examination of Western Representation of the Muslim Brotherhood
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Adviser: Mucahit Bilici

This research focuses on the Western media coverage of the rise to power of the Muslim Brotherhood which occurred after the fall of former president Hosni Mubarak in February of 2011 as a result of the Egyptian Revolution. Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman's propaganda model that they established in their work *Manufactured Consent* is used to analyze the coverage used for this paper. After the propaganda model is explained the research goes into the historical background over the past forty years that has influenced the way Western media covers current events in the Middle East. Historical Events highlighted are the Iranian revolution, the siege of the Grand Mosque in Mecca, The assassination of President Anwar Sadat of Egypt, the marine barracks bombings in Beirut, the Israeli/Palestinian conflict and lastly the 9/11 attacks in the United States. With the theories purposed by Chomsky and Herman and the historical background established, the examination of the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood begins. This research shows that quite often history is altered in order to obtain the public support of the official stance of the Western powers, with the United States being the primary focus of this research. This public support is then used to justify whatever action or inaction taken by the West towards the Middle East concerning the events being reported upon.

Table of Contents

1. Introduction	1
2. Covering the Decline of American Middle East Foreign Policy and the Rise of Islamization	12
a. Iranian Revolution	13
b. Attack on the Grand Mosque of Mecca	17
c. Assassination in Egypt	20
d. Bombings in Beirut	24
e. 9/11	30
3. Perspectives of the Muslim Brotherhood from the Beginning of the Revolution, Until the election of President Morsi.	33
4. Conclusion	44
5. Bibliography	49

On June 24, 2012 I had the good fortune of being in Tahrir Square, the heart of the Egyptian capital of Cairo. Two hours prior, Mohamed Morsi, a member of the Muslim Brotherhood, had been announced as the first freely elected president of Egypt. This in spite having the difficult task of competing with Ahd Shafic, who had been the last Prime Minister under deposed leader Hosni Mubarak. Despite his ties to Mubarak, Egypt was deeply divided over the revolution and hesitant to install an Islamic party into power after years of mainly secular rule. Standing in the midst of jubilation there was still an air of uncertainty. An Egyptian reveler queried me if the United States would recognize the election of Morsi. Also, and more interestingly to me, he asked if the American people would accept an Egyptian government ruled by the Muslim Brotherhood.

The tone of the revolution was set by the secular youths gathered in the square. The reality after the fall of Mubarak was that the Muslim Brotherhood would be the only group with the organization and support to build a viable party for any national election. A long time ally to the United States was gone. Nonetheless the White House released the statement. "We believe in the importance of the new Egyptian government upholding universal values, and respecting the rights of all Egyptian citizens -- including women and religious minorities such as Coptic Christians."¹ Though the interim government during the bulk of the Egyptian revolution was controlled by the military council, the U.S. had kept its distance, as it was more comfortable with the council in power before the election to buy time for the secular movements to organize into viable political parties. Then a second call was made by the Obama administration to the

¹Kirkpatrick, David W. "Named Egypt's Winner, Islamist Makes History" The New York Times, June 25, 2012

Egyptian Military Council on the day of the inauguration asking them to hand over power to ensure a peaceful and democratic transition.

This inquiry in Tahrir Square leads one to contemplate what Americans knew about Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood and how they came about this information. This also led me to question, what are the intentions behind the various forms of media which people choose to stay informed on news? To investigate what the average American might know of the Muslim Brotherhood I read articles from various national newspapers, respected online journals and watched multitudes of news specials and documentaries. When researching what the intentions were behind the message various media outlets were presenting I looked into the sources these outlets used such as academic journals produced by think tanks such as the Council on Foreign Relations and the Middle East Forum. I also looked into the official United States Government responses to events and the reports given by correspondents on the ground in the Middle East. Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman presented the theoretical framework I use to examine these outlets in their work, *Manufacturing Consent*. I will first present the framework of Chomsky's critique of mass media and the outlines used to investigate any agenda's behind their reporting. From there I will show the coverage of events in the Middle East over the last forty years, which has led to the current perspective used by the mass media outlets. Lastly I will go over the coverage of the Muslim Brotherhood by the American media outlets from the beginnings of the Egyptian Revolution until the election of Mohamed Morsi, who was a long standing member of the Brotherhood.

Back to the question of how the American people would react to the Muslim Brotherhood winning the presidency and what their feelings were of the brotherhood. To address this must first examine how Americans receive news, and how that news is filtered and produced. Noam

Chomsky, a linguistic professor based at M.I.T., has become a forerunner in this study of media manipulation with his 1988 book *Manufacturing Consent* which was co-authored by Edward S. Herman. Chomsky and Herman propose that, in order to control public opinion, a predominant portion of news and editorial opinion in the United States and other leading Western nations is filtered through what they call the “Propaganda Model.” This propaganda model consists of five key contributors to the heavy influence that leading corporations, government and their bureaucracies have over the mass media. Before going into the filters in Chomsky’s propaganda model, let us review the definition of mass media that he is using.

“The mass media serve as a system of communicating messages and symbols to the general populace. It is their function to amuse, entertain, and inform, and to inculcate individuals with the values, beliefs, and codes of behavior that will integrate them into the institutional structures of the larger society. In a world of concentrated wealth and major conflicts of class interest, to fulfill this role requires systematic propaganda.”²

The first filter in the propaganda model is the size, ownership, and profit orientation of a media outlet. Given that the majority of mass media outlets are for-profit companies that are often owned by even larger corporate conglomerates that have a wide array of interests, with a prime example being the ownership of N.B.C. by General Electric, there is heavy pressure to maintain profit margins for these corporations. This combined with the high production costs further insures compliance with the economic and political interests of the larger ownership group.

The second filter is the advertising license to do business. While the majority of mass

² Edward S Herman & Noam Chomsky. “Manufacturing Consent.” Pantheon Books, 2011-06-22. iBooks.

media outlets revenue comes through advertising, others (P.B.S., N.P.R.) depend on private money from viewers and listeners and large government grants. One major exception would be the B.B.C. which receives major funds from the British parliament and advertising from abroad. This of course raises concerns that the B.B.C. is obligated to not only cater to outside advertising interests, but also that of the British government in order to maintain their funding. In both instances however, ultimately to cover the costs of production and provide profits for the parent organization, major media organizations are often pressured to take steps that will not offend their advertisers and risk losing vital sources of revenue.

The third filter in the model is the sourcing of mass media news. Chomsky sites the *New York Times*' long desire to be the authority on news in the United States and thus the writers of history. Many smaller markets do not have the operating budget of the larger national media outlets, and are forced to receive information second hand, many times reprinting the stories the larger market reports. Another cost effective way of obtaining information for the news reports comes from basing reporters in areas where information is readily available, such as the White House pressroom, or military press briefings during armed conflicts. All of these equal a universal and controlled message to be spread throughout a multitude of channels.

The fourth filter is the flack and enforcers. This involves the pressure put on mass media outlets when a story strays from the approved message that appeals to the corporate and government's interests. Pressure comes in a variety of methods such as direct public statements denying these stories, to the powerful think tanks that are set up by combinations of journalistic, business, academic and government individuals and organizations with a like-minded agenda, who actively work to discredit reporters or institutions that contradict their philosophy.

The fifth and last filter in the propaganda model has been replaced since the original

publication of *Manufacturing Consent*. Anti-Communism is now Anti-Terrorism, with the fall of the Soviet Union and the ending of the cold war. Communism and now terrorism are the tools of ingraining fear of “the other” in the minds of the populace. Without fear, the desire to fight or tolerate fighting to ensure American interests when they are challenged in far reaching parts of the world is difficult if not impossible to maintain.

Herman and Chomsky address the possible arguments against his propaganda model in their book and are also brought by the filmmakers in the subsequent documentary. The first being that a degree of control is needed to influence the public for the betterment of society and secondly that freedom of speech is alive and well and journalists are not filtered through a corporate and government filter. Chomsky declares these points are outdated in the documentary *Manufactured Consent: Noam Chomsky and the Media*. After the 17th century English Revolution criticizing the radical pro-democracy movements at the time stated “they have made the people thereby so curious and so arrogant that they will never find humility enough to submit to civil rule,” further stating, “democracy is a game for the educated elites, not for the ignorant masses who have to be marginalized into submission. The common interests elude the general public.”³ Although manipulating facts to mold public opinion are dubious in any time period, the increasing of literacy in modern times and the advent of greater technologies to transmit information the instant it happens to any person who seeks it has potentially allowed the possibility of larger portions of the population to make informed decisions for the betterment of all without filters clouding the truth. In fact however, these filters have gone against the common interests of the general public, often favoring the interests of the elites who control the process.

The other argument against Chomsky’s model is the journalistic community’s call for

³ Chomsky, Noam. *Manufacturing Consent - Noam Chomsky and the Media*. YouTube. Directors: Mark Achbar, Peter Wintonick. New York: Zeitgeist Films, 1993.

freedom of speech and their claims of reporting stories that expose the wrongful actions of the government or large corporations. In response Chomsky and Herman state “We believe that what journalists do, what they see as newsworthy, and what they take for granted as premises of their work are frequently well explained by the incentives, pressures, and constraints incorporated into such a structural analysis.”⁴ Chomsky believes that there has always been a fringe portion of the media that is allowed to operate outside of the propaganda model to maintain the veil of free speech but also often marginalized and thus unheard in the wider community.

Chomsky and Herman’s model, which I will be using in my examination of media, categorizes mass media in two overarching categories: those that ask questions to contradict the message being put forth and secondly those that ask questions which fall in line with government and corporate agendas and this latter category can be divided into further subcategories; the liberal/Whig perspective and a conservative perspective. The former category, the questioning of policy and the desire to provide the full story of American actions and agendas to the general populace is often, as mentioned before, marginalized to the point of irrelevance. It’s the two subdivisions of the last category that I would like to examine further both here and apply through the examination of articles throughout the piece.

The first of the subdivisions, the moderate/Whig approach, or a high diplomatic approach, stresses progress and liberalism is inevitable. Going after what interferes with this natural progression and how to ensure the steady progress towards modernization is the ultimate focus of this viewpoint. Imposing Western ideals of what modernization should be is a primary fault in this school of approach. Drawing selectively from Western historical events to impose influence over perceptions of current and future events, they conveniently deny or ignore other detrimental

⁴ Edward S Herman & Noam Chomsky. “Manufacturing Consent.” Pantheon Books, 2011-06-22. iBooks.

historical events that were perpetrated by the West. The desire to implement the “proven” democratic free market model of governance into the Middle East states and the call to better the status of the local population and states becoming positive and active members in the global world a chief characteristic of the platform of this philosophy, although we have seen many examples of the human rights aspect being ignored. The Council on Foreign Relations is the leading think-tank in this mode of thought and also publishes its own journal *Foreign Affairs*.

The second of the subdivisions, the right wing, uses conservative philosophy to influence the controlled perceptions shaped through the media. This group is most guilty in what Edward Said characterized as “the malicious generalizations about Islam have become the last acceptable form of denigration of foreign culture in the West; What is said about the Muslim mind, or character, or religion, or culture as a whole cannot now be said in mainstream discussion about Africans, Jews, other Orientals, or Asians.”⁵ A leading author in this conservative perception of the Middle East is Bernard Lewis. Lewis’ argument in an article entitled *The Roots of Muslim Rage* is that due to the lessons learned in the Western world on the need for a secular government, the West is destined to be in conflict with Islam, which is a religion that has the formations of state intertwined in its belief systems. Lewis sites a variety of historical examples to back up his claim that Islam is incapable of and unwilling to end its centuries old conflict with the Western world, though his examples leave out much of the story in each incident. It began with the advent of Islam, in the seventh century, and has virtually continued to the present day.⁶ Lewis then provides a brief history of conflicts with West against the Muslim world, stating “The

⁵Said, Edward W. *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World* (New York: First Vintage Books, 1981)

⁶ Lewis, Bernard. *The Roots of Muslim Rage*. The Atlantic Monthly, Boston, Massachusetts September, 1990. <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1990/09/the-roots-of-muslim-rage/304643/>

French have left Algeria, the British have left Egypt, the Western oil companies have left their oil wells, the westernizing Shah has left Iran—yet the generalized resentment of the fundamentalists and other extremists against the West and its friends remains and grows and is not appeased.”⁷

This leads the reader to believe that the Western powers have taken the necessary steps to appease the Muslim world and yet the Fundamentalist movement will continue to find fault and call for violence against the West. By labeling it as the West vs. Islam or against extremists it ignores and trivializes all other factors that have led to conflicts between Western powers and governments that have majority Muslim populations. Looking into all the examples you see two in the case of Algeria and Egypt where violent clashes were needed to push out the colonial powers of France and Britain. The reclaiming of the oil fields from the West was a long hard fight that still has the West intervening in the region to ensure its thirst for oil is fulfilled, for example the U.S. intervention during the first Gulf War in order to protect a valuable oil supplier, Kuwait. And lastly, yes the Shah is gone, but he was propped up by the West, reinstated as the Iranian supreme leader when the democratically elected Mosaddeq moved to nationalize Iran oil. Soon after being reinstated, the Shah launched the White Revolution, which was proclaimed as a westernization program by the Shah, but was more a way to legitimize the Pahlavi dynasty by stripping powers from his chief rivals most notably the clergy and the landlords. Lastly, Lewis argues that it is the West that received an undue amount of anger, when the Soviet Union had also committed various crimes against the Middle East. Lewis seems to overlook the equally anti Soviet chants of “Godless Marxists.” that Khomeini proclaimed during the revolution.

A leading work that articulates this perception would be the *Clash of Civilizations* by Samuel P. Huntington. Huntington’s main argument is, with the fall of the Soviet Union and the

⁷ Lewis, Bernard. *The Roots of Muslim Rage*. The Atlantic Monthly, Boston, Massachusetts September, 1990. <http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1990/09/the-roots-of-muslim-rage/304643/>

ending of the cold war, the new conflicts of the future will be cultural, between the prominent civilizations of the world. Huntington argues these conflicts have been around for much of world history, and the nationalist conflicts of the 19th and 20th century were only a temporary alteration of this historical track. As Huntington states “With the end of the Cold War, international politics moves out of its Western phase, and its centerpiece becomes the interaction between the West and non-Western civilizations and among non-Western civilizations.”⁸

Professor Juan Cole responds to this line of thought, stating: “But when you hear people talking about lumping all these issues together; when you hear them obliterating distinctions and using black-and-white rhetoric; when you hear them talk of existential threats, and above all when you see that they are convinced that small movements that they hate are likely to have an immediate and revolutionary impact, then you should be afraid, be very afraid. That is when extremism learns to hate and turns to violence.”⁹ The neoconservative approach capitalizes on the use of fear to pursue its agenda. By ignoring the causes of events, this approach focuses on the drama of the events and simplifies the situation into ideas of pure good and evil. With no shortage of characters to vilify in the region, this approach usually calls for military action to ensure the interests of the West. “The white Man’s bourdon”¹⁰ of having to save the Middle Easterners from themselves was further justification for action, with the Bush doctrine as a prime example, which speculated that by introducing democracy into the region, it would spread like wild fire. The government established in Iraq after the U.S. invasion in 2003 and the 2006 elections held in Palestine after heavy pressure from the United States are examples of the

⁸ Huntington, Sam. *The Clash of Civilizations?* Foreign Affairs; Summer 1993; 72, 3; ABI/INFORM Global pg. 22uel P

⁹Cole, Juan. *When Extremism Learns to Blow things Up* Informed Comment THOUGHTS ON THE MIDDLE EAST, HISTORY AND RELIGION 07/24/2011
<http://www.juancole.com/2011/07/when-extremism-learns-to-blow-things-up.html>

¹⁰ A poem of the same name which was written by Rudyard Kipling which was highly critical of the U.S. imperialist actions regarding the Philippians and questioned the motivations behind these aspirations.

doctrine put into action. Both examples have, in the long run, turned out to be failures for the US in varying degrees, with Hamas achieving victory in Palestine and Iraq still highly unstable, they are still both examples of direct US intervention by imposing Western ideals for the local populations.

As with many current examinations of the Middle East, my thesis takes its origins from the Arab Spring of 2011. Beginning January 25th, 2011, the Egyptian people began protesting the government of Hosni Mubarak after being inspired by a similar revolution in Tunisia. On February 11, after sustained mass protests, not only in Tahrir Square but also throughout Egypt, the vice president announced the handing of control over to the military council, less than three weeks after the revolution.

With the overthrow of Hosni Mubarak, Egypt's president of more than 30 years, the Muslim Brotherhood was thrust into the international spotlight. The moment Mubarak stepped down, speculation spread across Egypt and the world of the intentions of the Muslim Brotherhood, Egypt's largest and best organized opposition group. While at first maintaining that it would stay out of the elections, the Brotherhood quickly backed off this position and The Freedom and Justice Party was formed as the political party representing the interests of the Brotherhood. With a decisive win of the majority of the parliamentary seats and taking a narrow victory in the presidential elections, concerns over what Egypt would become under the Muslim Brotherhood rule were raised by outside observers such as if Islamic Law, or Shari'a, would become the rule of law in Egypt, that the treaty with Israel would be thrown out and that relations with the West would disincarnate. Of course, there is a broad spectrum of opinions on this issue, but more concerning is how these opinions are formed, and where the various media

outlets get their information and how this information is interpreted to suit the overall worldview of the media outlet doing the reporting.

First, let's examine the history of US foreign policy in the Middle East over the past forty years, which I argue is the period of time that most defines US attitudes towards the Middle East. This along with Chomsky and Herman's propaganda model will help us properly investigate the coverage of the rise to power of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Islam as a whole by American and Western media outlets.

Covering the Decline of American Middle East Foreign Policy and the Rise of Islamization

United States foreign policy in the Middle East since the end of World War II, is stated perfectly by Joel Hirst, in his article *The Wrong Side of History* “We claim to be the guarantors of freedom in the world, and yet we make our places in the beds of some of the world's most brutal tyrants. We claim to support freedom of religion and watch converts to Christianity executed. We claim to defend women's rights and sit idly by while women are stoned to death. We do this because we are afraid of the alternative.”¹¹ The alternative he speaks of is the Islamic revolution that was envisioned and executed by the Ayatollah Khomeini. Due to Iran’s anti-western rhetoric and desire eliminate American influence with its unbalanced economic ties, there was fear from the U.S. that other countries in the region would follow suit. As a result the United States would support leadership in countries that were clearly tyrannical and unjust towards their people but sympathetic towards U.S. interests and this became the standard procedure in US relations with its dwindling Middle East allies.

Throughout this next section I will show how common Western perceptions of the Middle East are intertwined with a slow decline in successful foreign policy over the last 40 years. The loss of key allies in the region, such as Iran before the 1979 revolution and the failure of bringing about any successful resolution concerning the Israeli/ Palestinian conflict are just two examples of Western foreign policy failures. By maintaining an unflinching agenda that is accurately articulated by Mr. Hirst and that is shown repeatedly in the examples below, we have strayed from the principles that we hold ourselves to, and destroyed America’s reputation in a region

¹¹Hirst, Joel D. “*The Wrong Side of History*” Huffington Post, January 28, 2011
<http://www.cfr.org/egypt/wrong-side-history/p23925>

striving for answers of how to adapt to modernization, and even more fundamentally, how to set up a functioning state.

Many of the modern Middle Eastern states have only recently achieved their independence from Western powers in the last 70 years, and before Western control, various empires had enjoyed control of the region for hundreds of years. The carving up of the modern Middle Eastern states was dictated by the European colonial powers after the fall of the Ottomans, and was done to meet the needs of the exiting colonial powers, and not for the good of the people in the region. National identities, as defined by Benedict Anderson as “an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign.”¹² Anderson states that nationalism came about as a result of the French revolution and the fall of the European monarchies. Nationalism did not emerge for many people of people and leaders in the region until the last years of the Ottoman Empire and in defiance of Western colonization, which occurred in much of the lands formally controlled by the Ottomans. When it became difficult for the Colonial powers to maintain direct control over their former Ottoman lands, they set up Western-modeled states that maintained the interests of the Western powers, such as the Francophile Maronite Christian dominated government in Lebanon, and the Shah in Iran after being placed back in power due to a coup d’état arranged by the United States. The rise of political and extremist Islam is in reaction to the control of the Western powers and the Western modeled states they left in their wake. The following events are key to Western perceptions towards current and future events in the Middle East and have profoundly affected Western attitudes towards Islam.

The unpredictable outcomes of the Iranian Revolution are apparent in hindsight, but at the time these uncertainties also led to false assumptions of the Shah’s control of Iran in the latter

¹² Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities.* Verso, 2011-02-01. iBooks

stages of the revolution. Since the 1953 coup d'état that ousted the populist Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh and reinstated Reza Shah to power the media in the United States maintained favorable headlines on the Shah which helped justify the aid coming from the United States and vaulting the Shah into the position of the United States chief ally in the Middle East. Headlines run in the months after the Shah returned to power declared "New Regime in Iran Opens War on Reds: Prince is Arrested" and "Iranian Red Doomed" showed Iran's commitment to U.S. interests in the cold war with the Soviet Union. Five years after the Mosaddegh incident, and after reports surfaced in Soviet Union publications, the Shah proclaimed to the world in a visit to London "In my country, I am proud to say, truly 99% of the people do not wish to change the way they are living."¹³

In an article published in 1975 for the *New York Times* on the changing culture of Iran, Eric Pace brings up the many positives of the rising oil prices on Iranian society. With the over \$2 billion monthly revenues in oil Iran was earning Price tells us in his article that the Shah had planned to spend \$80 billion in improvements such as schools and infrastructure projects.¹⁴ The only negatives in of this economic boom and westernization mentioned in Price's article are the deterioration of Iranian cultural identity to western culture and technology. The piece ignores the income disparity caused by the oil revenues and how many of the westernization programs instituted by the Shah were not only to modernize Iran, but also to centralize power away from traditional power centers such as the clergy and the Bazaar.

In the winter 1978 edition of *Foreign Affairs*, James Bill wrote a piece that for the most part praised the Shah and his leadership, and hardly questioned the Shah's ability to regain

¹³ *Shah of Iran denies possibility of a revolt against his regime* The New, York Times. (1959, May 09)

¹⁴ Pace, Eric. *A changing Iran wonders whether the gain will exceed the loss*. The New, York Times. (1975, Jan 16).

control of his country. First, he reaffirmed the Shah's importance to the West, stating, "American opinion leaders have long admired the sturdy consistency with which Iran has maintained its orderly existence and is a reliable partner client state upon which to rest U.S. political and economic interests."¹⁵ Bill goes further with his positive review of the Shah's past leadership and how this would help him maintain his power and maintain stability. Though advising the Shah to move further towards democracy, never is it suggested that the Shah step down from power. The message of stability was a significant motivation in how events were reported by the Carter administration and publications friendly towards American leadership. The United States had already experienced how actions in the Middle East could directly affect them with the energy crisis of the early 1970's which was a direct result of the 1973 Arab-Israeli war and the Middle East oil producing states boycott of the U.S. for its support of Israel. The thought of losing such a key partner in the region, and a crucial supplier of oil, was a scary thought, but in the beginnings of the revolution it was not Islam they believed would take power. The influence of the Soviet Union worried the U.S. policy makers and media the most. When the populist, anti-American slogans of Khomeini began to hit the airwaves in the West, such as "the United States is the head of the imperialist serpent" and accusing the international corporations of "looting Iran's resources,"¹⁶ the Shah made a last grasp for more American support, labeling Khomeini and his followers Islamic-Socialism.

"The Shah left Iran, which he has ruled for 37 years. Shah Mohammed Riza Pahlevi termed his departure an extended vacation, but it is more likely to be a long and perhaps permanent exile. He left aboard a royal jet aircraft after a year of demonstrations and crippling strikes aimed at ousting him. The demonstrators denounced the arbitrary way in which he pressed his ambitious industrialization programs, corruption in ruling circles

¹⁵ Bill, James A. "Iran and the Crisis of '78" *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 57, No. 2 (Winter, 1978), Pg. 323

¹⁶ Rouleau, Eric *Khmeini's Iran*, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 59, No. 1 (Fall 1980)

and harsh measures used to suppress opposition from religious and liberal political groups.”¹⁷

“Major newspapers such as *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *Wall Street Journal* have been especially weak in their reporting on Iran, misrepresenting the nature and depth of the opposition of the Shah.”¹⁸ The shock of the Shah falling was a devastating loss in American foreign policy, and further drastically affected American and Western people by causing a second energy crisis in a 10-year period. Finding fault for this was at top priority.

“An overwhelming victory was declared by Ayatollah Khomeini In the referendum proposing that Iran became an Islamic republic, and he announced that April 1st was the ‘first day of a Government of God.’ Meanwhile, disturbances continued among ethnic minorities who want self-rule rather than a central Government.”¹⁹

In an article entitled *Khomeini's Iran*, Eric Rouleau was highly critical of past actions against Iran by the U.S. such as the 1953 coup d'état which the C.I.A. aided the Shah's military in removing populist Prime Minister Mosaddegh who wished to nationalize the oil industry. This critique lay in sharp contrast to James Bill's article published less than a year earlier. Rouleau's piece went further on to criticize the domestic reforms of the Shah, and showed how these failed domestic plans and the Shah's close ties with the U.S. were given as justifiable reasons for the overthrow of the Shah. The piece focused on American mistakes in its earlier dealings with Iran, thereby relieving President Jimmy Carter of sole blame.

¹⁷ News Summary: The Shah of Iran International National Metropolitan New York Times (1923-Current file); Jan 17, 1979;

¹⁸ Bill, James A. Pg. 324

¹⁹News Summary: Nuclear Plant International National Metropolitan New York Times (1923-Current file); Apr 2, 1979;

The roots of American perceptions of the Middle East and Islam are planted in the Iranian Revolution, also referred to as the Islamic Revolution. Although Islamic organizations had participated in politics before, most notably the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Islamic extremism had appeared with some factions of the PLO, the Iranian revolution represented the first success of Islam overthrowing a repressive autocrat, and using modern political ideas intertwined with Islamic history and philosophy.

“The American Embassy in Teheran was seized by students who reportedly took as hostages 100 employees, mostly Americans. They vowed to occupy the building until the Shah, a cancer patient in a New York Hospital, was returned to Iran to face trial. The students were Moslems, and their occupation of the embassy was said to have the support of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.”²⁰

Just two years earlier Iran had been one of the United State’s closest allies. As a key component of the Nixon Doctrine, whose goal was to prevent U.S. policing of far-flung regions through the world, Iran was used in proxy to maintain stability in the Middle East. Iran’s willing and active participation in Nixon’s doctrine however further angered the left and the Shi’a clergy. The effect of the Iranian hostage crisis is the desired effect of extremist groups on both sides.

Attack on the Grand Mosque of Mecca

“An attack by fundamentalist Muslims believed to be from Iran was made on the Grand Mosque in Mecca, according to American officials. They said that the band had seized Islam's holiest shrine and fought off Saudi Arabian troops for several hours

²⁰ News Summary: International National Metropolitan New York Times (1923-Current file); Nov 5, 1979

before relinquishing control of the mosque. An unconfirmed report said that an Imam of Mecca, a Moslem leader, was killed in the crossfire. [AI: 4-5.]”²¹

Given the events of the previous year in Iran, the hostage crisis and Khomeini's call for an Islamic Revolution to spread across the region, Iran was quickly assumed to be responsible for events at the Grand Mosque. When news finally released by the Saudi Interior Minister Prince Nayef, stating that the occupiers were Sunni Islamic Fundamentalists from Saudi Arabia and had no connection to Iran or the United States, it was too late in terms of the Iranian and U.S. propaganda machines. The Ayatollah Khomeini went on Tehran radio commenting on the seizure stating that; “It is not beyond guessing that this is the work of criminal American imperialism and international Zionism.”²² These accusations were refuted by then U.S. president Jimmy Carter saying that authorities would receive official protest for the “False and irresponsible charges.”²³ Although the United States media began to downplay actual Iranian direct involvement in the Grand Mosque attack they began to play up Khomeini’s influence was having on the region. The popular news magazine *Newsweek* compared Khomeini to Mao Tse Tung, “both idea men who inspire others to put these ideas into action.”²⁴ The statements by Khomeini blaming the U.S. and Israel caused widespread rioting over the Islamic world. U.S. Embassies in Pakistan and Libya were destroyed. The above *Newsweek* article called the burning of the U.S. embassy in Libya as the third example of American “imperialism” to fall. The destruction of the two embassies and the anti-American outcry across the Islamic world further

²¹ News Summary: International National Metropolitan New York Times (1923-Current file); Nov 21, 1979

²² Wright, Robin *Sacred Rage: The Wrath of militant Islam* Simon & Schuster. New York, 1985. pg. 148

²³ *U.S. Pledges to Maintain Presence in Islamic World: Vance Sends Messages* New York Times; Nov. 23, 1979 pg. A19

²⁴ Strasser, Steven *The Khomeini Contagion* Newsweek; December 17, 1979 pg. 39

strengthen the belief in the cultural divide and conflict between the West and the Islamic world. “It is the atmosphere of Fanaticism created by Khomeini that this possible”²⁵ However, the fanaticism by Khomeini and its potential to Islamize the Middle East was not yet the chief motivation for the U.S. call to arms. The United States was more concerned how the uncertainty could affect the balance of power in the region with the Soviet Union. American leaders and media were still entrenched in their Cold War mentality to pay much seriousness to the “Khomeini Contagion.” It was believed and hoped that his movement would die out and reports from the region often alluded that his power in Iran was fragmented at best. The uncertainty of how events would play out with the power vacuum left behind by the Shah was still the chief concern of the United States.

The real fear that the power vacuum presented American leadership was losing vital oil supplies. “On the basis of events that have already occurred, one must expect further disruptions of the world’s oil supply. A drop in the Iranian production and shipments seems certain, putting further upward pressure on the price of oil.”²⁶ President Jimmy Carter established the Carter doctrine in his 1980 State of the Union Address that stated any outside threat to the Persian Gulf would warrant retaliation from the United States in defense of their interests in the region. This cemented American intentions to use all of its resources to maintain control of the region. This was a direct response to the Soviet Union’s invasion into Afghanistan which could potentially further disrupt United States oil supplies.²⁷ President Carter’s successor Ronald Reagan reaffirmed that America would maintain a strong presence in the region in order to maintain its economic and security interests in the region. In an October 1st, 1981 statement Reagan “Vowed

²⁵ Tanner, Henry *Attack in Mecca Attributed to Khomeini Influence* New York Times, Nov 22, 1979

²⁶ Silk, Leonard *Economic Scene: Mideast Crisis Clouds Outlook* New York

²⁷ <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=33079>

that the United States would never permit Saudi Arabia ‘to be an Iran’”²⁸ In the same *New York Times* article, Middle Eastern foreign correspondent Thomas Friedman argued that the threat of the Saudi family losing control of the country was minimal at most, the real threat to U.S. interests concerning Saudi Arabia was the Saudis changing direction in policy towards the United States. This is where the separation from the conservative and moderate perspectives begins to take its dramatic turn, by separating unrelated incidents occurring in Middle Eastern states that make decisions on what is best for their national interests and not an overarching Khomeinist or Islamic fundamentalist agenda. Robin Wright, a contemporary journalist to Thomas Friedman, argued there must be a grand Islamic fundamentalist plan to gain control of the Middle East, and to cripple the West with the cutting off of oil supplies.²⁹

Assassination in Egypt

“Egypt's President was assassinated by a group of men in uniform as he watched a military parade in Cairo. The assassins broke rank as the parade passed by and threw grenades and fired rifles at the reviewing stand, fatally wounding Anwar el-Sadat. Others in the crowded reviewing stand area were killed or wounded. The parade was commemorating Mr. Sadat's 1973 war against Israel. For the time being, Egypt's affairs are expected to be run by Vice President Hosni Mubarak, President Sadat's long-time associate. The Interim president for the next 80 days, pending elections, will be Sufi Abu Taleb, Speaker of Parliament.”³⁰

Anwar Sadat was highly regarded and lamented by the West. U.S. president Ronald Reagan said of Sadat, “In a world of hatred he was a man of hope.” French President, Francois

²⁸ Friedman, Thomas L. *Saudis, in Firm Control, Face Long-Term Dangers* New York Times; October 18, 1981

²⁹ Wright, Robin *Sacred Rage: The Wrath of militant Islam* Simon & Schuster. New York, 1985. pg. 150

³⁰ News Summary: Assassination in Egypt International National Metropolitan New York Times (1923-Current file); Oct 7, 1981

Mitterrand stated, “The world has lost one of the best among us,” and U.N. Secretary General, Kurt Waldheim praised Sadat’s “courage of his convictions, his historical role and his dedication to his country.”³¹ Sadat’s Egypt was considered a pillar of peace³² in the more and more chaotic and violent Middle East due to its treaty with Israel. Reasoning for such an act of terror in the West was lacking; why would the “Islamists” want to kill such a leader who was working towards peace and prosperity for his country other than to further propagate the chaos of the regime and hopefully destabilize the “soul” of the Arab world so as to have Egypt become the next Islamic Republic. It was precisely this high regard by the West that ultimately resulted in Sadat’s assassination.

“The young proselytizers did not consider the retrieval of the Sinai Peninsula, lost to Israel in the ’67 war sufficient reward for recognition of the Jewish state among other complaints”³³ Among the other complaints to which Miss Wright refers to is the lack of consideration given to the Palestinians in regards to the Peace Treaty Sadat made with Israel, notable as the first recognition of the state of Israel by an Arab country. Sadat’s high regard in the Middle East fell in spite of Egypt’s successful advances made during the war with Israel in 1973. Egypt’s conclusion of the peace treaty resulted in its expulsion from the Arab League, which viewed Egypt’s participation as a betrayal of the Palestinian people. The involvement of the United States in the peace treaty with Israel further inflamed the Islamic militants of Egypt “In the eyes of the Militants, the defiantly proud Egyptians, who once ruled the Mediterranean (Historical inaccuracy) were becoming another satellite of the United States.” Given the history of Egypt for the previous 200 years since the invasion of Napoleon, the idea of another Western

³¹ Montgomery, Paul L. *WEST, HEARING OF SADAT'S DEATH, MOURNS THE LOSS OF A FRIEND*. The New York Times, October 7, 1981

³² Lescaze, Lee and Schram, Martin. *U.S. Reacts Bitterly To Loss of Sadat; A Day of Confusion, Lament and Outrage at Loss of a Statesman*. The Washington Post. October 7, 1981

³³ Wright, Robin *Sacred Rage: The Wrath of militant Islam* Simon & Schuster. New York, 1985. pg. 180

power a having influence over Egyptian affairs was unacceptable to the majority of Egyptians, even with much-needed aid pouring in to the country. Further illustrating the ill reaction that the Arab world felt towards the Camp David Accords, *The Guardian* quoted Sadat's former Chief of Staff to Sadat, Lt. Gen. Saedaden Shayli as saying that the "Egyptian forces should follow up on the assassination by wresting power from leaders committed to 'Zionism and imperialism.'"³⁴

Sadat's ability to maintain his control over Egypt during this time of chaos in the Middle East was yet another reason for his popularity in the Western world. He had eased up on the crackdowns inflicted on the Muslim Brotherhood and other Islamic organizations early in his presidency in order to strengthen his power base and shifted the attack on the leftist and Nasserite movements throughout Egypt. In an article published in *The Washington Post*, Thomas Lippman points out the many policies enacted by Sadat and the ways in which he tried and distance himself from the Nasser regime. Some of these changes were the expulsion of Soviet military advisors, the release of thousands of political prisoners and the renewed moral of Egyptians due to the success of the 1973 war with Israel. Further policies mentioned in the piece that were enacted by Sadat to further solidify his stamp on the country were the liberalizing of the economy, restoring relations with the United States and traveling to Jerusalem to challenge the Israelis to peace talks.³⁵ As his presidency continued, and despite his outwardly devotional actions towards Islam the secular tendencies in his government policies began the divide with the Islamic movements. The Sinai pact and then subsequent Camp David accords further agitated the various Islamic groups within Egypt. Despite a growing animosity from fellow Egyptians, Sadat continued to ignore "advisors" warnings against the Islamic movements stating "I am not the

³⁴ MacManus, James *On This Day: 7 October 1981: President Sadat assassinated at army parade. The Guardian (London)*

³⁵ Lippman, Thomas W. *ANWAR SADAT: 1918-1981. The Washington Post. October 7, 1981*

Shah of Iran, and our Muslims are not Khomanists”³⁶ Shortly before his assassination Sadat finally began to heed his advisors but this proved to be too late. In a piece written just after Sadat was assassinated, Peter Perl wrote a piece concerning the opinions of the members of an Islamic community center in Washington D.C. Ron Cathell of the center stated “though we certainly viewed him in a positive light, we recognize that Sadat is a very controversial figure. You will run into a lot of people who are pleased that Sadat is gone, he ruled in a very—uh, I don’t know how to characterize it—a very strong way.” Further an Egyptian tailor who resided in Washington stated, “I believe 60 percent of the Egyptian people here will celebrate that God takes him.”³⁷

Egyptian authorities initiated a brutal crackdown after Sadat was killed; asserting that it was not Sadat alone who was being targeted but the entire grandstand, alleging it was a failed coup d’état attempt. Authorities wanted to diffuse the larger Islamic movement that was the real culprit in the assassination and the primary opposition to the regime. In Eric Rouleau’s article, *Who Killed Sadat?*, he argues the approach being taken in their handling of the assassination and the crackdown they put in place in response to the Egyptian public and the world as overly aggressive. “The Egyptian authorities must minimize the plot as to diminish its political significance but at the same time they must exaggerate its scope to justify the extent of the repression.”³⁸ This is an extreme example of tactics used in American media manipulation by maximizing fears and our duty to impose Western Liberal ideals and holding back the means

After the assassination of Sadat the media coverage, as seen above, took on what Huntington would later call the “*Clash of Civilizations*.” Sadat continued to be glorified as a

³⁶ Rouleau, Eric *Who Killed Sadat?* MERIP Reports, No. 103, The Politics of Religion (Feb., 1982), pp.3-5

³⁷ Perl, Peter *Countering Washington Sadness, Joy is Voiced at Islamic Center*. The Washington Post, October 7, 1981

³⁸ Rouleau, Eric *Who Killed Sadat?* MERIP Reports, No. 103, The Politics of Religion (Feb., 1982), pp 3-5

pillar of peace and a leader who was able to maintain control in an Egyptian state that was plagued with a poor economy and a rising unrest in his own population. With Sadat's assassination by Islamic Militants within his military the United States perception of the Middle East shifted to one of instability, Josh Goshko wrote in his piece for the Washington post that the comparisons were to great at the time to that of fall of the Shah in Iran, and the United States was forced to seriously reconsider its long standing policy evoked during the Nixon era of arming friendly leaders to the U.S. in the Middle East with weapons when they were so vulnerable to domestic violence.³⁹ The tragic loss of yet another Middle Eastern leader so popular with Western populations, who seemed able to bridge the gap between the West and the Islamic world, cast Islam in the minds of Westerners as moving as a whole towards the extreme.

Bombings in Beirut

“At least 161 American marines and sailors were killed and 75 were injured when suicide terrorists driving a truck loaded with TNT blew up a Marine headquarters at Beirut International Airport. A Pentagon spokesman said the truck broke through a series of steel fences and sandbag barricades and exploded in the heart of the headquarters shortly before dawn. Two miles away, another bomb-laden truck crashed into a French barracks, killing at least 12 French paratroopers and wounding 13. Fifty-three paratroopers were missing and believed buried in the rubble.”⁴⁰

The Marine base bombing was the first instance that a significant number of American lives lost due to an act of terrorism inflicted by an Islamic group. It was the highest number of

³⁹ Goshko John M. *U.S. Middle East Policy Plunged -Into Sudden State of Uncertainty*. The Washington Post. October 7, 1981

⁴⁰ News Summary MONDAY,: OCTOBER 24, 1983 New York Times (1923-Current file); Oct 24, 1983;

American military personnel killed in a single attack since the Vietnam War.⁴¹ There was confusion at first on who was responsible for the bombings with Thomas Friedman announcing the group Free Islamic Revolution Movement claiming responsibility. An unidentified American traveling with the United States Treasury Secretary in Saudi Arabia at the time was quoted as saying it was Amal, a Shiite group that had evolved into a predominantly secular organization. The group ultimately found responsible was Islamic Jihad, which was closely linked to and later absorbed by Hezbollah. The countries that were attacked, the United States and France who had recently soured relations with Iran by selling arms to Iraq, further confirmed the linkage to Iran, Friedman argued.

President Reagan described the act as “despicable.” After meeting with advisors on how to best prevent something like this happening again Reagan announced to the American public “that we all need to stand up and fight against the boastful nature of those who would assume power.” The administration reassured “there would be no change in the United States military role in Lebanon.”⁴² This further reinforced the statement made by former President Carter after the protests that occurred after the siege of Mecca, when he stated that the United States cannot appear to be retreating in the face of mob violence.⁴³

The Beirut bombings initially prompted the U.S. and France to declare their resolve to maintain their presence as part of an international peace keeping mission due to the long running civil war that had been ravaging the country. Behind this declared resolve, there were Western leaders who began to question the peacekeeping mission. “The heavy loss of life in Lebanon is likely to fuel demands by leftist political parties in Italy, France, and Britain for withdrawal of all

⁴¹ FRIEDMAN THOMAS L. *Suspicion in Beirut Is Now Focused on a Shiite Splinter Group* By New York Times (1923-Current file); Oct 27, 1983

⁴² CLINES, FRANCIS X *ATTACK IS ASSAILED: U.S. Says Terrorists Tied to Iran May Have Set ...* The New York Times Oct 24, 1983

⁴³ *U.S. Pledges to Maintain Presence in Islamic World: Vance Sends Messages* New York Times; Nov 23, 1979

troops from Lebanon.”⁴⁴ In the United States, The *New York Times* reported after the bombings that “Legislators from both parties said the Reagan administration must redefine and clarify the role of marines in Lebanon and their long range mission in the Middle East.”⁴⁵ Simultaneously two reporters arrived in the Levant who would build their reputations by their coverage of the conflicts in the Levant. Thomas Friedman arrived in Beirut in June 1979, and Robin Wright had already spent time in the country.

Thomas Friedman is a Jewish American who was born and raised in the Midwest, but spent his high school summers in Israel and later studied Arabic in Cairo. Although he had a deep love for studying the Middle East, Friedman would later state he learned early on “a Jew who wants to make a career working or studying about the Middle East will always be a lonely man: he will never be fully accepted or trusted by the Arabs, and he will never be fully accepted by or trusted by the Jews.”⁴⁶ This allowed Friedman to maintain a degree of neutrality in his coverage of the region, especially when stationed in Jerusalem. Since Friedman believed that both sides in the conflict were skeptical towards him, this belief allowed Friedman to remain highly critical of both sides without worry of losing favor from one or the other.

The ideological vision of both Wright and Friedman are not only seen in their articles but also their titles and subject matters of their initial book publications. Robin Wright’s book entitled *Sacred Rage* focused on the growth of the militant Islamic movement in the Middle East while Thomas Friedman’s first book, entitled *From Beirut to Jerusalem*, covers his experiences while living and reporting in the region, his drive to understand the complexities of the conflicts he was covering and how these affected the people on the ground. The subjective historical

⁴⁴ Dobbs, Michael. *The Beirut Massacre; West Europeans Say Forces Will Stay in Beirut*. The Washington Post. October 24, 1983

⁴⁵ *MONDAY, OCTOBER 24, 1983 Bombings in Beirut*. The New York Times. October 24, 1983

⁴⁶ Friedman, Thomas L. *From Beirut to Jerusalem* Picador, New York, 1989

background each offers highlights the first striking feature of their opposing perspectives on how to portray the region.

The history and ideology of the Shi'a is essential to both stories, given that Iran and Lebanon are both Shi'a majority countries. Both authors cover the early history of the great schism in Islam, but the language is dramatically different in their interpretations. Wright mentions the "murder of Ali" and the "killing of Hussein" during the conflict of succession that occurred in which the Shi'a split off, believing that the Caliphate should remain in the hands of the family of the prophet and the Sunnis supporting the idea that Muhammad's successor should be appointed through the process of election by the elders of the community. The Shi'a insisted that Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of the prophet should be the leader of the community. Friedman only mentions Ali in his explanation of the schism as the choice of the Shi'a movement for the leader, not that he was murdered and that his son Hussein was also killed when he led a revolt against the supporters of the Caliphate Muawiyah, who enjoyed larger support in the Muslim community.

The ideology of the Shi'a is also a point of contention between the two authors and the sources they use to help define what they believe as this ideology. Wright writes that for the Shi'a, "every day in his life is a day of battle in which he must seek either triumph or martyrdom" quoting Hamid Algar an Islamic expert at Berkeley. She goes on to quote Professor Hasan Askari, a Shi'ite teaching at the Center for the Study of Islam in England. "Shi'ism is all about the protest against authority, passion, constant rebellion."⁴⁷ Friedman quotes Islamic expert Edward Mortimer's book *Faith and Power*; "The starting point of Shi'ism is defeat: the defeat of Ali and his house... Its primary appeal is therefore to the defeated and oppressed. That

⁴⁷ Wright, Robin *Sacred Rage: The Wrath of militant Islam* Simon & Schuster. New York, 1985. pg. 63

is why it has been the rallying cry for the underdog in the Muslim world... especially for the poor and the dispossessed.” Friedman and Wright use these historical sources on the origins of the Shi’a to strengthen their interpretations of how Shi’ism has evolved into a belief that has lent itself to such revolutionary ideas and its ability to intertwine modern political ideas with Islamic principles on how a nation should be led.

Wright goes further to establish the violent strain throughout the history of Shi’ism by telling the story of Hassan al-Sabbah, a man whose life history is veiled in mystery, and presenting it as historical fact. Sabbah lived in the mountains of what is now Iran and led a group of hired killers, whose name or reputation led to the formation of the Assassins. He was a convert to the Ismaili sect of Shi’ism. He used religion, along with drugs, to inspire his recruits to commit murder, mostly for the prophet and not for ideological or political gains. Wright uses this story when discussing Khomeini and the Revolutionary guards of Iran. Though she says the comparisons between the two are minimal at best, the story is used to show the violence she believes is inherent in Shi’ism.

As time moves on Wright and Friedman continue to expand their Middle East perspectives. Friedman continues to stay in the region covering the events in Lebanon and subsequent peace process in Jerusalem. He worked to maintain a perspective of reporting that emphasized the political wants of the region and the ramifications of these actions on communities, and tried to de-emphasize the belief of a larger Islamic movement set out to reestablish the Caliphate. Even at his most disgusted and angry, when covering relations between the Israelis and Palestinians, he stresses the ideologies of each group not on religious terms but on political ones. In an article titled *Suicidal Lies* in 2002, which discusses the emergence of suicide bombings in the Palestinian fight against Israel, he does not once mention Islam,

fundamentalism or militancy. He addresses the suicide bombers as Palestinians. The closest he treads to the subject of religion is when writing, “The U.S. should make it clear that Arab leaders whose media call suicide bombers ‘martyrs’ are not welcome in the U.S.”⁴⁸ By simplifying suicide bombing as a tactic used from one group against another, he attempts to derail the idea of civilizational divides.

The idea of an organized Islamic fundamentalist movement is investigated more deeply in Wright’s book, *Sacred Rage*. Wright focuses on a meeting in Tehran, in March of 1982, in which Islamic extremists across the Muslim world came together to plan a greater Islamic Revolution in the Middle East and how to drive outside powers from the region. According to Wright this led to militants from around the world flocking to Iran to join the cause anyway they could. Wright further examines the rise of fundamentalism brought up in her book *Sacred Rage*. Though her attack remains focused on Islamic fundamentalism, she also begins to investigate the emergence of fundamentalist movements across the globe and throughout various religions, especially those of Hinduism and Judaism.

In the documentary based on Chomsky’s *Manufacturing Consent*, Chomsky points out the prevalence the *New York Times* and other major publications in dominating the coverage in smaller markets due to the reprinting of the written stories of the larger markets in their own newspapers. Friedman was one of the chief correspondents for the *New York Times* in both Beirut and Jerusalem, and Wright was a journalist for the *New York Times*, and later the *Washington Post*. Both became the voice for their papers, growing from beat writers to editorialists, and, with the long arm of these large papers, became prominent narrators in telling the Middle East story for moderate in (Friedman) and conservative in (Wright) perspectives.

⁴⁸ Suicidal Lies: A weapon threatens the civilized world. Friedman, Thomas L *New York Times* (1923-Current file); Mar 31, 2002; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times (1851-2009) pg. C9

9/11

With the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, and the Pentagon in the United States, the Islamic Republic of Iran was replaced as the fanatical face of Islam by Osama Bin Laden, his group al-Qaeda and the ruling Afghanistan party, the Taliban, who gave refuge to al-Qaeda. With the death of the Ayatollah Khomeini and Iran's nuclear program becoming the primary focus of hostilities between it and the West, the religious fanaticism image seemed to dim especially when compared with the extremism and poor state of human rights in Afghanistan. The 9/11 attacks caused a significant shift in the official propaganda from the conservative Republican Party in America, but further inflamed the religious right of the U.S. President George W. Bush, in spite of being a fundamentalist Christian, repeatedly stated that at its core Islam was a peaceful religion and most Muslims were a peaceful and positive influence on society. This was done in the hopes of assuring alliances with other Islamic countries, and to avoid retribution on Muslims and Middle Eastern citizens in the U.S. given the two wars against Islamic nations resulting from the events on 9/11. Alternately, in a PBS special on Anti-Islamic tendencies in the United States many of the leaders in the U.S. Evangelical movement, in the United States, were preaching something decidedly different. The Muslim world could not help but believe this was the feeling of the government as well given that both Bush and his Attorney General, John Ashcroft were well known evangelicals. The program quotes Reverend Graham stating: "The Islamic god is not the same as the Judaic/Christian God, the Islamic god is evil and violent god." Going further it quotes the Rev. Moody Adams who states "killing is against the teachings of Christianity, and displeases Jesus and God; in Islam killing pleases Allah." Moody uses passages from the Quran to justify his claims, but only citing the more violent passages and

using them out of context.⁴⁹ Though the piece provides a well balanced account of Evangelical leaders being invited to state their opinions on national television and the conspicuous absence of a defense of Islam, the special somewhat perpetuated the problem by gracing Rev. Moody with the segment's last words. The fundamental Christian groups seemed to adopt as a whole the philosophies of Huntington and Lewis. That a *Clash of Civilizations* was at hand, and that America needed to be aggressive in the battle against the Islamic world or all will be lost.

To add to the belief that a larger cultural clash was taking shape the writings of the late Sayyid Qutb began to be examined in popular media. "But if one man deserves the title of intellectual grandfather to Osama bin Laden and his fellow terrorists, it is probably the Egyptian writer and activist Sayyid Qutb who was executed by the Egyptian authorities in the mid-1960's for inciting resistance to the regime."⁵⁰

Milestones, one of many books written by Qutb, calls for an Islamic society based strictly on Qur'anic law and the teaching of the Prophet. The torture Qutb endured, and the experiences he had in America led him to believe in the closed fist philosophy of creating a pious and moral society. Qutb accused not only the West of living in a state of *jahiliyyah*, an Islamic term meaning the ignorance of divine guidance and the time before the revelations of the Prophet, but also the supposed Muslim states of the Arab world, and he supported active *jihad* against all *jahiliyyah* states. In the same *New York Times* article mentioned above Robert Worth quotes an early disciple of Qutb, Fathi Yakan, who wrote in the 1960's, "The groundwork for the French Revolution was laid by Rousseau, Voltaire and Montesquieu; the Communist Revolution realized plans set by Marx, Engels and Lenin. . . . The same holds true for us as well." This

⁴⁹ PBS *Religion and Ethics: Anti Islam* 12/20/2002 <http://video.pbs.org/video/2278293092>

⁵⁰ Worth, Robert. *The Deep Intellectual Roots of Islamic Terror*. The New York Times. October 13, 2001.

groundwork for a revolution based on *jihad* against all *jahiliyyah* states would not find an audience in the United States until after blood was spilled on American soil.

ABC News also produced a special with the aim of informing the American public more about Islam. Starting the program with American's reactions to the word Islam, faces flashed across the screen one, describing Islam as "different," another noting that admitting to being Muslim resulted in suspicion of being a terrorist, and a child stating the desire of Muslims wanting to build a mosque on the bones of dead Christians, referring to the plans to build an Islamic community center near the World Trade Center site.⁵¹ Though the piece's goal was to answer the American people's questions about Islam, it fell short by not properly identifying Islamic extremism as the minute minority of the Islamic faithful. The ABC News special left absent the difficult parts of Islam to urge viewers toward a progressive attitude toward Islam, much like the focus on *Milestones* by the conservative media. As the focus in the conservative religious community moved towards examining the cultural divide between Western values and Islam, there was also an active movement towards trying to inform the American people about the history and values of Islam but even with this effort both still painted Islam as the religion of the other.

⁵¹ http://abc.go.com/watch/2020/S559026/VD5589601/islam-questions-and-answers?cid=abccomsearch_results

**Perspectives of the Muslim Brotherhood from the Beginning of the Revolution,
Until the election of President Morsi.**

The Middle East's history of the last forty years and the manipulation of that history by the media provides an excellent springboard for the application of Chomsky's theory to analyze the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood. With the American presidential elections occurring simultaneously to the brotherhood's rise to power, both perspectives began to dominate Western media. Democratic approach, in the media favored the Whig ideals of stressing diplomacy, nation building, economic modernization and global integration, all constructed around a human rights/international legal institutional infrastructure, even if this high ideal is not always held up. The more conservative message of stressing security and preemptive action to ensure Western interests was adopted by the American Republican Party, which used the chaos and fear brought about by the uncertainty of the region to justify their stance and actions they might take. As I will show in statements by leaders in both of the dominant American political parties latter in this section, the Republican Party argued that President Obama was losing the Middle East to extreme Islam and that all U.S. interests in the region would be lost, Israel would be destroyed and the American economy would suffer with the loss of vital Middle Eastern oil. The Obama democratic campaign argued that democracy was prevailing, that years of oppression were collapsing and that America must respect the choice of the Egyptian people and those of other states that were finally enjoying the freedom to freely elect their own governments.

Egypt, being the most populated nation in the Arab world at over 80 million people, is not only one of the chief cultural and political leaders of the region, but also has been a cornerstone in U.S. foreign policy in the region and an ally with its peace treaty with Israel. When the protest movement finally achieved their goal of Mubarak being forced from office outside observers

became increasingly concerned with the fragility of the treaty, as popular sentiment in the Egypt was not in favor of the treaty with Israel.

The other chief issue of outside observers and media outlets was the future of Egyptian relations with the West in a post Mubarak Egypt. Top among these concerns was the status of the Suez Canal, which moves roughly 7% of the world's commercial naval shipping every year.⁵² Any major disruption or closing of the canal would cause tremendous economic burdens on the West and could cause the price of oil to climb dramatically. The uncertainty of the Arab Spring led both sides of America's political spectrum to sound larger drum beats for the reduction in foreign energy dependence, but the right kept the redirect of fear and thus intervention also alive in their message.

From the beginning of the protest movement media coverage was favorable to the protesters but was hesitant to criticize the long time ally in Mubarak until it was clear he would be forced to step down. Headlines such as "*Protestors stand fast in Cairo Tahrir Square*" and "*Uprising Energizes Egyptian Women Veiled and Unveiled*" appeared in *USA Today*. *The New York Times* headlines read "*Exhilarated by Hope in Cairo*" and "*Another Day of Demands and Defiance*" during the early days of the revolution. In the opinion of the White House and even the Republican opposition, the perspective on Mubarak was hardly negative and only waned when it was clear that his removal was necessary to regain any stability in Egypt. Outwardly, it was impossible for either liberals or conservatives to not support the protest movement calling for greater democracy. Behind closed doors, however the fear of the Muslim Brotherhood or an even more extremist Islamic group caused hesitation in full support of the movement until the election of Morsi.

⁵² <http://www.suezcanal.gov.eg/Files/Publications/73.pdf>

In the early days of the revolution, the leadership of the Republican and Democratic parties made statements supporting the protests and voicing their preference for Egypt to move towards a more open and democratic state. Echoing U.S. media coverage, there was also a measure of support for Mubarak, who had long been an U.S. ally. President Obama, in an interview with Bill O'Reilly on February 6, 2011, stated, "The Egyptian people want freedom, they want free and fair elections, they want a representative government." On the subject of Mubarak he stated, "that he has been a good partner when it comes to peace with Israel, and there have been counterterrorism efforts that he has been supportive of."⁵³ Obama never stated in the interview that he felt Mubarak should step down, and went so far to praise Mubarak's knowledge of many aspects of U.S. foreign policy in the region. This, among other reasons, could be a reason why the president was leery of asking Mubarak to resign, even with the cries for democracy that the U.S. supposedly champions.

The eventual Republican nominee for president, Mitt Romney, stated in an interview on the television show *The View* on February 1, 2011, that Mubarak was a long standing friend to the U.S. but called for democratic reforms. Romney's closest advisor on foreign affairs, especially dealing with the Middle East, was Dan Senor, who was the former chief spokesman for the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq, and also a regular contributor to the *Wall Street Journal* and Fox News.⁵⁴ He ended his statements on Egypt saying, "We must not allow Egypt to transform into an Islamic government."⁵⁵ This sentiment was echoed in an article from the conservative leaning newspaper, *The Washington Times* which stated, "The U.S. government has a vital role helping Middle Eastern states transits from tyranny to political participation

⁵³ <http://www.politicsdaily.com/2011/02/06/transcript-of-president-obamas-pre-super-bowl-interview-with-bi/>

⁵⁴ Good, Chris *Who's Advising Mitt Romney on Foreign Policy?* ABC News, September 12, 2012

<http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/politics/2012/09/whos-advising-mitt-romney-on-foreign-policy/>

⁵⁵ *ibid*

without Islamists hijacking the process. George W. Bush had the right idea in 2003 in calling for democracy but he ruined this effort by demanding instant results. Barack Obama initially reverted to the failed old policy of making nice with tyrants; now he is myopically siding with the Islamists against Mr. Mubarak.”⁵⁶ These thinly veiled calls for U.S. intervention if events did not transpire according to Western interests are contrasted by President Obama’s position in the same interview with Bill O’Reilly the President states, “Ultimately the United States cannot absolutely dictate” when asked when questioned over when Mubarak should step down, but this policy was also applied to all events concerning the revolution.

When the protesting persisted and it became clear that Mubarak’s long 30-year reign was near collapse, the speculation of what was next for Egypt began to dominate the coverage in the West. This speculation quickly gravitated towards the Muslim Brotherhood, the oldest, best organized and largest opposition group in Egypt. At first choosing not to participate in the elections, chiefly due to the largely violent and oppressive retribution inflicted upon them in the past by the state, the Brotherhood’s involvement and support began to grow as the momentum of the protest movement grew. With this further involvement in the revolution so came a flood of coverage focused on the Brotherhood, and headlines contemplating a sequel of the Iranian revolution.

Starting on February 1st 2011, popular ultra-conservative media personality Glenn Beck began a weeklong examination of the Muslim Brotherhood, which rarely stayed focused on the main topic. Three main themes carried throughout the televised piece; the establishment of a Caliphate, Western leftist socialist connections to the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas, which he

⁵⁶Pipes, Daniel. “*Turmoil in Egypt*” The Washington Times February 1, 2011

believed were one in the same and not that Hamas is an offspring with no official connection, and lastly the hatred of Israel and desire to “kill all the Jews.”⁵⁷

The idea of the Caliphate brought up by Beck is fear mongering at its finest. He goes on to explain just how it would all come about. With Iran and Somalia already “in the green”, a term for states becoming radically Islamic, he listed other Arab states that could tip towards the green. He then claimed that if Morocco became an extreme Islamic state, their influence would spread to Spain, which, he reminds the viewers, used to be under Islamic control, neglecting to mention that it was over 500 years ago, with the conversion of Spain the Strait of Gibraltar would be cut off from the West, with the ominous results of the loss a valuable marine passage for oil and opening of a religious corridor for Islam into Europe. He also added that if the Brotherhood ascended to power the Suez Canal would also be closed to Western states and thus both maritime entrances to the Mediterranean Sea would be under the control of the Caliphate. The propagation of fear concerning extreme Islam controlling the Middle East is further addressed in *the Washington Times* article previously mentioned which states, “Three decades had to go by, it appears, before the self-immolation of a vendor in an obscure Tunisia town could light the conflagration that Khomeini aspired to, and Iranian authorities still seek.”⁵⁸ All these concerns revolve around the costs of oil and the Western economic disaster that would? Should its transportation fall under the control of the Caliphate, another example of using fear to justify action in favor of Western interests. These themes echo those of Robin Wright, arguing the Islamic conspiracy to control the Middle East, and Lewis and Huntington years earlier arguing that the cultural conflict was only in a matter of time.

⁵⁷Beck, for February 10, 2011.”Beck 10 Feb. 2011. Infotrack Newsstand. Web. 25 Feb. 2013

⁵⁸Pipes, Daniel. “*Turmoil in Egypt*” *The Washington Times* February 1, 2011

Paul Gigot, the editorial page editor for the *Wall Street Journal*, conducted an interview session with Fouad Ajami, the director of the Middle East Studies Program Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University, and later with *Wall Street Journal* editorial board member Matt Kaminski on February 7, 2011. In keeping with the gentle criticism of Mubarak from both the left and the right, Kaminski called for Mubarak to step down to help appease the rising tide of protest in Egypt but neglected to mention the atrocities for which Mubarak was being protested. Kaminski's evaluation of Mubarak was "He gave Egypt, I would maintain, 12 good years. He began well. He was a modest man. He kept the peace with Israel. He tried, if you will, to diffuse the tensions in Egyptian society that the Sadat diplomacy and the Sadat style had triggered."⁵⁹ What qualifies twelve years of Mubarak's 30-year reign as "good" remains a mystery and the interview proceeds without any mention of the complaints against Mubarak that caused the revolution to start such as a failed economic plan, a near twenty-year constant police state and a failure to provide support in times of crisis to name just a few. Gigot went on to ask if elections in Egypt should be put off so as to give time to the secular movement, which was largely responsible for the Revolution, time to organize into viable political parties in order to compete with the more organized Muslim Brotherhood and former members of Mubarak's regime. Kaminski's response was "I think we've sort of learned a lot in the last 30 years of this global wave of democracy of what works, what doesn't work. The reason why it didn't work in Gaza with Hamas, and in Lebanon with Hezbollah, is because those parties did not believe in the legitimacy of a democratic system. They have armed militias. They want to bring down democracy. So whatever we put in place, we sort of need proper checks and balances, rule

⁵⁹ THE JOURNAL EDITORIAL REPORT February 7, 2011 'Begone' A transcript of the weekend's program on FOX News Channel. <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704858404576128284224029592-search.html?KEYWORDS=Paul+Gigot&COLLECTION=wsjie/6month#>

of law, to ensure that the first election is not the last election.” Gigot, “But are you saying that antidemocratic forces should be banned from democratic elections?” Kaminski, “I think they have to sort of--it has to be done through a legal and orderly process.”⁶⁰ Clearly, again this is a case of implying that Western ideals need to be met in order for a satisfactory outcome. Under the power of the all-powerful presidencies of Nasser, Sadat and lastly Mubarak, it is difficult to determine if their growing democratic sentiments would be put into reality. Also the speculation highlights an ignorance of the history of the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas but, one doesn't have to look far to see the distinctions between the Brotherhood and other militant Islamic groups that have achieved a degree of legitimate power, most notably the Brotherhoods declared commitment in the early 1970's to precede with a non-violent path towards the achievement of their goals.

Although Hamas was born out of the Brotherhood, the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood had long disavowed violence, and had become an active proponent of democracy in Egypt. Throughout the Glenn Beck sessions the destruction of Israel was a recurring theme. Walter Mead, in his article discussing American Christian views towards the establishment of a Jewish state throughout U.S. history gives us the reasoning behind conservative Christian support of Israel. Since 1967 the United States has been experiencing a religious revival in many parts of the country, and Episcopal and evangelical faiths experienced the greatest increase in followers and these faiths believed in strict interpretations of the Bible and the prophecies held within the scriptures. These strict interpretations made them, according to Mead, prophetic Zionists, believing that the only way for Armageddon, or Judgment day, to begin was for the Jews to regain power in Israel and to rebuild Solomon's temple in Jerusalem. This belief along with the

⁶⁰ THE JOURNAL EDITORIAL REPORT February 7, 2011 'Begone' *A transcript of the weekend's program on FOX News Channel.* <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052748704858404576128284224029592-search.html?KEYWORDS=Paul+Gigot&COLLECTION=wsjie/6month#>

growing dislike of the Arab world due to their on again off again connections to the Soviet Union, has lead to the enthusiastic support of the Christian right towards the Israeli cause.⁶¹ The violence committed by Hamas has been looked down upon by the Brotherhood, and since Morsi's election in 2012 Egypt has been the key broker in relations between Hamas and the West in an effort to end conflicts between Hamas and Israel. Mr. Beck erroneously lumps the two entities by referring to them singularly as, "Hamas, also known as the Muslim Brotherhood." The link between Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood is undeniable, with Hamas originating from the Palestinian branch of the Brotherhood. While Hamas receives aid from the Brotherhood, it is to continue its charitable organizations, which total about 90% of Hamas' \$70 million annual budget⁶². Beck inappropriately links a recognized terrorist group with an organization that has publicly distanced itself from violence for over 40 years. Adopting the conservative philosophy of interpreting the facts on hand, he avoids discussing why the Muslim world has come to dislike Israel and robs conservative Americans of a truer understanding of the situation.

In a call and response, *The Daily Beast* and the Council of Foreign Relations published articles both attacking the Muslim Brotherhood in the former and defending in the latter within months of each other. Leslie Gelb, who was a long time reporter for the *New York Times*, a consistent supporter of the Israeli state and currently holds the title of President Emeritus of the Council on Foreign Relations, in his article for *The Daily Beast* makes broad stroke claims against the Brotherhood with little evidence. In statements to further perpetrate fear of the Brotherhood coming to power he writes, "The Muslim Brotherhood gaining control would be calamitous for U.S. security" and, "If the Muslim Brotherhood gains control, it's going to be

⁶¹ Mead, Walter R. *The New Israel and the Old: Why Gentile Americans Back the Jewish State*. Foreign Affairs, Vol. 87, No. 4 (Jul.-Aug., 2008). pp. 28-46

⁶² Masters, Jonathan. "Hamas." Nov, 2012. Accessed Apr, 2013.

almost impossible to take back control, just look at Iran.”⁶³ Since the advent of the Egyptian revolution, began the comparisons to the Iranian Revolution were numerous, this is despite many writings by leading experts on the Middle East, such as Juan Cole, dispelling any belief that Egypt could end up like a situation in Iran. In his article *Why Egypt 2011 is not Iran 1979*, Cole takes a point by point of analysis of how the Iranian revolution came about and then uses those points to illustrate how the situation was not the same in Egypt.

Fear was further propagated in British papers like *The Daily Telegraph*, which ran an article entitled *14-year-old girl beaten to death in the name of Shari'a. Could this be what's in store for Egypt?* In this article the author, Toby Young, makes outlandish claims connecting the Muslim Brotherhood to the Nazis in the 1930's and 1940's and that the Brotherhood would be enacting an interpretation of Shari'a comparable to that of the *Wahhabi* movement in Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan under the Taliban.

In the answer to Leslie Gelb's article, the Council on Foreign Relations released two articles: *Islam and Politics in Egypt* an interview with Dina Shehata, Senior Researcher, Al Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies and *No Need to Fear the Rise of the Brotherhood* by Ed Husain. Both of these articles work to dispel many of the fears of what might ultimately happen when and if the Muslim Brotherhood, through their Freedom and Justice party, gained control of power in Egypt. Trying to soften the blow of what the ramifications of an Islamist party gaining control in Egypt, Shehata informs the reader that Shari'a law is already present in Egyptian law as careful balance of civil and Shari'a law had been in place for much of the history of the Egyptian Republic. The piece also goes on to point out the lack of a powerful clerical establishment in Egypt, thus lessening the chance of Egypt adopting the Iranian style

⁶³Gelb, Leslie H. *Beware Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood* The Daily Beast. January 29, 2011

government, and another issue that is not widely known in the West. Lastly Shehata points to those who might disagree with her opinions stating, “American analysts make broad statements about Islamists without making distinctions between who they are addressing.”⁶⁴ By educating the masses on what moderate political Islam is compared to radical Islamic political beliefs, those who choose to make these broad statements would lose the fear of the other that has been pushed for so long.

Ed Husain elaborates further in his article to calm fears of a Brotherhood run Egypt. On the fears of Egypt harboring terrorism “They are far removed from al-Qaeda and the supporters of violent jihad.”⁶⁵ This statement is supported by highly critical comments against the Muslim Brotherhood by the top deputy to Osama bin Laden and former member of the Muslim Brotherhood, Ayman al-Zawahiri, for participating in the 2005 Egyptian parliamentary elections.⁶⁶ In an attempt to dispel the idea that Egypt will close relations or become overly hostile towards the West, Husain points out “members of the Freedom and Justice party, the Brotherhood’s party, tell me they cannot make Egypt more prosperous without Western help and guidance.”⁶⁷

CAIRO — Egypt’s military rulers on Sunday officially recognized Mohamed Morsi of the Muslim Brotherhood as the winner of Egypt’s first competitive presidential election, handing the Islamists both a symbolic triumph and a potent weapon in their struggle for power against the country’s top generals.

After the election of Mohammad Morsi, outcries for who was responsible for losing Egypt, with American Presidential nominee, Mitt Romney accusing Obama on numerous occasions of losing Egypt to Islamists. Romney ignored or failed to mention in his accusations

⁶⁴“Islam and Politics in Egypt.” Feb 2011. Council on Foreign Relations. Mar 2013.

⁶⁵ Husain, Ed. “No Need to Fear the Rise of the Brotherhood.” Dec 2011. Council on Foreign Relations. Mar 2013.

⁶⁶Johnson, Toni. “Egypt’s Muslim Brotherhood.” Dec 2012. Council on Foreign Relations. Mar 2013.

⁶⁷Husain, Ed. “No Need to Fear the Rise of the Brotherhood.” Dec 2011. Council on Foreign Relations. Mar 2013.

that even the most conservative of Middle East experts acknowledged that there was nothing the U.S. could do directly to determine who would end up in charge of long time ally. The journal of the American conservative think tank, Middle East Forum, *Middle East Quarterly* released an article the day before Morsi was sworn in warning of what was in store. The article saw the military sharing power with Morsi with the former controlling foreign policy and the latter controlling internal matters. “In fact, one could well see the military adopt an approach toward militancy not dissimilar to the methods of the Pakistani security forces.”⁶⁸ With the constant tension the U.S. finds itself in with Pakistan, predominantly due to militancy active in the Pakistani military, fears the same situation would emerge in an Islamic controlled Egypt, and further adding to the perceived terrorist threat to the West. Al-Tamim finishes his article contemplating the long-term ramifications of the Morsi election stating, “In the long run, chaos and instability are most likely to dominate the country's future.”

⁶⁸ Jawad Al-Tamimi, Aymenn *What to expect from Egypt's Morsi*, Ha'aretz, June 29, 2012

Conclusion

Beginning with British occupation in 1882, the Egyptian people have been fighting against occupation and oppression, with the first glimmer of success coming after the Revolution of 1919 against the British. The result of this altercation with the British resulted in “official” recognition of Egyptian sovereignty by the British, but in actuality the British still dominated Egyptian affairs and occupied portions of the country essential to their own interests such as the Suez region.

Not until the Free Officers movement masterminded and carried out the 1952 Revolution that Egypt was able to throw off occupation and enjoy self-rule. With the rise to power of General Gamal Nasser from the Free Officers movement, so began the over sixty year rule of three presidents who would use any means to maintain the power they had achieved. Nasser was the first of this line of dominant presidents and Anwar Sadat succeeded him and lastly Hosni Mubarak succeeded Sadat and ruled for the longest period of the three rulers for over thirty years. The tight control of power by these three leaders insured that the Egyptian people remained oppressed long after the colonial powers had relinquished control.

In January 2011, sparked by an uprising in Tunisia, the Egyptian people began their own mass protests against the tyrannical rule of Mubarak. The protesters at first only called for greater representation in government and an end to the repressive police state status that had been in effect since 1967. After Mubarak resorted to the familiar brutal tactics in order to quell the uprising, the movement transformed into an all out revolution against his rule. No longer could Mubarak hide his cruel means of maintaining power and it was no longer easy for the democratic nations of the West, like the United States, to maintain support for the Egyptian regime.

On February 11, 2011 Mubarak finally succumbed to the protestors and resigned, handing power over to the Supreme Military Council, which assured the people of Egypt it would only maintain control until free and fair elections could be safely held. As the Military Council began to assure their power was maintained after a new government was set up, and at the same time postponing elections reasoning that more time was needed for the secular parties of the protest movement to organize and galvanize support more uprisings began to spring up against this blatant power grab. When pressure finally forced the Military Council to speed up the electoral process there were only two parties that were able to mount national campaigns for the parliament and presidential elections; the Freedom and Justice Party of the Muslim Brotherhood, and the party representing the previous regime. The Freedom and Justice party dominated the parliamentary elections, and as far as the presidency, after a first round of elections only two candidates remained, Mohammad Morsi of the Freedom and Justice Party and Ahmed Shafik, the last Prime Minister under Mubarak. With only these two options to choose from there was only one choice to make for the supporters of the revolution, the Muslim Brotherhood who had long been in opposition to the occupation of Egypt and later the oppression put upon its people by the Egyptian state was ushered into power.

Since the election, Morsi has faced many issues such as extremist attacks in the Sinai Peninsula, fighting between Israel and Hamas, trying to form a coalition government and constructing a constitution. Morsi was instrumental in acting as the go between the United States and Israel and Hamas helping put an end to the conflict in a timely fashion. In forming a government that represents all Egyptians and helping shape a constitution that insures the rights of all are represented he has fallen back on the tactics of his predecessors. Filling the ranks of the top offices with members of his party and the Brotherhood Morsi has not given a voice in the

highest ranks of the government to the minorities like he had sworn during the elections. When pushing forth the constitution that was drafted primarily by members of the Muslim Brotherhood, and contained provisions that further entwined Egyptian law with Islamic principals President Morsi successfully enacted a power play that allowed him to over rule the court systems and other hurdles that stood in the way of implementing the new constitution.

The process towards democratization is a hurdle that might ultimately derail the Muslim Brotherhoods newfound position of power in Egypt. Democratic institutions need time to develop and take root in a society's mindset and expectations. Full representation of all aspects of society need to be in positions of power in order to construct a truly democratic system and ensure the peaceful passing of leadership from leader to leader. Underrepresentation of any group could lead to unrest and ultimately lead the forcible removing of power as in what occurred to Mubarak and ultimately ushered Morsi into the presidency.

“It is not hard to fathom why the fundamentalist label has gained such wide currency. For conservatives, the term is associated with xenophobia, militancy and radicalism. For Liberals, it means extremism, fanaticism, and traditionalism. For radicals it evokes theological obscurantism, political activism, and the rejection of science, history, modernity, the Enlightenment, and the Industrial Revolution. For the Orientalists, the term is useful precisely because it implies that the Muslim world is intrinsically timeless, unchanging, Irrational, backward looking, and programmed merely to replay old scripts from the time Prophet, the early caliphate, and the medieval Crusades”⁶⁹

The answer to the question presented to me in Tahrir Square of how the American people will react to the election of Morsi and rise to power of the Muslim Brotherhood is still a

⁶⁹ Abrahamain, Ervand. *Khomeinism: Essays on the Islamic Republic*. University of California Press. Los Angeles, 1993. pg.2

complicated one that is difficult to answer. There are years of events that have clouded our perceptions of current events in the Middle East. These events unfold far from the United States and we are forced to learn of them through our choice of various mass media outlets, outlets that are heavily influenced by the many massive corporations that either own these media outlets or finance them with advertising dollars. Higher academic institutes or think tanks like the more diplomatic Council on Foreign Relations and the more conservative Middle East Forum also have a heavy influence on these various media outlets. And lastly, the government pushes its message using its influence on all of these organizations.

We have seen that the diplomatic perspective has tried to limit the scope of Islamism in the Middle East, preferring to address things in a case by case, state by state instance. When Islamism derails progress, it is not a grand conspiracy for an Islamic Empire and more nationalist movements using Islam to galvanize support for their cause. Examples of this are Friedman's article on suicide bombings in the Israeli/ Palestinian conflict, or Juan Cole explaining how events that led to the Iranian Revolution had no resemblance to events of the Egyptian Revolution, and the rise to power of the Muslim Brotherhood. The conservative perspective on the other hand perceives Khomeini's grand plan as still very much alive. A plan, that if given the opportunity, would transform the Middle East into an Islamic Caliphate that has aims to destroy the West and set back any human rights gains that we enjoy. And examples of this are in former republican nominee for president, Mitt Romney's comments questioning how we "lost" Egypt to an Islamic fundamentalist group. This echoed statements after the fall of the Shah in Iran and the subsequent seizure of power by Khomeini.

When dealing with the West there is a similar motivation by both sides. The withholding of facts is ever present in both arguments and the negative tone is also apparent, whether it is a

flicker or a flame. Covering up the past, which influences the present, is a prime motivator as is justifying the support of tyrants for the past fifty years. Both of these motivators weigh on both parties of the United States, and both need to maintain a presence in the region. One side uses fear to justify action and the other uses cautious optimism that needs Western aid to foster progress.

Although the Internet has made access to knowledge easier for the average person, it is still difficult to investigate the whole truth on any given topic such as issues involving the Middle East. The average individual does not have the time and means to compile the vast amount of information and use this information to pressure their local media, let alone the larger media outlets.

While ideally the mass media outlets would not shirk their responsibility to accurately inform the population instead of catering to their corporate and government interests, it falls on intellectuals and independent media outlets to compile and present data to an open and willing public at large, a public who not only wants to change the way the mass media distributes information but longs to use objective information to draw their own conclusions about the world around them.

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