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**The Political Stability and Prospect of Transformation in The  
Arabian Gulf Countries**

**By/par**

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# **The Political Stability and Prospect of Transformation in The Arabian Gulf Countries**

## **Introduction**

The Arab countries were subject to military attacks during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries that led to colonization of the Arab wealth and resources, and doubt and mistrust for Muslims of their religion and also to keep the Islamic world divided and unstable.<sup>1</sup> As a result of that a lot of liberation revolutions arose in the Islamic world aiming to liberate the countries from colonization. Political Islam was not only an old phenomenon but also a new one since the religious reform till the birth of the present Islamic groups.<sup>2</sup>

Esposito mentioned in one of his books under the heading *Fields of coexistence, cooperation and kindness*, all along the great period of the Islamic history the Jew and Christians were protected as they are considered as free non-Muslims enjoying Muslim protection and they are treated with great kindness under the protection of the Islamic governments.<sup>3</sup>

After 1945, the Islamic World entered the modern era worse prepared than the western world. The cultural elites of the west had supported the self-confidence and

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<sup>1</sup> Dr Hassan Aqeel Abu Ghazalah, *Fundamentalist Movements and Terrorism in the Middle East* (Beirut: Dar Alfikr, 2002), 123.

<sup>2</sup> Dr Hassan Hanafi, *Islamic Movements: Political Islam between Concept & Practice* (Abu Dhabi: The Emirates Centre For Strategic Studies and Research, 2002), 59.

<sup>3</sup> John L. Esposito, *Islam and the West after September 11: civilization dialogue or conflict* (Abu Dhabi: The Emirates Centre For Strategic Studies and Research, 2003), 5& 6.

social stability that presented a new soul towards modernization and modernity. As for the Islamic world the feeling that resulted from political and military disasters after independence left its deep prints on the structure of the Arab-Islamic societies after the Arabic defeat on 5 June 1967 by Israel till the Pakistani defeat of 1971 by India. The series of Arab disasters and the feelings of disgrace and humiliation and inferiority resulting from these disasters were understood as a practical proof of the modern failure of these regimes.<sup>4</sup>

Two main factors had happened together and they sent a strong shock that caused the Arabic societies to shock and stagger. The first factor is the failure of the Arabic regimes to build the establishments of a modern state. The second factor is establishing of modernization on western types and accordingly connecting upgrading and reform with western nation or globalization.

Recently, many Muslims attribute the failure of their societies to their extreme reliance on the western countries and to the domination of western governments values and culture on their societies; they started to reject the secular governments and the moderate religious institutions likewise. They hold them responsible for the long period of declining morals and the retreat that their societies suffer from. The call for Islamic rise and progress and return of Islamic identity has covered the whole world. That looks similar to that which happened in the Christian world during the renaissance of the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Usama Al-Ghazali, *Political Parties*, (Cairo: Egyptian Library, 1991), 32.

<sup>5</sup> Esposito, *Islam and the West after September 11 ...*, 12.

The political movements appeared as opposition movements, some of them complete to be represented in the governing power and some of these use religion for their looking forward to power and authority, and as a means for achievement of political targets for pressure on the regime.

Whereas the Arab world lacks the dialogue culture between the governing power and the opposition, there for the governing power and the opposition act on the basis of control and monopoly of complete and absolute fact, and neglect other point of view, that led to congestion of the society that expressed itself in different ways. The simple form of it is the shelter of the religious movements to gain respect on certain political matters and the worse form is application of violence and terrorism.<sup>6</sup>

The growth and development of the Islamic movements with their strict and inflexible political and social concepts and thoughts will lead to a lot of dangers that threaten the national systems and the legislative bodies, as well as the social and cultural life.

It is difficult to ignore the effects of the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> 2001 on the movement of political Islam. It is also difficult to ignore the effects of the political, cultural and social environments that prevailed in the Gulf region and helped for and constitute these movements before the events of September. There movements are not the result or outcome of these events. As the two sides of the events of September are the Arab and the Americans we should look into the American reading of the political Islam

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<sup>6</sup> Dr Salama Ghassan, *Society and state in the Arab Orient*, (Arab Unity Studies Centre, 1987), 119.

movement and to explain the social and political context of the Arabic environment from which the minority Islamic violence trend emerged and led to those events.

For reading of the political Islam movements from inside, or for reading the environment from which these movements started, related to the reasons that led the groups of violence in the region take the religions image and adopted a statement that it sees it represents the religions context. Why do these extremist groups not apply other (revolutionary) image than the armed religious Jihad? Why did the Islamic culture produce this type of (suicidal violence) that made every one who sees it accuse (Islamic Jihad) without waiting for confirmation of the doer? Pure political and social reasons have led these groups to apply violence. These reasons are different from other reasons that made the Islamic protest in the past against the western invasion and colonization through religions reform movements at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>7</sup>

For better treatment of the phenomenon of terrorism in the Gulf countries through internal reform and at the same time to close the way for external reform initiative and to protect Gulf societies of from extremist movements, this study analyzes the Gulf authority as that will make it easier to touch the required sides of change and transformation. There is no reason that prohibits the Gulf authority or any Arab regime from abiding to rationalism and democracy as developed countries do.

### **Islamic Movements**

It is worthy of consideration that these movements and groups are under conceptual and political development in the Gulf region or even in the Arab countries but

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<sup>7</sup> Dr Omer Al-Shobaki, *International Politics Magazine*, April 2003, 3.

the gap is still wide between the volume of its popularity from one side and clearness of its objectives from the other side.

These Islamic parties and groups do not have a clear practical concept in the field of international policy. That appears clearly in their writings and logos and in the policy of the countries that fall under their influence. The current Islamic movements do not have a strategic concept for national development or specification for the society they require.<sup>8</sup>

AL-Shatti as one of the most prominent Kuwaiti Islamists of the Muslim brothers wing, sees that the Islamic movement doesn't have a real political view of reality and doesn't pay great attention to the political work on political concept as it pays great concern to the educational or party or juristic concept. Therefore many positions or attitudes come to be inconsistent with one another.<sup>9</sup>

Dr. Abdullah AL-Nafeesi- an Islamic researcher from Kuwait doubts that there is an agreed Islamic agenda in the Gulf. These groups of the Gulf are part of the social structure than a part of the Islamic speech. The social structure in the Gulf and the Arab peninsula is still tribal, conservative and with an Arabic tendency, conservative of the traditions and fears the new concepts and machinery.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Dr Mohamed Saad Abu Amoud, "Political Islam in Islamic Countries," *International Politics Magazine*, January 2003, 2.

<sup>9</sup> Dr Ismail Al-Shatti, *Al-Majalla Magazine*, July 28, 1996, 37.

<sup>10</sup> Dr Abdulla Al-Nafeesi, *Al-Watan Newspaper*, 15 February 1997, 5.

The circumstances surrounding the rise of the Islamic movements were the decisive factors of specifying their objectives and forming of their conceptual supply. Some people say that these movements are natural results of the partial development and UN-matured secularism. Therefore their concept reflects their unstable rise and poor reality. It reflects the poverty of concept and concept of poverty. It also reflects grievance and disappointment of the classes that were divided by class struggle according to others.

Or a new phenomenon that only express a minority that seeks to impose a new concept on the present Muslim societies. The demands and concept of these radical movements are as follows: -

1. Call back for influence of Islam and its power in the world.
2. This matter could not be achieved except by return to the true Islam. The return should be comprehensive and should cover all sides of the Muslims life, e.g. spiritual, political, personal and legislative.
3. Call back of Islamic sharia power is not possible without establishing of a true Islamic state in which the rule should be to God alone.
4. Return of the Islamic power is a sacred mission. For its achievement all means should be followed. Violence and deceit are not accepted.<sup>11</sup>

Abdul Bagi AL-Harmassi, sees the Islamic movement in Tunisia is not only one of the voices that rose aloud to condemn and disapprove dependence and subordination of the west as some ruling sections in the Arabic and Islamic world live a similar life of the west in spite of being in a primitive society but also that movement is expectable and

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<sup>11</sup> Dr Abdul Wahab Al-Afandi, *Islamic Movement: Political Islam through concept and practice*, (Abu Dhabi: The Emirates Centre For Strategic Studies and Research, 2002), 32.



confused. The values of the society are deteriorating and there are a lot of cracks in the structure of the society. The Islamic movement appeared as the voice of the past that condemns and rejects our past as a whole and in details. This movement was born from the womb of the society and it is a result of its crisis.<sup>12</sup>

### **Methods Of The Islamic Jihad**

Leaders of the Islamic movements led the liberation revolutions and accordingly it became an entry to the ideological and dynamic history in the present age. They applied Islamic Jihad method for liberation of the country and try to call back the Caliphate. Some leaders followed the way of reform and Jihad aiming to establish the Islamic state then that state will reform the people in general and apply sharia of Islam. Others followed the method of reform of the people or the Society than that society will establish the Islamic state through activity of missionary and far away from carrying of arms.<sup>13</sup>

If we look at the movements of political Islam in general we find that there is a need for distinction from the beginning between the major peaceful section represented by the movement of the “Muslim Brothers”, their allies and the movements that near to their thoughts and concept in the Arab and Islamic world as Al-Nahdha in Tunisia and the Islamic front in Sudan or others who are more democratic like “Al-Fadhila”, virtue party in Turkey. The other section is “Al-Jihad” which is less in number and more organized till the past age that included Al-Jihad and the Islamic groups in Egypt. This

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<sup>12</sup> Dr Abdul Bagi Al-Harmassi – Minister of Culture and youth – Tunisia, *Reformative Concept and Arabic Modernization against the present challenges Symposium*, Tunis: 15-17 June 2004.

<sup>13</sup> Dr Fouad Zakaria, *Fact and Illusion of the present Islamic Movements*, (Beirut: Dar Al-Fikr, 1986), 41.

section and specifically some of the remaining part of “Al-Jihad” allied with Al-Qaeda network. Its leaders Ayman Al-Dhawahri and his associates played decisive part in the concept of Bin Laden and structure of Al-Qaeda”.<sup>14</sup>

The Jihad movement has taken at present new values of the concept of Islamic resistance after the events of September 2001. Its first principle is unanimity on specification of the strategic enemy according to their concept and satisfaction of the people of the Islamic world that is the American-Israel alliance. This concept considers the Islamic nation is united and has fixed roots and assets in spite of the difference between their faith and schools. This concept started to form a wide base that deeply believes in it. It has no specific features so that it could be spotted by the international and local intelligence. They left behind the local limits, group interests and interests of the Islamic parties that do not contribute to resistance.<sup>15</sup>

This concept has regularly increased and it increases and expands in cases of security repression. It is not of importance as is that this Jihadi section has strong ties between the members but they share in the target even without knowledge of the groups in other places or connection with it.

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<sup>14</sup> Dr Omer Al-Showbake, “After the 11<sup>th</sup> of September Future of Political Islam Movements,” *International Politics Magazine*, April 2002, 21.

<sup>15</sup> Dr Muhanna Al-Habeel, “The Kingdom and the Storm: Dialogue or Decision,” Aljazeera report, 18-7-2003, <http://www.rasid.com/artc.php?id=89>; Internet; accessed 27 February 2005.

## **The Jihadi Ancestral** <sup>16</sup>

To talk about the Jihadi ancestral we have to understand the relationship between ancestral Wahhabis and the Jihadi sect and application of that on the political heritage in Saudi Arabia as the motherland of ancestral Wahhabis.

Jihadi Ancestral is a state of alliance and consolidation where a lot of Saudi youths rushed for resistance into different parts of the Muslim countries that were subjected to aggression colonization. Most of those youth adopt the concept of the Saudi ancestral school. But the Saudi Wahhabi missionary activity does not adopt resistance or support it on the basis that those communities are not on the right concept of Islam. But for the religious enthusiasm of these young men, as they are from the land of the two holy mosques, the Saudi Wahhabis missionary activity decided to support them independently from the people of these countries and that explains the Arab youth camps in Afghanistan. This group found a great support and sympathy from the Saudi ancestral Sheikhs at the beginning as that war had two dimensions. One of them is the resistance of the foreign colonizer and the second is that at the same time they fight and resist the other Islamic schools and faith that opposed to the Wahhabis missionary of activities.<sup>17</sup>

That continued for a time till the events of the 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2001, when Osama Bin Ladin adopted the open war against the United States of America. The American were angry and at both friends and foes of Bin Ladin and their anger in translated into severe fury and desire for revenge of Jihadi ancestral sect, a dispute arose

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<sup>16</sup> Ancestral: belonging to or inherited from one's ancestors.

<sup>17</sup> Dr Adonees Al-Akri, *Political terrorism*, (Beirut: Dar Al Taleia, 1983), 114.

between the wahhabis and Jihadi ancestral. After one year of the events of 11<sup>th</sup> September Osama Bin Ladin chose the Jihadi ancestral.

The Gulf region and the Arab Peninsula came to know the first Islamic liberation movement, the Wahhabis movement, in the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. Sheikh Mohammad Bin Abdul Wahhab, who was born at Ayainah in Najd in 1731, founded it. His thought and activities depended on Bin Han bal, Bin Al-Qayyem and Bin Taymiah.<sup>18</sup>

He was greatly affected by the past in establishing of his movement. Bin Taymiah mostly affected him as regards his movement but later it abandoned it called for Jihad with arms against the Othamani rulers. The followers of that movement are called at present as “Brothers of those who obey Allah”. Abdul Wahhab died in 1791.<sup>19</sup>

The Wahhabis missionary spread in India and Sumatra and some parts of Africa. But in the neighboring countries and others states it was met with grave enmity. Sheikh Mohammad Bin Abdul Wahhab revolted against the Othamani Sultan Abdul Hameed I and Saleem III. His followers fought against Saleem all over the Arab peninsula, Iraq and Al-Sham.<sup>20</sup>

The founder of the Wahhabi movement specified its aim in his famous message “Monotheism is the divine right of God on human beings” in which he confirmed that he didn’t call for a new Islamic school. He is calling people to follow sharia of Allah and

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<sup>18</sup> Khalil Ali Hyder, *Islamic Movements in the Arab countries*, (Abu Dhabi: Emirates Centre for strategic studies and research, 1998), 74.

<sup>19</sup> Hyder, *Islamic Movements in the Arab countries*, 75.

<sup>20</sup> Nabieh Zakaria, *The Islamic Movements*, (Qatar: Culture House, 1986), 15.

Sunnah of his prophet Muhammad. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the ambitious king of Najd Abdul Aziz Bin Saud restored and renewed the Wahhabis movement through the activities of the Muslim Brothers movement by which he united major parts of the Arab peninsula to constitute kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Afterwards he had no need for the movement of the Muslim Brotherhood and accordingly came into conflict with it.<sup>21</sup>

Saudi authority really fears the Jihadi ancestral sect of which is Osama Bin Ladin the founder of Al-Qaeda network. They are afraid that this network might hit some Saudi target like oil installations which might lead to an out of control political shake. Recently the tension reached its peak when a terrorist call planning to destroy oil interests in Saudi Arabia was discovered.<sup>22</sup>

Dr. Shahabi explains the relationship between the Saudi authority and the ancestral sect:

*...The Americans wants to achieve a main objective in Saudi Arabia. That is to separate the ancestral sect of Wahhabis from the governing authority. Each of the two parties does not want that, the Saudi authority founded its political being on the religious support of the Wahhabis establishment. If it loses that cover then their policies could not be justified.*<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Hyder, *Islamic Movements in the Arab countries...*, 75.

<sup>22</sup> Dr Saeed Al-Shehebi, *Saudi government between Requirement of changes and fear of the result*, <http://www.montadayat.org/modules.php?name=Sections&op=viewarticle&artid=677>; Internet; accessed 26 February 2005.

<sup>23</sup> Al-Shehebi, *Saudi government between Requirement of changes and fear of the result...*,

## **Al-Qaeda Organization**

Opinions were different on the reality of Al-Qaeda organization, from where it started its activities till it become at the top of the list of the terrorist groups that the world wants to uproot. The U.S. offers 50 million dollars as a prize for the head of Osama bin Ladin.

Bin Ladin was born in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, in 1957. His Father migrated from Hadhramout (Yemen) to Jeddah in 1930 where he became the biggest construction contractor in Saudi Arabia. His father died when Osama was 9 years old. Osama married when he was 17 years old to the daughter of his uncle in Damascus. He completed his university education in economics and public administration where he graduated from King Abdul Aziz University.<sup>24</sup>

Bin Ladin relationship with Afghanistan started from the first weeks of the Russian invasion on 26<sup>th</sup> December 1979 where he participated with Afghani Mujahideen against the communist invasion. He played a great role in Jalal Abad battle that forced the Russian to withdraw from Afghanistan. Osama and his assistants founded Al-Qaeda Register in 1988, that register, which contains all detailed information relating to the Arab Mujahideen became as an independence administration.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> <http://www.Alnilin.com/News/Benladen/Osama>; Internet; accessed 2 March 2005.

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.Alnilin.com/News/Benladen/Osama>

Beit Ul Ansar “House of the supporters” was the first temporary station for the new comers of Mujahideen before they go for training. Bin Ladin organized records with full details for all those who reach Afghanistan and that records named “Al-Qaeda”.<sup>26</sup>

After withdrawal of the Soviet from Afghanistan, Bin Ladin returned to Saudi Arabia. His activities discomforted the Saudi authority that warned him after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990. The Saudi authority stopped his activities and froze his assets, funds and currencies when his case turned to be as a hot issue of the agenda of the CIA. Accordingly he left Saudi Arabia to Afghanistan then to Khartoum in 1992. In 1994 the Saudi authority denaturalized him then he left for Afghanistan.<sup>27</sup>

Bin Ladin made a lot of alliances with extremist movements like Islamic Jihad of Egypt, Hizbullah, Pro Iranian, National Islamic Front of Sudan and Islamic groups in Yemen, Saudi Arabia and Somalia. Al-Qaeda connected with strong relations with the Islamic group of Sheikh Omer Abdul Rah man who was in the American prisons since 1995 after his plans for blowing up major landmarks in New York.<sup>28</sup>

U.S. considered Al-Qaeda as a terrorist organization that aims to overthrow the current Islamic governments and substitute them with “Sharia” Islam rules. Al-Qaeda considered U.S. as the main enemy of Islam and therefore all Muslim must fight against it.

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>28</sup> <http://Arabic.cnn.com/resources/Gaida>; Internet; accessed 3 March 2005.

Osama Bin Ladin cleverly, as Ayatollah Khomeini did before, specified certain grievance and injustice that a lot of non-extremists hold against U.S. and the ruling regime in the Islamic countries and therefore Bin Ladin misused the religious concept and faith to permit (his Jihad) in which he resorted to violence and terrorism.<sup>29</sup>

After he left Afghanistan for Sudan, the Sudan fell under strong pressure from U.S. to either send out Bin Ladin or extradite him. As a result of that pressure Bin Ladin and his followers left for Afghanistan. After he reached there the events started to occur dramatically as from Al-Khobar explosion to the fall of Jalal Abad at the hands of Taliban to the started of Jihad against the America.<sup>30</sup>

Events and explosions came successively. All events of explosion world wide were attributed to Bin Ladin and his assistants, like events in Kenya, Somalia, Yemen, and Saudi Arabia in which the American interests were targets. Accordingly Bin Ladin became the bitter enemy of U.S., therefore American bombed and destroyed a number of facilities in Sudan as a revenge of Bin Ladin.

It is worth of mention that Aymen Al- Dhawahri.<sup>31</sup> The right arm and the active mind of Al-Qaeda, who participated with Bin Ladin for fighting the Americans after Afghanistan war, said in a recorded tape transmitted by Jazeera channel “Time of calling to account is approaching for these apostates who offered help to American and gave it

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<sup>29</sup> Esposito, *Islam and the West after September 11 ...*, 22.

<sup>30</sup> <http://www.Alnilin.com/News/Benladen/Osama>; Internet; accessed 2 March 2005.

<sup>31</sup> Egyptian physician born in 1951, contributed to formation of the Islamic Group that assassinated president Sadat – An important change in life happened to him in 1998 when he allied with bin Laden against American interests.



bases.” It threatens directly the American people and indirectly the governments of Kuwait, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Egypt, and some targets within U.S. would be targeted by Al-Qaeda.<sup>32</sup>

As a result the events of the 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2001 the American media accused Saudi Arabia of harboring and giving shelter and assistance to terrorists and that Al-Qaeda Organization originated from Saudi Arabia. That led to tension of the relationship between U.S. and Saudi Arabia.<sup>33</sup>

## **Shia**

Shia communities in the Arabian Gulf states (minorities except in Bahrain) may have initially identified to a degree with the Iranian revolution, but as time ultimately proved, their skepticism toward Iran’s theocratic regime far out-weighed their grievances with their own Sunni-dominated regimes in terms of where their loyalties lay. Iran has continued to support dissident Shia groups in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and elsewhere, but it has never been able effectively to export its revolutionary Islamic doctrines to the Arab side of the Gulf.<sup>34</sup>

Changes that took place in Iraq have brought some hopes that the Saudi Shia could practice the same rights enjoyed by the Iraqi Shia at present, that the Saudi Shia have started to ask for their rights and they explained that they are not calling for

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<sup>32</sup>Aljazeera Channel News, <http://www.aljazeera.net>

<sup>33</sup> Dr John K. Cooley, *Unholy Wars: Afghanistan, America and International Terrorism*, <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/0745316913/104-8892665-7898302>; Internet; accessed 29 January 2005.

<sup>34</sup> John L. Esposito, *Political Islam and Gulf Security*, paper for second annual conference of Emirates Centre for Strategic Studies and Research, Abu Dhabi, UAE, 5-8 January 1996.

separation.<sup>35</sup>

Saudi Shia ask for two claims. One is special and the other is national. The first one relates to the group to be given freedom of speech and of religious and cultural identity and the other is to have complete citizenship with complete rights and duties.

Sheikh Hassan Al-Saffar, one of the Shia leaders in Saudi Arabia, sees that the Saudi Shia will surely be affected by what had happened in Iraq and its affects on Saudi Shia. As a challenge to the governing authority, that may be the subject of outside [American] pressure.<sup>36</sup>

Khalid Ali Hayder says “that some Shia and Sunni groups in the Gulf region tried to use violence.” The well known attempt was of (Juhaiman Al-Otaibi ) who controlled Mecca Holy Mosque in 1979, the events took place in Bahrain, attempts of explosions in Kuwait, Al-Hesa and Al-Khobar and the illegal organization in the Sultanate of Oman.<sup>37</sup>

## 9/11

The events of September 11<sup>th</sup> have revealed great hatred towards U.S. and people are ready to accept death for the sake of causing harm to it. Americans should study well this phenomenon and look for the reasons behind it. Every American should ask why all this hatred for U.S.? The American authority quickly gave the reply and with complete certainty “These are Arabs and Muslims” and it harried up to pursue and chose those

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<sup>35</sup> Rasid Informational Network, *Saudi Arabia and the Shia after Iraq*, <http://www.rasid.com/artc.php?id=39>; Internet; accessed 22 February 2005.

<sup>36</sup> Rasid Informational Network, *Saudi Arabia and the Shia after Iraq...*,

<sup>37</sup> Hyder, *Islamic Movements in the Arab countries...*, 78.

known to it and get rid of them.<sup>38</sup>

The direct reaction of the Americans to the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> was to catch the doers and punish them instead of looking for the reasons and hidden motives that led to that. During the first days of the events, the Americans were not ready to hear any thing except the condolence, conclusive condemnation of terrorist acts and entry without hesitation into alliance against terrorism.

From American perspective the reasons for the events of September 11<sup>th</sup> and other acts directed towards the Americans in Saudi Arabia relate to two matters. The first one is the nature of the American policy in the Middle East and its continuous partiality to Israel. The second denies the first and attributes the appearance and spread of terrorism to other reasons that are hidden in the Arabic Islamic societies and their nature of understanding the outside world.

Analysis of 11<sup>th</sup> of September in general refers to the Islamic mentality that is culturally and religiously against the concept of western democracy. The American administration intelligence avoided equating of Islam with terrorism but some of its supporters in general are hostile to the west and that paved the way for violence against U.S., terrorism has political motive and every terrorist act conceals a political problem behind it.<sup>39</sup> (e.g. as in the Arabian Gulf, U.K. and elsewhere).

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<sup>38</sup> Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Choice: Global Domination or Global Leadership*, (New York: Basic Books, 2004)

<sup>39</sup> Brzezinski, *The Choice: Global Domination or Global Leadership...*,

These reasons are correct in relation to the definition of terrorism phenomenon in general whether in the Arabic society or authorize terrorism in general attributed to religious or ideological fanaticism, dictatorship and economic and social difficulties. But terrorism that faced the Americans on 11<sup>th</sup> September or Iraq at present is related and connected above all to the American policy in the Middle East, which favors Israel for more than half a century. That is not only against the principles and morals in which the Americans believe in like principles of freedom and self determination of others but in facing the global security at most times. That policy led to increase of hatred and feed feeling of hopelessness and bitterness in the Islamic world in general and the Arab world in particular and Palestine and the surrounding Arab societies more specifically.

The cultural, political and economic educated people and elites in these societies are able to control their feelings and try to better understand the complications of the American policy and its interior dynamics but the public opinion and the normal pressure in the Arab and Islamic worlds sees the absolute American partiality to Israel.

The political history of the Middle East has strong relations with aggression of the terrorists and concentration of their aggression against American. Their emotional feeling of bitterness and what they see or hear of political grievance and injustice is the reason that forms their acts and grudge at the end.<sup>40</sup>

The Arabic political feeling conformed in the Middle East as a result of the fact that this region confronted the British and French colony and the failure of the Arabic

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<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

effort to stop Israel from the in-humane acts and practices against the Palestinians and also as a result of the direct and indirect American display of power and superiority. The extremists look at this American behavior as desecration of the Muslim holy places (in Saudi Arabia and Iraq). The religious enthusiasm has increased the political enthusiasm”.<sup>41</sup>

Majority of people in the Arab and Islamic worlds look at the long American record of absolute support to Israel as a proof of American hypocrisy. This hypocrisy appears in the levels of military and economic support to Israel and records of American voting in the United Nations and U.S. vetoes at the Security Council in addition to the official statements of the American government and the Congress voting for transfer of USA embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem which is considered as direct violation of UN resolutions.<sup>42</sup>

A lot of people in the Arab and Islamic world and in Western Europe spare no effort to remind the Americans of the dangers of their policies in the region and its direct effect of generation of terrorism and creation of popular support to it.<sup>43</sup>

The Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak was honest when he said to the Americans that, the main reason of terrorism is connected with the Arab-Israeli conflict

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<sup>41</sup> Brzezinski, *The Choice: Global Domination or Global Leadership...*,

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> Esposito, *Islam and the West after September 11 ...*, 25.

and mainly linked with Israel practice against the Palestine's, and the Islamic and Arabic public opinions are also against U.S., which continue to support Israel.<sup>44</sup>

Honestly we can say that till now we do not find any proof that U.S. has taken any attitude that explains its understanding of the lessons of 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2001 and could understand what is happening at present in Saudi Arabia and Iraq. That invites us to ask a simple but fearful question. If the death of 3000 innocent people, mostly American when the Trade center was destroyed failed to awaken and warn the American administration of the mistake of its politics then what are they waiting for? Are they waiting for even more tragic and most disastrous events that could hit them and the Gulf countries with them?

The important thing is that U.S. after that all tries to impose "The Grand Middle East Project" in the Arabic region, that includes Israel. One who reads Brzezinski's book "The Choice" as he is the man of important and the consultant of the strategic and International studies center and lecturer of foreign politics at John Hopkins University and was the consultant of national security of Carter administration, that these is only one way and no one more. That is the way of domination, therefore no way for choice. The author believes in the American tutelage and domination on the world and human civilization. He sees that chaos and trouble will cover the earth if America doesn't become a master of it. He appoints America to take role and to have the European community as a partner. He didn't forget to mention that shares of the European

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<sup>44</sup> Al-Ahram News paper, 18 September 2001, available from <http://www.ahram.org.eg/archive/Index.asp?CurFN=FRON2.HTM&DID=7152>; Internet accessed 13 March 2005.

community should not be the same as of U.S. As alone is stronger than the twenty-five countries of the European community. Thus, in effect, Brzezinski bequeaths the earth with all above it to the U.S. with its partner, the European community.<sup>45</sup>

### **The American Reading**

It appeared from the words of Graham Fowler, the former deputy chief of the National Intelligence Council of the CIA how the American thought as regards the concept of political Islam:

*... The concept of political Islam is relatively new. The U.S. historically doesn't have a wide experience of Islam when compared with Britain and France who are connected with channels of interaction with the Islamic religion through their numerous colonies.*<sup>46</sup>

The first Experience of U.S. with political Islam on 11<sup>th</sup> of September as effect of the shock resulted from the fall of the Trade Center Towers in 2001. Washington and others were taken unexpectedly and that shows the decrease of this degree of importance of concern of Washington for the phenomenon of political Islam. Graham Fowler continues, "U.S. department of state explains that U.S. government doesn't have diplomatic relations with religions or region like the Middle East or the Islamic world but with certain countries".<sup>47</sup>

Esposito, the American lecturer of religion and Islamic studies of Georgetown University explains the misunderstanding of U.S. of the trend of Islamic enmity against it

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<sup>45</sup> Brzezinski, *The Choice: Global Domination or Global Leadership...*,

<sup>46</sup> Graham E. Fuller, *US Policy Towards Political Islam*, (Abu Dhabi: Emirates Centre for strategic studies and research, 2003), 4.

<sup>47</sup> Fuller, *American policy against political Islam...*, 22.

as part of the problem of misunderstanding of the American of the reasons of enmity towards their country relates to their failure of understanding that the Arab and the Islamic world in general see more than the American do. During the previous years U.S. became less concerned of international relations and more concerned with the local matters.<sup>48</sup>

Regarding the American reading of the political Islam movements we notice generally that the American administration remained as a prisoner of a lot of assessments some of which were circulated by the officials of the American Administration or Middle East specialists they looked at the Islamic movement as practical being or as an exceptional case in the western context. Therefore there is no need or justification for its understanding and reading from the inside. It is left for its fate. That is said by these movement is nearly (mystery) which is difficulty for the American mind to understanding.<sup>49</sup>

### **Reading From Inside**

If there is a decisive role for the social and political context of the environment surrounding the formation of the Islamic speech, it becomes logical to distinguish between the groups of political Islam and should not be put all in the basket of violence and terrorism. Here I confirm the dangers of some new American policies that do not distinguish between the movements of peaceful political Islam movements and other terrorist organizations and violence movements. These policies blocked and besieged both the true movements and this matter may lead to create new cycles of Jihadi violence

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<sup>48</sup> Esposito, *Islam and the West after September 11 ...*, 8.

<sup>49</sup> *Arabic Strategic Report*, (Cairo: Strategic Studies Centre, 2003) First edition, June.



when new generation of the peaceful Islamic movements discovers that the political and democratic openness and its ideological and political rejection and casting off all sorts of violence is useless and the results are the same as they remain pursued in prisons for being holding a pen or adopting a peaceful thinking the same as those who carry arms or bombs.

There is an extremist thinking on the moral level as some people see that what they believe in is the pure truth and it is correct and right and they make efforts to be abiding by it. This kind of extremism and radicalism does not arouse anxiety or unrest while it is within the limits of law and legality as this is natural of the reformative movements.

On the other hand there is another practical and real extremism and that is the resort to armed violence and acts to impose certain thought or concept on others by force and this is rejected. A difference should be made between the temporary violence and its being a permanent part of the concept and ideology of the movements like those Jihadi groups that represent the armed action and act to change by force the present situation as that is the main part of its concept and strategy.<sup>50</sup>

In spite of U.S. and Western confirmation that Islam and terrorism should not be confused but that confirmation only remains tactical and moved by a lot of motives.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> Dr Imad Eldin Shaheen, *Islamic Movements: Extremism and Moderation of Islamic Movements*, (Abu Dhabi: Emirates Centre For Strategic Studies and Research, 2002), 96-97.

<sup>51</sup> Dr Nadia Mustafa, "Wars of the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the position of the Islamic Nation: Preliminary view," *International Politics magazine*, January 2003, Chapter One.

In my point of view I confirm that the religions violence trends will remain as of the historical side. It is also possible that they will reappear and repeated. The decisive factor is to turn it again from marginal trends or terrorism movements to effective social reformation movements in the political and social context. I shall discuss this in this research. I confirm that the Islamic movements in the Gulf region are subjected to control and domination of extremist concept and elements whatsoever the case of its appearance at some stages as peaceful and quiet. Some religious texts could be understood in more than one way and that might lead to extremist political meanings that justify violence.

It is difficult to make accurate study on the public opinion in the Gulf countries as the result of the fact that the light is not well shed on the political opposition force in addition to the non-sufficient on adequate data on political trends. But the political opposition in the Gulf countries can be divided into two: -

1. Political force emerged from within the constitutional institutions like the parliament or the legislative systems as of the Kuwaiti political opposition. Those opposition organizations or societies usually follow lawful and peaceful methods. Therefore they are classified as liberal opposition.
2. Organizations relating to the national movement outside the constitutional institutions as the opposition in Saudi Arabia. Their methods range between violent and peaceful work. Their methods depend on the legislations and political situations in the country. When the country is more democratic, the opposition turns to act through the legal channels. But most of the Islamic organizations tend to violence and protest.

## **Reasons Of The Islamic Violence**

Explosion that happened every now and then in Saudi Arabia and other gulf states make the situation more complex and more obscure about the political situation in region and whether these terrorist acts will increase pressure for political change.

Acts of violence in Saudi Arabia have caused big losses in human lives, the majority of these are innocent Muslims. No doubt these acts are far away from the Islamic principles and teachings. All Arab and Muslims reject them in general and the Gulf region in particular. Acts like these constitute dangerous problems in the future of the political studies for the countries of the region. No country will accept such acts that lead to spread of terror, weaken the governing authority and destroy or damage the economy.

Opinion of these terrorists differs about the reasons that led them to acts of violence and explosions. These reasons relate to hunt the western interests and mainly the Americans in Saudi Arabia and to let them leave the kingdom. They relate themselves to Al-Qaeda network. But the American force left Saudi Arabia before the war on Iraq and only a small number is left in Saudi Arabia. Why do they continue to frighten peaceful people? Many terrorist movements justify these difficult and complicated cases and problems and give different reasons according to their different perspectives.

Some allege that the policies of the Kingdom towards U.S. and the latest attempts of interference in the affairs of the Kingdom lead this movement to resort to violence

against American targets in Saudi Arabia.<sup>52</sup> But the fact is that the Kingdom's relationship with America has recently witnessed great tension. If there is some kind of subordination that not only limited to the Kingdom but for most countries of the world as U.S. is the superpower and dominates the new world order.

Others see that these frightening acts aimed at the Americans as a revenge for the inhuman and uncivilized American acts against Al- Qaeda and Taliban in Afghanistan and against the desecration and violation of Iraqi sanctity and against the wild U.S. practices against Muslims all over the world and against the unfair policy justifies that the savage and in-humane acts of the Israeli again the Palestinians, the true owners of the land.<sup>53</sup>

I ask why those who object and oppose to the wild American practices against Muslims do not join the Arabic and Islamic resistance in Palestine to fight against as the Israeli enemy who is supported by American instead of terrifying innocent civilians who have no relations with the American practices or their interests.

Others say that absence of freedom in the Region society urged these groups to adopt and use violence as expression of anger and rejection of the existing situation.<sup>54</sup>

It is true that the civil and political freedoms are narrow in the Region but that does not justify resort to violence and terror of civilians. Gulf states started some political

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<sup>52</sup> *Arabic Strategic Report*, (Cairo: Strategic Studies Centre, 2003) First edition, June.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>54</sup> Dr Mohammad bin Hoyden, "absence of freedom," *Al-Khaleej Newspaper*, 5 June 2004, 16.

reforms and to have dialogue with the concerned cultures of different sectors and schools. They are not the only Arabic countries in which political and civil freedoms are narrow in one way or another.

Others say that continuation of violence is calling to account between the supporters of Bin Ladin and Al-Qaeda and the authority as the later has taken harsh policy against the first for the claim of fighting and destroying terrorism.<sup>55</sup> The real victim is the Gulf society. Continuation of these practices led to prejudice the economy and negatively affect the living situation.

As Arabs in general and Gulf people in particular we cannot support or feel for those whatever there reasons and motives. These acts and practices have done evil to Islam and affect its image. Investigations with those young people who were arrested show that they were subjected to brainwashing.

As mentioned before in regard to the American domination in the Gulf region, that as the main reason in this region in addition to another main reason and that is the Israeli existence and practices with the full support of the America.

Policies of Bush administration in war against terrorism have changed the international threat and succeeded in increase of hatred against U.S.; the Iraqi crisis complied with the radical changes in U.S. policies all over the world have helped give the extremists a new dimension. It also gave the radical groups chances to extend among the Muslims and others.

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<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

For nearly two decades some Gulf reformers ask for changes of educational policies in the Gulf region and Arab peninsula for the benefit of the people and for better living with the people of the world. But it seems that the change should count from either internal or external power and that makes it compulsory. If not for the latest events, the Gulf countries would not start for asking for changes in their educational systems.

Education is only one of many reasons for extremism and terrorism movements that developed as a result of political, economic and social factors. U.S. complains of terrorism concept that has spread and caused it with harm and the Gulf region is one of the most important regions that nursed and brought up that concept as U.S. sees. Therefore the educational systems in this region should be changed and cleaned out of this concept. That is not true as the official school curriculum and schoolbooks are not the good environment for terrorism.<sup>56</sup>

### **Foreign Meddling**

The Gulf States have faced active meddling by a number of foreign powers and movements. Iran has repeatedly supported militants in the Gulf. Iran tried to create and organize a Bahraini Hezbollah organization before and during the recent spate of violence. To this end, the Revolutionary Guard's Al-Qods Force trained several Bahrainis studying in Iran as a local leadership cadre and provided the group with limited financial support. Bahraini Hezbollah actively spread propaganda against the Bahraini Government, but it was not linked to any actual acts of violence or to the larger

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<sup>56</sup> Dr Mohammad Al Rumahi, albayan Newspaper, 12 January 2004, available from <http://www.albayan.ae/servlet/Satellite?cid=1051779715060&pagename=Bayan%2FBayanArticle%2FBayanArticle&c=BayanArticle>; Internet; accessed 19 March 2005.

demonstrations that occurred. In 1996, Bahrain arrested 44 citizens accused of acting on Iran's behest.<sup>57</sup> Today Bahrain Hezbollah probably retains limited organizational capabilities in Bahrain itself, and it almost certainly has some organizational capacity in Iran.

Iran's effort to foment unrest was particularly strong in the 1980s. Iranian-backed radicals tried to initiate a coup in Bahrain in 1981. The Iranian-supported Dawa group, which originated in Iraq but became affiliated with what later became Lebanese Hezbollah, carried out six bombing attacks in Kuwait in 1983 with personnel, weapons, and explosives smuggled from Iran. Throughout the mid-1980s, Iranian-backed groups attacked U.S., French, Kuwaiti, Jordanian, and other targets associated with perceived backers of Iraq in order to dissuade these governments from supporting Baghdad.<sup>58</sup> Iran has also used political violence to discredit the Saudi regime. Throughout the 1980s, Iran orchestrated demonstrations at the hajj that spilled over into violence. During this time, the Iranian government repeatedly called for Gulf residents to overthrow their governments.<sup>59</sup>

Egyptian-inspired Arab nationalism posed a similar threat to the Gulf regimes in the 1950s and 1960s. Egyptian President Nasser, lionized throughout the Arab world, made powerful radio broadcasts promoting Arab unity and at times attacking the Gulf regimes, particularly Saudi Arabia. Nasser also sponsored Saudi exiles, including members of the royal family, in their attempts to overthrow the monarchy. Arab

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<sup>57</sup> See "Bahrain: Defendants Confessions Reported," Manama WAKH, FBIS-NES-96-110, 5 June 1996 and "Bahrain: Interior Ministry on Arrest of Hizballah of Bahrain Group," Manama WAKH, FBIS-NES-96-107, 3 June 1996.

nationalism helped topple regimes in Syria, Iraq, and Libya, but the Gulf States weathered the storm.<sup>60</sup>

### **Arabic Reform Attempts**

It is important to know that the American call for reform has not come from pure humanitarian reasons, but it depends on facts and figures of the reports of Arabic humanitarian development of 2002-2003, prepared by specialized Arab elites. The initiative came as a result of Arabic diagnosis of the phenomenon of the Arabia nation. The Arab citizen suffers from lack of political freedom; expansion of economic chances and gives the woman wide field for contribution and participation.<sup>61</sup>

The American call ignored the main points included in the development report and that is the negative effect of the Israeli-Arab struggle on the Arabic development. The report considered the Israeli existence as the main reason for failure of the efforts for reform and development.

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<sup>58</sup> John W. Amos II, *Terrorism in the Middle East: The Diffusion of Violence* (New York: G.K. Hall & Co., 1994), 154.

<sup>59</sup> Edgar OBallance, *Islamic Fundamentalist Terrorism, 1979-1995* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 152.

<sup>60</sup> Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1985) and Patrick Seale, *the Struggle for Syria* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987).

<sup>61</sup> Mustafa Bakri, "The American initiative and its objectives in the region," *Al-Usboea Newspaper* 9 July 2003, 3.



On the reverse the American initiative sees that the natural result of Arabic reform should take the direction of conciliation with Israel and making of normal relations with it on the framework of “The Grand Middle East”.<sup>62</sup>

The strong criticism for the American initiative is that it ignored, from the beginning, the grand Arab case and also that initiative came very late after the situation in Palestine and Iraq has deteriorated. A lot of people look at America as the direct reason of all the deterioration and all other problems that are happening now. How can they accept the advice for reform from America which is the main reason of failure and spread of terrorism and ever if the call for reform is good? How can the Arabs trust the American intent and purposes? Also the American initiative does not come under natural or normal conditions but under very complicated conditions and under pressure of elements and factors of distortion and calumny of the Islam, the true religion that is far from violence and terrorism. The Arabs are totally convinced that American foreign policy is absolutely partial and one-sided to Israel with premeditation and complete consciousness. U.S. also looks at the Arabs with the same malformed picture and it thinks that extremists who show enmity towards Western values control the region.<sup>63</sup>

During the convention of the G8 on 8 June 2004 that put the reform in the Middle East at the top of its agenda, senior American official declared that “ The Israeli-Palestine struggle should not be used as an excuse or pretext to avoid democratic reforms and the

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<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Dr Mohammad Gadari Saeed, *Global & Arabic Analysis* (Cairo: Al-Ahram Centre for strategic and political studies, 2003), 19-32.

Israeli-Palestine peace should followed up ... We will not accept the idea of making that as a pretext for failure of reform in other places”.<sup>64</sup>

On the other side the Arab countries confirm their total rejection of connection of the required reforms with stability in the region. In a message sent by the Egyptian ambassador Abdul Raouf Al-Ridi, president of the Egyptian Council for foreign affairs, the internal reform cannot be achieved without reform of situation and solution of the regional crisis. This reform in its wide content on all levels will not succeed unless by achievement of peace, security, stability and clearing out the Middle East region of weapons of mass destruction and application of combined measures on all countries of the region without exception. We as a civil society insist on reform and work for it with others, we want progress in this reform without foreign interference. The internal reform is not the only requirement for solution, “the crisis of the Middle East are big not for the reasons of absence of reform but arises from the prevailing feeling of the people of this region of absence of peace, security and justice in the region and their disappointment of the policy of dual standard measurement”.<sup>65</sup>

The reasons of the internal obstacle that prohibit the Arabic concept from going far for research and investigation and failure to practice thought and opinion goes back to predominance of conservative conception of Arab thinkers and tendency to ideological concept. This concept does not read reality but reads its concepts about reality.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Mohammad Mustafa Kamal. “Events of 11<sup>th</sup> of September and USA National Security,” *Al-Ahram Newspaper*, 18 June 2004, 14.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>66</sup> Dr Abdul Bagi Al-Harmassi – Minister of Culture and youth – Tunisia, *Reformative Concept and Arabic Modernization against the present challenges Symposium*, Tunis: 15-17 June 2004.

Dr. Al-Harmassi does not criticize the external factors but criticizes the Arabic nature that was not able to form a new Arabic concept that depends on classical method Dr. Al-02t Tw

at the hands of Israel its ally in the region. As a result of that defeat, the Arabs entered a stage of collapse and doubt of their abilities and that caused a state of backwardness in economics, political and concept. It also led to internal retreat. That defeat was not accidental but as accumulation of mistakes and fear of public contribution of building the societies.

State modernization replaced “Arabic development”<sup>69</sup> It aimed to attempt to modernization after the defeat of June 1967 but that attempt was aborted due to civil wars, invasion, interference and wars between Arab countries. The invasion of Kuwait by Saddam Hussain regime was an example of that state. Modernization project died by heart failure on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of August 1990 (Iraqi attack on Kuwait) to leave the Arabic world in a state of confusion and tear that was not known before.

Enlightenment of the Arabic mind was the last attempt that failed and a new call “Reform” for formation of new Arabic concept that follows the method of critics and dealing positively with reality, heritage and society. The critic concept is that of questions and inquiry and research. It criticizes itself for the best.<sup>70</sup> What should we do as Arabs in general and Gulf people in particular for the reform of the Arabic situation?

The deed for development, modernization and reform has answered the first part of this question. But that part relating to reform of the Gulf society carries only the

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<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>70</sup> Dr Abdul Bagi Al-Harmassi – Minister of Culture and youth – Tunisia, *Reformative Concept and Arabic Modernization against the present challenges Symposium*, Tunis: 15-17 June 2004.

minimum. We will discuss it through analysis of the power and authority so as to reach the changes and transformation.

### **Transformation**

The leaders of Arab countries, in their meeting at Tunis on 23 May 2004, are expression of the will of their people for achievement of comprehensive development and confirmation of the effort of their countries for development, modernization and reform and their will for political, economic, social, cultural and educational development based on cultural and religious support and with consideration to the current changes in the societies and for building of better future for unity and contribution of the people for modernization and openness with the world.<sup>71</sup>

There is a general feeling whether of the ruling authorities or the normal citizens that it is time to look for new ways for political contribution that could help for social and economic development and give the woman a chance to contribute to public life.

If this research work deals with political stability on one side and required Gulf transformation on the other, the most important subject on the agenda of the 25<sup>th</sup> Gulf Cooperation Council summit at Bahrain on 20-21 December 2004, is reform of the educational systems, security and violence in the region.<sup>72</sup>

In October 2003, Saudi Council of Ministers announced its intent to introduce elections for half of the members of local and provincial assemblies and a third of the

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<sup>71</sup> 16<sup>th</sup> Arab Summit, "Progress of development, modernization and reform," Tunis 22-23 May 2004, *Al-Khaleej Newspaper*, 24 May 2004, 17.

<sup>72</sup> 25<sup>th</sup> GCC Summit Bahrain 20-21 December 2004, <http://www.gcc-sg.org/report25.html>; Internet; accessed 25 February 2005.

members of the national Consultative Council or Majlis al-Shura, incrementally over a period of four to five years. In November 2004, the Ministry of Municipal and Rural Affairs initiated voter registration for partial municipal council elections scheduled nationwide for February through April 2005.<sup>73</sup>

The continuing presence of foreign troops on Saudi soil after Operation Desert Storm remained a source of tension between the royal family and the public until the US military's near-complete withdrawal to neighboring Qatar in 2003. The first major terrorist attacks in Saudi Arabia in several years, which occurred in May and November 2003, prompted renewed efforts on the part of the Saudi government to counter domestic terrorism and extremism, which also coincided with a slight upsurge in media freedom and announcement of government plans to phase in partial political representation. A burgeoning population, aquifer depletion, and an economy largely dependent on petroleum output and prices are all ongoing governmental concerns.<sup>74</sup>

Shia activists fomented unrest sporadically in 1994-97, demanding the return of an elected National Assembly and an end to unemployment; several small, clandestine leftist and Islamic fundamentalist groups are active. In October 2002, Bahrainis elected members of the lower house of Bahrain's reconstituted legislature, the National Assembly.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> <http://www.saudinf.com/main/c5.htm>; Internet; accessed 21 March 2005.

<sup>74</sup> CIA Factbook, , <http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook>; Internet; accessed 21 March 2005.

<sup>75</sup> <http://www.bahrain.gov.bh/english/index.asp>; Internet; accessed 25 March 2005.

Kuwait National Assembly or Majlis al-Umma (50 seats; members elected by popular vote to serve four-year terms) several political groups act as de facto parties: Bedouins, merchants, Sunni and Shia activists, and secular leftists and nationalists<sup>76</sup>

Majlis Oman consists of an upper chamber or Majlis al-Dawla (58 seats; members appointed by the monarch has advisory powers only) and a lower chamber or Majlis al-Shura (83 seats; members elected by universal suffrage for four-year term; body has some limited power to propose legislation, but otherwise has only advisory powers).<sup>77</sup>

The UAE Federal National Council consists of forty members. Seats are distributed among member Emirates, Abu Dhabi 8 Seats, Dubai 8 Seats, Sharjah 6 Seats, Ras Al Khaimah 6 Seats, Ajman 4 Seats, Umm Al Quwain 4 Seats and Fujairah 4 Seats. Each Emirate has the right to specify the way of selecting the citizens representing it in the Federal National Council. The Council mandate, (called the legislative term) is two calendar years commencing from the date of its first meeting.<sup>78</sup>

In April 2003, Qatar held nationwide elections for a 29-member Central Municipal Council (CMC), which has consultative powers aimed at improving the provision of municipal services; the first election for the CMC was held in March 1999, the new constitution, which came into force on 8 June 2004, provides for a 45-member

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<sup>76</sup> [http://www.fatwa.gov.kw/constit\\_22.htm](http://www.fatwa.gov.kw/constit_22.htm); Internet; accessed 25 March 2005.

<sup>77</sup> [http://www.omaninfo.com/om\\_gov\\_site.html](http://www.omaninfo.com/om_gov_site.html); Internet; accessed 25 March 2005.

<sup>78</sup> <http://www.almajles.gov.ae/eindex.asp>; Internet; accessed 25 March 2005.

Consultative Council, or Majlis al-Shura; the public would elect two-thirds of the Majlis al-Shura; the Amir would appoint the remaining members.<sup>79</sup>

The Gulf Countries meanwhile, are traditional Islamic monarchies, all of them use to varying degrees the symbols and doctrines of Islam to legitimize their political institutions. As a result, extremist in the Arabian Peninsula cannot condemn the current regimes for denying the validity of Islam in politics, but must persuade the public that the regimes have not lived up to their own Islamic principles. This is a far more difficult task.

Gulf governments must seek to deprive the extremist of the public grievances that they can use as rallying cries. Raising the level of public participation in the political process, increasing accountability by public servants, and seeking to address the runaway population explosion are vitally necessary in all the Gulf Countries to avoid a continued build-up of public disaffection.

This does not mean that each Gulf country should rush to create Western models of representative government. For participation to be effective, it must conform to the constraints of local political cultures. In some instances, for example, a representative assembly where elected members can openly criticize government policies and call for more accountability can serve as a safety valve to relieve dangerous pent-up frustrations among the general population. That has been the case in Kuwait and could most likely relieve current political tensions in Bahrain.

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<sup>79</sup> <http://www.diwan.gov.qa/english/qatar/constitution.htm>; Internet; accessed 25 March 2005.



Other Gulf Countries are not yet socially or culturally prepared for representative democratic institutions. As the recent experience in Yemen bore out “democratization” through elected assemblies does not necessarily lead to more public political participation and could prove counterproductive<sup>80</sup>. This does not obviate the need for real participation, however. The important thing is for institutions of public participation, whether consultative assemblies or representative assemblies, to encourage real participation.

### **Conclusion**

Although there are many American research centers that paid attention to the American phenomenon and supplied the specialists and American decision makers hundreds of books and researches but most of these books read reality but did not analyze a phenomenon. It concentrated on information or intelligence observation of the trend of the political Islam movements. It recommended for alliance with it sometimes and attacks it in other places according to the American interests.

The desired solution for the radical liberal struggle in the Gulf region should not ignore each of the two. A mature social and political solution is a must. It should be within a right constitutional framework that is able to take the deep-rooted legality, or popularity acquired by the Islamic movements from one side and the political movements from the other side. It should be in a form that benefits from the modern political and

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<sup>80</sup> Dr. Ali Hassen Alkarini, *The Gulf Cooperation Council against the Challenges: The Gulf Geographically, Historically and Politically*, Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies (Kuwai: Kuwait University, 1995), 79.

administrative experience that have accumulated along the years of independence as a result of the acts of the elites and the governing regimes.

If this understanding is not quickly and wisely achieved with modern condition that secure and guarantee confirmation and progress of the societies of the region then unexpected political disasters will be awaiting these countries.

Gulf people present a lot of research and studies on the Gulf Societies whether as reformative or academics. Most of these studies and research present social, political and economic views that could help the region avoid a lot of crisis and tragedies that took place in the previous years and that could have made it better suitable through political, economic, social and educational programs.

Calls and demands of these honest reformative elites and academic of the Gulf countries should be considered and the executive and legislative authorities to help their countries pass these situations should support them.

The internal reform has its benefits on both the ruler and the ruled. But it is not easy to be practical on the light of our known situation. It is the only way for confrontation and solving of the chronic and increasing problems. It now reaches an extent of threatening the stability of the region and its internal security. There are some knocks on the doors, quiet and traditional. Start with call for change of laws, positions, attitudes, obligations, establishments, philosophies and points of start. That challenge that faces the Gulf countries is whether they are able or not to respond to these knocks.

Comprehensive reform will not take place without strategic view that specifies the image of the society after long decades. This strategic view shall not be limited to governing parties alone. It should come through a comprehensive democratic dialogue and discussion in which all classes of the society participate and contribute. The other requirement is the ability of all these parties to agree on the accurate and critical reading of the changes in the international community.

The exaggeration in the optimism of the reform has resulted from the lack of clarity of the scientific views of the social change philosophy. The majority of people in the Gulf are novice and beginners of politics and its affairs deeply. The reform talks are new and still within the elites framework in spite of its wide spread in the last few years. This lack of clarity has made many people not able to understand the nature of the internal social and political movement and how to activate and exit it, and that led to over-simple and limited analysis.

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