



THE TRUTH ABOUT U.S. MIDDLE EAST POLICY

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In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 attacks on America, there was much discussion about whether U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East. This policy was widely attacked throughout the region on many grounds. In the United States, too, there were those who attributed the attack to deficiencies in U.S. policy. This article suggests that the record of the United States in the Middle East has been badly distorted in the verbal attacks that followed the terror attacks. In addition, it argues that anti-Americanism is serving a political function in the Arab world and Iran that is largely independent of actual U.S. behavior and policies.

"It is important to gain respect, rather than sympathy."

--Syrian President Bashar al-Asad, Interview in al-Safir, July 16, 2001.

"Aggressors thrive on appeasement. The world learned that at tremendous cost from the Munich agreement of 1938.... How could the German generals oppose Hitler once he had proven himself successful? Indeed, aggressors are usually clever at putting their demands in a way that seems reasonable."

--Iraqi Deputy Foreign Minister Nizar Hamdoon, "The U.S-Iran Arms Deal: An Iraqi Critique", Middle East Review, Summer 1982.

"The believers do not fear the enemy [during] the struggle....Yet their enemies protect [their] lives like a miser protects his money. They...do not enter into battles seeking martyrdom....This is the secret of the believers' victory over their enemies."

--Abdallah Al-Najjar, al-Gumhuriya, October 7, 2001.

"[Those] God guides will never lose... America [is] filled with fear from the north to south and east to west.... [Now there will be] two camps: the camp of belief and of disbelief. So every Muslim shall... support his religion."

--Usama bin Laden, al-Jazira television, October 7, 2001.

In the aftermath of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack that killed more than 3,500 people in the United States, there has been a great deal of discussion about U.S. Middle East policy. The terrorists and those who supported them or at least sought to explain their deeds, spoke of past American policy as being responsible for profound grievances on the part

of Arabs and Muslims. Accepting the reality of these grievances, many observers--Arab and Muslim leaders, Western Middle East experts, and Middle East journalists and intellectuals--claimed that this situation required an apology for past American behavior, a change of course for future U.S. policy, and somehow justified or explained the September attack

But this argument and much of the debate following the September 11, 2000 events has profoundly misrepresented the history and nature of U.S. Middle East policy to the point where it has become a caricature of reality. (For a systematic presentation of arguments condemning U.S. policy, made after the September 11 attacks, see Cameron Brown, *The Shot Seen Around the World: The Middle East Reacts to September 11th*, *MERIA Journal*, Vol. 5, Number 4 (December 2001)

<http://www.biu.ac.il/SOC/besa/meria/journal/2001/issue4/jv5n4a4.html>>. Equally, such distortions make it far harder to understand the terrorists' true motives, the reasons why many Arabs and Muslims seem to support or sympathize with them, and the implications of these events for the region. Many things about American policy in the Middle East that contradict the case against the United States have been forgotten or ignored.

What is most important is that the truth is far different from the way it is being presented in so many places. And only by understanding this history is it possible to comprehend the real reasons for the terrorism of September 11 and its interconnections with wider trends in the region.

This article attempts to set the record somewhat straighter. The ground rules for this article are as follows: In correcting the imbalance mentioned above the intention here is not to imply that the United States has not made mistakes, that grievances (right or wrong) do not exist, or that the author necessarily endorses the specific U.S. policies and activities cited. Still, much of the case against America is built on wild conspiracy theories that charge the United States with deeds that were never committed. Other elements of the criticism are based on profound misrepresentations of American society originating in the Arab mass media, which is in itself the recipient of huge state subsidies and high levels of state direction.

Obviously, the United States, like all other countries, seeks to make a foreign policy that is in accord with its interests. In dealing with this

particular debate about the Middle East, however, that factor is quite irrelevant. Even if the reason that the United States saved Kuwait from permanent conquest by a radical secularist regime in Iraq in 1991, for example, was primarily because of oil interests, the American policy was still in practice pro-Kuwait, pro-Muslim, and pro-Arab. After all, there were many alternatives available. The United States might have tried to seize control of oil assets for itself or threatened oil-producing states with violence if prices were not lowered or U.S. companies' holdings were molested.

What is important is that U.S. leaders have usually defined American interests and tried to implement policies in the Middle East in a way most closely in accord with winning support from the widest possible group of Arabs and Muslims. At any rate, to claim that the United States took pro-Arab or pro-Muslim stances because these were deemed to be in its interests does not in any way vitiate the reality of such actions.

An equally important point is that not all Arabs or Muslims, or their leaders, or the states where they live, agree on their own interests or goals. In short, U.S. policies have not been "anti-Arab" or "anti-Muslim" but rather have often opposed radical Arab regimes and forces (often themselves militantly secularist and anti-Islam) and radical Islamist regimes and forces (which most Muslims held to be deviant if not heretical) against their moderate counterparts. Here is the heart of the matter: today, radical groups wish to seize power in the Arab world by defining themselves as the only legitimate Muslims against whom any resistance is opposition to Islam itself.

To begin with, it should be noted that for the last half-century U.S. policymakers have continually had it in mind to avoid insult, antagonism, or needless friction to Middle East Arabs or Muslims. It is literally impossible to find a single statement by any American official during the second half of the twentieth century that was "anti-Arab" or "anti-Muslim" in intention or content.

During the 1940s and early 1950s, U.S. leaders wanted to play an anti-imperialist role in the Middle East. They tended to oppose continued British and French rule in the region and voice support for reform movements. When Gamal Abdel Nasser took power in Egypt in 1952, American policymakers welcomed his coup. That same year, the United States also opposed British proposals to overthrow the nationalist government in Iran.⁽¹⁾

The Cold War-- the global U.S.-Soviet conflict that shaped all of U.S. foreign policy from the 1950s through the 1980s--altered this strategy. By the mid-1950s, U.S. leaders believed with good reason that this conflict was being extended into the Middle East, where local governments were also taking sides. The United States saw that Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser decided to align with the Soviets. In some states, like Lebanon and Jordan, there was a wave of radical nationalist subversion; in others, like Syria and Iraq, this turmoil led to coups whose new regimes also became friendly to Moscow. And in this context, U.S. leaders also feared that the Iranian government of Prime Minister Muhammad Mossadegh was being taken over by Communist forces.

Even so, there was one last service the United States rendered to radical Arab nationalism. In 1956, in a remarkable exception to the usual American policy of supporting England and France, the United States opposed their plot to overthrow Nasser during the Suez crisis because it thought this action would antagonize the Arab world and increase Soviet influence. It threatened Britain and pressured Israel to force their military withdrawal from Egyptian territory. The United States saved Nasser, though this deed would not be remembered, far less treated with gratitude, in the Arab world.

Basically, though, what U.S. policy did was simply to take sides in an inter-Arab conflict--Malcolm Kerr aptly called this the "Arab Cold War"--that had also taken on global implications. Far from being anti-Arab, between the 1950s and 1980s, the United States

backed some Arab countries that were under assault by others which happened to be allied with the Soviet Union. This same fundamental factor, minus the no-longer-existent USSR--was the pattern that prevailed in the Kuwait crisis of 1990-1991.

Far from being anti-Muslim, the United States became literally the political patron of Islam in the Middle East. After all, traditional Islam was a major bulwark against Communism and radical Arab nationalism. Saudi Arabia, the stronghold for the doctrine of using Islam against radicalism, sought U.S. help to ensure its survival of the Nasserist and Ba'this threat. Even in Iran, the U.S.-organized 1953 coup against the nationalists and in support of the shah met with the approval of most Muslim clerics.

Why would the United States' taking sides in this inter-Arab conflict be an "anti-Arab" policy? This is only true if one holds that radical Arab nationalism represented the people's will and that the other regimes were merely stooges of the West. But this is not the argument of all Arabs but rather a self-serving attempt by those holding radical doctrines to present themselves as the only legitimate Arabs. The implication is that countries and governments like Morocco, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and even Egypt (since the late 1970s) are not good Arabs but traitors. In addition, one would have to believe that in retrospect the governments of Syria and Iraq have succeeded far better in meeting their people's needs and bringing them benefits than those of Jordan or Saudi Arabia.

Consider a Cold War analogy, the kind of claim made by Soviet propaganda: By opposing the triumph of Communism in Western Europe, the United States foiled the wishes of the European masses. In this context, the United States could be labeled "anti-European." Equally, when the United States fought Germany (which proposed a new order of a united Europe) in coalition with other European states was this "anti-European?" Or when the United States fought Japan, which claimed to

unite all Asia in prosperity, was it anti-Asian? And when the United States competed with the USSR, which purported to lead the world's masses in a quest for justice and the ideal society, was this anti-Slavic, or anti-European, or anti-working class?

Actually, the existence of the Cold War and its centrality in American strategy deterred the United States from taking tougher stands against even Arab radical forces. The argument accepted was that if various Arab regimes or groups were too alienated by American actions, they might side with the Soviet Union. Thus, the United States pursued a careful course, always on the lookout for "winning away" those Arabs who aligned with the Soviets and avoiding the "loss" of those who didn't. Thus, the United States successfully wooed Egypt in the late 1970s and therefore that country became the second-largest recipient of U.S. aid in the world (with Israel in first place). The United States also did not attack or act too directly to counter Syria or Iraq. For example, Syria's control over Lebanon was accepted by Washington.

A powerful source of this type of claim that America was "anti-Arab" or "anti-Islam" is the myth of Arab or of Islamic unity. Ignoring the differences between the national and group interests of various Arabs and Muslims--which have even led to bloody wars in recent years--the claim is that they are really all on the same side. Thus, if not for external interference, they would all live happily together. If there is strife, then, the true cause must be American interference.

And yet history tells a different tale. In fact, American involvement resulted from, and was the cause of, conflicts among Muslim and Arab groups or states. Did Muslim Iraq attack Muslim Iran? Did Arab Muslim Iraq take over Arab Muslim Kuwait? Did Arab Muslim but secularist Nasser's Egypt threaten Arab Muslim--and more authentically Islamic--Jordan or Saudi Arabia? Did Islamist Afghanistan murder Islamist Iranian officials whose government was also battling

Afghanistan? Did Lebanese fight each other in an indigenously inspired civil war? Did Jordan, Syria, Iraq, and Lebanese forces fight and kill Palestinians, and vice-versa, though both sides were Arabs and usually Muslims? Did Arab and Muslim Algerians murder each other in another civil war?

Even with the existence of an Arab-Israeli conflict, most of the battles in the region have been between Muslim and Arab parties. Sometimes the United States took sides in these conflicts. There was nothing "anti-Muslim" or "anti-Arab" in this policy. Ironically, Usama bin Ladin's main anger arose from the presence of U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia starting in 1990. Yet this action was not only to protect Saudi Arabia and to free Kuwait from an Iraqi threat, it was sanctioned by a vote of the Arab League. Ironically, the grievance most closely associated with bin Ladin's turn to an anti-American strategy and the September 11 attacks was clearly based on a U.S. action that was pro-Arab and pro-Muslim.

The claim of anti-American grievances also arises out of the myth that "real" Arabs or "real" Muslims must support revolutionary causes. All Arabs supposedly wish for a militant Arab nationalist government. All Muslims should want a "fundamentalist" Islamist regime. So if these forces do not take power, it could not possibly be because the masses don't want them or the governments fight effectively against them. The true factor ensuring the success of the "counterrevolution" must be the United States.

This situation also poses an insoluble dilemma for U.S. policy common to all great powers. If the United States supports and aids a government like that of Egypt, it can be accused of sabotaging revolutionary movements that seek to overthrow that regime. But if the United States opposes any given Arab government, or presses it to be more democratic or tolerant of human rights, it can be accused of meddling in domestic affairs and thus of acting in an imperialist manner against the Arabs.

In fact, though, the United States only played a very limited role in the internal conflicts that pitted radical Islamist revolutionaries against Middle Eastern regimes in the 1980s and 1990s. Equally, during Iran's Islamist revolution in 1978, the United States did not intervene in Iran and therefore in effect restrained the shah from taking a tougher line with the opposition that was overthrowing him. This passivity was due to internal debates in the administration and hope that a moderate government might emerge, but that doesn't change the fact that the United States did little to prevent Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's triumph.

Once the revolution succeeded, President Jimmy Carter sought to conciliate the new regime. It was indeed the growing contacts between the United States and moderate elements in the new government that led to the seizure of the American embassy in November 1979. The United States was such an immediate threat not because it tried to bring down Khomeini but because, at most, it sought to influence the revolution to be less radical. However one interprets past U.S. policy toward Iran--including grievances arising from the 1953 coup against a secular government--American policy in the late 1970s and early 1980s in Iran wasn't even consistently or energetically anti-radical Islamist much less anti-Islam. During the mid-1980s, the Reagan administration was even ready to sell arms to Tehran in order to build an alliance with the Islamist regime there.

In retrospect, American "counterrevolutionary" involvement in the Arab world was extremely limited. Arab regimes neither wanted nor needed U.S. help to fight and defeat Islamist insurgents. In Algeria, which was the sole exception to this pattern, the United States maintained a deliberate policy of neutrality, despite the Algerian government's attempt to get help. The purpose of this strategy was to avoid offending Muslims. Despite the dispatch of U.S. Marines in 1982, the United States played no important role in Lebanon's civil war.

Even in Jordan, arguably the most consistent U.S. ally in the Arab world, the regime maintained itself internally without much U.S. help or involvement. Indeed, far from trying to appease a bullying America, King Husayn followed the demands of domestic radical forces in 1990 to support Iraq while America was at war with that regime but suffered no U.S. pressure or punishment as a result.) Indeed, it was Saudi Arabia and Kuwait who denied Jordan aid, while the United States tried to persuade them to forgive and help Amman.

Of course, the Islamists are quite willing to forget the fact that the most ruthless suppression of Islamist revolutions took place in two anti-American states--Syria and Iraq. Elsewhere, Arab regimes proved capable of repressing, outmaneuvering or coopting Islamists without any U.S. involvement, aid, or advice. Even if the United States had totally ignored the Middle East during the 1980s or 1990s it is doubtful that a single additional Islamist revolution would have succeeded.

Compared to Europe, Latin America and Asia, U.S. involvement in Middle Eastern domestic conflicts to preserve existing regimes was positively miniscule. In Europe, the Marshall plan and other policies did help defeat Communism in the late 1940s. In Latin America, there were periodic interventions and massive support for the local militaries, focusing on internal security efforts. In Asia, there were the Korean and Vietnam wars plus other direct and active counterinsurgency and covert efforts, as well as the long-term presence of huge U.S. bases.

Again ironically, the deepest and only really direct involvement in a battle between regimes and Islamists took place in Afghanistan, where the United States actually took the side of Islamist forces to battle the Soviets. Indeed, it would be more accurate to accuse bin Ladin of being a U.S. "collaborator" than it would be to make such charges against Arab regimes. Bin Ladin cooperated with American intelligence in fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan and worked with those receiving U.S. arms and training to

serve Washington's Cold War goals. And the victory over Moscow that bin Ladin claimed proved the efficacy of Islamist thinking and radicalism was in no small part due to American arms, equipment, money, and training.

As Professor Fawaz Gerges has accurately noted: "Radical Islamists blame the U.S. for their defeat at the hands of the pro-U.S. Arab regimes. They claim that the West, particularly the U.S., tipped the balance of power in favor of secular regimes by providing them with decisive political and logistical support."⁽²⁾ But this does not mean that the claim is true. U.S. counterrevolutionary involvement or intervention--with the exceptions of Iran in 1953 and perhaps Lebanon in 1958--remained quite limited. The real reason these revolutions failed was because the local regimes defeated them, the masses didn't support them, and the militants were not very competent.

But one could also put it this way: If radical nationalist or Islamist revolutions had not been stopped in Egypt, Jordan, or Saudi Arabia, people in those countries today would be as happy and prosperous as those in Iraq, Syria, Iran are under their "revolutionary" regimes and Kuwait would have been under permanent Iraqi annexation.

WHAT THE UNITED STATES DID DO

In listing the many "pro-Arab" and "pro-Muslim" acts of the United States in the Middle East and related issues over many decades, it is possible to cite a remarkable number of such cases. Some examples have already been mentioned above, but the list also should include:

-- The United States saved Yasir Arafat in Beirut in 1982 by arranging safe passage for him out of the country after he was besieged there by the Israeli army. It initiated a dialogue with the PLO in 1988 and turned a blind eye to the terrorism of PLO member groups until a blatant attack and the PLO's refusal to renounce it made this policy impossible to sustain in 1990. It became the patron of the Palestinians

between 1993 and 2000. The United States forgave Arafat for past involvement in the murder of American citizens, including U.S. diplomats. The United States worked hard to mobilize financial aid to the Palestinian Authority. Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat was frequently invited to the White House. The United States almost always refrained from any criticism of the PA. President Bill Clinton went to Gaza and made a very sympathetic speech to an audience of Palestinian leaders. Finally, the United States tried to broker a peace agreement that would produce an independent Palestinian state with its capital in east Jerusalem. After Arafat rejected the U.S. peace attempts and did not implement ceasefires he promised to the United States, American leaders did not criticize him.

--The United States proposed numerous détente efforts with Islamic Iran. These included the Carter policy of 1979, the covert contacts by the Reagan administration in the mid-1980s, and several initiatives by the Clinton administration. The United States did maintain sanctions on Iran to try to change three specific Iranian policies (sponsoring terrorism, developing weapons of mass destruction, opposing Arab-Israel peace) but it also sought to find ways to end those sanctions through diplomatic compromise and never waged a serious campaign to overthrow that regime.

--The United States saved Afghanistan from the Soviets; Kuwait and Saudi Arabia from Iraq; and Bosnia and Kosovo from Yugoslavia. In the first case, this involved covert U.S. efforts and in the other three instances the actual deployment of U.S. troops and their commitment in combat. In short, the United States risked American lives to help Muslims. The United States is being targeted in part because of Muslim suffering in Bosnia and Kosovo, two places where the United States sided with and protected Muslims.

--Year after year, administration after administration, U.S. governments were careful not to hurt Muslim sensibilities in any speech or policy. In every statement, distinctions were

made between radical Islamist movements and Islam itself.

--The U.S. government supported Muslim Pakistan against India, though Congress put some sanctions on Pakistan because of its nuclear weapons' program. The United States ignored Pakistan's sponsorship of terrorism against India.

--The U.S. government supported Turkey, a country with a Muslim population, against Greece over the Cyprus conflict.

--In Somalia where no vital U.S. interests were at stake, the United States engaged in a humanitarian effort to help a Muslim people suffering from anarchy, civil war, and murderous warlords. When it became clear that the mission could not succeed, U.S. forces left. Now that voluntary end to a humanitarian mission is being portrayed as the defeat of an American anti-Islamic imperialist effort by Muslims, in short as a grievance justifying anti-Americanism and a model for attacks on the United States.

--The United States supported Arab Iraq against Iran during the latter part of the Iran-Iraq war. It took these steps at the urging of such Arab allies as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

--When Iraqi President Saddam Husayn began to seek Arab leadership in 1989 and repeatedly denounced the United States, U.S. policy did not respond in a tough enough manner in order to avoid offending Arabs. The United States continued to provide Iraq with credits and other trade benefits even when it had evidence that the money Iraq obtained was being illegally misused to buy arms. When Saddam Husayn directly threatened Kuwait, the United States hurried to assure him, through U.S. Ambassador April Glasspie, that America was not his enemy and was neutral in this dispute. Convinced America would not intervene, Saddam then invaded Kuwait.

--For many years, the United States kept its military forces out of the Persian Gulf to avoid offending the Arab and Muslim peoples there. It went in only when requested, first to re-flag Arab oil tankers and later to intervene against

Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. Its forces never went where they were not invited and left whenever they were asked to do so by the local states. American forces also stayed away from Mecca and Medina to avoid offense to Islam. Once Kuwait was liberated, the United States even advocated the concept of the Damascus agreement, in which Egypt and Syria would have played a primary role in protecting the Gulf. It was the Gulf Arab states who rejected implementing this idea.

--The United States rescued Egypt at the end of the 1973 war by pressing Israel to stop advancing and by insisting on a cease-fire. The United States became Egypt's patron in the 1980s, after the Camp David peace agreement, providing large-scale arms supplies and other military and financial assistance while asking for little in return. Indeed, all of this U.S. help and support gave the United States no leverage over Egyptian policies, nor even good will in the state-controlled Egyptian media and in the statements of that country's leaders.

Indeed, in 12 major issues where Muslims had a conflict with non-Muslims or secular forces, or Arabs had a conflict with non-Arabs, the United States sided with the former groups in 11 out of 12 cases:

The United States backed Muslim versus Non-Muslim states in six of seven conflicts: The United States supported Turkey over Greece; Bosnia and later Kosovo against Yugoslavia; India against Pakistan; the Afghans fighting the Soviets, and Azerbaijan against Armenia. The only exception to this pattern was U.S. support for Israel in the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Muslim versus secular: The United States helped moderate Islamic-oriented states against both Egyptian Nasserism and the Ba'thist regimes in Iraq and Syria; and Kuwait and Saudi Arabia fight Iraq. The only apparent exception was U.S. help for Iraq against Iran, though this was not an act based on U.S.-Iraq relations but was an attempt to help the conservative Islamist Gulf Arab regimes threatened by militant Islamist Iran. Given this

aspect of the Iran-Iraq war, the United States helped Muslim against secularist governments in three of three conflicts.

Arab versus Non-Arab: Here, the United States supported Arab Iraq against non-Arab Iran; and both the Arabs and Iran against Soviet power. [The Israel issue is included above] Two of two.

If the Arabs and Muslims are so aggrieved at U.S. support for Israel, it may be because this is the only significant contrary case in the Middle East and its vicinity to the usual U.S. policy of supporting their causes. A second major grievance was U.S. opposition to Iraqi aggression in 1990. Yet this step was taken on behalf of other Arab states with better Islamic credentials than Baghdad, and after the United States had helped Iraq in a previous conflict.

This pattern of U.S. attempts to maintain good relations with Arabs and Muslims was so strong that even after 3,500 Americans were murdered in a massive terrorist attack, U.S. leaders spent much of their time urging that there be no retaliation against Muslims or Arabs in the United States. American policymakers repeated at every opportunity that they did not see Islam as the enemy, tried everything possible to gain Arab and Muslim support or sympathy for the U.S. effort, dropped food supplies in Afghanistan, and promised to help develop the country in the future.

President George W. Bush even asked American schoolchildren to send donations to help their counterparts in Afghanistan. Instead, he could easily have called for revenge, denounced whole peoples and countries, and stirred up anger and hatred. But Bush's approach was a continuation of the traditional American approach of avoiding antagonism to Arabs and Muslims while cooperating wherever possible.

Again, the fact that many or even most Arabs and Muslims in the Middle East did not recognize that consistent thread in U.S. policy does not mean it did not exist. But what it does demonstrate is that there were forces and factors within the region that had a stake in

distorting American policy for their own purposes.

WHAT THE UNITED STATES DID NOT DO

Just as an examination of U.S. policy shows its overall support for Arabs and Muslims--or at least for relatively moderate states against radical and aggressive ones--a consideration of what the United States did not do in the Middle East also undercuts the notion of overwhelming and justified Arab/Muslim grievances based on American misdeeds.

If the United States wanted to carry out "anti-Arab" or "anti-Muslim" policies as it is charged, or even if it wanted to act as a traditional great power, it could have implemented dozens of actions in the Middle East that could have been justified by events there. The fact that the United States did not do so is related to its goals--which include a very serious desire to win support from Arabs and Muslims for a variety of reasons ranging from the Cold War, to good trade relations, to avoiding conflict.

Another factor here is the unique American style of foreign policy which tends to be uncomfortable with realpolitik, wishes to avoid force to a greater extent than other historic powers, wants to be liked, and other features too extensive to explore here. A simple way to put it would be that the United States generally favors a minimalist foreign policy--avoiding interventions or conflicts whenever possible--and a policy that projects values--like development and democracy.(3)

Clearly, a part of the Arab/Muslim critique of U.S. policy is based on an expectation of what America wants and how it might behave. For many in the Middle East, the view of the United States is a projection of what these states, leaders or movements would do if they were the world's most powerful country. They would seek global hegemony and control over the Middle East, using force and subversion in a systematic fashion to achieve those ends, and wiping out their enemies without mercy or

tolerance. Consequently, the United States is accused of these same things, as if it wanted to subordinate the Arab world and defeat or destroy Islam.

Consider what the United States did not do in past decades:

--It did not embark on an all-out effort to overthrow the Islamist regimes in Iran or Sudan, even though these regimes sponsored terrorism against the United States and unilaterally declared it to be an enemy. Nor did it attack Iran for its involvement in the taking of American hostages in Lebanon or in sponsoring terrorist attacks that cost American lives. The United States did invoke sanctions to change certain specific policies of these states.

--Even when Iran held American diplomats as hostages, the United States publicly declared it would avoid using force and sought diplomatic means to resolve the situation.

--It did not try to overthrow Saddam Husayn in 1991 partly because it accepted the argument that to do so would make the United States unpopular in the Arab world. Even when Kurdish and Shi'ite Iraqis rose up against the regime, the United States did not help them bring down its most hated enemy in the Middle East.

--It did not pressure or seek to subvert Syria even when Damascus was involved in anti-American terrorism. It courted Syria for the Kuwait war and the peace process but put no serious pressure against Damascus even when the Syrians walked out of the peace process. Rather than act as an imperialist power, the United States flattered and courted Damascus.

--It did not try to destroy Yasir Arafat and the PLO even when they were responsible for anti-American terrorism and aligned with the USSR. It did not criticize or pressure them when they broke agreements, slapped Clinton in the face by rejecting two peace initiatives in the year 2000, and broke at least three cease-fires promised to the United States in 2000 or 2001. The United States did not have an "anti-Palestinian" policy except in the sense that it opposed Palestinian efforts to destroy Israel's

existence, while supporting efforts to find a compromise solution to the conflict that would help satisfy moderate Palestinian goals.

--It did not try to punish Egypt for rapprochement with Iraq or secret purchases of missiles from North Korea. It did not threaten Egypt with a cut-off of aid even when Cairo refused to cooperate with the war on terrorism in 2001.

--It dropped sanctions on Libya when Libya turned over two intelligence officers and took no further actions even though the court case showed Libyan involvement in the bombing of a U.S. airliner with the deaths of many Americans.

--When two U.S. embassies in east Africa were blown up with immense loss of life by Usama bin Ladin's group in 1998, it responded only with one rocket attack on a factory in Sudan allegedly owned by bin Ladin and being used to make chemical weapons and one rocket attack on a terrorist training base in Afghanistan. If the United States was so bullying, imperialistic, and eager to hurt Islamist forces, it could have justifiably launched full-scale military assaults and other punishments on those hosting or helping bin Ladin.

--It did not go all-out in supporting Israel even when the peace process collapsed in the year 2000 but instead maintained a studious position of neutrality, probably spending more time criticizing Israel than it did the Palestinians.

--It did not use all its assets and resources to force Arab states to support the peace process with Israel but only employed very limited efforts at persuasion.

--It did not use the occasion of an Iraqi attempt to assassinate former President George Bush to go to war with Iraq, sending only a one-day rocket attack on Iraqi intelligence headquarters, and even that was done at night in order to minimize casualties.

--While the United States did bomb Iraq and fight to retain sanctions when Iraq blatantly broke its commitments on eliminating weapons

of mass destruction, the United States also made compromises to ease sanctions, tried to improve the humanitarian situation in Iraq, limited its use of force, and resisted proposals to go all-out in using the Iraqi opposition in trying to overthrow Saddam.

--When U.S. oil companies' holdings were nationalized and when oil prices were raised steeply, the United States did not try to overthrow regimes or force them to lower prices using threats or force.

--The United States did not try to dominate Gulf after 1990, despite its position of overwhelming military strength there; did not overthrow or dominate the local governments; did not demand a huge ransom for its help (unlike Iraq did after the Iran-Iraq war) or threaten to punish Gulf states unless they changed their policies to be more to the U.S.'s liking (unlike the behavior of the radical Arab states and Iran), or insist that they transform their systems (like Iran and radical movements had done).

--The United States did not launch an anti-Islamist campaign in the region. It did not send forces, or special counterinsurgency aid, or demand that Islamist groups be repressed, or do a host of other things it could have done in this regard.

--It did not take advantage of the USSR's disappearance to impose anything on anybody and certainly not to establish any American domination in the region. Despite having won the Cold War, the United States did not seek to take revenge on regimes which had supported the losing side.

This list is far from complete but it gives a sample of how the United States chose options which reflected the fact that it did not seek to dominate the region, destroy Islam, undermine Arabism, or take other actions of which it has been accused. All along, there was a constant consciousness of these factors and a deliberate effort to avoid creating the type of perceptions now promoted by bin Ladin, most of the Arab media, and many Arab states.

The fact is that whatever America has done in the Middle East it has used a small portion of its potential power; stopped far short of what it could have done, often with justification; and avoided intervention whenever possible. It could be claimed that the United States could not have done more to "injure" Arabs and Muslims, but all the complaints are centered on a claim that the United States did indeed act in a bullying, imperialistic manner. If, for whatever reason, the United States limited its actions in the region, then the alleged grievances against this restrained superpower should also be smaller.

Again, even if the above lists have overstated the mildness and laissez-faire orientation of U.S. policy in the region--though more points could have been raised to demonstrate this assertion--the mass of evidence is still impressive. How can the real record be so disregarded in the Middle East?

There are four ways being used to distort this history. The first is simply to ignore the truth about U.S. policy. This has been an extremely important factor. For reasons of their own, discussed below, the Arab and Iranian media hardly ever say anything positive about the United States, while Arab and Iranian leaders--even those who benefit from U.S. help--rarely praise America. Shut off from contrary information and constantly fed antagonistic views, it is hardly surprising that the masses are hostile to the United States. Those who would present a different view are discouraged by peer pressure, censorship, and fear of being labeled a U.S. puppet.

Ironically, the most blatant omission of all is that the United States was the outside power that played the greatest role in freeing Afghanistan from Soviet control. Bin Ladin and his sympathizers must conceal this point since they want to claim total credit for this achievement and, of course, to admit otherwise would make them subject to accusations of being American agents.

The second technique is to distort the record. For example, bin Ladin himself charges that the

suffering of Muslims in Kosovo and Bosnia--whom the United States actually protected--or in places like east Timor, the Philippines, and Algeria--where the United States had no role--are America's fault. In other areas, American motives can be misrepresented. For instance, U.S. humanitarian efforts in Somalia are portrayed as an imperialistic, anti-Muslim campaign defeated by heroic local resistance. Again, the Arab media and leaders are complicit in this approach, having laid a foundation for it by their own presentation of issues.

A third method, and one that has been less noticed by outside observers, is to ignore other threats to the region. An outstanding example here is the whitewashing of Iraqi President Saddam Husayn. After all, the Iraqi leader began two wars; killing hundreds of thousands of Muslims and Arabs; looted and vandalized Kuwait; threatened all his neighbors and thus the holy cities of Mecca and Medina also; tortured and repressed his own people, against some of whom he also used chemical weapons; fired missiles at Iran, Saudi Arabia and Israel; and was working to develop nuclear arms with which he could seize power in the Gulf.

Yet now the Arab peoples are told that it is the United States, not Iraq, which threatens to dominate the Gulf and enslave its people. American-backed international sanctions against Iraq and the use of sporadic force to make Iraq less dangerous are cited as major reasons justifying the assault on America. The strange implicit alliance between bin Ladin and Saddam Husayn, a secularist who has killed many Muslim clerics (albeit Shi'a ones mainly) is one of the more bizarre elements of the situation.

Fourth and finally, there has been an attempt to reduce all of American policy to a single issue, defined as "U.S. support for Israel," while also distorting the nature and policies of Israel itself. This point is discussed, below. For the moment, though, it can be said that to try to negate all the United States has done for the Arab and Muslim world--and all that it has

NOT done to the Arab and Muslim world--on the sole basis of US-Israel relations shows the flimsiness of the case against America.

We should not believe, then, as too many American intellectuals and Middle East experts have done--that the United States is guilty of grave sins against the Arab world or Iran that merit shame, repentance, and a change in basic policies. Equally, we should not accept the idea so prevalent in the Arab world that past American behavior explains or justifies the September 11, 2001 attack. The reasons for these attitudes and the new anti-American strategy are far deeper and far more embedded in Middle East politics than merely a response to U.S. policies.

THE ISRAEL FACTOR

Before considering the real roots of anti-American views and behavior, however, the issue of the U.S.-Israel relationship requires some separate consideration. Clearly, the United States has been Israel's main ally since the 1970s. But what does the concept that "the United States supports Israel" mean in the overall contexts of U.S. policy and the current spate of anti-Americanism.

There are many complex and controversial issues involved here but a brief analysis will cover the most essential points for the specific questions addressed by this article. It should also be noted that the focus in this case is on U.S. and not on Israeli policy.

The United States has not "supported" Israel in some bid to dominate the Middle East, to oppress or exterminate Arabs or Muslims, or any of the fanciful--though deeply believed--notions so often put forward in the Middle East. Moreover, if Israel became such an important U.S. ally it was in no small part due to the failure of Arab states to offer the United States more in terms of partnership, as well as the alliance of several of them with the Soviet Union and their use of such tactics as sponsoring anti-American terrorism.

U.S. policy regarding Israel has revolved around two basic principles: to help Israel

survive in the face of real, powerful threats to eliminate that state and also to help broker a negotiated peace agreement that would be acceptable to both sides in order to end the conflict. It is regarding these two points that the radicals' objections to U.S. policy toward Israel becomes clear, for they wish to destroy Israel and to block any negotiated arrangement that would allow Israel's survival and to defuse their ability to use the issue to foment revolution in the region.

For many decades, the Arab states and the Palestinian movement were not yet ready or willing to make peace with Israel. Whenever opportunities seemed to arise for progress in negotiations, the United States seized them throughout the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. In the 1993-2000 Oslo process, the United States tried to facilitate a deal on the Israel-Palestinian and Israel-Syrian fronts. While it is possible to critique the details and timing of specific American efforts, the overall goal was quite clear. During the Oslo process, the United States put such peacemaking at the top of its international agenda. Over time, it moved considerably closer to the Arab/Palestinian standpoint and urged Israel to do so as well.

Negotiating a compromise agreement was always in the U.S. interest precisely because it did want good relations with the Arab world. By resolving this heated issue, the United States would be better able to promote regional stability, reduce the possibility of war, and ensure its own position in the region. For these same reasons, the Islamist radicals opposed this policy. Indeed, U.S. efforts at peacemaking--intended to ease regional problems--were more dangerous for their goals of revolution than if the United States had refrained from any such activities. A workable peace would strengthen U.S. influence in the area, too. These are the reasons that radical Islamist forces opposed the peace process altogether and staged many terrorist attacks to try to destroy it.

Their complaint was not that the diplomatic process was moving too slowly but that it might succeed at all. Success would rob them of a

useful issue and also ensure Arafat's dominance over his Islamist opponents, Hamas and Islamic Jihad. Indeed, ironically, if one Middle Eastern leader benefited from U.S. efforts to strengthen him against Islamist forces, it was Yasir Arafat. The fact that Yasir Arafat and the Palestinian Authority became a virtual U.S. client for much of the 1990s only further dismayed the Islamist radicals.

The timing of the current wave of anti-Americanism demonstrates the accuracy of the above analysis. Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon, which the United States urged and supported, was not seen as a step toward "ending occupation" or achieving peace but as a sign that Israel was weak and that an offensive against it should be escalated. Bin Ladin's ideological framework was laid down and the September 11 attacks were being planned at a time when the peace process seemed closest to failure, even though the crisis actually took place at a time when it had clearly failed.

It is strange that the height of anti-Americanism came at the height of American offers to support an independent Palestinian state with its capital in east Jerusalem. And even if the specific offers are judged inadequate by various Arabs due to their details or presentation (and often on the basis of misleading information about what was offered), this hardly explains or justifies how such a stance justifies portrayal of U.S. policy as some form of horrible brutality and indifference.

Those truly interested in the quick and real relief of Palestinian suffering could have reacted by saying, "They offered more. Good. They are coming along. Let's try to get them to go further, perhaps by offering some compromise ourselves." The main Palestinian grievances could have been resolved in a period of months. Instead, a decision was made to sustain and escalate violence, a strategy that is doomed to failure and that has already inflicted--and will continue to do so--more suffering on the Palestinians than any alternative course.

In addition, the implication of the claim that the crisis is almost totally due to U.S. backing for Israel neglects and misrepresents other key points:

--It implies that the collapse of the peace process and a gigantic crisis in the Middle East has resulted largely from a dispute over one or two neighborhoods in east Jerusalem or two or three percent of West Bank territory rather than other issues entirely or a refusal to make peace with Israel at all.

--It ignores the fact that bin Ladin and his allies have shown little interest in the Palestinian issue in the past and that this question is a secondary point in an analysis which sees Islam at war with the West on a dozen fronts.

--To a large extent, Arab and Palestinian forces are understandably attempting to use the current crisis opportunistically as leverage in trying to gain more unilateral concessions from the United States and Israel.

--Since Israel's withdrawal from Lebanon was taken by radical Islamists as a reason to increase violence, arguing that Hizballah's strategy of armed struggle brought success, wouldn't an Israeli pull out in the West Bank and Gaza be taken as proving that the September 11 attack made big gains possible and thus encourage more anti-American terrorism? This would also greatly increase support for bin Ladin as a hero and role model who could be said to have "achieved more" than all the Arab states were able to do on the issue.

Finally, the attempt to reduce all of U.S. Middle East policy to the phrase "support for Israel" is really an effort to mask the fact that most of U.S. Middle East policy has always been primarily concerned with supporting some Arabs (and Muslims) against others, and that some Arabs have, for perfectly valid reasons, sought U.S. help to survive against radical forces.

The radicals' real complaint is that the United States has helped Israel survive. Attempts to broker a political settlement, even

one involving a Palestinian state with sovereignty over east Jerusalem, is a crime for them because it would undermine their cause's ability to exploit the issue, and reduce their Palestinian colleagues' opportunity to seize power in their own community. It is not "U.S. support for Israel" as such that has created anti-Americanism but rather the distortion of U.S. policy and also the extremist goals that are pursued by radicals but echoed by many others in the region.

THE REAL ROOTS OF THE ANTI-AMERICAN STRATEGY

Even if one does not accept all the examples given in this article to show American attempts to help Arabs and Muslims--and even this article does not exhaust the cases that could be cited--a huge amount of evidence still remains to show that the case against American Middle East policy does not stand on an objective assessment. The case against American policy rests on far weaker grounds than one may have been led to believe

Certainly, many Arabs and Muslims do not see the situation this way or act as if they do so. "For many Arabs, regardless of their politics, the U.S. has replaced colonial Europe as the embodiment of evil," Gerges wrote. "In their eyes, the U.S. is the source of the ills and misfortunes that befell their world in the second part of the past century. Today, to be politically conscious in the Arab world is to be highly suspicious of America, its policies, and its motives." (4) Why, then, is the perception so different?

Obviously, difference of opinion in viewing events is rooted in a whole set of cultural and historical factors, questions of language and familiarity, interests and politics. Nevertheless, to attribute this outcome to simple misunderstandings or honest disagreements over the facts is insufficient to explain what is going on in the region. Only by examining such issues further can the reason for the crisis, the wave of anti-Americanism, and especially its timing be better understood.

The real basis of a wave of anti-Americanism in the Arab world is that this is a strategy that offers something for everyone there, and at no significant cost either:

--For the radical oppositionists, anti-Americanism is a way to muster mass support after they failed to do so for an anti-government revolutionary strategy. Given the inability of revolutionary Islamist movements to overthrow any Arab government using a variety of strategies, they are desperately seeking some new tactic. The masses have overwhelmingly rejected the radical Islamists' claims that they represent true Islam, noting the many ways that their views deviated from Islam as it was always practiced. But this objection can be swept aside by clothing the "fundamentalists" heresies in the attractive garments of xenophobia. It is an old trick of totalitarian movements and one that works very well.

An added benefit for the radical opposition movements to use anti-Americanism is that it is a relatively safe strategy. Arab regimes that will quickly and brutally repress a challenge to themselves will do nothing against militants who only attack the United States.

The extremists' real goal is to de-legitimize the moderate forces; mobilize the masses using the existing hatred for America and stirring up more, and maintain the myth of Arab or Islamist unity against a foreign foe. Our enemy, they argue, cannot come from our own ranks but must be something and someone external. The cause of our problems and suffering is not in any way due to our own actions or decisions but purely to the meddling of evil foreigners and their local agents.

--For the regimes, anti-Americanism is a way to distract attention from their numerous failings. Instead of pressing for democracy, human rights, higher living standards, less corruption and incompetence, a change of leadership, or any of numerous other demands that would damage the interests of the governments and rulers, the focus of attention could be turned to shouting at the United States. This strategy defuses opposition and takes the

pressure off the rulers to do anything constructive.

In short, rather than fear anti-Americanism as a tool used by oppositions against them, the regimes embrace anti-Americanism as both a defense and as a tool for strengthening their own power. Such a strategy appeases the radicals, distracts their own citizens, and maintains their legitimacy as good militant Arabs (and Muslims). Governments have one more reason to demand national unity, (i.e., to insist that no one criticize them or demand domestic change) in the face of this American "threat" to the Arabs and Muslims.

Most Arab governments are not so afraid of bin Ladin and his allies and the regimes certainly prefer that those forces attack America rather than themselves. While recognizing that there is some risk in this strategy, the regimes view bin Ladin as a threat and problem only for America. Thus, they see little need to cooperate with the United States in an anti-terrorist campaign.

They can hope to enjoy the best of both worlds. Even if they do nothing, the United States will eliminate the threat of bin Ladin. For moderate states, their unwillingness to help will probably not cost them anything in terms of their long-term ties to the United States; for radical states, it probably will not worsen their adversarial relationship with America. At the same time, these governments can stir up and manipulate anti-American, anti-Western, Arab nationalist, and Islamist sentiments to consolidate support for themselves.

For Iraq, anti-Americanism becomes a useful tool in its battle to escape from sanctions and rebuild its military might. Who can remember Iraq's seizure of Kuwait if America is the true threat? Even the 1991 war can be transformed from a U.S.-led liberation struggle to an example of anti-Muslim, anti-Arab American aggression.

For Iran, putting the emphasis on anti-Americanism provides an opportunity to get U.S. forces out of the Gulf and to make a trans-Muslim appeal that negates Iran's handicaps

of being Shi'ite, not Sunni, and Persian, not Arab. At the same time, the United States has eliminated their troublesome neighbor, the Taliban government in Afghanistan, though Tehran does not want Afghanistan to become a U.S. client either.

For Syria, anti-Americanism is a substitute for the reform that President Bashar al-Asad promised and quickly squelched. For the Palestinian leaders, anti-Americanism erases their own rejection of compromise peace offers and resort to violence, while also providing a good weapon to mobilize the Arab world and a lever to undermine Israel's international support and demand more concessions.

Egypt can once again show itself to be the leading champion of Arab interests, with some additional Islamic credentials also added to the government's credit. It can try to use the crisis to gain leverage by demanding the United States pressure Israel for unilateral concessions as a way to reduce anti-Americanism in the Middle East. Cairo can also realistically expect that this non-cooperation, and even the continuing anti-American hostility of the state-controlled Egyptian media, will in no way jeopardize its \$2 billion in annual U.S. aid.

Arab governments can also use the crisis to demand more concessions from the West and hence material gains for themselves. They argue that they can do nothing because their hands are tied by the passion of public opinion (a factor which never stops them from tough action when this same factor threatens their own interests). They insist that the United States must put pressure on Israel for unilateral concessions, end sanctions against Iraq, and meet their other demands--without any reciprocal action on their part--as the only way of defusing the crisis.

Again, it should be stressed that no Arab government (with the possible exception of Sudan) and certainly not Iran's regime likes bin Ladin or endorses his specific brand of Islamist ideology. They do not wish (with the possible exception of Iraq) to support him or praise him. But they will exploit his ideas and deeds, adapting them to their own needs, and they will

only attack his forces directly if they are deemed to be a threat to internal stability. Bin Ladin's full ideology is too dangerous: they don't want a confrontation with the West or a war with Christianity. They don't want to lose the trade arrangements or the economic aid or military defense arrangements they have with the United States. But if they can get away with it, the regimes will also play the Arab and Islamist militancy game at home for domestic benefit, thus reinforcing their own people's antagonism to the West and the United States, as well as making a peaceful resolution of the Arab-Israeli dispute more difficult.

--For the intellectuals and opinion-makers, anti-Americanism permits them to vent their own anger against a government-approved target, rather than risk their positions as the rulers' privileged courtiers by taking courageous stands against their own societies' injustices. They also do not have to consider changing their own traditional militant ideologies. Anyone who differs from the prevailing view can be intimidated into silence by being accused of being anti-Arab, anti-Muslim and agents of America. Those who talk of domestic reform, democratization, privatization, and other changes can be shut up.

--For the masses, anti-Americanism falls in line with what they have been taught in school, told by the state-controlled media, heard preached at the mosque, and seen purveyed by their leaders (or the opposition movements). Hating America as being responsible for everything wrong in their lives makes them feel better and provides an explanation of how the world works. It is important to understand that these attitudes are not merely outbursts of spontaneous anger or the result of seeing pictures of the Palestinian intifada on al-Jazira television but are the product of decades of one-sided, state-sponsored conditioning and propaganda.

Consider, for example, how Egypt--arguably America's greatest ally in the Arab world--handled the Egypt Air crash of 1999, when a passenger plane dove into the ocean and a crew

member was suspected--though not proven--to have been responsible. In official statements and the state-controlled media, this tragedy was presented as being caused by a U.S. or Israeli-orchestrated conspiracy. Suggestions that an Egyptian co-pilot might have deliberately caused the crash for political or personal reasons were rejected as a slander on Egypt and its people. In short, even the investigation of a plane crash was presented to the masses in inflammatory anti-American terms.(5)

All these groups can project anti-Americanism all the more fully and easily because they share a common premise based on past experience and current expectation: Whatever noises it makes, the United States will not do very much to punish them for this behavior. For while the complaint is that the United States is responsible for everything bad that happens and is supposed to be a satanic bully, simultaneously they believe that the United States is impotent.

There is, then, a strange concurrence of interests between bin Ladin and many Arab governments. The radicals argue that those who oppose them are American puppets, and the moderates agree in pushing their own people and the radicals to attack America instead of themselves.

If the Arab and Muslim reaction is explained purely in terms of America's past sins and their own grievances, none of these points can be understood. The reality of the Middle East is thus concealed and rendered incomprehensible. In short, it is not true that "where there's smoke, there's fire" in the sense that U.S. foreign policy itself has sparked antagonism. It would be more accurate to say that where there's smoke, there are arsonists at work.

Are there legitimate Arab and Muslim grievances against America? Of course there are. But there are also legitimate American grievances against Arab states and Islamist opposition movements that are equally impressive. Moreover, one must assess the overall level of legitimate grievances and the legitimacy of a terrorist response to them. A

good way to do so is to compare them to the grievances and responses of people in other countries and regions.

If one wants to assess relative grievances against America based on past U.S. policies, the Arabs and Muslims of the Middle East would be relatively far down on the list. After all, one could far more easily find, justify, and see as larger the grievances of Native Americans and African-Americans; the Japanese and Germans, defeated and occupied after World War Two; Latin Americans, who faced U.S. supported coups and military regimes along with a high level of economic influence; Filipinos and Puerto Ricans, who were ruled by the United States for decades; Cubans subject to U.S. sanctions; Russians and other ex-Soviet peoples defeated in the Cold War; and Vietnamese or other people in Southeast Asia who suffered hundreds of thousands of casualties as well as American carpet bombing, napalm, and deforestation; Chinese, who dislike U.S. support for Taiwan; or sub-Saharan Africans, who deplored U.S. support for South Africa..

One grievance that hardly exists in the Middle East, while being paramount in other regions, is the issue of economic exploitation. The oil-producing states have a great deal of economic power and wealth, bossing around U.S. companies as they wish. Unlike in Latin America and Asia, there is little American investment in the Middle East. There is no domination of the economy as there is in Latin America, sweatshops as there are in Asia, or control over raw materials control as there is in Africa.

In this respect, the Middle East has far less reason for grievances than other regions. It is hard to argue that Arabs are poor because Americans are rich. And it cannot be claimed that Arab raw materials are sold at low prices in exchange for high-priced Western industrial goods, a situation quite different from that of those countries that have only cacao or tin to sell.

Another grievance that has little or no reality in the Middle East compared to other areas is

the complaint that the United States makes or breaks governments there. Since the pro-Shah Iranian coup of 1953, there is literally not a single case in which U.S. intervention can be credibly charged, much less proven, in the Middle East. Only regarding Iraq has the United States been even half-heartedly involved in trying to change the government in recent memory.

The point here is not to judge the merits of these potential grievances as such but to say that they are far more real and extensive than those claimed by people in the Middle East. Everyone has grievances against America but in only one part of the world does this hatred take on such an intensive and popular form. Nowhere else is there popular and governmental support for terrorist attacks against the United States. Something is very peculiar in this situation and clearly the problem does not stem from the extent of American misdeeds. Instead, the implication is that the problem's roots are deeply embedded in local mistakes, in using America as an excuse and as a tool for political manipulation and control.

Indeed, in the Middle East, the case against America is often an attempt to justify the use of the United States as a handy target, employing the same technique that Nazi Germany, the Communist USSR, and other dictatorships did in their time. It is a way to mobilize masses, to excuse the shortcomings of local governments, and to carry ideological movements to victory. It is also a way to disparage a whole set of otherwise attractive ideas--political freedom, modernization, and so on--which are linked to America by slanderous the perceived exemplar and sponsor of that way of life.

Traditional Islam and aspects of Arab society are under assault by Westernization or Americanization, modernization and globalization. But the same situation applies also to every other part of the world, including Europe. In many places, this challenge is met by rejecting some aspects of these things and adapting others. Nowhere else in the world,

however, is resistance so uncompromising and thoroughgoing as it is (at least in terms of rhetoric) in the Arab and Muslim world. Anti-Americanism is also a specific element in this response.

A subtlety of labeling is very revealing on this point. Starting with the Iranian revolutionary leader, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in the 1970s, it has become commonplace to label the United States as the "great Satan" (and Israel as the "little Satan"). But Satan, in both the Christian and the Muslim religions, is not an imperialist bully, rather he is a tempter. He makes his wares seem so attractive that people willingly and voluntarily sell their souls to him.

Many of the extremist Islamists, including most of the September 11 suicide terrorists, had a great deal of personal contact with the West, as did many of the militant Iranian students who supported Khomeini and seized the U.S. embassy in Tehran in 1979. They were people who came close to yielding to the "temptation" and they came to define their Islam not as most normal Muslims do as a body of belief they feel secure in but as a way of maintaining personal identity against America and the West precisely because they fear their own desire to join Western society. This basic attitude, to a greater or lesser extent, is common among Arabs, especially the class of people who govern and who dominate the media. In short, anti-Americanism in this respect arises not from the ugliness of U.S. policy but from the attractiveness of American society.

ANTI-AMERICANISM AS A FINAL REFUGE

A saying has it that extreme patriotism is the last refuge of scoundrels. In a real sense, anti-Americanism is a last refuge of failed political systems and movements in the Middle East. Between the 1940s and 1990s, the Arab world underwent numerous disappointments, defeats, and failures. It was unable to unite, destroy Israel, achieve rapid economic development, create representative political structures, banish

violence, or make massive improvements in the people's living standards. The development of large-scale oil and gas resources in a handful of countries was virtually the sole exception to this pattern. And even this was a frustration for many since it strengthened the most traditional societies and their influence.

Between the 1950s and the 1990s, generally speaking, Arab ideologies and strategies led to disaster. Pan-Arab nationalism divided the Arab world instead of uniting it. Unnecessary wars sacrificed scarce resources. Development lagged; dictatorships proliferated. The PLO went from one defeat to another. Lebanon and Algeria had destructive civil wars. Islamism, presenting itself as an alternative utopian plan to Arab nationalism, provoked more disorder and violence without being able to take power outside Iran. The Iran-Iraq war and Iraqi invasion of Kuwait cost hundreds of thousands of lives and wasted billions of dollars for no good purpose.

One group or ideology after another promised to solve these problems--Nasserism, Ba'thism, Marxism, national liberationism, Saddam Husayn, Khomeini, Islamism, and others. All failed, usually in a way that inflicted heavy costs on the people and set these countries and societies back still further. Equally, one method after another had a similar result and effect. Neither military coups, nor mass uprisings, nor terrorism, nor grassroots social organization, nor participating in electoral systems, nor guerrilla warfare brought the desired outcomes.

By the 1990s, this mountain of failure could no longer be concealed. The Arab world had appeared to reach rock-bottom. Even in Iran, the Islamic revolution was being harshly criticized by the majority of the population. Having run out of old ideas, many Iranians were willing to consider such extreme innovations as moderation, privatization, democratization, modernization, civil society, peace with Israel, and friendship to the United States. There was a serious debate over choosing a different path.

In the end, though, many judged these proposed solutions as being too dangerous, despite the ample benefits that would have been possible. There were real and rational reasons for this concern. For example, democracy implied the loss of power by existing regimes. Modernization could mean more Western influence and secular trends. Peace with Israel required the abandonment of treasured ideas and expectations. Rather than being outraged by the failure of the Arab-Israeli peace process, Arab leaders, radical oppositionists, and intellectuals worried that it might succeed and thus they would lose this issue as an excuse for keeping the Arab world frozen in time. After all, with few real exceptions, the Arab states were ruled and had systems remarkably close to those that had prevailed in the 1970s and 1980s.

If, indeed, there would be peace with Israel and other big changes, virtually every regime would be in serious trouble. What excuse would they have for continued dictatorship? What rationale would they have for high military spending? How could they continue to stem the tide of demands for better living standards, more democracy, social change and economic reform? Without the specter of conflict, would it also be harder to stem globalization with its implied Westernization and challenges to tradition?

For regimes, democratization and human rights could mean their defeat. In the West, the fall of the Soviet bloc was greeted as a great victory for democracy and international peace. In the Arab world, though, rulers had not only lost an ally but were wondering whether the collapse of these regimes was a precedent for their own demise. They noted how democracy movements and pressure for greater civil liberties had led to the total overthrow of dictatorial regimes, and could well wonder whether there would be a firing squad in their future. Those individuals who had become wealthy through their government connections had to worry that they would be displaced by a real market and competition. Officers had to doubt whether their high military budgets

would be sustained. Islamist and radical nationalist oppositionists could well assume that they would swept aside as liberal, democratic opposition movements came to power. Islamic clerics knew that an opening of society could lead to a decline and dilution of piety. And lapdog intellectuals understood that if the ideological slogans, the only product they had to purvey, became unfashionable they might actually have to work for a living.

This is an all-too-brief presentation of a major historical era. Yet dozens of examples could be brought up to justify each aspect of this argument. The bottom line is this: by the end of the 1990s, huge sectors of Arab and Iranian society were looking for some new leader, doctrine, and strategy to save them from becoming obsolete, both politically and perhaps physically dead.

Elements of this counterrevolution had already emerged by the year 2000. The Palestinian leadership and Syria refused to make a compromise peace with Israel not because they were appalled by one percent of the proposed deal or their feelings were hurt but because such an outcome seemed extraordinarily dangerous for their interests. Syria's new President Bashar al-Asad had moved to destroy incipient reform movements. Months before the attack on New York, Syria's government discredited civil society and democracy by denouncing them as Western imports. Iranian hardliners blocked the reformers despite the fact that the latter won all the elections, in part by accusing their rivals of being American agents. Saddam Husayn was close to extricating himself from the sanctions regime without having to make a single compromise, in part by persuading much of the world that America was persecuting and murdering his people.

But the emergence of bin Ladin and his great "accomplishment" of September 11, 2001, was the defining moment in furnishing the new hero, strategy, and doctrine to justify scuttling any major change in the region. In America, the toppling of the World Trade Center killed

several thousand people; in the Middle East, it killed any hope of attaining a breakthrough for peace, democracy, greater freedom, or a more productive economic system. It assured the continued reign of demagoguery, extremism, and violence.

Hatred of America thus justifies a great deal that is bad in the Arab world and helps keep it politically dominated by dictatorships, socially unfree and economically underdeveloped. Blaming national shortcomings on America means that the Arab debate does not deal with the internal problems and weaknesses that are the real and main cause of these countries' problems. It justifies the view that the only barrier to complete success, prosperity and justice for the Arab (and Islamic) world is the United States.

Instead of dealing with privatization, women's equality, democracy, civil society, freedom of speech, due process of law, and 20 other issues the Arab world needs to address, attention can be focused on—or rather, diverted to—the conjuring of American conspiracy. Fixing blame for the Arab world's problems on Israel's existence is a regional staple. Yet no matter how emotional is the charge against Israel, its salience is truly overwhelming only for the Palestinians. The advantage of anti-Americanism is that there is something to everyone's advantage in this argument and any Arab or Muslim can adapt it to his own list of priorities. The solution for the dilemma of the Arab world and of the hard-liners in Iran was not peace but the stirring up of a new wave of hysteria against external enemies.

While bin Ladin's role is particularly important in helping to kill the best chance in modern history that Arab and Muslim societies had to rethink their past mistakes and to change course, the function he is playing is hardly new. In Islamic thought there is the idea of a "century reformer," a charismatic individual who appears at the end of each century to revitalize Islam.

Bin Ladin might more accurately be called a "decade challenger." In every decade, a leader has arisen to issue a call for the Arab or Islamic

world to rise up against the West. This is the function portrayed by Nasser in the 1950s and 1960s, by Palestinian and other revolutionary movements in the 1970s, by Khomeini in the 1980s, and by Saddam Husayn in the 1990s. Each has mustered a broad range of support and for a historical moment held center stage. Each promised to be the savior solving the Arabs' problems, defeat their enemies, and ushering in a new age when the Arabs (or Muslims, or Iranians) would be powerful, happy, rich, and restored to their rightful, leading place in the world.

Each also failed. But after a period of disappointment, a new hero and magic idea has been grasped. Islam rejects the use of alcohol, but the ideology of utopian expectation has proven to be an equally dangerous intoxicant.

Enter bin Ladin. After so many defeats, the September 11 attacks on America could be judged a great success. Anti-Americanism was the new doctrine needed. It made sense. What was being rejected, after all, was an "American" paradigm for modernization and change, so why not go directly to the alleged source of the despised program of moderation, peace, democracy, compromise, private enterprise, secularization, Westernization, rule of law, open media, pragmatism, and so on? If America is the example you don't want to follow and want to discourage people from following then it must be bad, all bad. If America is the temptation that seems so appealing you must make it unappealing. You must discredit anyone who likes that paradigm and the paradigm itself.

Few will join bin Laden and not many will explicitly endorse him or his specific methods. But the basic ideas he has propounded now seem to be the new tidal wave that will lead the Arabs and Muslims to victory without compromise. More realistically, it will be very useful in stopping the kinds of rethinking and change that would most benefit the Arab and Middle East Muslim worlds. Of course, it will fail like its predecessors, and the waters will turn red with the blood of innocents killed as a

result of the preference of extremism over moderation, of violence over peacemaking.

And yet this progression does make good sense. It does serve the interest of many in the Arab world and in Iran, even if bin Ladin is defeated. One might say, in some ways, the new anti-Americanism is especially useful if bin Ladin is defeated. In that case, one could have the useful rhetoric without the dangerous revolutionary movement.

AMERICA: ARROGANT BULLY OR COWARDLY WEAKLING?

One of the most fascinating aspects of the new anti-Americanism--though even this point is not so new--is the contradiction between seeing the United States as an arrogant bully whose mistreatment of the Arabs and Muslims merits punishment and as a cowardly weakling. There are two slight variations as to how this problem is addressed, though the difference between them is not so important. It could be claimed that America was always cowardly, and the heroic revolutionaries are only exposing that fact, or that the United States is made cowardly by the revolutionaries' own heroism and clever strategy of attacking America directly.

While the radicals must portray America as a bully to provoke outrage against it, they must also portray America as weak to encourage Arabs and Muslims to fight it and believe they can win. After all, the revolutionaries and radical states are frustrated by the fact that too many Arabs and Muslims are already afraid of the United States, or at least see its friendship as an asset they don't want to lose. The revolutionaries have an uphill battle if they want the masses or regimes to join them in practice. They must answer some difficult questions: Why don't people listen to them and rise up against their rulers and U.S. influence? Why don't regimes all go to war against Israel at once and why don't Muslims by the thousands become suicide bombers? Why aren't American interests attacked everywhere and American "ideas" rejected outright?

An obvious reason for this is that various people and governments are afraid they will lose this war because they are afraid of the United States. Of course, one byproduct of building up America as the “Great Satan” is to make it seem even more frightening, giving it even more leverage in the region. As has often been seen in Middle Eastern history, whatever they say loudly in public, many politicians and others want such a powerful force on their side.

So the revolutionaries must persuade the masses and leaders that America is simultaneously horrible and helpless: that the United States cannot do anything if it is attacked, ridiculed, and disregarded. Powerless against their own dictators, against defeats, against regime corruption, against restrictions on their religion or the restrictions of their religion, and against poverty, any Arab or Muslim can at least spit on the United States and get away with it.

Here, too, is a key problem with the U.S. debate over the terrorism crisis: American opinion-makers, diplomats, and academics are defining America’s mistake in the Middle East as having been too tough. Instead, the belief that America could be defeated and the readiness to try such a strategy arises from the fact that the United States was too weak and meek in its behavior. Far from attacking America because it is really a big bully, extremists past and present launched assaults to prove their belief that the United States was a paper tiger.

Thus, while U.S. policy has made mistakes perhaps the biggest mistake of all is the precise opposite of what it is accused of doing by critics both at home and in the Middle East. Rather than having been guilty of bullying, the United States has been too soft to merit respect. Here is a country in which the most influential text on the Middle East, Edward Said’s book, Orientalism, charges that Americans—and especially American scholars--totally misunderstand and constantly insult the Middle East. In fact, the Middle East’s miscomprehension and hostile behavior toward

America far exceeds these same qualities on the part of the United States.

The four quotes that begin this article show that respect, rather than love, is the quality prized in a Middle East which accepts realpolitik down to its very bones.(6) After the United States did not respond toughly to so many terrorist attacks in the past, let Saddam Husayn stay in power but let the shah fall, pressured its friends and courted its enemies, allowed its prized peace process to be trashed without a word of criticism for those responsible, and acted so often in this same pattern, why should others respect its interests or fear its wrath?

If you study the diverse ideologies of Middle East radicals--Iran’s Ayatollah Khomeini, Iraq’s Saddam Husayn, or bin Ladin for instance--you find a common thread in that all of them argue that America is really weak and can be defeated by the proper methods. It was Khomeini who said that America “cannot do a damn thing” to stop Islamist revolution.(7) It was Saddam who called the Arabs to battle the United States. And now it is bin Ladin who insists that the true believers’ willingness to sacrifice their lives will allow a small group of terrorists to destroy America.

At the same time, the alleged big bully--the United States--has been mainly concerned about proving itself to be a friend to Arabs and Muslims. Terrorist attack after terrorist attack took place from the 1970s on without any tough American response. Iran seized hostages and the United States replied only with a disastrous failed rescue mission. When Saddam threatened to invade Kuwait, American diplomats assured him that the United States wanted to avoid involvement. Syria and the Palestinian leadership mocked American mediation attempts and the United States gave hardly a word of criticism.

Even the response to terrorist attacks was, in practice, muted. Each American president, beginning with Ronald Reagan, would make tough speeches on how anti-American terrorists would be punished severely, yet this never

happened. During the 1980s and 1990s, Middle East terrorists committed many attacks on American citizens and interests. U.S. diplomats and military officers were murdered in Lebanon and Sudan; Americans were seized as hostages in Lebanon and Iran; U.S. embassies were attacked in Beirut, east Africa, and other places; two American presidents were targeted for assassination (George Bush, after leaving office, in Kuwait; Bill Clinton in the Philippines); terrorists launched or tried to launch attacks on U.S. soil; and U.S. soldiers were killed in Germany, Saudi Arabia, and Yemen.

With few exceptions--the first bombing of the World Trade Center and the attack on Libya after the bombing of a night club frequented by American soldiers in Berlin--the United States did not act toughly or effectively in response. It is hardly surprising that American credibility suffered as a result and this encouraged more attacks. If the United States appeared to Middle Easterners as stronger and more determined, this factor would reduce, not increase, anti-American activities.

What America needs now is to apply the basic and classic lessons of politics: credibility, leverage, and deterrence among them. Take it from no less an authority than Syrian President Bashar al-Asad: "It is important to gain respect, rather than sympathy." (8)

To show that this is not a new phenomenon, let us consider two brief case studies: Iran and Iraq.

Many Iranians were fearful of pushing the revolution too far in 1978 and 1979, convinced that America would step in and destroy them. This was in tune with a classic part of the Iranian worldview. Hitherto, Iranians had seen themselves as pawns of foreigners and their conspiracies. At best, Iranians could occasionally and cleverly manipulate these powers so as to serve Iran's purposes. Now Khomeini proclaimed liberation to be at hand. If the United States, with all its power and satanic determination could not free its own diplomats from being hostages, how could it

bring down the Iranian Revolution? Washington might continue to fuss and fume, but if Iranians were united behind Khomeini's leadership the revolution would be invincible.

"Our youth should be confident that America cannot do a damn thing," Khomeini said repeatedly. The United States was too impotent to interfere by direct military force, and if necessary, Iran could defeat such a move by mobilizing its own people, who were willing to become martyrs. (9)

Iranian leaders have continued to stress this theme. Almost a decade later, Planning and Budget Minister Mas'ud Zanjani, ridiculing U.S. intervention to defend Gulf shipping from Iranian attacks in 1987, explained that the United States would never fight in the Gulf, explained Zanjani, because its forces were so vulnerable, the American people and their European allies would oppose intervention, and the Americans would quickly retreat if they suffered casualties. (10)

In 1998, after another decade, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, Khomeini's successor as Supreme Guardian of the Islamic republic of Iran and leader of the hard-line faction, insisted there was no need to negotiate with the United States. After all, he proclaimed, Iran had demolished the American superpower's myth of invincibility by standing up to its threats and not bowing to its demands. Following Iran's example, Muslims all over the world have started fighting and expressing their Islamic feelings. Khamenei posits a struggle during the last twenty years between two competitive camps on the world political scene -- the camp of arrogance led by America and the Islamic camp led by the Islamic Republic of Iran. The Islamic camp has advanced and gained victories with Islamic movements coming to power in various states.

Saddam Husayn did not agree with Khomeini about much, but he did agree that the man who would lead the Middle East in attacking America must convince Arabs and Muslims that America was weak. And, like Khomeini, he was assisted by U.S. policies that seemed to prove his

point. In response to Saddam's actions and threats in the late 1980s, Washington sent signals of weakness to Baghdad. Saddam interpreted attempts to avoid conflict as proof that America feared confrontation with him. Each act of appeasement only increased Iraq's boldness without persuading it that the United States wanted to be its friend. The Americans "are out to hurt Iraq," one of that country's top leaders claimed. The problem was not that U.S. actions alienated Iraq but that the nature of Iraq's regime inevitably made it antagonistic to the United States.

Allowing Saddam to threaten the United States without reacting made Arabs see Baghdad as a winner and made Iraq think it could get away with seizing Kuwait. No less an expert on this point than Iraqi Deputy Foreign Minister Nizar Hamdoon--albeit in reference to Iran--explained, "Aggressors thrive on appeasement. The world learned that at tremendous cost from the Munich agreement of 1938....How could the German generals oppose Hitler once he had proven himself successful?"(11) If America did not stop them, Khomeini's or Saddam's neighbors and underlings would not try to do so either.

After evincing no strong reaction to Iraq's use of chemical weapons against the Kurds, threats against Israel, outspoken anti-Americanism, or ultimatum to Kuwait, the United States had helped convince Saddam that he could get away with occupying and annexing his neighbor. By seeking to avoid any trouble with Iraq, U.S. policy had helped precipitate a much bigger crisis in August 1990.

Saddam told visiting Assistant Secretary of State John Kelly in February 1990 that America was the only outside power that counted in the Middle East. He assumed the United States would use its overwhelming power as he would in its place: to eliminate the radical regimes and seize control of the region. If the United States would not act, Saddam would fill the vacuum.

But the Iraqi leader knew that America was objectively strong and could presumably dictate changes in policy and behavior for Arab regimes.

What could the Arabs do to save themselves from America? Two weeks after meeting Kelly, Saddam openly launched Iraq's new radical phase in one of the most important speeches of his career, on February 24, 1990.(12)

Saddam suggested that the Arabs had three choices. They could wait until a new balance of power would be restored-- perhaps allowing them to play off Europe against the Americans-- but by then it could be too late. Or the Arabs could give up, arguing that there was "no choice but to submit" to America. This second alternative would require the Arabs give up forever the hope of destroying Israel or of uniting themselves.

There was, however, a third possibility. Rather than revising their own thinking, the Arabs might change the situation. Saddam claimed that Arab pessimism, not Arab nationalism, was the delusion. If Arabs united behind a strong leader they could still defeat the United States and Israel or at least hold their ground against the alleged U.S. and Zionist conspiracies to destroy them. Saddam's unconventional weapons would make Iraq the Arab superpower, replacing the lost Soviet nuclear umbrella.

The United States, he claimed, was far weaker than it seemed because it feared military confrontation and losses. America had shown "signs of fatigue, frustration, and hesitation" in Vietnam and Iran and had quickly run away from Lebanon "when some Marines were killed" by terrorist suicide bombers there in 1983. He believed that if Iraq acted boldly, America would not dare confront him. Had not this been his experience with the United States during the last two years?

These declarations were not merely a challenge to the United States, they were also a dare to the Arab world. Would the Arab leaders and peoples remember the unpleasant lessons or recent history--the cycle of war, failure, and wasted resources--or would the old ideas and patterns of behavior overwhelm common sense and carry them into another adventure?

The result was just as Saddam had hoped: the Arab masses cheered, the Arab governments--whatever their private contempt and fear of Iraq--jumped on his bandwagon. The United States stayed out of his way. Of course, Saddam was wrong in thinking that he could take over Kuwait and that America would stand by and do nothing. But he was right enough about the United States to be in power many years after making that miscalculation.

Bin Ladin himself, and Islamist writers like the Egyptian al-Najjar, both quoted at the start of this article, similarly concluded that America would not fight effectively after the September 11 attacks. An Hizballah leader in Lebanon, Shaykh Nabil Qaook, remarked that America was loud and dominating in the past but now, "when the balance of power leans the other way, we hear them scream." (13)

A member of Hamas exulted over anthrax: "You have entered the...White House and they left it like horrified mice....The Pentagon was a monster before you entered its corridors....And behold, it now transpires that its men are of paper and its commanders are of cardboard, and they hasten to flee as soon as they see...chalk dust!....You make the United States appease us, and hint to us at a rosy future and a life of ease." (14) He openly suggests that terrorism is a way to obtain wonderful concessions from the United States without giving anything in return, though he makes clear that even these surrenders would be insufficient.

These anti-Americans attributed U.S. behavior to cowardice in arguing that striking against America was a reasonable, practical, and successful way of getting what they wanted. They were wrong in their reading of U.S. motives. But if America acted in this same manner instead out of a desire to prove to Arabs and Muslims that America was a friend and to win their support through niceness, the result could be the same. The exercise of American good intentions could be just as costly to the United States in the Middle East as would have been the wrongly alleged sins of bullying and cowardice.

By this same token, the United States will not persuade its adversaries and critics that anti-Americanism is a mistake, a misunderstanding. Even if the United States were to pressure Israel, end sanctions on Iraq, pull its troops out of the Persian Gulf, and take other such steps, the Arab media, opposition, and even regimes will not praise it as a wonderful friend and noble example. Instead, these acts would be taken as signals of fear and weakness that encouraged even more contempt and make a campaign of anti-American terrorism seem irresistible. And if the root cause of this wave of anti-Americanism is internal it is dependent on those needs and forces rather than anything the United States actually does.

Finally, the ferocity of anti-Americanism, in word or deed, will leave the longest-term, most lasting damage on the Arab world itself. The blaming of external forces blocks any serious effort by Arabs to deal with their own very serious internal problems and shortcomings that are the real causes of continuing dictatorship, violence and instability, relatively slow economic and social development, and other problems.

Like so many totalitarians of earlier times--past dictators in Japan, Germany, and the USSR, current dictators in Iran, Iraq, and elsewhere--those who have declared war on America are playing the dangerous game of exaggerating outside menaces to justify his incompetence at home and aggressiveness abroad. They deliberately misunderstand American policy and society, successfully soiling them also in the eyes of others. At least, though, one might hope that the United States does not join in this slander. For that would not only be a betrayal of American interests and ideals, but also of those in the Arab world and Iran who have been fighting against the decadent order there and for a truly better and freer life for their peoples.

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This article is an abbreviated version of material that will appear with fuller documentation in Barry Rubin, Reluctant Pragmatism: The Tragedy of the Middle East, to be published by Cambridge University Press in 2002.

NOTES

1. For a detailed discussion of these attitudes, see the author's books, *The Arab States and the Palestine Conflict* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1982); *Paved with Good Intentions: The American Experience and Iran* (NY: Oxford University Press, 1980); and *The Great Powers in the Middle East 1941-1947: The Road to Cold War* (London: Frank Cass, 1981).
2. Fawaz Gerges, "The Tragedy of Arab-American Relations," *Christian Science Monitor*, September 18, 2001.
3. The author has discussed these patterns of decision-making and style in *Secrets of State: The State Department and The Struggle Over U.S. Foreign Policy*, (NY: Oxford University Press, 1985).
4. Fawaz A. Gerges, "The Tragedy of Arab-American Relations," *Christian Science Monitor*, September 18, 2001
5. See "Egypt Air Crash: The Hidden Hand Behind the Disaster" From *al Ahram*, Egypt, April 2, 2000
<http://www.albalagh.net/current_affairs/egypt_crash.shtml>
6. Translations of the Bashar al-Asad and Ibrahim al-Najjar quotes were done by MEMRI
7. For example, his speech of November 7, 1979. Text in U.S. Department of Commerce, Foreign Broadcast Information Service (FBIS), November 8, 1979.
8. Syrian President Bashar al-Asad, Interview in *al-Safir*, July 16, 2001. Translation by MEMRI.
<<http://www.memri.org/>>, Special Dispatch No. 244 — Syria July 20, 2001
9. Khomeini's speech of November 7, 1979. Text in FBIS, November 8, 1979.
10. *Keyhan International*, October 20, 1987. Text in FBIS, November 4, 1987, p. 54.
11. Iraqi Deputy Foreign Minister Nizar Hamdoon, "The U.S-Iran Arms Deal: An Iraqi Critique," *Middle East Review*, Summer 1982, pp. 35-36.
12. Speech at Arab Cooperation Council, Royal Cultural Center in Amman, February 24, 1990. Text in FBIS, February 27, 1990, pp. 1-5.
13. *New York Times*, November 8, 2001.
14. 'Atallah Abu Al-Subh in *al-Risala*, November 1, 2001. Translated in MEMRI, November 7, 2001, No. 297.