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## **Saudi Arabia: Islamic Threat, Political Reform, and the Global War on Terror**

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**SAUDI ARABIA:  
ISLAMIC THREAT, POLITICAL REFORM,  
AND THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR**

**Sherifa Zuhur**

**March 2005**

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Comments pertaining to this report are invited and should be forwarded to: Director, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 122 Forbes Ave, Carlisle, PA 17013-5244.

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## FOREWORD

U.S. foreign policy and the domestic concerns of Middle Eastern states are influencing the pursuit of the global war on terror in the Middle East. A close view of Saudi Arabia reveals the complex interaction of these forces. The U.S. relationship with Saudi Arabia and the global war on terror are important challenges to the U.S. administration that have region-wide ramifications. Saudi Arabia has been facing down Islamist insurgency along with other challenges since September 11, 2001, and with even more urgency since May 2003.

The Kingdom clearly remains a major political and economic force in the region. The income from its vast oil resources primarily has funded its strong influence, and the Kingdom has, in turn, sponsored poorer developing Arab nations. Furthermore, its Islamic influence has been apparent in the broader Muslim world, and the United States has maintained a strong relationship with the Kingdom for many decades.

The current war on terror is testing the U.S. ability to craft and implement sound policy in the region and predict future strategic needs. Untended, Saudi-American antipathies might jeopardize an effective pursuit of counter- and antiterrorist strategies for the future. The Strategic Studies Institute is pleased to offer this monograph which examines the emergence and progress of an Islamist threat in Saudi Arabia and the simultaneous development of other forces for political change, and assesses the strategic situation in the Kingdom in light of the regional war on terrorism.



DOUGLAS C. LOVELACE, JR.

Director

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SHERIFA ZUHUR is a Distinguished Visiting Research Professor of National Security Affairs at the Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College. She has been a faculty member or researcher at various universities including MIT; the University of California, Berkeley; and the American University in Cairo. Dr. Zuhur has lectured internationally, appeared on National Public Radio, television, and provided congressional briefings. Her research includes Islamic movements and insurgencies, modern Middle Eastern politics, war and peace in the Middle East, and social and cultural developments in the region. Dr. Zuhur has published 7 books and more than 27 monographs, articles, and chapters in edited books. Her most recent book is *The Middle East: Politics, History, and Neonationalism in the Middle East* (Institute of Middle Eastern, Islamic, and Diasporic Studies, 2005). She recently co-authored *Islamic Rulings on Warfare*, an SSI monograph, with Youssef El-Enein. Dr. Zuhur holds a B.A. in Political Science and Arabic, a Master's in Islamic Studies, and a Ph.D. in Middle Eastern History, all from the University of California, Los Angeles.

## SUMMARY

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the United States have been allies for more than half a century. In the wake of the terrible events of September 11, 2001, and in the midst of a Saudi battle against a wave of Islamist terrorism on their own soil, the two nations are drawing apart. This monograph questions this unfortunate advent in the context of Islamist challenges and the growth of forces for reform in the Kingdom. The Saudi government has been strongly criticized for setting too narrow an agenda and too slow a pace for change. External sources also debate the efficacy of measures taken to control Islamic terror cells, in particular those associated with al-Qa'ida on the Arabian Peninsula (QAP), and to rein in those who provide ideological support to extremism. Sources internal to Saudi Arabia argue that, as their entire state structure and society is founded on religious principles, they must move cautiously.

As similar battles against Islamist extremists are being waged in Iraq today, it seems clear that the future of U.S.-Saudi relations is contingent on a redefinition of the two countries' interests. Both have high stakes in the future of the war on terror in the region. American policymakers and military leadership urgently need to comprehend clearly the nature and interests of the "Islamic threat" in Saudi Arabia, as well as other broadly defined arguments swirling around the war on terror. Some have accused the Kingdom of gross sponsorship of terrorism. Yet they should distinguish the sectarian origins of Wahhabism from the new Islamic and Islamist discourses emerging in that country.

As the U.S. policy for the global war on terror recommends the "forwarding of freedom" and prevention of "failed states," Saudi Arabia's reform movement has assumed new importance as well. U.S. policymakers should determine future courses of action in light of the various pitfalls inherent in bolstering authoritarianism, empowering reform, treating the Kingdom as an essentially unwelcome ex-ally, or abandoning it in the event of a serious challenge. The future of security in Saudi Arabia is related to the future of political, educational, administrative, and social reforms. Current U.S. strategy calls for the attainment of both aims.

Principal recommendations for U.S. policymakers include:

1. Developing a well-established plan in the event of catastrophic events in the Kingdom.
2. Creating, facilitating, and participating in ad hoc and formal multinational discussions of antiterrorism and its relationship to democratic or other reforms.
3. Responding to Saudi conventional military and security needs and proposals regarding Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) force or multinational Muslim force creation.
4. Encouraging Saudi improvement and modernization of the General Intelligence Presidency, the Saudi intelligence service, including the areas of research, human intelligence, and strategic thinking.
5. Urging Saudi responsiveness to international efforts to improve human, legal, and workers' (international) rights. This might be bolstered by the development of a Bill of Rights.
6. Examining and more carefully analyzing the influence of Saudi *ʿulama* and Islamic institutions in the Kingdom and upon the progress of reform and democratization in neighboring countries.
7. Monitoring the impact on Saudi Arabia of the security situation in Iraq, and eliciting allies' cooperation in monitoring travel for religious purposes in the Kingdom and regionally.
8. Encouraging the Saudi government in its efforts to increase political participation and administrative transparency.

More detailed recommendations may be found on pages 48-50.

# SAUDI ARABIA: ISLAMIC THREAT, POLITICAL REFORM, AND THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERROR

## Introduction.

Saudi Arabia has been under more U.S. scrutiny since the events of September 11, 2001 (9/11), than ever before. Both Saudis and Americans were shaken by the fact that 15 of the 19 jihadists who committed the crimes of 9/11 were Saudis. Had Saudi Arabia's pan-Islamic policies, its global mission (*da`wa*) to foster Islam and Islamic knowledge, charities, and causes, licensed or nurtured *Tanzim al-qa'ida fi jazirat al-`arab* (al-Qa'ida on the Arabian Peninsula) and the subsequent hydra-like emergence of al-Qa'ida franchises? Saudis were even more disturbed by the May 6, 2003, discovery of a huge arms cache in Riyadh; followed by two major attacks on residential compounds there on May 12 and in November; further discoveries of arms; and by shootings, skirmishes with extremists, bombings, a beheading, drive-by killings, and an attack on the U.S. Consulate in Jeddah since, claiming the lives of over 176 policemen and civilians by December of 2004, many of whom were foreigners. That violence convinced Saudis that al-Qa'ida on the Arabian Peninsula (hereafter QAP) specifically, and Islamist extremism in general, pose a threat to their homeland, and not merely to the United States. Despite cooperation between counterterrorism agencies, that violence has threatened and negatively recast the shared interests of Saudi Arabia and America with regard to oil policy, the containment of Islamic threats, management of regional security, and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) state interactions. Fear, new impediments to dialogue, and acrimonious perceptions also have diminished the American share in the currently expanding Saudi economy, and discouraged travel on both sides. Thus, the QAP has been able to further one of its goals: attacking and wounding the relationship between America and the government of Saudi Arabia.

QAP and other jihadist violence, and Saudi responses to it, coincided with the emergence of a multistranded Islamic opposition and calls for political reform from the 1990s to the present. The Awakening Shaykhs (clerics who represented rising Islamist

consciousness in the country), Saudi opposition groups, and liberal petitioners have effected to some degree a new method for engaging the government. They anticipate minor reforms and dream of major ones. The internal debate on the Islamist threat and the future of Islam is important, especially in view of concerns about succession and the economy. Both internally and externally, it has touched on the present and future role of religion in Saudi politics, and the Kingdom's international endeavors in the service of Islam.

The Saudis have taken numerous actions to confront the radicals. They have cooperated with other governments in this regard, including the United States, and are simultaneously waging an internal and external public relations campaign. All the same, Saudi self-scrutiny and U.S. condemnations of the country have not produced well-iterated policies or recommendations that will enhance strategies for the global war on terror (GWOT). This shortcoming is understandable because compelling questions about the undergirding and future of the Islamic threat are more perplexing than a simple query about the stability of the House of al-Saud. Saudis, unlike much of the Western world, are aware of the compelling nature of the Islamist phenomenon. They know that it transcends violent expressions, forcing liberal elites to accommodate a new discourse. In addition, observers are asking about the nature of the Saudi government, its contract with its citizens, and its future role in a Middle East that is to feature democratization alongside a war on terror. What impact will the GWOT as fought in the Kingdom have on any potential democratization, or on other regional actors?

One could argue the stability of the Saudi royal family, the al-Saud, is reasonably secure. It is important that the family leadership determine succession without external pressure. Certain aspects of political struggle might emerge between the next King and his Crown Prince, and that prospect has not yet been factored into strategy for a war on terror. Previous crises have been managed successfully; for example, the transfer in 1958 of King Saud's statutory powers to Prince Faisal,<sup>1</sup> the assassination of King Faysal ibn `Abd al-`Aziz in 1975 by a nephew, and Juhayman al-`Utaybi's 1979 uprising and take-over of the grand mosque in Mecca.

However, some sources suggest that, as conflicts within the royal family might prove destabilizing or since other Gulf countries

also anticipate changes at the helm, potential Islamist strategies should be considered.<sup>2</sup> An alternative to the Saudi royal family has not been the subject of any careful brainstorming by the political opposition, except for the extremists who call for the establishment of a caliphate.

While the current form of Saudi monarchy may have no satisfactory alternative, uncritical U.S. support of authoritarian and repressive practices because of our commitment to the GWOT may belie our stated preference for democratization and human rights in the region. Saudi Arabia has been the subject of serious charges by Amnesty International, the Human Rights Watch Organization, the Commission on International Religious Freedom, women's rights advocates, and a host of other critics who call for reform in the Kingdom. The government has reacted negatively or claimed that the consequences of such reforms are too politically risky. After many decades of suppressing internal expressions of dissent ranging from the late author `Abd al-Rahman Munif, who sharply criticized the Kingdom in his fictive portrayal of the "sultanate of Mooran" in *Mudun al-Milh* (Cities of Salt),<sup>3</sup> to dissatisfied members of the elite or middle classes, Saudi rulers experienced new, collective demonstrations of discontent.

The nature and effects of Wahhabism's linkage with the state have been called into question, along with that ideology's elements of extremist, or *salafi* (purist)-jihadist thought.<sup>4</sup> It is the confusion between salafism and Wahhabism, or between versions of Wahhabism, and possibly the supporters of the clash of civilizations theory that fuel irresponsible, damaging critiques of the Kingdom. Introspection is taking place from Riyadh to the Hijaz, but if the U.S.-Saudi rift deepens, and if any of a number of other destabilizing factors take place, then some believe that the consequences will be dire. Saudis expressed concerns about a destabilized Lebanon and Syria, a weak Iraq, a threatened Iran, and U.S. establishment of "democracy hubs" via the McCain Act.<sup>5</sup>

Optimists think that anti-Americanism in Saudi Arabia may have peaked in 2003 and could be ebbing today. Pessimists warn that as the two nations retreat from each other, anti-Americanism will increase.<sup>6</sup> Terrorist actions seen through the lens of anti-Saudi sentiment in the United States, stoked by the film, "Fahrenheit 9/11"

and books attacking politicians' connections to the oil industry, evangelical preachers' prejudice, and good old fashioned ignorance, were sufficient to argue for a retreat from Saudi Arabia. Let the Kingdom sort out its own problems. Americans could stage military actions from Qatar, and U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia have been reduced to 400. However, that withdrawal may have aggrandized Iraqi jihadist claims that Americans are wrongfully engaged on Muslim soil (*dar al-Islam*). Also, the uncontrolled Iraqi environment may represent the site for future organized campaigns against Saudi Arabia, or other neighbors of Iraq. The GWOT thus requires Saudi cooperation; otherwise, it will remain vaguely interpreted and unrealized. Eliciting Saudi cooperation, in the context of heightened anxieties about the "reshaping of the region," would benefit from a theoretically sound policy.

The most obviously applicable portions of U.S. policy on the GWOT are its stated aims of 1) eliminating terrorist sanctuaries – whether physical, ideological or cyber-sanctuaries – and 2) preventing the growth of terrorism through a "forward strategy of freedom" that will support the rule of law, tolerance, openness, and progress toward democracy.<sup>8</sup> The U.S. characterization of the causes of terror also suggests that actions should be taken to prevent Saudi Arabia from becoming a "failed state." Here, the notion is that a successful state, one where freedom is present, is less likely to foster terrorism, although as we know, terrorists have managed to operate in the United States and in Europe.

President Bush more explicitly related this trajectory to the Middle East:

As long as the Middle East remains a place of tyranny and despair and anger, it will continue to produce men and movements that threaten the safety of America and our friends. So America is pursuing a forward strategy of freedom in the greater Middle East. We will challenge the enemies of reform, confront the allies of terror, and expect a higher standard from our friend.

He also spoke of new media efforts and the encouragement of free elections, markets, press, and labor unions.<sup>9</sup>

Scholars of Islamic radicalism are highly divided on the causes of that phenomenon, though few would dispute the presence of

tyranny in the Middle East. The question is whether or not tyranny, or even despair and anger, are the primary reasons for Islamism. Do we not see more despair and utter wretchedness today in, say, Darfur, Sudan? In fact, has not Islamism arisen from a combination of push-and-pull factors from Morocco to Indonesia, ranging from dissatisfaction to lack of mobility and impeded political participation, to increased religiosity and a desire to revitalize the religious dimension after the failure of other secularist ideologies? The most destructive and energetic of Islamic radicals were not members of the most miserable of social rankings. Some of the most influential have been middle-income professionals, while others, like Usama bin Ladin, are wealthy. Their message was spread through new means: first, cassette tapes, publications, and faxes; and then, e-mail, the Internet, videos, satellite TV, and cellular telephone text messaging. Saudi Arabia and other countries have been affected by Islamist ideology, and not necessarily due to the presence of misery or lack of freedom. On the other hand, the genuine socioeconomic woes of the greater Muslim world and lack of “social justice” are used by Islamists in their argument for a new order<sup>10</sup> and to attract recruits.

Another argument can be made that Islamist extremism, however it arose, can be combated more effectively if a larger number of citizens have a stake in nonextremist, increasingly democratized political systems. More freedom should be created to foster enhanced political participation and human investment in Middle Eastern states. A greater degree of participation may occur without the implementation of other requisites of democracy. If our definition of freedom is free elections, a free press, and labor unions—it is absent in Saudi Arabia.

Supporters of the Kingdom point to other methods of creating balance and justice in society, whereby the royal family protects the citizens and defends their values in exchange for their loyalty. While this may smack of feudalism to the reader, such bargains were fulfilled in Islamic history through the Ottoman concept of the circle of equity; self-governance of religious minorities; and the recognition of local, tribal, and familial authorities. Today’s Middle Eastern rulers are facing similar questions about the ways that democratization will alter earlier understandings of leadership or threaten its longevity.

Opinions inside the Kingdom can be confusing. A wide range of Saudi voices are speaking: some for political reform, others for a more or much less liberal version of Islam. They are uncertain about the potential effects of reform. Will it heighten or lessen the power of certain Islamist voices? The regime expresses a more limited vision of the degree of democratization to be anticipated than the various civil society actors who would prefer speedier progress toward greater freedoms.

This monograph will present an introduction to Saudi Arabia's geostrategic situation, and the origins, themes, and trends in Saudi Arabia's Islamic discourse. It will describe the efficacy of Saudi responses to these Islamic threats and the emergence of Islamist neo-liberalism, and non-Islamist liberalism, possible counterweights to extremism. Finally, it will summarize proposed political and legal reforms and their confluence with the Islamic threat, and offer some thoughts on U.S.-Saudi relations. A glossary of Arabic terms and names is provided at the end of the monograph.

This overview of the situation in Saudi Arabia is being presented because there is an urgent need for American policymakers and military leadership to comprehend the nature and membership of the "Islamic threat" in Saudi Arabia, as well as the arguments swirling around the war on terror. They should be able to distinguish prevailing conditions that fuel terrorism from those that need not, and identify differing elements of Islamist discourse. U.S. policymakers should then determine policy in full comprehension of the respective dangers in bolstering authoritarianism, empowering reform, treating the Kingdom as an unwelcome ally, or abandoning it in the event of a serious challenge.

## **Country Context.**

Saudi Arabia's leaders developed its strategic policies with one clear-eyed gaze at its own vast, arid, sparsely populated terrain and status as the world's largest oil exporter, and a second keen assessment of the threats from neighboring powers. King `Abd al-`Aziz ibn `Abd al-Rahman al-Faysal ibn al-Sa`ud, commonly known as Ibn Saud, had begun his quest to recover a Saudi Kingdom in 1902 when he captured Riyadh,<sup>11</sup> attained it in full by 1934, and

ruled until 1953. With insufficient manpower and weaponry for defense against stronger regional powers, Ibn Saud sought and found a Western protector, Great Britain. He struggled, though not to the point of alienation, with the consequences of that protector's sponsorship of other political rivals, Iraq and Jordan, states ruled by Hashemites, the descendents of Sharif Hussayn, keeper of the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina in the Hijaz. He then transferred this special relationship to the United States. The United States did not agree to a formal alliance with Saudi Arabia but offered technicians, loans, military aid, a military mission, a treaty of friendship, rights to navigation and trade, and an agreement regarding an airfield at Dhahran.<sup>12</sup>

King Saud, Ibn Saud's successor, brought the kingdom closer to the prevailing political discourse of the United Arab Republic, as Egypt's union with Syria was entitled, and the cause of Arab nationalism, encumbering the battle against Nasser in Yemen.<sup>13</sup> Eventually under King Faysal, the Kingdom reclaimed its autonomy and exercised strong influence over the region, shifting from certain alignments to others; retaining its strong relationship with the United States, but uncomfortable with U.S. support for Israel and the lack of resolution of the Palestinian situation. Faysal officially abolished slavery in 1962, promoted education, and led the nation as the region began to experience a wave of Islamization.

Saudi Arabia is the birthplace of Islam and guardian of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina. Prior to the discovery of oil, the Hijaz, the western province of Saudi Arabia derived a certain amount of yearly income from the *hajj*, the pilgrimage to Mecca that is the duty of each Muslim who can afford to travel. The national economy was otherwise insubstantial until the receipt of oil income. That income made Saudi Arabia a tempting target for regional enemies, and the country has weathered hostilities with Iran, Iraq, the southern states of the Arabian peninsula, and radical states in the Arab cold war of the mid-20th century.<sup>14</sup>

This situation is now quite different. Challengers like Gamal `Abd al-Nasser of Egypt and Saddam Husayn no longer threaten the Kingdom. Indeed, the driving ideological forces of the region, Arab nationalism and neo-Marxist populism, have been, to a large degree, transformed or replaced with a region-wide heightening of

religiosity, Islamic revival, and the growth of Islamic radicalism. The Saudi-Iranian relationship was transformed when the Islamic Revolution ousted the Shah of Iran, replacing him with a theocratic state. Prior to that, both oil-producing countries were “pillars” in the Nixon Doctrine of the early 1970s, sharing common cause in their antipathy to radical Arab nationalism and communism,<sup>15</sup> although the Shah’s ambition to advance Iranian interests in the Gulf and the region conflicted in certain ways with Saudi Arabia’s needs. Ayatollah Khomeini initially proclaimed an active Islamic foreign policy, like early Soviet diplomacy under the *Narkomindel* (People’s Commissariat of Foreign Affairs). Trumpeting Islam’s antipathy to monarchy, Khomeini challenged the House of Saud, calling it an American satellite, and its brand of Islam, “American Islam.”<sup>16</sup> The revolutionaries were afraid that the United States would attack the new regime, then were emboldened when it did not do so, following the seizure of hostages. When Saudi dissidents seized the Grand Mosque, Khomeini blamed that attack on the United States.<sup>17</sup>

Saudi Arabia supported Saddam Husayn during the lengthy Iran-Iraq war. Husayn’s invasion of Kuwait then threatened the Saudis. The Saudi government quietly has reassessed its strategic situation since and has not been baited into overt confrontations with Iran. Somewhat of an accommodation with Iran, in view of Iraq’s currently weak status, seems prudent, but the Kingdom is watching Iranian-linked actors in Iraq carefully.

The House of Saud had ruled according to the Islamic principle of *shura*, which means consultation. Today it rules with a Cabinet. Because Saudi Arabia considers *shari`ah*, Islamic law, to be the law of the land, and it is uncodified, a constitution was considered unnecessary, or less suitable than the principles to be found in the *Qur’an* and *shari`ah*. King Fahd<sup>18</sup> spoke throughout the 1980s about his intention to establish a Basic Law of Government for the Kingdom. Disputes concerning the order of succession prevented its issuance until March 1992, although some of these disputes were not resolved. In 1991, King Fahd announced the revival of a *majlis al-shura*, an appointed body, and named its 60 members in 1993. None of these reforms, nor anticipated ones, have threatened the power or stability of the royal family, but it is true that some disputes among the Sudayri, Jiluwi, and Thunayan branches of the House of Sa`ud

have been acrimonious. Moreover, the large size of the royal family is a factor<sup>19</sup> as its members earn substantial salaries from birth, and, in what amounts to a social class of royals, corruption of a few can taint the system.

Current and future challenges arise from Saudi Arabia's closed system, its relationship to Islamic politics and idealism, and its relationship with the world's largest oil importer, the United States. Also, Saudi incomes have greatly decreased. The height of the oil boom came in the late 1970s and 1980s, when it was common for many princes to pay large sums and salaries to large numbers of the visitors to their *majlises*, just as a matter of course. Corruption was rampant, and high fees for intermediary services were common. The scale of spending has now decreased, diminishing the trickle-down effect to the lower classes, and Saudis have taken on types of labor that they once would have disdained. While far less densely populated than Egypt, the Saudi population has grown in the last 20 years. Estimated at 25,795,938 in July 2004, that figure includes 5,576,076 non-Saudis, according to one source,<sup>20</sup> and is estimated by other sources in the Kingdom as being 7 to 8.8 million. In 1980, the country's population was estimated at 5 to 6 million, of which 2 million were non-Saudi workers and their families.<sup>21</sup> The relative proportion of foreign workers has decreased somewhat. Saudis are now employed in service industry positions likely to have been filled by foreigners in the late 1980s or early 1990s. Today, many foreign workers are contracted from Asian rather than Arab countries.

Economic and demographic conditions will challenge the future Kingdom. The population is quite young, the median age is 21 years. Differing estimates of the percentage of those under the age 15 range from 38.3 percent<sup>22</sup> to 45.6 percent of the population.<sup>23</sup> The high birth rate (5.5 children per woman) portends a large increase in future population. In the short term, the economic situation appears good, although there are impoverished sectors that the government had not acknowledged in previous years. With some future uncertainties and concerns about the imported workforce, the Saudi government must create jobs, plan for a more diversified economy, and shift budget expenditures to some degree from defense. Pessimists state that a future Saudi Arabia will be a "rotted welfare state," poor, but with a very wealthy royal family.<sup>24</sup>

Studies of Saudi Arabia routinely attribute Saudis with more conservative attitudes than those of citizens of neighboring states; significantly more conservative than those of their own government. This may be true of certain regions of the country, but perhaps the conservative political and religious elites make this argument to advocate a slower pace of change. This truism rings with less authenticity today; youth are expected to argue for more reform and opening than their parents' generation. Dissent has been tolerated at the level of conversation; less so in print or in public action. Young people, speaking anonymously, critique the hypocrisy of the ruling family, saying that "there are two laws in the country – one for the ruled and one for the rulers." As the royal family is so large, an impression arises of a dual-class society. The radicals' complaints about corruption of the *`umara* (the princes) are compelling to young people, whether they are attracted to a liberal message of reform, or one of increased fidelity to Islamic principles. Many are finding it difficult to obtain employment.<sup>25</sup> Youth, like their elders, resort to a system of patronage (*wasta*) to find jobs. That social connectivity has positive and negative aspects, as do laxer work or business standards.<sup>26</sup> This patronage system derives from another prevailing feature of life, tribalism, or more properly, familialism. Informal, pragmatic, and trusted methods of lobbying, mediating, and distributing political goods are constantly compared to the external and formal institutions that Saudis hope to, or are told they should, develop.

As an arm of economic and fiscal reform, the Saudi Arabian government announced a policy of Saudization of the workforce, although social norms prevent or discourage Saudis from accepting certain types of employment. These attitudes, along with a continuing need for specialized training, mean that Saudization will take place alongside a continuing policy of worker importation. Thus far, some experts state that Saudization policies, plotted into various 5-year plans, are barely implemented.<sup>27</sup> Others praise programs such as the government's Human Resources Development Fund, and believe the private sector will benefit.<sup>28</sup> These policies are not necessarily exacerbating the tensions between Saudis and non-Saudis, but conditions and procedures have become more difficult for the latter. To that end, some new policies on longtime expatriates' ability to

apply for Saudi citizenship were announced. New measures may address the sale of “free” visas sponsored by Saudis and the illegal deduction of recruitment visas from immigrants’ salaries.<sup>29</sup>

The Kingdom spent huge sums to modernize its armed forces. Saudi strategic interests required the building of an efficient air force because of vast, undeveloped, and inhospitable topography. Ibn Saud’s dream for defense alongside a strong foreign power resulted in an Air Force, and an Air Defense Force capable of effective action under the right circumstances. Nonetheless, the army, navy, and air forces cannot deal with a powerful attack without foreign assistance.<sup>30</sup> Moreover, Saudi Arabia has, through the 1990s, experienced a sharp decrease in revenues and spent about \$55 billion on the Gulf War. Multiple economic, political, and social pressures on the Kingdom have coincided just as Islamic terrorism has emerged as the major security threat, rather than attacks by hostile neighbors. Military and intelligence and policing arms of internal security are being employed in the war on terror, but the question is how to develop nonterror, or antiterrorist measures and policies along with counterterrorist campaigns.

Prior to the latest wave of violence in the Kingdom and inflamed feelings in both countries, those writing on security issues predicted a continuing “flexible cooperation” with the United States for training and procurement. It was suggested that training could enhance reliance on other GCC nations in order to reduce a U.S. commitment.<sup>31</sup> This view may now be under advisement in both countries. Saudis were critiqued for the lack of coordination and assessment among the five defense branches (National Guard, Army, Navy, Air Force, and Air Defense Force) and the various intelligence and internal security forces, and the lack of transparency in security expenditures. Moreover, patronage systems affect the military like other strata of Saudi society, as do some problems of administration—purchases in the absence of planning—which plague organizations, not only military, worldwide. There have been reports that some National Guard officers and personnel were arrested for ties to the extremists, and other reports that corruption at the top levels might have affected the Air Force.<sup>32</sup> In lieu of any other support, the Saudis will require U.S. help in the event of a major terrorist challenge, the likelihood of which is difficult to assess. And the Kingdom, though possessing

greater military resources than any other peninsular power, cannot match Iran in manpower.<sup>33</sup>

Since May 2003, purely military assessments of Saudi Arabia cannot provide a comprehensive view of the war on terror. Instead one must understand the domestic factors exerting pressure on the Saudis. The wave of Saudi-bashing in the United States seems to stem from the shock of September 11, 2001. It may have been aggravated by aspects of the 2004 American presidential election and concerns about Iraq and the GWOT, impeding a proper view of the Kingdom. Even with open minds, it is difficult for all but the one group of Americans with a lengthy history of business ties with the Kingdom to agree with the official Saudi assessment that progress, if slow, is being made in the areas of political reform and that control over the Islamic threat has been achieved.

### **Saudi Arabia and the GWOT.**

The GWOT has been defined in various ways and with a multiplicity of innuendo. Clearly, it is easier to describe what terrorism does than what it is. The White House has thus far stated that the GWOT is “an ideological war as well as a physical struggle.”<sup>34</sup>

Terrorism:

- Is “a new kind of evil.”<sup>35</sup>
- A form of violence “perpetrated against noncombatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents.”<sup>36</sup>
- Has no single point of origin.
- Has taken advantage of the increasing porosity and interconnectedness of today’s world.

As for our strategy in fighting the GWOT:

- It will be a lengthy struggle perhaps lasting for “decades.”
- It will be “waged in multiple theaters.”
- We must employ “all the instruments of national power” against it<sup>37</sup> to defeat, deny, and cause it to diminish, and to defend ourselves and the world.<sup>38</sup>

This general policy does not single out the Muslim world, nor specify the ideological basis for Islamic terrorism. As ideology and *weltanschauung* (worldview and sensibilities) matter greatly, this policy must be refined for the Saudi and Muslim world context.

The project of ideologically combatting terrorism is occurring in the midst of one broad ongoing debate about the role of religion in modern life, and a second about the future of the Kingdom. President Bush declared the need to support “moderate and modern government, especially in the Muslim world” to render it infertile to terrorism, and use diplomacy to cause those “in societies ruled by global terrorism” to aspire to freedom.<sup>39</sup> But to what degree was Saudi Arabia moderate or modern? To what degree could the encouragement of democracy possibly destabilize the regime? To what degree can addressing development, and defusing regional conflicts – other stated components of U.S. policy – be achieved if the United States must use means other than a large physical presence, since that presence triggered a backlash against it?

### **From the GWOT to the U.S. Security Concerns in Saudi Arabia.**

Saddam’s Iraq, Iran, Syria, and Libya were defined as state sponsors of terrorism in the Middle East and North Africa, but Saudi Arabia has not been so labeled. Saudi Arabian officials decried al-Qa’ida’s actions in the United States, and have captured and killed operatives, arrested more than 600 suspects, forced key clerical figures to recant their radical views on television, recalled more than 1,400 imams who were counseled on their divergent opinions, and took a variety of measures to diminish the financial support of terrorist organizations. The government also announced modest political reforms that began with voter registration from 2004-05, and municipal elections in 2005 which will enhance political participation.

A public discussion about reform faces various obstacles but nevertheless provides a contrast to the past. The U.S. military has essentially withdrawn operations other than training and a certain amount of coordination from the Kingdom. Whether that will be a positive decision over the long run, releasing the Saudi rulers from the charge that they are encouraging infidel penetration of a Muslim land, or, more unhelpful, in surrendering the terms of this argument to the Islamists, can only be judged in the future.

Certainly, there are new worries. Islamists in Saudi Arabia have vowed to link their campaigns with those in other Arabian peninsula

countries, Egypt, and Iraq.<sup>40</sup> The strongest element of the Iraqi insurgency are Sunni Islamists who might, one supposes, retreat across the border, or use Iraq as a staging ground for operations in Saudi Arabia or Jordan. This is not a fantastic proposition; insurgents organized themselves in Syria to attack targets in Saudi Arabia in 1996. There is also the far less likely prospect of a revolution in Saudi Arabia, or a situation in which Islamist and tribal factions might ally.

For now, the key objectives are to improve counterterrorism measures, and to diminish tensions between the United States and Saudi Arabia. U.S. leaders have also implied that democratization is of utmost importance in the region and recommended reform and more open dialogue in the Kingdom, as have other international observers.<sup>41</sup> But there are several serious questions that have been asked in the process of examining Saudi Arabia's specific security challenges. Does not self-examination and inquiry show that Saudi Arabia, particularly in its position of leadership in the Muslim world, has fostered extremist and intolerant views, or at least views that are antithetical to tolerance and compromise? Second, are the paths to containing the Islamic threat in Saudi Arabia and that leading eventually to democracy, coinciding routes, or pathways to very different political locations? Third, can Western concerns about the Kingdom, and Saudi misapprehension of U.S. plans to reshape the region, be addressed in the polarized U.S. political atmosphere, or in a Middle East so antagonistic to U.S. efforts in Iraq?

### **The Islamic Threat in Saudi Arabia.**

The current Islamic threat in Saudi Arabia is operating alongside other tensions. Outsiders can, as some do, simplistically argue that the lack of secularism in the Kingdom, or more properly the bargain struck between the political powers and the Wahhabi ideology, are the root of the problem. Instead, we might interpret that bargain as an *a priori* condition, and look instead to the imbalances arising since the outbreak of the Islamic Awakening in the early 1990s and the simultaneous emergence of global Islamic radicalism.

## Systemic Islam: Wahhabism Is the Source of Radicalism.

Islamic principles, practice, and discourse vary from country to country. In Saudi Arabia, the Hanbali school of law (*madhhab*) is followed, and the views of Muhammad ibn `Abd al-Wahhab, a religious reformist and ally of the Saudi family in the 18th century, became the prevailing version of Islam. Both the royal family and today's *salafi* opposition are Wahhabis, hence Wahhabism is not necessarily a cohesive ideology in terms of its proposals regarding the state.

Non-Wahhabis describe the sect as highly conservative, for `Abd al-Wahhab sought to purify his belief from degrading innovations (*bid`a*) that had been assimilated, according to him, from non-Islamic customs or mores. These included practices dear to the hearts of many Muslims such as the veneration of the Prophet Muhammad's grave and those of other holy men and women, and the teachings and rituals of Sufi Muslims (the mystics of Islam), and the *Shi`a*. The Wahhabis considered tomb worship to be polytheistic, a form of *shirk*—because something other than God is revered. They were offended by the *Shi`a* conception of the imamate (the legitimate spiritual rulers of the Muslims) and the Sufi search for union in this lifetime with God, as well as the practices of the “ecstatic” Sufi orders. The Wahhabis also condemned the Ottoman rulers of their era for their corruption, addiction to luxury, use of prayer beads, and other innovations.

The Saudi *Shi`a* comprise about 40 percent of the population of the eastern oil-rich province of the Kingdom, and are approximately 10 percent of the indigenous Saudi population. Wahhabi warriors attacked the *Shi`a* in both Saudi Arabia and Iraq in ibn `Abd al-Wahhab's day. The Wahhabi claim that the *Shi`a* are apostates renders their status difficult in Saudi Arabia, and has led to discrimination against them. The Wahhabi rulers forbade various rituals, *Shi`a* mosque construction and their doubled call to prayer; and this antipathy created tensions between the Kingdom and Iran.

Wahhabism caused Saudi Arabia to pursue a foreign and cultural policy of *da`wa*, or Islamic mission. This spirit of proselytization and reform can be, with all of the usual ambiguity, traced to early Islam. Yet, more liberal Muslims find it antithetical to the ethos of the Muslim world in later periods, and they cite Surah Hud of the Quran, “If thy

Lord had so willed, He could have made mankind one People: but they will not cease to dispute" (11:118) or Surah al-Baqarah, "Let there be no compulsion in religion" (2:256) to explain their aversion to zealotry. As part of this *da`wa*, and as it is the Guardian of the Holy Cities, Saudi Arabia has created or participated in various sorts of Islamic institutions, from the Muslim World League and the World Assembly of Muslim Youth, to the Organization of the Islamic Conference, which includes the International Islamic Court of Justice (ratified by only a small number of states), and a long list of affiliated groups, banks, and federations.<sup>42</sup> These activities, along with Saudi support for Islamic academies, academic chairs (at Harvard, University of Moscow, University of California, Santa Barbara, and the University of London), institutes, mosques, and Islamic centers in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Canada, the United States, Australasia, and Europe,<sup>43</sup> are, on the one hand, expressions of *zakat*, which is not merely charity, but furtherance of Islam. On the other, these endeavors are an aspect of Saudi Arabia's foreign policy, disseminating various Wahhabist principles to the point that today many Sunni Muslims see them as a norm. Critics accuse these efforts and institutions of supporting Islamists in other Middle Eastern nations, and in Europe. Saudi Arabia's religious officials have even been able to interfere with secularizing reforms by directly or indirectly pressuring local religious leaders or other Saudi-influenced constituencies, as occurred in Lebanon in 1999 with the tabling of the new optional civil law of personal status.

The idea of cleansing Islam from foreign influences is not unique to the Wahhabis. Many other parallels exist between Wahhabism and other strands of Muslim, or fundamentalist, or Islamist thought. Various critiques of Wahhabism exist; one characterizes the sect as an aberrantly puritanical trend in the otherwise tolerant and multicultural tradition of Islam. Wahhabism in such a view is a distinct sect or reactive movement and not really a part of mainstream Sunni Islam. The writings of ibn `Abd al-Wahhab were very sparse, limited to the booklet, *Kitab al-Tawhid* (Book of Unicity). A key to his philosophy is *tawhid* (unicity or oneness of God, sometimes translated as monotheism) of three types. Before explaining these three types, non-Muslims should understand that **all** Muslims, not only Wahhabis, are committed to *tawhid*. This principle has been

expressed in art, literature, devotion, indeed in every facet of what can be termed Muslim culture. `Abd al-Wahhab wrote about *tawhid al-ibada* (unicity of worship), *tawhid al-rububiyya* (God's unique attribute of creator of and dominion over the world), and *tawhid al-asma wa al-sifat* (the idea that God's [multiple] names or attributes that may be found in the *Quran*, solely apply to God and should not be applied to others).<sup>44</sup> *Tawhid* is so central to the followers of `Abd al-Wahhab that they called themselves *muwahhidun*, those who support monotheism. Ibn `Abd al-Wahhab's extremism was due to his followers' enforcement of *tawhid al-ibada* which they equated with attacks on polytheism, or *shirk*. Ibn `Abd al-Wahhab thought that other Muslims who were insufficiently devout, or associated "others with God" by virtue of their sect or orientation, were tantamount to polytheists, and thus subject to attack by true believers. As other Muslims acknowledge *tawhid*, the concept itself does not distinguish Wahhabism, rather it was ibn `Abd al-Wahhab's idea that he could deny the Muslim identities of others and pronounce them unbelievers, if, after God's proof was communicated to them, the other persisted in alternate forms of worship, or failed to uphold Islamic duties. This labeling is the *takfiri* project, and its presence or absence is a way of determining the "extremism" of any given Islamist group.

A recent article in a prestigious academic journal, highlighting Saudi ambiguity to its "Islamic threat," focused on *tawhid*, seeing in it an embodiment of Prince Nayif, the Interior Minister, further described as a dark force, supporting the clerics and even al-Qa'ida, while Crown Prince `Abdullah is supposedly the supporter of *taqarrub* (accommodation), the foil to *tawhid*.<sup>45</sup> Yet, Wahhabism has, in a sense, globalized other Muslims, so they can hardly perceive *tawhid* as being deviant.

Wahhabism served to support Sa`udi political rule, for `Abd al-Wahhab and his heirs, the Shaykh family, demanded obedience to the ruling Saudi family from the people.<sup>46</sup> This produced a quiescence that differs from the oppositionism called for by Ibn Taymiyya, an intellectual inspiration of `Abd al-Wahhab and the 20th century Islamists like Sayyid Qutb and Usama bin Ladin. They, in contrast, advised believers to counter and label impious rulers infidels. Bin Ladin's attacks on the piety of the Saudi family aim to delegitimize the rulers (*takfir* in Arabic, meaning to call someone a *kaffir*, or unbeliever).

The second type of critique grossly oversimplifies the alliance between the Saudi family and the Wahhabis, without fully accounting for public sensibilities.<sup>47</sup> A historical view of Wahhabism shows that its purist impulse and the exhortation to *jihad* have created problems for Saudi rulers for some time. Ibn Saud faced challenges first from the Ottoman forces, and later from the Hashemites, who remained staunch enemies as he had divested them of the Hijaz (the Western province of Saudi Arabia where the cities of Mecca and Medina are located). He drew on militant Wahhabism at times, but in 1927, the *Ikhwan* (Brotherhood, as the Wahhabi warriors are known) tried to force him into a more severe conflict with the Hashemites. Ibn Saud who had already weathered trouble with the *Ikhwan*, employed his political wiles until they overstepped their bounds. Then, in 1929 he utilized other tribal forces to defeat them and destroyed certain *Ikhwan* colonies, but did not ban the Wahhabis; they helped him to win a war with Yemen in 1934.<sup>48</sup> The principle of tribal/dynastic leadership was useful then and later in containing the zeal for *jihad*, but that does not translate into a recommendation that the royal family should or could separate itself from the Wahhabi creed particular to much of the Saudi citizenry.

### **Wahhabism Is Not the Source of Radicalism.**

Conversely, one may argue that Wahhabism is central to Saudi Arabia, a part of its founding political bargain. Wahhabism usefully served as a philosophy and mobilizing means for the alliance of the House of Sa`ud and the House of Shaykh (the Wahhabi family) to define a state.<sup>49</sup> It was moderated, moving from its earlier extremism and ideological rigor to a more adaptable stage in which the Council of Senior `Ulama could issue a *fatwa* legalizing Saudi rulers' invitation to non-Muslim soldiers to defend the Kingdom, lest it be captured like Kuwait.<sup>50</sup> However, a newer and more ardently *salafi* movement now exists and has overtly challenged the government. The main objections to this movement arise from its oppositionist, anti-Western, and uncompromising character. In contrast to the idea that if one might rid the Muslim world of Wahhabist tendencies, all would be well, this strategy is that one should encourage the

Saudis to continue modernizing under the umbrella of Wahhabism, but eradicate, defuse, or co-opt the new radicalism in the Kingdom and, by extension, the Muslim world. There is a problem with this second approach in that more liberal reformers assert Wahhabism's potential for revision. But many in the clerical establishment and outside of it do not agree, rather they identify with the salafists' notion of the purification of Islam through ending corruption and serving society. These ideas are Wahhabist, after all. That strand is willing to overlook a certain amount of corruption by the rulers, so long as Wahhabist doctrine remains intact. If, however, there is to be true reform, it must differentiate the offensive jihad promoted by a Qutbist/Wahhabist bin Ladin in his quest to expand Islamic territory (*dar al-Islam* as opposed to *dar al-harb*, or the lands of the nonbelievers) from the defensive jihad intended by Wahhabism's founder, according to Delong-Bas.<sup>50</sup> In fact, it is difficult to agree with Delong-Bas in this regard, for jihad, as it has been taught in Saudi Arabia, is a true obstacle to the reformation of Wahhabism.<sup>52</sup>

Saudis explained away the new *salafis* and their movements as fads or imports. They reluctantly admitted that they were home-grown, though influenced by regional phenomena of radical Islam. Prince Nayif ibn `Abd al-`Aziz, Minister of the Interior, was criticized in the wake of 9/11 for his attribution of militance to the influence of the Egyptian *Ikhwan*, and for comments he made about Zionist linkage to the attacks. The comments communicate the Prince's understandable desire to view extremism as an "import." Other leaders of Muslim states have taken very similar positions in the past, in Tunisia and Egypt, until so much was known about the indigenous nature of movements like the *Gama`at al-Islamiyya* or the *Jihad* that this form of rationalization alternated with claims that activists were simply lunatics or criminals. Official concerns with the regional environment are not entirely specious, as the Islamic Revolution in Iran inspired what it could not export, and since the jihad phenomenon in Afghanistan, Bosnia, and Chechnya have blurred national and even doctrinal distinctions.

In June 2004, Prince Bandar, the Saudi Ambassador to the United States, issued a strong and introspective declaration of war on salafist extremism. He categorizes the extremists as criminals, but also as

“seceders,” like the Kharijites, a group who withdrew from the majority Muslim community to pursue their own purist doctrines, and “renegades.” (This designation carries an irony to those in the know, for the Ottomans called the Wahhabis “Kharijites” in the 18th and 19th centuries.<sup>53</sup>) By locating the fundamentalist phenomenon in Muslim history, Prince Bandar warns his listeners not to blame their emergence on the government’s ties with the United States, Christians, or Jews, or on the Palestinian situation, Iraq, or Chechnya.<sup>54</sup>

### **Prologue to the Salafis.**

In the 1970s and 1980s, other sources of opposition could be found in Saudi Arabia. The main sources of dissension stemmed from disputes with neighboring Arabian Peninsular states. These disputes were more than purely territorial, thanks to the swelling of Arab nationalism in combination with radical local nationalisms and communist movements like the Bahrain National Liberal Front, the Communist Party of Saudi Arabia, and the Popular Democratic Union in Yemen. Other groups that derived from the Arab Nationalist Movement (Nasserists) were somewhat more popular, influenced intellectuals, and aggrandized the Third Worldist discourse of revolution, setting a model for guerrilla actions. These groups managed to fuel the generalized public feeling that Saudi Arabia had a responsibility for the Arab world and its unity, and to Palestine, above and beyond its historic Islamic duty of protector of the Holy Cities and hosts of the *hajj*. Like the Ba`thists of Syria and Iraq, these movements were anti-Western in orientation, equating the West with neo-imperialism.

Today’s Islamic threat is quite distinct from this earlier legacy, though the anti-Westernism, calls for political reform, end to corruption, and rule on behalf of the people owe something to it. Saudis and other Muslims refer to an Islamic Awakening (*sahwa Islamiyya*) that took place in Saudi Arabia, and which, in other usage, has mushroomed in many locations of the Muslim world. In the Arab world, the Awakening developed in the 1970s and 1980s following the defeat of secular Arab nationalism after the 1967 war and in response to repressive regimes. The Islamic Revolution in Iran was

a catalyst of sorts. A large number of those involved were aware of, or inspired by, the Awakening, disapproved of the excesses carried out in Islam's name in Iran, but applauded the rise or renewal of political Islam, or simply an enlargement of the role of religion in modern life.

The question arises: Why was the Islamic Awakening appealing in a country where Islam and state were already linked and where the *shari`a* (Islamic law) is the law of the land? Some trace this popularity to the politically oppositionist Muslim Brethren who, exiled from Egypt, brought certain trends of thought to the Gulf.<sup>55</sup> These were the radical ideas of rejecting any state authority in favor of God's (*hakmiyya*), and the notion that one should counter and punish inauthentic and un-Islamic Muslims, even rulers (*takfir*). Although it is probably wrong to establish a direct link between the Saudi *salafis* and the Egyptian *Ikhwan*, the sense that Islamism should be fostered regionally and the Egyptian *Ikhwan's* emphasis on social justice may have indirectly impacted them. Secondly, Saudi Islamists began to critique an "establishment" *`ulama*, or religious scholars whose interests were supported by the state, or were apolitical, and later on, in their view, manipulated by the regime to legitimize its actions, as in the Gulf War I *fatwa* described above. The emergence of religious counter-elite should be traced, then, to internal and external influences.

### **Juhayman al-`Utaybi's Uprising and Riots in the Eastern Province.**

On November 29, 1979, a charismatic leader with long hair and grandson of an *Ikhwan* warrior, Juhayman al-`Utaybi, along with his brother-in-law, Muhammad ibn Abdullah al-Qahtani,<sup>56</sup> and hundreds of followers took over the Grand Mosque in Mecca. They had emerged from a movement called *al-Jam`a al-Salafiyya al-Muhtasiba*, which rejects the legal schools of Islam and argues for literal readings of religious texts. After the gates of the mosque were closed, trapping the worshippers, al-`Utaybi delivered a speech calling for a true Islamic ruler in place of the monarchy and severing ties with unbelievers. His fighters held 130 hostages and remained for

3 weeks, fiercely fighting the 10,000 security forces, Pakistani troops, and the French Intervention Group of the National Gendarmes that finally removed them.<sup>57</sup> Once defeated, they were swiftly executed (67 were beheaded) or thrown in prison.<sup>58</sup> The uprising shocked the Kingdom, and the government responded to the Islamic dimension of the challenge, at least in part, by bolstering the religious authorities and increasing the funding for religious endeavors. Some Saudis complain that it was in the 1980s that increasingly strict measures were implemented.

In the same year, another unprecedented uprising took place when the Shi`a of the Eastern province, who complained of discrimination and other oppressive practices, insisted on celebrating `Ashura, the Shi`i holiday of mourning that had been banned by the Saudi government. The regime responded violently, and the National Guard put down the resultant riots or "revolt." Saudi authorities pointed fingers at Iran, and Shi`i activists fled the country, some returning only recently to play a role in the reinvigorated discussions about reform over the previous year.

### **From Local to Regional and International Salafism and al-Qa'ida.**

Usama bin Ladin is emblematic of the cross-currents of salafist politics that emerged in years 1979 and 1980. Just prior, the Camp David treaties had horrified many Islamists and Arab supporters of Palestine who saw these as an Egyptian abandonment of the cause. In 1979 bin Ladin first went to Pakistan and took on the cause of liberating Afghanistan from pro-Soviet forces, a quest that many in the Arab world supported. Indeed, Saudi support of the Islamic cause in Afghanistan continued until 1990, and that cessation angered Usama bin Ladin, who had spent a decade on that crusade.

During that decade, bin Ladin recruited from other strands of jihadist movements, joined forces with Abdullah `Azzam, a Palestinian who ran the office for aid to the *mujahidin* in Peshawar, Pakistan, and who had taught bin Ladin and served as something of a mentor. Al-Qa'ida finally emerged with its world mission just prior to bin Ladin's disenchantment with the Saudis. He went into exile in the Sudan where the Bashir/Turaybi Islamist regime sheltered him, as the Saudis stripped him of his citizenship.

Bin Ladin bears some resemblance to `Utaybi, in that both call for a purified *ummah*. `Utaybi nonetheless, represented frustrated ultra-Wahhabism as compared to Bin Ladin's radicalism that bears more semblance to the former Egyptian General Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, Sayyid Qutb. Bin Ladin criticized Ibn Baz' fatwa that licensed Arab-Israeli peace talks by attacking the Muslims who were party to the talks (neither true Muslims, nor legitimately Islamic leaders) and Bin Baz himself.<sup>59</sup>

Two points worth remembering are 1) that bin Ladin's primary goals are worldwide jihad against the West and Muslim "pretenders," and his greatest complaints about the Saudi regime are that it is corrupt, anti-Islamic, and supports non-Muslim, or non-Islamist, causes (the Maronites of Lebanon, the Christians of Sudan, Arafat, etc.) "Your kingdom is nothing but an American protectorate, and you are under Washington's heel," he railed in a 1995 letter to King Fahd;<sup>60</sup> and 2) the Saudi regime was well aware of bin Ladin, but could do little to control his activities outside of their country, though they stripped him of Saudi citizenship. Few other Afghan Arabs came under such scrutiny, and those who went on to seek jihadist experience in Bosnia or Chechnya, or who recruited in the strong Islamist bases in Europe, were even further outside the sphere of Saudi control.

The generalized public support for those who would defend Muslims who faced genocide or repression was certainly not limited to bin Ladin or other jihadists in pursuit of just causes. It must also be mentioned that the Saudi public supported Palestinian resistance to Israel and also that waged by Hizbullah in Lebanon. The argument was made that Israel had unfairly and unjustly imposed collective punishments, tortured prisoners, and was clearly inhibiting Palestinian aims to sovereignty. Calls increased for Palestinian self-representation within the limitations of the Authority in the post-Oslo period. Saudis, like others in the region, therefore did not believe that by supporting Palestinians, whether in Hamas or through other organizations, they were supporting terrorism. Approval of an Islamically-defined resistance was stronger in Saudi Arabia than in some other quarters of the Middle East. Usama bin Ladin, whose mission is essentially political, nonetheless casts his support of Palestine in the terms of a religious cause and a matter of ethics.

## Gulf War I Sparks Calls for Reform and Islamist Activism.

Many thousands of Saudis volunteered to join the Saudi military before January 1991, including, for the first time, Shi'a volunteers. The Saudis permitted complete foreign supervision and control over their troops. Paradoxically, the 1991 Gulf War actually encouraged Islamists in Saudi Arabia and throughout the region.<sup>61</sup> Relatively quiescent moderates became activists as huge protests against participation in the Coalition were mounted in a number of Middle Eastern and North African states. While demonstrations are commonplace in the United States, they are illegal in countries like Egypt where emergency laws are employed, prohibiting such assemblies. Egyptian and other North African populations were galvanized in anticipation of a U.S. military presence on both anti-imperialist and Islamic grounds. What was really being protested was the closed nature of their own political systems above and beyond their alliances with the West.

The U.S. presence in Saudi Arabia during the Gulf War provided ammunition to various forces opposed to the royal family and also to the American presence. The King had to issue an edict reining in the religious police (*mutawa'in*). A group of 45 women who staged a driving demonstration were punished, fired from their jobs, and the affair generated even more controversy about the possibilities of change or the need to reassert custom as it stood. Islamists accused them of trying to Americanize the Kingdom, of being "infidels," communists, and whores. The women had pointed out the hypocrisy of a rule that permits them to be alone with an unrelated man (their driver) and to drive overseas, but not in their own homeland. No actual law against women's driving existed, but Shaykh `Abdul `Aziz Ibn al-Baz issued a *fatwa* in response to this polarizing incident.

The *mutawa'in*, the Organization to Prevent Vice and Promote Virtue, the modern day equivalent of the medieval *muhtasib* (a state official who could enforce penalties at the level of *ta`zir*) monitor the dress code that requires women to cover completely in public, break up any gatherings of women in public, punish men who attempt to speak to them, and ascertain the closure of businesses during the five daily prayers. They have detained and tortured citizens and

foreigners. They blocked and beat female students fleeing a fire in a public school in Mecca, on March 11, 2002, because they were not fully veiled, and obstructed the entry of Civil Defense officers into the building. Fourteen students were killed.<sup>62</sup> Prince Nayif issued a directive in 2002 that the *mutawa'in* should alter their forceful approach,<sup>63</sup> and an Academy of Islamic Police was established at Umm al-Qura University, but Saudis continue to complain about the *mutawa'in* who may encourage the extremists' views. A legal scholar suggested that the Saudi government might revisit the classical Islamic texts' interdiction on spying on and confining citizens and regulating crimes outside the *shari`a*.<sup>64</sup> Better yet, Saudi citizens' rights should be protected within a Bill of Rights.

### **The Awakening Preachers.**

During the first Gulf War, the so-called Awakening preachers, Salman al-Awda and Safar al-Hawali, strongly criticized the regime for its alliance with the West and circulated taped sermons throughout the country. This method of communication, difficult to control, had also bolstered the reputation of Khomeini prior to the Islamic Revolution, and various popular Muslim preachers in neighboring countries. Shaykh Al-Hawali has a background in Islamic scholarship and argues, as had bin Ladin, against Western influence and modernization. Unlike bin Ladin, he did not personalize his attack against specific members of the royal family, or question its authority. Al-Hawali decried America's pursuit of its interests, including access to oil in the region, to be achieved through alliances with moderate, secularist Arab regimes as well as with Israel. He also focused on American Christian fundamentalist televangelists like Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson who, to al-Hawali's mind, support Zionism through their anti-Arab/anti-Muslim statements.<sup>65</sup>

Shaykh al-Awda comes from a village not far from the city of Burayda, once a hotbed of *Ikhwan* activity. Farmers there protested the late delivery of subsidies. He preached and wrote about some of the socioeconomic ills of the country and the need to rebuild the alliance between Islamic society and state, and he decries normalization with Israel.<sup>66</sup> Others like `A'idh al-Qarni had actually emerged earlier, in

the late 1980s. He, along with Sa`id al-Ghamidi, attacked liberals and liberal ideas in Saudi Arabia. The governor of Asir province accused al-Qarni of sodomy and child molestation and imprisoned him. He was found innocent in court and then toured the country, lecturing – a fairly unusual activity in Saudi Arabia.

The Awakening preachers differed from the more senior and established `ulama because they criticized the regime. They characterized their own royal leaders as being submissive to the West. That elided both with extremist discourse and the general sense of malaise and anger of the young and disenfranchised Saudis. The Saudi government tried various measures to control and combat the Awakening preachers, eventually imprisoning them. They also encouraged a countermovement under Shaykh Rabi` al-Madkhali, who refuted the awakening preachers, but like them utilized cassette tapes and websites as well as formal conferences to spread their Wahhabi and politically conservative views.

### **Public Complaints.**

Intellectuals and university students were attracted by the Awakening, and some professors organized discussion groups. In March 1991, several of these figures wrote the Letter of Demands which was signed by more than 400 religious figures and preachers, including those inside of the establishment `ulama, and sent it to King Fahd. This Letter followed on the heels of a so-called “secular” petition (though it contained signatures of religious personages as well and argued for closer observance of Islamic mores) to King Fahd, written in December 1990, which proposed the establishment of a consultative assembly; the revival of municipal councils; independence of, and equality in, the judiciary; equality of the citizenry; more freedom of the media; reformation of the principle of *hisba* (commanding the good and forbidding the evil); encouraging women’s participation in society; and reform of the educational system.<sup>67</sup> Next, a group of emboldened clerics in 1992 produced a document called the Memorandum of Advice that called for stricter observance of the *shari`ah* (Islamic law) in all areas of national life, an end to corruption, and cessation of relations with Western and non-Muslim entities.

The government asked the most senior clerics to condemn the Memorandum, and, the highly-respected Shaykh ibn al-Baz did so. Seven among this highest-ranking clerical association procrastinated, not signing onto the regime's denunciation of clerical activism. King Fahd dismissed these seven and then attacked preachers of radical discourse and other regional Islamist influences. It seemed however, that the genie of dissent had escaped from the magic lamp. The clerics had attempted, in a manner consistent with their social role, to consult with and advise their ruler and to substantiate their arguments with religious scripture; secularists and Islamists were attempting to exercise the same function. What was new and nearly intolerable to the government was the public nature of this criticism.

### **Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights (CDLR) and the Movement for Islamic Reform (MIRA).**

In May 1993, a new organization launched itself by issuing a communiqué by a group of young Islamist professionals who, along with others, obtained the signatures of very prominent Saudis on this first message. In addition, a cassette tape referred to as "Supergun" was circulated to explain the demands of the petitioners to the public. The CDLR broadcast its formation on the radio, and cast itself as both a human rights organization and channel for popular, legitimate opposition. The Council of the Higher `Ulama denounced the group, and the government cracked down on the new Islamist trend, arresting various leaders, and CDLR's leaders fled to London, where Muhammad al-Mas`ari emerged as chief spokesperson. The group cleverly utilized faxes, e-mail, and websites to criticize the Saudi government and what it deems the establishment clerics (*`ulama al-sulta*). Mas`ari was nearly deported from England but managed to remain there through an appeal process.

The MIRA was created in 1996 when its leader, Sa`d al-Faqih, split with Mas`ari of the CDLR. One reason for the split concerned Mas`ari's support for two other Islamist groups: the *Hizb al-Tahrir* (literally, Liberation Party), an older Islamist organization responsible for the establishment of many worldwide jihadist offshoots that disavows the validity of any current Muslim government, even the two Islamist

states of Iran and the Sudan, because they hold that Muslims must be governed by a Caliph. His second association was with a group called the *Muhajjirun*. Mas`ari developed money troubles as a result of suspicions about these associations and declared bankruptcy in 1997.<sup>68</sup> Al-Faqih is also an Islamist admirer of Sayyid Qutb's jihadist doctrine. He remains in London and distinguishes his opposition to the royal family from al-Qa'ida's aims. His web-based activism targets the Saudi Arabian government for human rights abuses and probably exaggerates the degree of opposition.

### **Violence in the 1990s.**

Violence broke out in 1995 when a car bomb attack in Riyadh at a facility that housed the U.S. Army Materiel Command's Office of the Program Manager for the Saudi Arabian National Guard led to fatalities and many injuries. Three of those executed for the crime were "Afghan" or "Bosnian" Arabs, part of the global jihad, and the fourth was also an Islamist. None of the men were members of the three groups that actually claimed responsibility: the Movement for Islamic Change in the Arabian Peninsula, the Tigers of the Gulf, and the Combatant Partisans of God (who demanded the release of Shaykh `Umar `Abd al-Rahman and Musa Abu Marzuq from American custody). There were suspicions that another individual, Hassan al-Suraihi, might have been involved.<sup>69</sup> This earlier incident is referred to in 2004 Islamist statements as "the first attack against the barracks of the Crusaders," or Riyadh/East.<sup>70</sup>

Then in 1996, the U.S. barracks in Khobar exploded in a truck bombing. The huge bomb killed 19 Americans and injured 373. Experts were divided on whether this was an al-Qa'ida related attack, or more probably a group or splinter of Hizballah of Saudi Arabia, a Shi'i organization. Warnings of an attack had been issued. The result of the Khobar incident was that the United States relocated its Air Force personnel to an isolated air base at Al-Kharj, more secure than the Khobar site. Other results were Saudi crackdowns on Shi'i figures, suspicions of Iranian involvement, and a U.S.-Saudi failure to coordinate or cooperate successfully in the investigation of the incident.<sup>71</sup>

The information that eventually emerged about Saudi Hizbullah, thought to be a small group of fewer than 1000 members, was illustrative of Middle Eastern governments' difficulties in controlling jihadist organizations. This organization was essentially independent of its Lebanese namesake, although the U.S. indictment of the group issued on June 21, 2001,<sup>72</sup> mentions that an unidentified member of the Lebanese Hizbullah allegedly assisted the Saudi group to construct their large bomb. The U.S. indictment detailed meetings and recruitments of certain members at the Sayyida Zaynab shrine in Damascus, a site that attracts a large amount of Iranian pilgrim traffic. Damascus is also a frequent destination for Saudi tourists and home to a Hizbullah office, and not far from the Lebanese border via the Maysalun road. The U.S. view of the group implied rather more dependence on Iran and Lebanese Hizbullah than the Saudis initially accepted, as the Saudi Hizbullah had defined its goals as being in Saudi territory.

Four interesting aspects of this event have a bearing on the current Islamist threat in the region, and not only in Saudi Arabia. First, the Islamists' ability to recruit via religious travel and at religious sites is an extraordinarily difficult capacity to contain. Second, it is clear that Saudi-Syrian, Syrian-Iranian, and Saudi-Iranian relations and ideas of mutual interest are quite distinct from those of the United States with each of these three countries. Third, one must avoid over- or underemphasizing connections between Islamist organizations. Saudi officials cancelled a trip to Lebanon after it became publicly known that a Saudi Hizbullah leader, Husayn Mubarak, was, in fact, able to receive colleagues in the Biqa` Valley in eastern Lebanon and that these colleagues had fled from Saudi Arabia through Iran. American leaders have, on the other hand, overestimated the degree of Iranian control over Lebanese and Saudi Hizbullah. Fourth, the Khobar incident triggered anti-Shi`a actions and so both militant and quietist responses from the Saudi Shi`a.

### **Regrouping and the Shock of September 11, 2001.**

Many of the Awakening preachers were released from prison in the late 1990s, when the Saudi regime finally permitted limited use of the Internet, and calls for political reform reemerged. Some

leaders like Mishari al-Zaydi and Mansur al-Nuqaydan recanted their previous ideas and called for a new revision of scriptural interpretation. Other Awakening leaders were less critical of the Saudi state, which in turn sought their input, as if to legitimize the regimes' Islamic credentials after two of the best known pro-establishment clerics had died (one being the above-mentioned Ibn al-Baz). Different names for these neo-liberals are Islamist-liberals or new Islamists; they also include certain Shi'i leaders and are apt to call themselves *islahiyyun* (reformers).

Of these, `Abd al-`Aziz al-Qasim is notable in promoting an adapted democratic system, and in fostering a free and active civil society. Unlike secularist or earlier liberals, he promotes jihad, and unlike Islamists, supports Saudi nationalism. He says that Islamist-liberals must better communicate with liberals, but he does not support Saudi women's rights activists.<sup>73</sup> Other leaders of this trend, like Abdullah al-Hamid, who calls for an innovative instead of a conservative salafism; Hasan al-Maliki, who has attacked the Saudi curricula and version of Islamic history; Mansur al-Nuqaydan, who wants to see an enlightened form of Islamic law; and Muhammad Sa'id Tayyib, who holds a political salon and calls for an "open door" policy by political leaders, differ from each other but share goals to re-read or revise religious ideas, retain Islamic law, and create bonds with other Islamists. Likewise, Shi'a leaders like Shaykh Zaki al-Milad, Muhammad Mahfuz, and Ja'far al-Shayib seek to redefine rather than to reject Islamism, and to be seen as Saudis first.<sup>74</sup>

Outside the Middle East, some experts have called for a single figure like Martin Luther who would lead Islamic reform. They seem unaware that Islam has experienced reform movements in the past, with a reaction to these in the form of Rashid Rida's (a Syrian thinker) *salafism* earlier in the 20th century. In the Saudi context, it is probably more reasonable for reform to emerge in this piecemeal and eclectic manner, and outsiders would do well to remember that those here described as Saudi liberals hold views more familiar to them than Islamist-liberals or neo-salafis.

Other new salafists came to the fore — these being Nasir al-Fahd, Hamud al-Shu'aybi and `Ali al-Khudayr, who had a following in the Wahhabist stronghold of Burayda. These leaders strongly disapproved of Saudi liberals who hoped to modernize the Kingdom

and reform it along the lines of other Arab “democrats.” Admirers of these salafists included local followers and jihadists with global ties, QAP, and other smaller groups that share bin Ladin’s goals of worldwide jihad. As Sa`d al-Faqih has pointed out, observers sometimes mistake QAP or bin Ladin’s aims as the destruction of the royal family. Members of the royal family have not been the primary target of bin Ladin, but al-Faqih suggests that this has frustrated some of the jihadists.<sup>75</sup>

The non-Islamist or liberal stream (*al-tayyar al-librali*, the Liberal Trend) also merits attention as the counterweight to Islamists. Earlier liberals were pan-Arabists, whereas the new generation are attentive to the Saudi demand for Islamic authenticity and are not merely “secularists,” as their Islamist opponents call them. Those outspoken in exchanges with the regime are highly educated academics and professionals, and not clerics. They were poorly organized, but had begun publishing the *al-Watan* newspaper and had their own website prior to 9/11.<sup>76</sup>

All three groups appeared to gain energy after 9/11, although for very different reasons. Many Saudis were shocked by the attacks on the World Trade Center and the resulting charges of responsibility that the country was guilty of harboring terrorists and for an environment featuring disdain for the rule of law and the emergence of *takfiri* discourse. If Saudis are arguably even more conservative than their government, a reformation of key religious ideas is much more palatable than wholesale dismissal or challenging of these notions.

The more violent and oppositionist strain of salafists also gained strength as some unknown number of fighters returned from Afghanistan to Saudi Arabia. Regional factors like the escalation of violent Israeli responses to Palestinian attacks and the growing awareness that the United States would likely attack Iraq sharpened anti-Westernism. According to the Gallup poll conducted in February 2002 and a Zogby poll issued in March 2002, anti-American attitudes and disapproval of the United States were high among Saudis who characterized the country as being “pretentious,” “brutal,” and “arrogant,” although its technology, media, and educational system obtained higher ratings.<sup>77</sup> Also, once the Saudi officials began to mount a variety of counterterrorist actions, militants like the QAP saw a need

to demonstrate their resilience. This may explain the wave of violence since May 2003. Among these measures were those designed to control the financial support of extremist activities and money laundering stemming from the lack of control or accounting over charitable monies, donations, and the foundations that funneled money. The assets of the Haramain Islamic Foundation were frozen, and the Foundation was scheduled to be closed prior to Ramadan of 2004.

The giving of *zakat* or charity, one of five major duties for Muslims, is simultaneously private and voluntary, and religiously incumbent. As supporters of the Saudi government's efforts have stated, controlling this outflow is no easy matter when in every mosque there has been an unguarded box for donations.<sup>78</sup> With the embarrassing evidence from recanting Islamists that these funds had been used by extremists along with meal coupons for Ramadan, donations henceforth will be collected in specified bank accounts.

### **Limited Reform and the 2003-04 Violence.**

Introspection arising from the 9/11 events and existing critiques of corruption and bifurcated lifestyles—the privileged royals as compared to the Saudi poor—and the concerns over unemployment and anticipated future declines in oil prices, and changes made to the governing system in the 1990s, along with Islamist challenges, combined to produce a veritable Saudi obsession with reform in 2003. Liberal reformers sent their “Strategic Vision for the Present and the Future” to Crown Prince `Abdullah in January 2003, a detailed proposal that calls for the building of constitutional institutions under the framework of the existing monarchy: separation of powers, an elected representative consultative council, independence for the judiciary, human rights, and permission to form associations, as well as an agenda for economic reforms.

In April 2003, a group of Saudi Shi`a also presented a petition to Crown Prince Abdullah that stressed tolerance, an end to discrimination, the need for human rights and freedom, and equality of the citizenry.<sup>79</sup> All of this seemed hopeful, but in the wake of the May 2003 attacks, the liberals attacked Wahhabi ideas that fund salafism in a public fashion via *al-Watan*. The government

then fired Jamal Khashoggi, editor-in-chief of *al-Watan*,<sup>80</sup> whether fearing backlash from the Islamists, or in direct response to `ulama demands,<sup>81</sup> illustrating the travails of political opening and freedom of expression. Khashoggi continued to write in the Arab press, and now works for Amir Turki ibn Faysal, the former head of Royal Intelligence and Ambassador to the United Kingdom.

However, 13 pro-reform activists, who called for a transition from absolute to constitutional monarchy and for a governmentally provided timetable for changes to be implemented, were arrested in March 2004. Seven were released, and more than 130 petitioned to release the remaining detainees, but talks between activists and Prince Nayif were unproductive.<sup>82</sup>

Despite the situation, many Saudis agree on at least one idea, greater financial transparency, meaning more accurate reporting of state budgets and an end to financial corruption.<sup>83</sup> Several members of the Islamist reform front deny any need for social reform, which has been a problematic issue for the government as well. Official objections to women's voting in the municipal elections cited the lack of sufficiently qualified women to manage female-only polling places, and that few Saudi women have the photo identification necessary for voting. Saudi women activists retorted that if Afghans could manage such problems, Saudis could as well, once the general reluctance to make changes was addressed.

In January 2004, Lubna al-Olayan, a leading Saudi businesswoman, addressed an economic forum without being completely covered by the abaya, or a headscarf. Saudi newspapers published pictures of her and other "unveiled" women. Shaykh `Abd al-`Aziz al-Shaykh, the grand mufti, denounced the women's behavior and the publication of photographs.<sup>84</sup>

Women, a natural constituency for democratizing reform, are also salient to unemployment and Saudization. A Saudi Management Association survey of 2,550 women designated acceptable spheres of female activity in the family, in the religious sphere, education, management and social services, but recognized that women could perform many other types of employment. Women may study medical science, dentistry, medical technology, science, home economics, administration, economics, humanities, and the arts, but

this will not translate into large numbers of jobs until many practices are amended. Prince al-Walid ibn Talal, who possesses his own fleet of aircraft, recently hired a woman pilot, Hanadi Zakariya Hindi,<sup>85</sup> a first for the Kingdom, although efforts to hire female flight attendants were stymied.<sup>86</sup> Lubna al-Olayan, mentioned above, was the first woman to be elected to the board of a major Saudi bank.<sup>87</sup> One of the women of the driving demonstration actually participated in the Third National Dialogue, whose subject was women, held in June 2004. Two women have been appointed members of the 120-seat Majlis al-Shura, and Amira al-Jawhara Fahd ibn Muhammad ibn Abd al-Rahman al-Saud was appointed assistant Undersecretary for Education Affairs in 2000, another important first. Women's desks are being established in all ministries; Foreign Minister Prince Saud al-Faysal announced that women will be hired in his ministry for the first time, and Saudi businesswomen are optimistic as well. Though resistance to change persists, personal observation in the Kingdom reveals that women are far more active than the Western or Saudi press might lead one to believe.

Women also played a role in the spread of *salafi* views. Some attribute this to instructors in the women's colleges. Though purges took place, the women previously affected are now raising families, and their influence cannot be easily contained in that private sphere.

Other areas questioned by reformers face problems or challenges depending on one's perspective. The first nongovernmental human rights organization, the National Organization for Human Rights (NOHR), was officially approved on March 9, 2004. It was mocked for declaring that certain *hudud* punishments like amputations and flogging are not torture—a position that the United Nations Organisation Contre La Torture and other human rights groups disagree with. Torture and enforced elicitation of confessions also have a direct bearing on the security situation and progress toward reforms. Research on legal practice has shown that past judicial tendencies (mostly outside of Saudi Arabia) were to soften extremely strict legal interpretations by recourse to the concept of doubt (*shubha*). Unfortunately, the practices of regimes like the Taliban, the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Saudi Arabia have eroded elements of moderation. Weekly public beheadings, stonings, or amputations

are shocking to the outside world, and have influenced Muslim extremists who beheaded hostages in the Kingdom, and also in Iraq, although Saudi and other religious officials have denounced these incidents.<sup>88</sup> Enforced confessions obtained through duress or torture are a violation of Islamic evidentiary rules; while the application of beheadings to women violates tradition. *Shari`a* punishments are applied to non-Muslims and non-Saudis who reside or work in the Kingdom. An Egyptian national's eye was surgically removed as a legal punishment in 2000 to uphold the eye-for-an-eye principle in a *qisas* offense<sup>89</sup> and Pakistanis, Afghans, and others were beheaded along with Saudis last year.<sup>90</sup> Former British accusees won an appeal in their effort to sue the Saudi government for torturing them in prison, after they were pardoned for alleged crimes.<sup>91</sup> Beyond criminal law, foreign workers make up a huge proportion of the Saudi workforce. While some are well-paid, others are indebted to the agencies that contract them to the Kingdom where they have no way of combating their exploitation with long work hours, slave-like conditions, and sometimes assault, rape, incarceration, and sentencing without recourse.<sup>92</sup>

Exactly how the United States could encourage the NOHR to open a genuine discussion of human and legal rights (including those of foreign workers), the subject of a recent Human Rights Watch inquiry,<sup>93</sup> is unclear. Some external entity must do so, if freedom is to be forwarded. Influence from and dialogue with other Muslim nations that have reformed penal codes would be useful in this endeavor.

With all of this in mind, mild political reforms in 2003, triggered by a decade of increasingly public discussion and violence, are significant. A bomb exploded in a home in Riyadh on March 18, 2003. This premature explosion led authorities to the discovery of an enormous arms stockpile. Then a gun battle between the police and extremists took place in Riyadh on May 6, following a raid. Six days later on May 12, 12 suicide bombers attacked residential compounds in Riyadh, killing 30 people, wounding 200, and signaling a crisis on Saudi soil. Many clashes followed suggesting the presence of 10 or more QAP cells. These extremists' refuges were discovered in various parts of the country, and the QAP's leader, Yusuf al-Ayiri, was killed. Another suicide attack took place at the al-Muhayya

residential compound on November 8, 2003, but police were able to prevent a large-scale attack in Riyadh.

A group called the Haramayn Brigades surfaced and was thought to be a cell of QAP. By March, the police had killed Khalid al-Hajj, the subsequent QAP leader. Gunfights, attempted bombings, and assassinations continued. Divisions arose in the terrorist groups on the issue of whether or not to attack Saudis, Jews, Christians, and Americans (i.e., Western foreigners) as `Abd al-`Aziz al-Muqrin, a QAP leader, ordered. In May 2004, the Yanbu offices of a Swiss company were penetrated by militants who moved freely around the installation, killing Westerners. On May 31, gunmen charged into an office and then through a housing compound in Khobar, killing 22 foreigners. In June, an Irish cameraman for the BBC, Simon Cumbers, was killed in Riyadh, and his colleague, correspondent Frank Gardner, seriously wounded.

Lone Westerners were attacked in Riyadh, one in his own house, and an American employee of Lockheed Martin, Paul M. Johnson, Jr., was beheaded by the self-proclaimed Falluja Brigade, horrifying many Saudis. The police reported that they had killed Abd al-Aziz al-Muqrin along with three other leading militants on June 19, 2004, and then offered an amnesty to militants who would surrender within a month. That effort was largely unsuccessful, although Safar al-Hawali attempted to broker a deal with the Islamists. Three militants surrendered, one on the first (May 2003) list of 18 remained at large, or 10 at large on a December list of 26 individuals. Further attacks of lone Westerners continued. Saudis could not but note the replication of similar attacks in Iraq. Abdelmajid bin Mohammad Abdallah al-Manaya, another extremist leader, was killed on October 11, 2004, and a Saudi policeman was killed in a clash on November 17, 2004. Official views were cautiously hopeful that the worst of the violence might have passed, but in October other reports spoke of a renewed campaign and alluded to Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's declaration of membership in al-Qa'ida. This optimism was dashed when extremists attacked the U.S. consulate in Jeddah on December 6, 2004.

Extremists have promulgated their messages via the internet, and began publishing a bi-weekly magazine, *Sawt al-Jihad* (the Voice of Jihad), and in late August 2004, *al-Khansa*, a jihadist magazine for

women on the Web. These have included bloodcurdling defenses of the slaying of Paul Johnson and Islamist critiques of U.S. policy. They provide a means for salafist extremists to maintain visibility, even while suffering losses at the hands of Saudi counterterrorist forces. *Sawt al-Jihad* gave notice that Sa`ud Humud al-`Utaybi was a leader in QAP's struggle. In his youth, Sa`ud had grown his hair long like Juhayman al-`Utaybi and called himself Abu Muhammad just like that leader of the Mecca uprising.

Assessments of the "Falluja Brigade"'s storming of the U.S. consulate in Jeddah were mixed. The boldness of the attack was surprising, but it also appeared improperly or incompletely planned, as the gunmen who entered through a side gate set off an explosion. Five non-Western employees of the consulate were killed, but others moved into the administrative section of the compound. Three of the gunmen were killed by Saudi security officers, and a fourth died later.<sup>94</sup> The attack shocked many in the Red Sea port who regard Jeddah as the most cosmopolitan of Saudi Arabia's cities due to its commercial importance and role in pilgrim traffic to the Holy Cities. The vulnerability of the highly protected Consulate and subsequent coordinated bombings in December give credence to QAP's assertions that the Islamic threat was not on the wane. However, news of attacks was replaced by news about the municipal elections in January and February of 2005, and a new anti-terrorism campaign directed toward the Saudi public in March 2005.

How should one measure the progress of the war on terror? Saudi officials wisely have decided to forego producing a new list of extremists. Too much energy could be devoted to the pursuit of just these individuals, when others will no doubt take their places and require expenditures of time and investigative energy. Closing down Internet traffic and inhibiting new recruitment are far more difficult tasks.

Saudi Arabia took a variety of actions to improve its internal security functions and defeat extremists prior to and following May 2003. These are listed in detail in Saudi sources and by Anthony Cordesman, and testify to Saudi efficacy and cooperation with international entities.<sup>95</sup> Arrests, detentions, and extraditions, the establishment of anti-money laundering units, a financial intelligence unit, other controls over banks and charitable organizations, and

efforts to control mosque-based and *mutawwa`in* activities could take up pages of this monograph. Cordesman and Obaid note the effectiveness of the various security services, as well as some problems with detention practices and in the intelligence service since Prince Turki al-Faysal resigned and was replaced by Prince Nawwaf ibn `Abd al-`Aziz, who then suffered a stroke.<sup>96</sup> Certain U.S. officials have issued supportive statements concerning Saudi efforts, but the Western media covered extremist violence more than Saudi efforts to subdue it.

The current state of the liberal reform movement has been affected by the U.S. presence in Iraq, which has aggravated further Saudi anti-Americanism. At the same time, talk of reform is everywhere in the Arab world today, more pervasively than Americans imagine. Instead of out-Islamizing the Islamists, as the Saudi regime did in the early 1980s following the `Utaybi uprising, liberals hope that it will realize the necessity of reforms to re-legitimize its authority. Some Saudi watchers doubt that anything will emerge but a Mubarak-style short-term victory<sup>97</sup> over the Islamist extremists, because the Saudi Arabian government cannot afford to dislodge, or remake, its conservative Wahhabist base of support.

Saudis are not agreed on whether external pressure might speed the pace of reform. Businessmen, who share the aim of stability and limited change with the regime, warned that American pressure would actually aid the extremists if reform is perceived as an American-driven phenomena.<sup>98</sup> Yet, reformers from all over the region have reported that external pressures from international groups or the West have had an effect in encouraging previously intransigent governments to make changes.

### **Saudiphobic America and Anti-Americanism in Saudi Arabia.**

Family members of those killed in 9/11 filed a \$116 trillion lawsuit in a U.S. District Court against Osama bin Ladin, al-Qa`ida, the Taliban, three Saudi princes, seven banks, eight Islamic foundations, other financiers, and the government of the Sudan. Anti-Saudi sentiments were also affected by the polarized domestic situation prior to the 2004 elections, by certain books,<sup>99</sup> and by the film, *Fahrenheit 9/11*, that sought to provide Americans a simple explanation for the events of 9/11.

Sharp emotions are further inflamed by what seems to Americans to be a campaign against them that seeped from Saudi Arabia all over the region, and in which Westerners are being kidnapped and slaughtered, while even Arab liberals and opponents of Islamism revile American foreign policy. The sources of this profound lack of understanding are many and go back in time. At present, what ties remain are being eroded due to inflamed discourse. Saudis are not traveling to the United States for study, business, or medical treatment as in the past, if only because new immigration and travel procedures<sup>100</sup> intended to protect the homeland are greatly discouraging, and individuals with no connection to terrorism have been stranded, publicly humiliated, or worse; while xenophobia and even physical attacks on Arabs and Muslims (or Sikhs mistaken for them) in the United States have surged.<sup>101</sup>

Lack of contact and access and “text assaults”—partial or misreadings of each other’s statements<sup>102</sup>—will most probably worsen the situation. A Gallup poll conducted February 9-12, 2004, showed that 28 percent of the Americans polled regarded Saudi Arabia favorably, while 66 percent regarded the country unfavorably. Americans preferred Saudi Arabia to Iran (77 percent unfavorable), the Palestinian Authority (76 percent unfavorable) and North Korea (83 percent unfavorable), but less than Egypt (32 percent unfavorable) or Israel (35 percent unfavorable).<sup>103</sup>

Beyond the effects of events on public opinion, we must be concerned with policy recommendations that vilify or destabilize the Kingdom. The bottom line is that Saudi Arabia and the United States have been allies for more than half a century. Their military and economic ties exist in addition to political ones. This admittedly ambiguous relationship is well described by Thomas Lippman in his chronicle of Americans who lived and worked in the Kingdom, as the “ultimate marriage of convenience”<sup>104</sup> which, now threatened, could result in a lengthy separation, divorce,<sup>105</sup> or reorientation. Many Saudis want to cooperate with the United States, although some fundamental differences—differing orientations toward Israel,<sup>106</sup> religious institutions, and the pace of political and social changes—will not easily be resolved.<sup>107</sup>

Anti-Americanism in the Kingdom may stem in part from the pressure of American influences; the consequences of Saudi

dependence on American military strength—which to Saudis appeared detrimental to Arab and Muslim unity—Saudi frustrations with the American reaction to the al-Aqsa *intifadha*, and erosion of peaceful efforts between Palestinians and Israelis,<sup>108</sup> as well as sympathies or favorable views of Islamism. Those salafists who have not accommodated with the Saudi government are unrelentingly critical of the United States. The Gulf War of 1991, the U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, and the subsequent campaign in Iraq are all considered to be acts of a colonialist power determined to impose its will on the world. Salafists, including `A'idh al-Qarni, Muhammad al-Fawzan, and Safar al-Hawali, produced a document dedicated to creating a dialogue, "How We Can Coexist," that raises many objections to a perceived U.S. course of antipathy to, and war on, Muslims rather than a war on terror.<sup>109</sup> Similarly, salafists have been angered by media attacks on Islamic charities and the religious curricula.<sup>110</sup>

It is more difficult for Americans to understand that non-salafi Saudis, indeed much of the Arab world, would disapprove so strongly of American foreign policy, as well. Recently, an open letter signed by some of the Islamist figures mentioned in this monograph, as well as other academics, called for support for the people of Iraq and legitimized resistance to the occupation. The Saudi Ambassador, Prince Bandar, distanced the government from the statement.<sup>111</sup> The letter was then misinterpreted, and the Saudi response ridiculed in terrorist-studies media sources.<sup>112</sup> These sources appear unable to understand the separation of Islamist *`ulama* from the Saudi government. This issue is of concern in Iraq as well, where U.S. troops attempted to rein in Shaykh Harith al-Dhari and Shaykh Mahdi al-Sumaidi, Sunni clerics who called for a boycott of elections and criticized other clerics who had not condemned the campaign to retake Falluja.<sup>113</sup>

Beyond Iraq, and as Prince Bandar mentioned elsewhere, unhappiness with the Israeli-Palestinian situation and America's role in that crisis is not the source of Islamist extremism, but it remains an element in extremist anti-American discourse. It is a thorn in the side of many Arab liberal reformers because Saudis perceive the situation as a contradiction to the U.S. policy of "forwarding freedom" and the historic American championing of representation and justice under

the law. Relations with anti-extremist Saudis would be improved if the United States were to invigorate the effort to achieve an Israeli-Palestinian-Arab peace. Saudis, like other Arabs were amazed that Crown Prince Abdullah's initiative in Beirut in 2002 on this matter was not met with a very public enthusiastic response in the United States. The acts of Palestinian terrorists destroyed that opportunity, some officials would respond, but if any such opportunities arise again, they should not be missed.

### **The Future of Security in Saudi Arabia – The Future of Political Reform?**

The future of security in Saudi Arabia will depend strongly on actions taken in the next 5 years. The United States, so actively engaged in shaping future states in Afghanistan and Iraq, cannot afford to retreat entirely from its relationship with Saudi Arabia. Neither should it wish to put its ally in an impossible position where slurs on local competence or directives for change embolden a regime change that could more likely favor radicals and conservatives than liberals.

Still, many U.S. and non-U.S. observers equate the future of security and stability in Saudi Arabia with the future of reform. Three types of arguments are given: first, that without reforms, Saudi Arabia could result in a "failed state" where sanctuary cannot be denied to terrorists, and they may freely recruit; second, that Saudi Arabia already comprises an environment antithetical to the war on terror; or third, that Saudi citizens who have more freedoms will better defend their own country against extremism. We might add that successful reforms would redeem the United States to some degree for the costs of its interventionist, reshaping experiment in the region, and salvage the relationship between the Saudi government and its more liberal, non-Islamist critics.

Anthony Cordesman and Nawaf Obaid write, "[T]here is no dilemma between improving intelligence and the security services and liberalization," and that progress can be made at the Saudi rate and on Saudi terms.<sup>114</sup> Here "Saudi" must equate with the government, for other Saudis are frustrated by the preferred slow pace and reversals. A group of 306 non-Islamist Saudis submitted a

petition, "In Defense of the Nation," that incorporated some aspects of the "Vision" and the Shi'i petition, mentioned above, on September 24, 2003.<sup>115</sup> Petition-signers were not punished by the regime, but the regime blocked a website listing the reformers' agenda. Reformers were told that the royals feared a backlash by the Islamists.<sup>116</sup>

Saudi riot police employed live ammunition to dispel a pro-reform march at an October 2003 Saudi Red Crescent Society conference on human rights. Even more troubling to reformers and ordinary Saudis was a September 2004 statement by the Council of Ministers forbidding military personnel and civil servants from voicing opposition to governmental policy.<sup>117</sup> Two days later, a 2-month salary bonus was paid to members of the military and security services. A reformer complained that the security personnel were being rewarded for their efforts against extremism, yet the Saudi people were punished for their enthusiasm for reform.<sup>118</sup>

## What Kind of Democratic Reforms?

Calls for reform from above are the hallmark of Middle Eastern liberals, or "democrats" in a number of countries in the region. When we dare to be optimistic, we see these, elite-based, flawed, and miniscule in influence, as the best antidote to extremism. The encouragement of such groups requires actions by individual states, but also something more – something outside the ken of U.S. policy proposals and that is a reexamination of a) the *ʿulama* establishment, and b) the future role of moderate Islamists.

Arab intellectuals have been calling for reforms in Islamic thought and jurisprudence for more than 120 years.<sup>119</sup> These efforts did not coincide particularly with the earlier rise of liberals, Arab nationalists who hoped for political change to arise from the will of the masses. In the Kingdom, today's pro-reform liberals face a conundrum. They must convince rulers not to act against them to prove to the conservative and Islamist elements of the *ʿulama* establishment, as well as the neo-Islamists, that they can out-Islamize any alternative. The liberals have called for rethinking and revisioning rather than discarding the status quo. They have embraced, to some degree, the spirit of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) in the region, which also calls for a vibrant civil society and the furthering of reform.

In the West, we find many interpretations of democratization. Scholars familiar with the Middle East, like Udo Steinbach, agree that a democracy in the Middle East has “no blueprint,” but note the weakness of NGOs and their vulnerability to state control there.<sup>120</sup> Others, angered by the anti-Americanism of NGOs, argue that they are a means for the replacement of democracy with a post-democratic condition, and they will co-opt the U.S.-funded initiative of democratization.<sup>121</sup> Few understand that democratization may require an accommodation with moderate Islamists, and that might impede progress of the process just as surely as regime cautiousness will. Differently put, pursuit of a liberal constitutional ideal may necessitate curtailment of certain popular rights, producing, according to Frédéric Volpi, a “pseudo-democracy.”<sup>122</sup>

### **What Kind of Security?**

At a minimum, Saudi Arabia needs to reestablish internal security, continue to guard its oil fields, and consider its current vulnerability to Iran and militants in Iraq. If Iran continues on its current path of nuclear development, Saudi Arabia must meet that risk by continuing to fund its defense and training program while also hoping that, in a crisis, the United States would be willing to restore an equilibrium to the situation. The conventional wisdom is that the smaller size of the Saudi military prevents it from being used in an internal coup. Some have speculated that the Saudis may buy arms from the Russians and could invest in the natural gas sector.<sup>123</sup> Further, they could and might wish to develop a nuclear arsenal because of the worsening relationship with the United States, the size of their defense forces, and likely future Iranian development of nuclear weapons.<sup>124</sup>

Doomsday scenarios to be avoided are:

- an assassination, or death and subsequent crisis in the royal family leading to regime disintegration;
- a civil war between regime supporters and Islamist extremists, and their respective tribal and familial allies;
- an unmanageable attack on the oil region; or
- a serious conflict with Saudi Arabia’s neighbors.

The danger of a civil war might arise from a situation in which a segment of the Saudi government is radicalized from within. If that were the case, then the alliances of security, military, or national guard forces might be subverted, unlikely as this is at present. An attack on the oil facilities is a serious concern. More than one-half of Saudi Arabia's oil reserves are located in just 8 of about 80 fields, including Ghawar, which produces nearly half of the country's total production. Extremists attacked oil installations in 2004, and Saudi security has foiled other and earlier attacks. The 2004 attacks specifically targeted expatriates, but perhaps attacks will become less specific as in Iraq where Iraqi crude exports were affected, and pumping was deliberately halted in August 2004.<sup>125</sup> Oil loading facilities and the two main pipelines, the Petroline and the Abqaiq-Yanbu natural gas liquids pipeline, as well as tankers, might also be targeted. Strategic planners and military games must not predicate easy victory; rather, the lessons of the Iraqi insurgency should be carefully integrated into scenarios concerning the oil fields, which are now protected by forces of over 30,000, and possess sophisticated surveillance equipment. Still, the likelihood of infiltration by small groups seeking to keep their cause alive or future coordinated multiple attacks must be considered. Even the brief attack on the U.S. consulate in Jeddah triggered a rise in oil prices, so the economic impact of any such scenarios should also be assessed.

In light of these scenarios, the current goal of restoring security is merely a mid-level concern. But with these scenarios in mind, political reform appears more risky, though morally and politically imperative to the discouragement of Islamist extremism in the long run. And if the U.S.-Saudi relationship worsens, these crises might present very different outcomes than we now imagine or anticipate. Sunni extremists' abilities to bolster each other in a wide swathe of states extending from Saudi Arabia to Jordan to Syria to Iraq, and westward to Egypt are exactly what QAP and other groups have been trying to demonstrate. Their role in any doomsday scenario is worth consideration.

## **The Risks of Security and Democracy.**

The risks of a security policy geared to suppression of the mid-level crisis involve a concomitant suppression of Saudi-led calls for liberal reform. That might occur whether we actively aid the Saudis in their effort, or stand back and hope that they can manage on their own. This type of policy – foreign and security – will not do anything for the future of Saudi Arabia 10, 20, or 50 years down the road.

At present, we should not write off the royal family, as do their Islamist opponents, or blame them entirely for the slow progress toward reform, but the United States can and should understand that improving internal security can well mean threatening civil liberties as has been the case in Egypt and Morocco, and that aiding allies to increase justice and political participation while also efficaciously zeroing in on extremists are aims fraught with cross-purpose.

The risks of encouraging liberal constitutionalist or democratic reform, on the other hand, are a) destabilization, b) an even more violent backlash by the Islamists against the regime, or more likely, c) many Islamists will try, as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Hizbullah in Lebanon, or the Islamists of Jordan, to transform themselves into legitimate political actors to outweigh the liberals and block their aims at legislative reforms.

## **The Benefits of Security and Democracy.**

The potential benefits of democratization are not too difficult to imagine either. If the process can be successfully managed, the cooperation now found in Saudi and U.S. counterterrorism efforts might be translated to other spheres of the relationship. In a less charged and antagonistic atmosphere, Americans might be more open to Saudi views on regional issues; indeed Saudis have many valuable insights to share about the processes of rapid modernization and the nature of Islamism itself.

## **Religious Reform.**

Saudis do not want to reject their own cultural legacy (*turath*). We cannot easily convince a country dedicated to the principles of

Islamic law that it should allow proselytization or visible worship of other faiths. But we can ask how well it serves Saudis to be taught that invective against Jews or Christians validates their own faith. Saudis have begun to reform religious and national education in order to grapple with these issues; for instance, reforming instructions on how one greets non-Muslims, and in directives to and retraining of preachers.

Sharp external criticisms like the 2004 International Commission on Religious Freedom Report that characterizes the Kingdom as a chief violator of religious freedom<sup>126</sup> had a stinging effect on government officials. It was true that the Shi`a suffer discrimination and public worship by non-Muslims is not permitted, but for years, Christian groups met weekly and held services in private. Tolerance should be encouraged, but it should be noted that mosques open to non-Muslims and the presence of churches in other Muslim countries did not dampen the growth of Islamist thought, nor can they alter the teaching of *jihād* or other problematic doctrines; self-generated moderation is needed.

Further, it is not simply the presence of Wahhabism that has fostered Islamism in Saudi Arabia. Certain tribal and geographic tensions are unknown to most Americans. For instance, Saudis note that al-Qa`ida and QAP have drawn many adherents from Asir province, an area that has in some ways resisted its incorporation into the Wahhabi state. The Hijaz has also been characterized as a locus of identity<sup>127</sup> and a tolerant spirit. Conversely, the town of Burayda, a Wahhabi stronghold, has proved a great source of salafist strength, but other likely locations have not. The fact that a large number of liberal reformers are from Najd is, on the other hand, thought to be a positive sign of their ability to “speak” to the government’s power base there.

Election registrations for the 178 municipal council seats showed that a certain amount of education about elections, issues, procedures, and civic spirit is needed. Half of the seats in these elections were open to male candidates who could self-nominate. The fact that male prisoners, but no women, could vote created some disgruntlement and calls for women to be appointed to some of the nonelected seats. Less than 150,000 voters registered in Riyadh, where 7 seats were open, disappointing those who hoped that more of the 400,000 eligible

to register would do so. Municipal organization, creating community projects, protecting and creating green spaces, and cleaning up the environment were part of candidates' agendas. This connects to "anti-terrorism" if candidates help foster a sense of public ownership of and responsibility for communities. The large number of candidates, 646 in the Riyadh area, was a positive sign, as was public excitement about the elections and candidates' public meetings which serve to educate the public.<sup>128</sup> Six of the seven winners were Islamists aided by cell phone text messages and Internet links that emphasized their religiosity.

Saudi Arabia can provide many lessons for a strategy to defeat salafist extremism. At the grand level of such a strategy, we perceive the interrelationship of informational, political, security, economic, and social factors, and that calls out for their coordination. At the country operational level, a military and intelligence battle can more easily be won with public cooperation and understanding, as well as support for the type of transition intended to public responsibility, civic-mindedness, efficacy, and transparency, if a degree of open dialogue between government and citizenry can be created and maintained. That, in turn, rests on reforms. We in the West can encourage this process.

The "soft" aspects of a policy of antiterrorism, unlike the "hard" facts of counterterrorist needs, are much more difficult to incorporate into a meaningful policy position. Even if we restricted ourselves to the specific needs of counterterrorist entities in the Kingdom, it would be easier to chart a course for Saudi and American cooperation if there were a simple and distinct enemy, a single and non-franchising al-Qa'ida. That is not the case. QAP may be eradicated or put out of commission for a time, but other insurgent groups, small factions of the original, or new ones will emerge. Counterterrorist measures alone are insufficient to dampen Islamist appeal or to deter recruitment. What U.S. policymakers may not realize is the depth to which ordinary citizens identify with many aspects of Islamist goals. As Islamism has swept the region for the last 28 years, Middle Eastern and other governments have uncertainly developed a pragmatic strategy: defeat the violent opposition and try to co-opt those who may share their views, but act with restraint. It is more

difficult for ordinary citizens neatly to separate extremists from those whose Islamist views may more likely lead to sheltering, or tolerating extremism, particularly if they are intimidated or tricked into cooperation. It is very much in U.S. interests to resurrect a better working relationship with the Kingdom to prevent such outcomes, since we may anticipate a campaign against oppositionist and extremist Islamism for decades to come.

Thus, the general American prescription for fighting terrorism—while forwarding freedom—is, in the long run, more compelling than it might seem on first glance. What would be helpful is clarification of how far or how short a distance we are willing to travel in the furtherance of freedom, and how the stabilization of Iraq, or a further outbreak of violence or instability in the Kingdom will or will not affect our foreign policy aims there.

Recommendations can be issued with several scenarios in mind. U.S. policymakers should:

1. Be wary of wholesale condemnations of Wahhabism, while encouraging reform of its more extreme permutations both inside and outside of Saudi official institutions.
2. Offer to create, or merely facilitate and participate in, ad hoc and more formal meetings that include Saudi Arabia and other Arab and European countries, as well as nonstate actors, held in neutral locations to discuss the future of antiterrorism and its relationship to democratic or other reforms.
3. Monitor and support, on a variety of levels, the efforts of liberal reformers who can, by working within the system, more effectively dampen *salafi* support than the United States itself can.
4. To facilitate Recommendation #3, U.S. officials should reestablish or reinvigorate ties with Saudis that will allow for influence in uncompromising, less formal situations, where advice may be offered, rather than dictated. This, in turn, implies,
5. Encourage modifications within and cooperation between Saudi and American private sectors to stimulate employment and investment, and provide better protection and insurance for workers.
6. Carefully consider that rational Saudi calculations that higher levels of oil production are not in its best interest might occur.

Up to now, the Kingdom has played the role of market regulator in response to American concerns with high oil prices.<sup>129</sup>

7. Be responsive to Saudi conventional military and security needs, recognizing that the former are far more costly than the latter, and begin discussions about GCC multi-country forces, or the multinational Muslim force proposal that the Saudis had previously floated. Either of these alternatives would provide at least some assistance in a crisis.
8. Be realistic concerning stated Saudi desires that governmental policies vis-à-vis Islamist extremism or political reform should be untainted by any U.S. input. Both parties must be flexible, but if there is to be an alliance, respectful consultation must continue.
9. Understand that antiterrorism laws and the legal limbo of states of emergency can be utilized to strengthen regimes, Saudi Arabia's and others, rather than to promote reform. This leads to the problematic goal of promoting legal reform in Saudi Arabia. Here, liberal reformers may provide the best rationalization for reforms capable of reconciling the original intent of Hanbali jurists with the exigencies of international standards of human and civil rights.
10. Encourage Saudi counterparts to improve and modernize the General Intelligence Presidency, the Saudi intelligence service which had deteriorated to some degree since Prince Turki al-Faysal resigned. Research, human intelligence, and strategic thinking are essential complements to the performance of security forces.
11. Use formal and informal channels to urge Saudi responsiveness to international bodies governing human rights, as with the now extremely tardy response to the U.N. Committee to Eliminate Discrimination Against Women, and in responding to the U.N. Committees monitoring racial discrimination (pertains to foreign workers) and torture. On the national level, Saudis should be encouraged to develop a Bill of Rights. Chapter Five of the Basic Law of Government is inadequate in its articulation and defense of citizens' rights, nor are they protected under the Majlis al-Shura law or the Law of the Provinces.

12. Strongly encourage their Saudi allies to examine and analyze the tangible and intangible influence of the Saudi *`ulama* and institutions of Islamic foreign policy on the progress of reform, rationalization, and democratization in neighboring countries.
13. Be aware that the security situation in Iraq has triggered some degree of transnational insurgency, running at present from Saudi Arabia to Iraq. Should stabilization be achieved in Iraq, measures must be taken to constrain militants who may return to Saudi Arabia.
14. Use all channels to provide better intelligence and coordination of information in surrounding countries or Europe to prevent future incidents such as the 1996 Khobar attack. Travel for religious purposes is just one element to be considered here.
15. Similarly, develop a more purposeful use of information concerning the role of religious clerics, and what constitutes dangerous, infuriating, or annoying provocation, while recommendation #12 is being pursued.
16. Encourage the Saudi government in its efforts to increase political education and participation through elections, the enhancement of civic consciousness, and creation of transparency.
17. Better educate ourselves about Saudi Arabia's pivotal role in the Middle East of today and tomorrow.
18. Develop a well-grounded plan in the event of catastrophic events in the Kingdom, or its eastern provinces, based on Saudi forces and a regional coalition, and anticipate U.S. involvement. Such plans must now include the prospect of longer-term commitments and resultant insurgencies, and not only dramatic and swift military operations.

## GLOSSARY OF ISLAMIC TERMS, PERSONALITIES, AND ORGANIZATIONS

*Apostate*: An apostate is one who denies his or her faith in Islam, or converts to another religious creed. Apostasy is one of the most serious crimes in Islamic law.

*ʿAshura*: The Shiʿi celebration of mourning the death of Husayn at Karbala in the early Islamic era. Ritual parades, self-flagellation, or wounding to the point of blood-letting are traditional. Celebration of the holiday has been banned by the Saudi government (and was limited in Saddam Husayn’s Iraq).

*Bidʿa*: An innovation. Entities not indigenous to Islam, or the Islamic way of life, were regarded negatively, although through the process of conquest, the Muslim warriors and dynasties acquired many new practices and customs. Religious scholars therefore seek to determine if an innovation, a form of technology for instance, is in conflict with the spirit of Islam or any principles of Islamic law, and may not necessarily condemn them. The Wahhabis called for the rejection of various previously accepted innovations.

*Caliph (Khalifah)*: A political office used to govern urban areas of pre-Islamic Arabia and chosen by the consensus of tribal elders. The term pre-dates Islam and simply means “successor.” The four Caliphs to succeed Muhammad were, in order, Abu Bakr, ʿUmar, ʿUthman, and ʿAli from 570-632 A.D.

*Dar al-Islam*: Literally, abode or house of Islam. The territory controlled by Muslims where Islamic law is observed.

*Dar al-harb*: Literally, the abode or house of war. Territory that is not controlled by Muslims.

*Daʿwa*: The mission to spread Islam in the world, and to Islamize, or remake, the Muslim world in a more authentic form.

*Fatwa*: An opinion or *responsa* issued by an Islamic jurist. A *fatwa* answers a question about the lawfulness of a particular topic or action. In Sunni Islam, jurists utilize the *Quran*, *hadith*, legal analogy and consensus in *fatwa* construction, while Shiʿi jurists may also use a creative process known as *ijtihad*. A highly educated ʿalim or religious scholar is qualified to issue a *fatwa*, whereas Usama bin Ladin is not qualified to do so.

*Gamaʿat al-Islamiyya*: Refers to the Egyptian radical Islamist umbrella organization that developed in the late 1970s and 1980s in that country, and waged a low-level war with the government.

*Hanbali* school of Islamic law: The legal tradition of Ahmad ibn Hanbal, the most strict of the four Sunni legal schools (*madhhab*).

*Haramayn* Brigades. *Haramayn* refers to the two holy places. A cell of al-Qa'ida on the Arabian Peninsula.

*Hashemite*: Descendents of the Sharif Hussayn of Mecca and Medina, whose lineage goes back to the prophet. Hussayn's sons led the Arab Revolt against the Ottomans, aiming at an Arab kingdom. After World War I, one son became the ruler of Jordan, and the other of Iraq, and their enmity to the House of Saud stems from their expulsion from the Hijaz.

*Hijaz*: The western province of Saudi Arabia. The holy cities of Mecca and Medina are located here, and the Hashemite family, formerly the authorities of the holy cities, came from the Hijaz.

*Hudud*: Severe penalties for the capital crimes in Islamic law which include apostasy, sedition, adultery, and fornication. At the court's discretion, the penalties may be death by the sword, lapidation (stoning, usually to death), or lashing.

*Ibn `Abd al-Wahhab, Muhammad*: Founder of Wahhabism. Cleric who lived in the mid-18th century and sought to purify Islam. His strict brand of Islam and mission to purge Arabia of pre-Islamic practices was adopted by Muhammad Ibn Saud and his warriors in the 1740s. The Wahhabis call themselves *Muwahhidun* (Unitarians).

*Ibn Taymiyyah*: A 13th century Islamic jurist who redefined *jihad* and *takfir* to address the Crusades and the Mongols who had invaded the region and influenced local rulers in his day. He is considered a spiritual source for Islamic militants and al-Qa'ida.

*Ijtihad*: To construct an independent *judgment* in responding to a theological issue, or a *fatwa* that goes beyond the other sources of law. Also, the opposite of *taqlid*, or blind imitation.

*Ikhwan*: Brethren, brotherhood. Refers to both the Wahhabi warriors, or in Egypt, Jordan, or Syria, to the Muslim Brotherhood established in 1929 in Isma'iliyya, Egypt.

*Islahiyyun*: Reformers. Liberal reformers in today's Saudi Arabia.

*Imam*: An imam is, in one meaning of the word, merely a prayer-leader. Certain imams may also be preachers who deliver the Friday sermon. The term imam may imply the legitimate ruler, who was historically called the caliph. For that reason, radical leaders have sometimes used the title of Imam.

*Imamate*: The Shi`a Muslims believe in the institution of the *a`ima*, or *imamate*, a chain of imams appointed by God to lead the Muslims.

*Al-Jama`a al-Salafiyya al-Muhtasiba*: Radical purist group with tribal affiliations whose members took over the Grand Mosque in Mecca in 1979.

*Jihad*: Struggle or offensive war. Frequently defined in English as “holy war,” Muslims distinguish between the greater *jihad*, the daily struggle to fulfill the requirements and ideals of Islam, and the lesser *jihad*, fighting for the faith. Also refers to the *Jihad* organization of Egypt.

*Khariji*: *Khawarij*, the Arabic plural; Kharijites, English: those who seceded from the early Muslim dynasty to avoid what they saw as the degradation of Islamic principles through adaptation. One member killed an early Caliph, `Ali, objecting to his assent to arbitration with the Ummayyads.

*Mahdi*: The guided one. An individual who will restore Islam prior to the Day of Judgment, and who must descend from the Prophet’s lineage.

*Madhhab*: Pronounced “math-hab” in English, it refers to a system of lawmaking, or jurisprudence. Often termed a legal school (of thought).

*Majlis*: A meeting or council. In the Kingdom, a hall and occasion for entertaining guests where royals may respond to requests.

*Muhtasib*: A state official who could enforce penalties at the level of *ta`zir*, a crime of second degree severity. This official had other responsibilities such as ensuring fair prices and practices in the markets.

*Mutawa’in*: The religious police. The Organization to Prevent Vice and Promote Virtue who enforce the Wahhabi interpretation of religious duties and restrictions and separation of the sexes.

*Muwahhidun*: Wahhabis. Literally means those who support monotheism, or *tawhid*.

*al-Qa’ida on the Arabian Peninsula* (QAP): Known in Arabic as *Tanzim al-qa’ida fi jazirat al-`arab*, it is simply a branch of the organization.

*Qisas*: The second level of criminal punishments in Islamic law that punish murder, manslaughter, or bodily injury, and require a blood payment or injury in kind.

*Sahwa Islamiyya*: Islamic awakening. A reference to the general movement of religious revival and discourse across the Muslim world, and also to the Islamist movement or sentiments within Saudi Arabia.

*Salafi*: An adherent of the *salafiyya* movement. This actually refers to the 19th century movement for Islamic reform and modernization of thought led by Muhammad `Abduh (1849-1905). One line of *salafis* continued on in `Abduh's endeavors, whereas some others believed that a return to a religious order was necessary. Today, the term usually does not refer to liberals, but rather to Islamists seeking a purified creed.

*Al-Saud, King `Abd al-`Aziz al-Rahman*. The founder of the modern state of Saudi Arabia. This was actually the third state formed under the al-Saud family. Al-Saud was survived by 44 sons and an unknown number of daughters.

*Al-Saud, Prince Bandar ibn Sultan ibn `Abd al-`Aziz*: Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to the United States.

*Al-Saud, King Faysal ibn `Abd al-`Aziz*. A modernizing King who was assassinated in 1975 by a nephew.

*Al-Saud, King Fahd ibn `Abd al-`Aziz*: The current King who was debilitated by a stroke and therefore many of his state duties are performed by the Crown Prince.

*Al-Sa`ud, Crown Prince Abdullah ibn `Abd al-Aziz*: Heir to King Fahd and currently acting head-of-state of Saudi Arabia.

*Al-Saud, Prince Nayif ibn `Abd al-`Aziz*. Minister of the Interior.

*Al-Saud, Prince Sultan ibn `Abd al-`Aziz*: Minister of Defense and Aviation and Inspector General. He is the next in line to be Crown Prince.

*Al-Saud, Prince Turki al-Faysal*. Previously headed the General Intelligence Directorate until 2001. The Directorate has since been renamed the General Intelligence Presidency.

*Saudi Hizbullah*: The Party of God. To be differentiated from the group of the same name in Lebanon.

*Shahid*: One who is martyred for the cause of Islam.

*Shari`ah*: Islamic law. Islamic law is based upon the *Quran*, the *hadith*, *qiyas* (analogy), and *ijma`* (consensus). Jurists of the Shi`i tradition may also utilize *ijtihad* (a creative interpretive process) to issue an Islamic legal ruling or *fatwa*. Prior to 19th century Ottoman reforms, Islamic law was not codified.

*Shirk*: Polytheism, idol worship. Many pre-Islamic Arabs believed in a pantheon of gods and goddesses.

*Shura*: Consultation. The King and princes may consult with their advisors and inner circles, or hold open *majlises* (councils) to allow for questions, petitions, and grievances of others. Many Islamists say that *shura* is an Islamic method of government, whereas democracy is not.

*Takfir*: Declaring someone, even a Muslim, to be a nonbeliever.

*Tanzim al-qa'ida fi jazirat al-'arab*: al-Qa'ida Organization on the Arabian Peninsula.

*Tawhid*: Unicity, or oneness of God, according to Muslims.

*Tawhid al-ibada*: Unicity of worship.

*Tawhid al-rububiyya*: God's unique attribute of being the creator of the world and holding dominion over it.

*Tawhid al-asma wa al-sifat*: The belief that God's multiple names or attributes (such as the Generous, or the Beneficent) that may be found in the *Quran*, solely apply to God and should not be applied to others.

*Ta'zir*: A penalty for crimes less serious than capital offenses.

*Turath*: Islamic or Arab legacy or precedent. The Arab and Muslim intellectual circles frequently argue over the definitions of this legacy, always seeing it as a core social, political, cultural, and religious element under siege in an era of globalization.

*'Ulama*: Religious scholars, or clerics.

*'Umara*: The princes of Saudi Arabia.

*Umma*: The community of Muslim believers; transcends national, ethnic, racial, or linguistic divisions.

*Al-'Utaybi, Juhayman*: Leader of the 1979 uprising in Mecca.

*Al-'Utaybi, Sa'ud ibn Hammud*: A current extremist leader. His call to jihad was published in Issue 27 of the Internet journal, *Sawt al-jihad*.

*Wahhabism*: The religious philosophy and sect developed by Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab.

*Wasta*: Connections used to obtain a job, a favor, or to influence an outcome.

*Zakat*: Charity. A voluntary payment of a set percent of a Muslim's income and assets that is one of the five duties, or Pillars, of Islam.



## ENDNOTES

1. Immediately following the revelation that Saud had contracted the assassination of Egypt's President Nasser. Nadav Safran, *Saudi Arabia: The Ceaseless Quest for Security*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985 and 1988, pp. 85-88. Others explain this arrangement on the basis of fiscal issues, and also, according to Joseph A. Kechichian, Saud's appointments of his own sons instead of more senior and experienced relatives. The arrangement faltered as Saud, who agreed to the transfer of power to Faysal, allied himself with others, forcing Faysal to resign until the decline of Saud's health in 1961. Joseph A. Kechichian, *Succession in Saudi Arabia*, New York: Palgrave, 2001, p. 41. When Faysal resumed his duties, Saud attempted to gain back his powers, and a permanent transfer of power from Saud to Faysal was finally arranged during 1964.

2. Concerns about aging rulers have been expressed for some time. See Judith Yaphe, "Islamic Radicalism in the Arabian Peninsula: Growing Risks," *Strategic Forum*, No. 67, March 1996; as well a discussion of intrigue in the royal family, "Saudi Arabia: An Anatomy of Crisis?: Politics of the Royal Court," *DEBKAfile*, October 3, 2002, and Simon Henderson's various opinions on succession. Numerous Arabic sources also discuss intrigue, the most virulent (and also unreliable) of which is probably Nasr al-Sa'id, *Tarikh al-Sa'ud*, n.pub., no date, a book that was banned and its author probably assassinated since his disappearance in 1979. `Asad Abu Khalil comments on the Saudi government's influence in the Arab press, *The Battle for Saudi Arabia: Royalty, Fundamentalism and Global Power*, New York: Seven Stories Press, 2004, pp. 35, 102-103, 105; and on factionalism among the royals, see pp. 113, 117.

3. Abdelrahman Munif, *Mudun al-milh*, 5 Vols. 9th ed., Bayrut: al-Mu'assasah al-`Arabiyah lil-Dirasat wa-al-Nashr, 5 Vols. 9th ed., 1999; *Cities of Salt*, Peter Theroux, trans., New York: Random House, 1989. Munif, half-Saudi, half-Iraqi, according to some sources, and born in Jordan, according to his publisher, was stripped of his Saudi citizenship after the work's publication, and it was banned in the Kingdom.

4. The U.S. defense establishment has adopted the term salafi-extremism to describe the version of militant Islamism in question in this monograph. Foreign representatives may object, as this particular term translates poorly into Arabic just as Arabic terms like *islamiyyun* translate poorly into English, or for other reasons. It is far preferable to "fundamentalist," or neo-Wahhabi, or even *khariji*, this referring to a sect that seceded from the Muslim community in the first Islamic century who called for a purer version of Islam than the acknowledged leadership.

5. Personal communications with the author, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, March 2005.

6. One view is that the violence in 2003 caused Saudi revulsion, despite disapproval for aspects of U.S. Middle Eastern policy. Nawaf Obaid conducted a poll of 15,000 Saudis between August and November 2003 of Osama bin Ladin's political rhetoric, but not al-Qaida's acts of violence. Nor did they want him to rule the Kingdom. For discussion despite the misleading title, see Henry Schuster, "Poll of Saudis Shows Wide Support for Osama's Views," *CNN.com*, June 9, 2004, <http://www.cnn.com/2004/WORLD/meast/06/08/poll.binladen/>. A much simpler D3 poll sampling 1,003 Saudis from September 13-24, 2004, showed that 56 percent disapproved of the United States, but that percentage of the sample was lower than disapproval in Egypt (96 percent), Turkey (66 percent), Pakistan (65 percent), or Iraq (61 percent). "Five of Eight Muslim Countries Surveyed Report Negative Image of the U.S.," *D3 Systems*, <http://www.d3systems.com>.

7. Reverend Franklin (Billy) Graham's statement, "I believe it's [Islam is] a very evil and wicked religion," was widely circulated. See Nicholas Kristof, "Bigotry in Islam – And Here," *New York Times*, July 9, 2002.

8. Paul Wolfowitz, Deputy Secretary of Defense, referred to President Bush's 2002 State of the Union address and a speech given on November 6, 2003, in Wolfowitz' speech to the House Armed Services Committee, Washington DC, August 10, 2004, <http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches>, last visited September 30, 2004.

9. President George Bush, "State of the Union Address," released January 20, 2004, <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2004/01/print>, last visited September 29, 2004. Also see President Bush's March 8, 2005, speech on terrorism delivered at the National Defense University, <http://www.cnn.com/2005/allpolitics/03108/bush.transcript/>.

10. Alan Richards, "Socio-Economic Roots of Radicalism? Towards Explaining the Appeal of Islamic Radicals," Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, July 2003, pp. 22-23.

11. Amin Rihani, *Muluk al-`Arab*, Beirut, Lebanon: Sadir, 1929.

12. Safran, *Saudi Arabia*, pp. 66-67.

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29. Divya Pakkiasamy, "Saudi Arabia's Policy for Changing Its Workforce," *Migration Information Source*, November 1, 2004, reprinted in Saudi-U.S. Relations Information Service, December 3, 2004.

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36. President George Bush, "Goals and Objectives," *National Strategy for Combating Terrorism*, February 2003, p. 1.

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45. Michael Scott Doran, "The Saudi Paradox," *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2004, pp. 35-51. One wonders what the response would be if the author suggested that the U.S. global war on terror required its country's leaders to abandon their belief in the Trinity or the principle of original sin.
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48. Safran, *Saudi Arabia*, pp. 50-56.
49. Gwen Okruhlik argued that Saudi "nationhood" was not really achieved, but that the current struggle expresses the ongoing process of national definition (this being a time-honored academic approach to the lack of congruence between "state" and "nation" in Middle Eastern studies). "Struggles for the Soul: Building a Nation in Arabia," 38th Annual Middle East Studies Association meeting, San Francisco, CA, November 23, 2004.
50. "Statement by the Council of Senior `Ulama Supporting Actions Taken by the Leader Inviting Qualified Forces to Respond to the Aggression Against This Country." Partially quoted in Abdulaziz H. Al-Fahad, "From Exclusivism to Accomodation: Doctrinal and Legal Evolution of Wahhabism," *New York University Law Review*, Vol. 79, 2004; reprinted in *Saudi-U.S. Relations Information Service*, July 17, 2004.
51. This is, for instance, the thrust of Natana Delong-Bas's defense of `Abd al-Wahhab. Natana J. Delong-Bas, *Wahhabi Islam: From Revival and Reform to Global Jihad*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2004, pp. 288-289.
52. Youssef H. Aboul-Enein and Sherifa Zuhur, *Islamic Rulings on Warfare*, Carlisle Barracks: Strategic Studies Institute, October 2004, pp. 11-12.
53. Communication from David Commins. Commins delineated the intellectual legacy of Wahhabism in "Wahhabism as a Regional Religious Culture," 38th Annual Middle East Studies Association meeting, San Francisco, CA, November 20, 2004.
54. Prince Bandar ibn Sultan ibn `Abd al-`Aziz al-Saud, "We Will Lose the War on Terrorism Unless . . .," <http://www.saudiembassy.net/2004News/Statements/StateDetail.asp?cIndex=437>, last visited October 28, 2004, and cross-posted on *Foreign Broadcast Information Service* (FBIS) as "Saud Envoy to US Exhorts Religious Scholars 'To Proclaim Jihad' on Terrorism," Document ID GMP2004601000168, June 1, 2004.
55. The earlier works on the Muslim Brotherhood, on the other hand, trace their increasing strictness and insistence on *da`wa* to their sojourns in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf.
56. Al-Qahtani bore the name of the Prophet, and Juhayman al-`Utaybi claimed that he was the *mahdi* – the figure who will restore Islam, and who must descend from the Prophet's house.

57. Ironically, the bin Ladin construction company's trucks had been used to smuggle arms into the mosque, and they also provided plans of the Holy Places to the police to defeat the rebels. Jacquard, *In the Name of Osama bin Laden*, pp. 13-14.

58. Dilip Hiro, *War Without End: The Rise of Islamist Terrorism and Global Response*, London: Routledge, 2002, pp. 138-140.

59. Osama bin Ladin, "An Open Letter to Sheikh bin Baz Refuting His Fatwa Concerning the Reconciliation With the Jews," Communiqué No. 11, Advice and Reform Committee (ARC) December 29, 1994, pp. 1-4; and "al-Risal al-Thaniyah to Shaykh Abdul Aziz bin Baz," ARC, January 20, 1995, pp. 1-14, discussed by Mamoun Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and Politics of Dissent*, New York: Palgrave, 1999, pp. 187-188.

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69. Anthony Cordesman, *Saudi Arabia Enters the Twenty-First Century*, pp. 188-189.

70. Al-`Aedhi, "From Riyadh/East to Sinai."

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