Participation Of Religious Parties In Elections
And
Its Repercussions On Civil Peace
In Arab States

(Lebanon, Palestine, Egypt & Iraq)

Paper Prepared by:

Wassim Harb, Sassine Assaf, Wajih Fanous

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1. Introduction:

Civil peace cannot be active without the presence of certain basic elements and factors such as justice, equality, development, democratic freedoms, in addition to rights of citizenship and political multiplicity. Those elements and factors form, in fact, the systematic conditions for the good governance. In addition to that, good governance cannot be active and developing, in this sense of democracy, without political parties. It is the vitality stimulated by democracy, through political parties, which enable the nation to utilize its creative capabilities as well as to share others with these capabilities for the benefit of humanity.

By recognizing the principle of elections, religious political parties had accepted a non violent way, i.e. democratic, for enjoying political power. But yet, and in accordance with the theoretical firm religious bases of these parties, would they follow the democratic way in realizing their programs; or would they try a different style or methodology that is more convenient with the firmness of their religious bases? Going further in this issue, one may wonder if religious political parties may stand as a guarantee for civil peace, and if their engagement in the procedure of democracy, via elections, may form a good support for solving conflicts related to civil peace, or such an issue will be an endless dilemma in political life? A religious political party is based on unobjectionable concepts, while the procedure of democracy is based on what is decided or accepted by the majority of the people regardless of any objection from the minority. Thus, one may question the suitability of what is regarded as holy, with the popular or the so called, mood of the majority!

Religious political parties do establish their political theses on common as well as incidental issues at the same time. Via the common ones, the parties are attempting at establishing a state based on Islamic "*Shariaa*"' i.e. a fixed entity; while, at the incidental level, they tend to reveal a great deal of flexibility. It is, thus, quite reasonable if one asks are these parties capable of or willing to separate   between the "common" and the "incidental"? More over, one would also ask if these parties do agree to separate between the "common" and the "incidental", would this agreement be a tactical or a strategic one?

The basic question in this course is: "do political religious parties inflame or end or create conflicts"?

It is worth asking about the political program of these parties, as well as the methodology they utilize in applying this program; is it a methodology of dialogue or conflict? In addition to this, one also is supposed to ask "what are the political implementations used by these parties and what is the practical conclusion of their acknowledgment of the other"?

To be in the circle of international sovereignty, on the account of the national one, would offer the international society many opportunities to practice great influence on the political attitude of the national authority. This could be realized either by financial support or economical and aggressive sanctions. Thus it seems impossible to read political religious parties of the Arab world without taking into consideration the role of international influences; especially in the areas of the growth of international sovereignty on account of shrinking the national sovereignty.

Upon the conflict between the national and the international, there is a great impact on the political religious parties' behavior. This impact is revealed in the field of elections and what may follow it. Moreover, this impact might be of more effect in the post-elections stage. The question that rises here is "will the political discourses of these ideologically religious parties change due to this impact"? It is one of the basic rules of political behavior that researches and analysts should not miss. It is what may lead to the claim for being lenient with the arrival of such parties to governance, so that they will be in fronted by administrating the crisis and be concerned in solving it.

During the last two decades, and more than anytime before, Muslims have become more involved with world's developments. They have become an influential factor and catalyst in international politics. In strategies of powerful countries, they constitute main elements that render them the growing force that has changed many ideas and policies. Moreover, the Arab World is a very complicated region, where religious and political affairs intermingle.

It has become clear that fundamentalist Islam leads protesting political movements in the Arab World. Islamists are undergoing difficult confrontations with the oppression and tyrannical regimes; the Islamic confrontation with its political and intellectual lines, backed by religious jurisprudence based on a reading to restore its past. Self-defense necessitates such restoration to correct the cognitive analytical line of new facts and suggested challenges. What the first Islam accomplished is a fundamental base in political and intellectual analysis. In this sense, fundamentalism means going back to the foundations. It is not fanatic "*salafism*", nor does it mean going back to a static cognitive regime and a closed political regime or intellectual orientation that does not know change or modification.

Such a fundamentalist position might contribute to providing solutions to the crisis of freedoms and democracy in the Arab World. It is either that fundamentalism becomes a ritualistic/religious/form practice of one interpretative way due to some historical circumstances and does not obtain the legitimacy of unanimity and passage to all phases, or fundamentalism transforms into a political movement that exploits the pure and religious emotions to achieve interests that do not fall within the religion's context, teachings and noble objectives. This is, of course, adds complication to the crisis of freedoms in the Arab World.

In order to study these issues and other ones that are related to them, the present study will be focusing on the following points:

- Discussing the relation between religious and political aspects in theoretical Islam.
- Dealing with case studies and analyzing the participation of Islamic parties in elections and its repercussions on civil peace.
- Conclusions and overall summary.

2. Relation of the Religious to Political Aspect in Islam

a- *Jurisprudence of alienation and the jihad (struggle) of disbelieving regimes*

Establishing the rule of Allah (God) on earth is a religious duty: "I have left you with two things, which if you hold tight to, you will not lose your way; God's book and the Sunna (teachings) of His Prophet." Organic correlation between the political and religious aspects constitutes the essence of Islam. Religion is considered as a legitimate cover for politics; yet, it is the most dangerous cover, as Bahraini researcher Mohammed Jaber al-Ansari puts it[1]. (This organic correlation is not new to Islam. It is a ruling foundation). The Prophet combined in his character the religious and political man, and his successors resembled him too. Hence, the political power (Sultan, Ruler, Caliph, or a Prince) at the beginning of Islam is a prophetic delegated power that gains its legitimacy from this delegation.

"The Command rests with none but Allah"[2]. Hence the Sharia'a (Law) of God with respect to life and universe is the only context that a human being can live in, and then he has to be subject to it. It falls in the interest of a human being that he respects the law of Allah. Allah is the only legitimate authority and He is the unique source of the Sharia'a. He is the legitimate, and the human being owes Him by obeying Him alone. If man wants to be realistic, he shall choose to be subject to the only authority that practices real command, i.e. Allah (God). As for political leaders and kings, they absolutely can not be the origin of a legitimate authority[3].

Based on what al-Mawdoodi, the Islamic Pakistani intellectual, said we understand that in Islam, there is no legitimacy for democracy and civil authority, the source of which is the public.

"The Command rests with none but Allah" is the paradigm/principal constitutional rule of the Comprehensive Islamic Political Regime. It is the best explanatory

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[1] Mohammed Jaber al-Ansari, Arabs and Politics: where is the defect?, Dar al-Saqi publishing house, 2nd edition, Beirut 2002, p. 27.
[2] Al-Anaam (The Cattle) chapter ,verse 57, Yusuf (Joseph) chapter, verse 40 and 67.
[3] Al-Mawdoodi, quoting Abdel-Wahhab al-Mouaddab, Illusions of Political Islam, Dar an-Nahar, Beirut 2002, p.125.

expression of absolute divine centralization: "Everything should be eliminated except for what serves the command of God." (Sayyed Qotob). Islam cannot exist without its authority, i.e. compliance to the Sahria'a, via the Koran and the Sunna of the Prophet. "We have sent down to thee the Book in truth, that thou mightest judge between people by that which Allah has shown thee.[4]" "If any do fail to judge by what Allah hath revealed, they are Unbelievers.[5]"

Eventual correlation between religion and politics prohibits human beings from inventing positive regulations or laws; and if they did, Evil will rule. "Hast thou not turned thy thought to those who declare that they believe in the revelations that have come to thee and to those before thee? Their wish is to resort together for judgment in their disputes to the Evil.[6]" Islam cannot be really applied unless through Islamic rule: "Follow the revelations that God has sent down to thee, and do not follow others."

Any rule other than that of Islam is a rule of disbelief, Muslims are banned to follow it: "Whoever relinquishes the group and Islam a bit, then he has taken the noose of Islam off his neck"; "Whoever has relinquished obedience, he would meet Allah on Judgment Day, and he would be invalid, and whoever dies and he does not wear the noose the pledge of faithfulness around his neck, then he would be die as an ignorant.[7]" "And if a ruling is not based on legitimate and religious evidence, then it is not counted as an Islamic ruling or as Islamic jurisprudence.[8]" This ancestral (Salafi) jurisprudence, the jurisprudence of alienation, jihad (struggle) of regimes and disbeliever governments does not grasp of the essence of Islam except claiming people as disbelievers, prohibition and claiming heresy, refusal of debate, dialogue and pluralism of opinion, where there is no space for difference, disparity and freedom for the other side to think differently. And if he did, then the duty of jihad tolls.

Ibn Taymiyya describes jihad in his book, entitled "Al-Siyasah" (Politics) as an equivalent of praying. In fact, he places it in a position that transcends the other four

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[4] Al-Nisa (Women) chapter, verse 105.
[5] Al-Maida (The Table) chapter, verse 44.
[6] Al-Nisa (Women) chapter, verse 60.
[7] Prophetic Hadeeth (talk).
[8] Ahmed al-Qasas, Basis of Rational Renaissance, publications of the Cultural Awareness League, Dar al-Umma, 1st Floor, 1995, p.171.

religious pillars (testimony, fasting, alms and pilgrimage). He renders the combat of disbelievers one of the two tasks of the leader. The first task is to dedicate his potentials to serve religion inside the nation (al-Umma), while the other one is launching sacred jihad outside the home of Islam.

Eradicating all of what is not at the service of the rule of Allah necessitates sacred jihad: "Think not of those who are slain in Allah's way as dead. Nay, they live, finding their sustenance from their Lord". This verse is the religious basis that legitimizes jihad and links it to the sacred.

This is how the opinions of "hard-liners in religion" were. Based on such opinions and others, the Islamic political parties have been formed, and they are spread like never before in the Arab World. They constituted a religious and political force for liberation (Palestine, Iraq and Lebanon), aiming at establishing the State of Sharia'a or Islamic rule, i.e. the rule of Allah (Algeria, Tunisia, Sudan and Egypt). In both cases, the jurisprudence of alienation and jihad has been practiced.

b- *Jurisprudence of participation and integration into mechanisms of Western Democracy.*

In return, the jurisprudence of pacific change and democratic democracy[9] started to grow, where fatwas (legal opinions) have been issued in defense of democracy[10].

These fatwas have transcended the duality of democracy and shura (advice).

The origin is participation and shura, and so is democracy. Shura in Isam is considered as the highest or most perfect step, and democracy paves the way for shura.

Acceptance of participation or integration in the political life based on the recognition of the legitimacy of political plurality and acknowledgement of the other's existence

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[9] Fahmi Houeidi, Islamic Rhetoric in a Renewing World, Cultural Forum of Abdel-Hamid Shuman, February 1998.
[10] Fatwas of Sheikh Youssef al-Qordawi.

are considered as a significant development in understanding the map of the way to power. This is what is known now as the "jurisprudence of participation."

The jurisprudence of participation implies the liberalization of religious parties of the ruling religious thought and the rules of ancestors (salafis). Here, the authority reaps its power from real life and not from a divine law.

Is there a ruling and restricting Islamic political regime for all Muslims in all places and times?

The mechanism of pledging loyalty has changed, and the methods of a person's investiture have altered as well. The basis of caliphate changed in the era of the four orthodox caliphs, so how shall it be after the passing of 14 centuries and more?

The jurisprudence of participation separates between the state and the authority. The state is legally religious and the authority is duly civilian, deriving its legitimacy from the will of human beings. Participation exists in order to reach power, and the objective on the long run would be the establishment of a religious state.

The jurisprudence of participation leaves the matter to those involved, i.e. the public. And the jurisprudential rule would be: "You know better about your lives." Hence, democracy is an endorsement of the public's will and knowledge. It is a methodology that gets along with the rules of Islam. Command, in its religious context, goes back to Allah, in its political context, it goes back to the public.

The jurisprudence of participation, or the new political jurisprudence, is a move towards the comprehension of western democracy to adopt it as a means to reach power. This was the case of Islamic movements in Egypt, Jordan, Palestine and Lebanon. These movements have gone beyond their initial request in capturing the whole power, and they agreed on the principle of participation.

Traditionally, the exclusion trend constitutes the basis of the ideology of Islamic movements. So how did they change from the exclusion of the other to the acknowledgement of the other's existence and right in participation?

"Hard-liners in Religion" had to relinquish their comprehensive vision that refuses possible formulas.

Hizbullah's talk in Lebanon that it would be impossible to establish an Islamic state or republic in the country marked the beginning of a political movement (political participation) in the limits of the possible, without abandoning theoretically its sayings and its project that is surrounded by the limits of the prohibited.

Why have they come to accept political plurality?

Accepting political plurality is required in the stage that preceded their access to power. Nevertheless, once Islamic parties managed to rule (stage of the state), will political plurality remain illegitimate and enforced?

After the victory of the Islamic Rescue Front in Algerian elections, one of the clerics said during Friday prayers: "Political pluralism will be banned.[11]"

This raises a problematic and complicated question:
What happens if Islamist took over power according to democratic mechanisms?
Will they have a cause against democracy?

Will they prevent the democratic political regime from slipping to practice tyranny?

According to al-Ansari, fundamentalist movements "succeeded in overthrowing the credibility of a large number of regimes in Arab and Islamic states, but it is hard to say that they presented a successful and attracting model for others, whether on the level of their organizational party-related experiences or their official authoritative experiences while being in power.[12]" Al-Ansari then wonders: "why doesn't the Arab and Muslim rebel or the "struggler" – after his victory in the battle of changing the regime- turn into a state man, a civil society man, a civilizational foundation man, a

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[11] Mohammed Salim al-Awwa, from the publication "Islam and democracy," Cultural Forum of Abdel-Hamid Shuman, Jordan, 1998.
[12] Al-Ansari, M.S., p.43-44.

development man and a technology man?[13]" What happened in Sudan revealed the lack of difference between these two patterns of experience since Islamists there tried to control the society, establishing a tyrannical regime.

There is a historical law that says: "Power swallows ideology. The stage of empowerment cancels the invitation stage. The invitation stage is that of "revolt against the state" (stage of ideology, jihad and martyrdom), while the empowerment stage is that of "building a state" (stage of power and engaging the different other in it).

Islamists distinguish between the invitation stage (stage of ideological pluralism) and the empowerment stage (stage of imposing the unique ideology).

The jurisprudence of participation and political pluralism leads to the controversy of Islamic political project and the right to be different after reaching power.

Does western democracy, being a modern mechanism of the mechanism of the jurisprudence of participation, have an unsolvable problem with Islam? "Democracy does not have unsolvable problems with Islam since it is not an alternative culture, and it does not aim at regulating people's habits and traditions, rituals of their birth, marriage and funerals, their methods of eating, social moralities and vision of their destiny after death.[14]"

Democracy does not have a cause addressed against religion. And the new jurisprudence does not have a cause against democracy.

Hamas in Palestine, Hizbullah in Lebanon, Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Jordan, and before them all, the Rescue Front in Algeria, saved their plan and legitimized it via their integration in implementing democratic mechanisms, in thought and in practice.

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[13] Same reference, p.44.
[14] Monsef al-Marzouki, Second Independence- For a Modern Democratic Arab State, Dar al-Kukouz al-Adabiyyah, Beirut 1996.

In this case, democracy has served religion.

The Muslim Brotherhood took part in Egyptian elections, and their ally then was the most senior secular party in Egypt, al-Wafd Party. They practiced their real faith in political pluralism, as well as their conviction of necessary integration in the democratic game. The experience of the Islamic Trend Movement in Tunisia (currently the Renaissance Movement) remains the loftiest experience in not slipping to place religion in a confrontation with democracy. The leader of the movement, Rashed al-Ghannouji, doesn't consider his movement as a guardian of the society, but it is a political/intellectual party that derives its legitimacy from the power of argument and defense. Tunisian Islamists do not set themselves as being above the society, but they work in the framework of the civil society. They announced their explicit and clear acceptance of political pluralism[15].

Tunisian political Islam is a modern phenomenon that contradicts, in many of its jurisprudential points of view and methods of movement, with previous Islamic phenomena. This is what Moroccan intellectual Said Bin Said al-Alawi, confirms, saying: "The Qoran includes the greater comprehensive principles of governance in Islam." What he means with this is justice and shura[16]. He believes that the rule is the Prophet's Hadeeth[17]: "You know better about your lives." The knowledge of Muslims about their lives is the golden rule that the concept of arbitration in Islam is based on. Arbitration means asking for the opinion of the group or the Ummah in the social/political regime that you want to live under. Asking for the opinion of the group is its invitation to take part in running its own affairs. Hence, this method of seeking the opinion of the Ummah is the closest methodology to the modern democratic practice and binding shura in the modern political jurisprudence.

Ever since its beginning, the Islamic movement changed into a striking political force in more than one country. As for the question that is related to its conditions in all countries is: Where do freedom, human rights and citizenship come

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[15] Ali al-Amim: Secularism and Islamic Refusal, Attempts in Renaissance and Modernity, Dar al-Saqi, 1st Floor, 1999, p.18.

[16] Ali al-Amim, p.39
[17] - "Hadeeth" (Sayings) is the sayings and doings of Prophet Muhammad; they come, according to Muslims, in the second place after the Quraan.

3. **Participation of Islamic Parties in Elections and its Repercussions on Civil Peace (Case Studies and Analysis)**

The countries, object of the study, were selected since they have seen parties, of different backgrounds, foundations and religious orientations. These parties had the chance to work in politics, for a certain period of time, outside the institutions of the state. At later stage, these parties practiced politics from within these institutions. The objective behind this selection, is observing the potential change or modification of these parties in terms of their standpoints or behavior in some cases or topics that might be influential in fields related to the threat of civil peace during their practice of politics outside or inside the authority. Therefore, countries whose main political religious parties will be the core of this study are: Lebanon[18], Palestine, Egypt[19] and Iraq.

Lebanon:

Hizbullah is considered as the most wide-spread and efficient political religious party among religious parties in Lebanon. It is the party that has lived the political life in

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[18] Most of the political religious parties that had the chance to practice politics outside and inside state institutions in Lebanon are Islamic Sunni and Shiite parties and organizations. Even if Hizbullah is the most eminent Islamic organization in this field, particularly on the Shiite level, there are other parties and organizations that should be mentioned though they do not have the same large political space that Hizbullah has:

- o "Islamic Philanthropic Projects Association", that is also known among some as al-Ahbash, due to its founder Sheikh Abdullah al-Habashi- had the chance that its representative won in the parliamentary elections in 1992. But, they did not manage to make any of their candidates make it to the Parliament in the 2005 elections. Al-Ahbash followed a moderate Islamic political line.
- o Islamic Group (al-Jamaa al-Islamiyya), took part in the 1992 parliamentary elections, and three of its candidates made it to the Parliament. The group is seen as trying to promote moderate political Islamic presence in official authority domains.

It is worth-mentioning, in this regard, that these parties sought the decision of the public via their candidates in parliamentary elections. These candidates have presented their programs to the public opinion. Hence, these parties acknowledged the existence of other political parties. These parties have established alliances with other parties and organizations. They even formed alliances with secular organizations. Moreover, they recognized the political regime, and no party among these resorted to claim the disbelief of the regime.

[19] It can be said that most political religious parties that had the chance to practice politics outside and inside state institutions in Egypt are Islamic parties and organizations. Even if the Muslim Brotherhood constituted the most wide-spread and eminent force, we still have to note the some of these parties were off-shoots of the Brotherhood, and they now have their own presence, such as the "Takfir and Hijra group", or what is known among some as "al-Najiya (The Saved)". This party believes in jihad against the disbelieving state that does not rule according to God's revelations. Others similar parties are known as "Jihad Group", who believes that jihad against the disbelieving state- Non-Muslim- is a religious duty, and that jihad is only the means to establish an Islamic nation. They adopt what is known as "jurisprudence of alienation" that means expulsion of anyone who is not one of them.

Lebanon outside the state institutions for a long time since the 1980's. The party was busy fighting Israel and liberating the occupied territories. It also had the chance to practice political work via the state's institutions ever since its representatives made it to the Parliament in the parliamentary elections in 1992 till now. This was preceded by the party's representatives' success in 2009 to win a large number of seats in municipal council in Lebanese villages and towns.

Hizbullah gained its popularity, in the beginning, among Lebanese Islamic factions, and the Shiite, in particular, via calling for establishing an Islamic republic in Lebanon, and via its calls for national Islamic "jihad[20]" to liberate the territories occupied by Israel. Moreover, Hizbullah has established external strategic alliances with each of the Islamic Republic of Iran and Syria to promote its political journey inside Lebanon. On the other hand, the party's absolute hostile stance vis-à-vis the United States' policy constituted a clear mark of the Hizbullah's political identity on the domestic and foreign level. The most general efficiency of the party resides in its armed resistance against Israel's occupation of the land, to an extent that resistance was almost an exclusive commitment by the party and not other political parties and movements in Lebanon[21]. At the end of the 20th century, the armed resistance against the Israeli occupation was about to be considered as a practice of "jihad" that is linked to the Islamic jurisprudential concept of "jihad", a practice is undertaken by Hizbullah militants, rather than a practice of "struggle" that is linked to the patriotic concept of "stuggle" undertaken by militant groups of Lebanese parties and factions that have non-Islamic political doctrinal backgrounds. Perhaps, the reflection of this exclusivity in carrying out military resistance against the Israeli occupation has contributed to a common belief among political analysts in Lebanon and abroad who considered that Hizbullah was active in the Islamic field for the interest of the Shiite community, not caring about other religions and sects.

Many international and regional developments, especially after Camp David treaty, Oslo Agreement, Madrid Talks, the Roadmap, September 11 events, as well as

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[20] "Jihad" is an Islamic jurisprudential term that means the necessity to fight everyone that wishes Islam harm. Jihad is of different types and levels. Jihad can take place through words, money and soul, etc…

[21] It is worth-mentioning that some of these parties and organizations, particularly the Lebanese Communist Party, the Syrian Social Nationalist Party and Amal Movement, had their effective shares of military resistance against the Israeli occupation.

regional and domestic upcomings in Lebanon and Syria in the wake of the assassination of the former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, have led to clear sorting of attitudes in terms of dealing with the Israeli occupation. The public were divided in general, and so were political movements in Lebanon, between partisans of pacific dialogue and political negotiations on one hand and supporters of armed resistance on the other. Hence, the position towards Israel and the liberation of the Shebaa Farms[22], the position towards Syria, the US policy, as well as the stance towards the sectarian political regime constituted main axes with respect to civil peace in Lebanon. Therefore, it can be claimed that the current position of political parties and movements in Lebanon towards these issues, contributes, to a large extent, in determining the efficiency of each of them in building civil peace.

Hence, it would be possible to determine the issues-topics related to Hizbullah's efficiency in civil peace conflicts in Lebanon, before and after entering state institutions in Lebanon with the following:

- Position towards Israel and the liberation of the "Shebaa Farms"
- Position towards Syria
- Position towards the US policy.
- Position towards the sectarian political regime

o **Israel and the Liberation of the Shebaa Farms**

Israel, as Hizbullah's secretary-general, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, described in a recent statement, is an enemy towards which the position hasn't changed despite the change of the political conditions across the world:

> *"The Israeli and the whole world should understand that the Islamic Resistance in Lebanon that you have known since 1982, the faith, firmness, bravery, dignity, determination, ability, power, constancy, martyrs' blood and firm political standpoints of which you have known…This Islamic Resistance in Lebanon before and after 2000, before and after September 11, before and after Afghanistan's invasion, before and after the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon, before and after Resolution 1995, before and after internal divisions, is the same. This party is the same in its courage, steadfastness, will*

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[22] Shebaa Farms are occupied by Israel, and they are located along the Lebanese-Syrian borders. Some Lebanese political groups believe that this land is Lebanese and should be freed through armed resistance, while another group sees that this land is Syrian, and it is not the responsibility of the Lebanese to liberate it. In fact, if the farms are Lebanese, this means practically, and at present, that armed resistance against Israel is legitimate. However, for those who claim that the farms are not Lebanese, this means practically, and at present, that they do not approve of the legitimacy of armed resistance against Israel.

and determination to continue its path and achieve the goals, protect the nation and serve the cause no matter what the sacrifices were.[23]"

As for the resistance's activities in Hizbullah, they are still ongoing in Shebaa Farms since the party believes in the Lebanese identity of this land. This land, as Nasrallah says, is Lebanese based on the words of the Lebanese Parliament and successive Lebanese governments that have stood before the Parliament[24].

- ○ **Syria:**

Nasrallah underlines a basic principal that he sees as a link between Hizbullah and Syria. This principle is based on the way Hizbullah comprehends Lebanon's relation with Syria, to which Nasrallah refers, saying: "We refuse that Lebanon seeks to confront Syria and combat, and to consider Syria as Lebanon's enemy.[25]" With respect to the relationship of resistance in Hizbullah with Syria, Nasrallah indicates that the orders for the Resistance's operations in Lebanon "since 1982 and until this moment and in the future, are not issued by Damascus nor by Tehran. We are proud of our relationship with Damascus and Tehran. But the orders are issued from Beirut, from the South and from every house that includes an honest and free Lebanese citizen who is keen on refusing aggression.[26]" Nasrallah stresses that Hizbullah's relationship with Syria is not based on some sort of affiliation; however, it is a relationship that is built on a Lebanese patriotic vision. To clarify this, Nasrallah says: "Since 1982, we have been friends of Syria and until today. We do not hide this friendship and we are not ashamed of it, but we believe in it. We call on all the Lebanese to promote and consolidate it, and this is in Lebanon's interest in the first place.[27]"

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[23] Text of Sayyed Nasrallah's speech during the funeral services of martyrs who were killed during clashes in al-Ghajar town at Moujamma'a Sayyed al-Shuhadaa in Roueis, publications of the media relations office in Hizbullah, 26/11/2005.
[24] Full text of Hizbullah's secretary-general Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah delivered during the World Jerusalem Day ceremonies, publications of the media relations office in Hizbullah, 28/10/2005.
[25] Same source.
[26] Text of Sayyed Nasrallah's speech during the funeral services of martyrs who were killed during clashes in al-Ghajar town at Moujamma'a Sayyed al-Shuhadaa in Roueis, publications of the media relations office in Hizbullah, 26/11/2005.
[27] Same source.

o **US Policy:**

Through the statements of Hizbullah leaders and their open political practices, it doesn't seem that the party has conducted any change in its positions towards the United States of America, whether before and after entering the state institutions in Lebanon. In fact, a simple revision of the public statements by the secretary-general Sayyed Nasrallah during the past few months, indicate that these positions are still the same and nothing has changed about them. For example, the USA has not quit exerting immense international and domestic pressure to disarm the resistance for Israel's sake[28]. It doesn't end here. Nasrallah indicates that it is necessary for the Lebanese to be aware of dealing with issues so that they do not open "this door before America and others to perform deals or impose conditions" on the Lebanese[29].

o **Sectarian Political Regime:**

Many remember that Hizbullah started to be active in Lebanon in the 1970's and mid-80's, trying to make the country subject to a regime of an Islamic republic that takes after and is guided by the Iranian model. Perhaps, this has played a role, to a great extent, in classifying the party, not on the basis of a religious identity only, but on the basis that it is carrying the banner of Shiite sectarianism that is linked to the Khomeini experience in Iran. This same identity might be responsible for perceiving the activities of the party; as if it is not working to isolate the party from other Lebanese groups. The party is planning to impose its model on all of the Lebanese. It is noticed that Hizbullah's orientations have witnesses obvious alteration that differs from this perception that many people saw before. Sayyed Nasrallah stresses the importance of national discussion and dialogue between all the Lebanese, clarifying that there is a difference between what is considered discussion and dialogue and what is considered an accusation. Thus, we can say that Hizbullah accepts dialogue on the national level, refusing accusation on this level as well[30]. Hizbullah's secretary-general says more than that, insisting on the national dialogue as a foundation to build Lebanon. He says:

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[28] Full text of Hizbullah's secretary-general Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah delivered during the World Jerusalem Day ceremonies, publications of the media relations office in Hizbullah, 28/10/2005.

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[30] Text of Sayyed Nasrallah's speech during the funeral services of martyrs who were killed during clashes in al-Ghajar town at Moujamma'a Sayyed al-Shuhadaa in Roueis, publications of the media relations office in Hizbullah, 26/11/2005.

> *"My brothers and I still insist on communication and even if some want to boycott us. My brothers and I still open the doors even if some insist on closing them. My brothers and I still insist on the fact that Lebanon can only be built through dialogue, consensus and union between everybody, whatever the harms that some of inflict upon other. We will remain like that. And when we give up, this means that means we give up on our country, people and future."[31]*

And Hizbullah doesn't stop here. Its secretary-general stresses the importance of the national authority. "No one can replace the authority"[32]. Nasrallah adds: "We, as Muslims are invited to confirm our unity, and we are invited, as Muslims and Christians, to promote our national unity."[33]

Summary:

It seems that the main variable in Hizbullah's positions, via the party's integration in the state institutions in Lebanon, is clear through the party's standpoints towards the issues and topics of the sectarian political regime, or towards what can be the essence of the national unity concept. It is obvious that Hizbullah has become more involved in domestic affairs, especially through handing service ministries to its representatives[34] in the current Lebanese government, knowing that since its establishment, it refused to have representatives in the successive Lebanese governments. The party's practices have become more open to the Lebanese and more interested in the affairs of the Lebanese citizens, regardless of their political, sectarian and regional affiliations. It is as if the party is trying to indicate that it is capable of bearing the general national concern of all the Lebanese. In spite of all of this, the party has not set foundations for national dialogue, and it still hasn't determined a clear position towards some other major issues in the field of civil peace in Lebanon, such as the sectarian and the citizens' feeling of belonging.

As for other topics, the ethics of Hizbullah have not indicated any change. On the contrary, the party's discussions seem to be distinguished by their Lebanese identity in

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[31] A speech by Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah during a graduation ceremony of 130 university students, held by the education unit in Hizbullah, Sunday 22/1/2006, publications of the media relations office in Hizbullah.
[32] A speech by Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah on the seventh night of Ashoura, Sunday 5/2/2006, publications of the media relations office in Hizbullah.
[33] Same source.
[34] Hizbullah is represented in the current Lebanese government by two ministers, one is the Energy Minister and the other is the Labor Minister.

dealing with these cases since they are part of the foundations of the party's Lebanese identity.

In its public political practices, the party has changed from the religious ideology that calls for the establishment of an Islamic state in Lebanon to the declaration that Lebanon is a pluralistic country. And the invitation to establish the Islamic state falls within the range that is similar to what Marxian or nationalist parties call for; i.e. invitations that they believe in but they do not wish to impose them on people with force.

Palestine:

Hamas movement emanated from the Muslim Brotherhood organization, which was established in Egypt in 1928. Years after focusing on social activities in Arab areas in Palestine, and with the emergence of Islamic Jihad and Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) to lead the resistance against Israeli occupation, the Muslim Brotherhood found itself isolated from the pace of events and decision-making. Hence, it established in December 1987 Hamas, the name of which is the acronym of "Islamic Resistance Movement" in Arabic.

In its statute, Hamas announced that the only means to liberate the occupied land cannot but be through armed struggle based on the Islamic conception of "jihad".[35] Based on this stance, Hamas did not consider the PLO as a basis for Palestinian resistance or a good representative of the real interests of the Palestinian people. Moroever, Hamas rejected any form of negotiations with Israel, and it refused to enter the track of initiatives and international conferences aimed at finding a pacific solution to the Occupied Territories issue. It can be noted here that Hamas did not announce a detailed internal program, but its media campaigns were content with focusing on combating administrative corruption.

Hamas benefited from PLO's standpoint towards the Gulf crisis in 1990. Contrary to the PLO, Hamas backed Saudi Arabia's position against the Iraqi regime then. This

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[35] Review the above-mentioned, Note 19.

was reflected through financial aids by KSA and Iran which provided military training to some of Hamas's militants.

Hamas intensified its military activities against the Israelis after PLO signed the Oslo Agreement in 1993. Under the banner of Islam and Hamas's Islamic identity, it started to occupy serious competitive positions in political domains with the PLO. With the increase in competition between Hamas and the PLO, and in the wake of blood events between the two sides in 1994, both tended to conclude agreements to respect the other's right in existence.

Yet, competition between Hamas and the PLO did not cease, even if there were some conditions of serenity and understanding, especially after the assassination of Hamas's two leaders, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin and Dr. Abdel-Aziz Rantisi, by the Israelis. In addition, the death of Palestinian president Yasser Arafat and the vacancy in the PLO leadership with Arafat's death, as there is no historical leader that could fill in the emptiness Arafat's death caused, in addition to the increase in Israeli operations against the Palestinians and the recent Palestinian parliamentary elections recently played a role in making Hamas reach the state institutions in the Palestinian authority, and this is through a parliamentary majority that entitled Hamas to appoint the Palestinian government.

Hence, we can say that the issues of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, and the "peace accords" (Oslo Agreement and the Roadmap), "Recognition of Israel", and "Liberation Front Pact", as well as the "borders of the Palestinian State that will be allegedly established" constitute one of the main keys to observe the field of Hamas's efficiency in building civil peace in Palestine.

Therefore, it is possible to determine the issues-topics related to Hamas's efficiency in civil peace conflicts in Palestine, before and after entering the state institutions in Palestine with the following:
- Arab-Israeli conflict
- Recognition of Israel
- Peace accords
- PLO Pact

- Borders of the Palestinian State that will be allegedly established

    o **Arab-Israeli conflict**

Before entering the state institutions, Hamas refused the project of Sholtz and Baker, Mubarak's 10 points, Shamir's plan and Madrid-Washington process. Hamas believes that the most dangerous compromise projects that were suggested until now are the agreement of "Gaza-Ariha First", which was signed in December 1993 between the Israel and the PLO leadership, as well as the mutual recognition document between both sides and the following agreements that bore the names of Cairo, Taba and others.

Perhaps what summarizes Hamas's position towards the Arab-Israeli conflict, after Hamas made it to the state institutions, is the statement of the head of Hamas's politburo, Khaled Meshaal:

> *"Our message addressed to the Israelis is that we do not fight you because you belong to a culture or a religion that are different from ours. The Jews and Muslims have lived peacefully and in harmony for 13 centuries, and according to Islam, the Jews are "people of a holy book", and they are linked to Muslims by a pact from God and His Prophet. Our conflict with you is not of a religious character. It is a political conflict. We don't have a problem with the Jews themselves. Our problem is with those who came to our land and imposed themselves by force, destroyed our society and rendered our people homeless. Therefore, we will not acknowledge the right of a force that has deprived us from our national rights. On the other hand, if you accept the principle of a long-term truce between you and us, we are ready to negotiate this issue with you. Hamas gives out its hand to build peace that is based on justice."[36]*

It seems that there is a philosophy that could explain this position of Hamas through some analyses. Some PLO leaders and some political analysts see that Hamas is using armed military resistance not to end the peace process but to rush it. They continue saying that military attacks launched by Hamas against Israelis push the Israelis to negotiate peace with Palestinians.[37] Perhaps what backs of Hamas's moves is that a senior Hamas activist, such as Imad Fallouji, did not denounce Arafat's plans for the elections of the Palestinian legislative council, but he said that they were good, but not good enough.[38]

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[36] The Guardian, Tuesday, January 31st, 2006.
[37] The Jerusalem Post, Dec. 1st, 1995.
[38] The Jerusalem Post, Oct. 2nd, 1995.

o **PLO Pact:**

Taking into consideration the political moralities of Hamas before entering the state institutions, where it extremely rejected the PLO, the statements of Hamas officials after making it to the state institutions, reveal a face that is different from the previous extreme rejection. For example, Khaled Meshaal, the prominent and main leader in Hamas, says, addressing the Palestinians after Hamas's victory in Palestinian parliamentary elections recently: "Our message to the Palestinians is that our people are not those under besiege in the West Bank and Gaza Strip only, but they are joined by the millions of Palestinian refugees in the camps in Lebanon, Jordan and Syria, and other millions scattered around the world. We promise you all that there is nothing in the world that can hinder our determination to achieve our objective in liberation and return. We will not spare any effort to work with all categories and institutions to reorganize the Palestinian home. Our medium-term plan, with our victory in the elections, lies in reforming the PLO to reinvigorate its role as a real representative of the entire Palestinian people without any exception or discrimination."[39]

o **Borders of the Palestinian State that will be allegedly established**

Having based its first phase of political work on the words of liberating Palestine with armed struggle based on the Islamic idea of jihad, Hamas has rejected any form of negotiations with Israel or going into the tracks of initiatives and international conferences aimed at finding a pacific solution to the issue of the occupied territories. However, after Hamas's became part of the state and one of her members were asked to form the next government, this statement has witnessed recently tangible change, even if some believed that this change was tactical more than being strategic, or it is a long-term step in the direction of strategic change in Hamas's journey. Khaled Meshaal said: "Hamas will not give an acknowledgement of Israel, and it will not legitimate its existence, but at the same time, Hamas does not mind to hold a long-term truce with Israel, on condition that Israelis accept to go back to the 1967 borders.[40]

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[39] The Guardian, Tuesday, January 31st, 2006.
[40] Cbsnews.com/stories, 08/02/2006.

Summary:

It seems that the main variable in Hamas's positions, via its integration in state institutions in Palestine is clearly obvious in Hamas's positions towards truce with Israel. It also seems that Hamas, that is the candidate to form the next Palestinian government, has realized the necessity to use some flexibility of man of State inside of the fundamentalist liberation obstinacy. However, the most important question in this regard is clear and awaits a clear and definite answer. Is this flexibility an absolute tactical step that Hamas has taken to consolidate the pillars of its fundamentalist liberation existence, or is it a strategic step Hamas is taking, paving the way for its long-term durability in Palestinian power?

Egypt:

The Muslim Brotherhood is known for its invitation to the regimes in Islamic states to resort to Quran and the Prophet Sunna in ruling. The brotherhood's slogan is: "Allah is our purpose, the Prophet is our idol, the Quran is our constitution, Jihad is our way, and death for the sake of Allah is the noblest of our wishes." The brotherhood does not adopt a certain jurisprudential school. They are Sunnis.[41] The Muslim Brotherhood was established in Ismailiyya by Hassan al-Banna[42] at the end of the 2nd decade of the 20th century. The brotherhood was then spread all over Egypt. The Muslim Brothers also infiltrated many of the State's administrative utilities, where there were many employees and workers from the Brotherhood in different administrative sectors.

The Muslim Brotherhood is officially banned in Egypt, based on the Egyptian Parties Law that prohibits that membership in any party be limited to a certain category. Therefore, the brotherhood's political activities are not permitted except as individual members. In many attempts of political participation, the Brotherhood established alliances with different parties during parliamentary elections, such as the Wafd (Delegation) Party and Labor Party. The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt succeeded in

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[41] In general, Muslims are divided into Sunnis and Shiites. Basically, the dispute between both sides is political, where the Shiites consider that Prophet Mohammed had the will that Imam Ali Bin Abi Taleb succeeds him in leading the Muslims, whereas the Sunnis do not think as such.

[42] Hassan al Banna (October 14, 1906 - February 12, 1949), was an Egyptian social and political reformer best known as founder of the Muslim Brotherhood.

harvesting 88 seats in the People's Assembly (Egyptian Parliament) in the parliamentary elections that were held in December 2005.

The concept of the state was a principal issue in the Muslim Brotherhood's conflict with other parties and movements. Therefore, it is possible to determine the issues-topics related to the Brotherhood's efficiency in civil peace conflicts in, before and after entering the state institutions in Egytp with "building the state (reform)":

o **Building the State (Reform):**

It can be said that the experience of the Muslim Brotherhood's access to the Parliament is being laid under many cameras and is under strict observation, not in Egypt only but in the Middle East as well. The military ruled Egypt, and they ruled it successively for more than 50 years. The public opinion and politicians look closely at the experience that was exploited by Muslim politicians to enter the political arena via elections. The Muslim Brotherhood was a model of political Islam, represented by Islamic political parties for many decades.

Muslim Brotherhood leaders say that among their priorities in the Egyptian Parliament is the call for a general political reform in Egypt. According to the Brotherhood, this reform includes the release of political prisoners, prohibition of the detainees' torture, putting an end to the emergency law, leniency in the law on political parties and more support to the ill-reputed legislative authority. In this regard, the Brotherhood does not post requests of absolute Islamic character, such as imposing the veil on women and ban of alcohol. Such demands were not found in the Brotherhood's latest electoral program.[43] Issam al-Aryan, one of the Muslim Brotherhood leaders, says during an interview with him on November 29, 2005 that "we want a pluralistic party system that governs with the will of the public.[44]"

The Muslim Brotherhood, has surprised analysts with its strong showing in Egypt's ongoing parliamentary elections. It has already won 76 seats and is on track to control 20 percent to 25 percent of Egypt's 454-member parliament by the end of the

[43] - Egyptian Opposition Group Changes Course; Muslim Brotherhood Now Pushing for Reform The Washington Post; 6/5/2005; Daniel

[44] Muslim Brotherhood and Egypt's Parliamentary Elections , Author: Sharon Otterman , December 1, 2005 – Council On Foreign Relations

elections. The group's detractors say that the group's victory will translate into fewer freedoms for women and increased persecution for Egypt's large Christian minority. But many analysts say they expect the Brotherhood will hold off on its Islamic political agenda at first. Instead, they say the Brothers will focus initially on broad reforms to open up Egypt's political system, such as ending the nation's 24-year-old Emergency Law, which severely limits political activity in Egypt.

Strengthening the role of Islamic law, or "sharia", is at the center of the Muslim Brotherhood's identity as an organization, both in Egypt and among the group's many offshoots throughout the Muslim world. The Brotherhood in Egypt says it is committed to implementing the rules of Islam peacefully, and only with the consensus of Egypt's citizens; yet it says it will continue to respect the rights of non-Muslim minorities in the society. "All the society accepts "sharia" law, and accepts it to be applied in a modern manner that respects all ways of life. But one may wonder whether this will give a realistic push to the Egyptian civil peace?

In general, Brotherhood leaders are notoriously vague when they speak on how they would legislate Islam if given the chance. Brotherhood leaders have said they will not require women to wear the veil, or "hijab", and have deemphasized the importance of "sharia" in their message. This, in fact, may not appear but a very shy step in certain sorts of social behavior, rather than a fundamental step for reforming the social philosophy or attitude of the brotherhood. It is worth mentioning here, that Brotherhood members have in the past pushed for conservative interpretations of "sharia" on such matters as divorce and women's rights. However, one may cann`t but conclude that their program remains deeply ambiguous.

Most likely, analysts say, in a new development for the 77-year-old Brotherhood, some of its top political leaders are calling for the Brotherhood to be divided into two distinct organizations after the new parliament is seated, a move that could lead to its legalization. One organization would be a civil political party open to all citizens, Muslims, and Christians. This new political party would "consist of the supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood" but comply with a law in Egypt that bans political parties based on religion. This attitude may seem to be serving tactical rather than strategic

aims; and thus, one may still question the practical rule of the brotherhood in holding responsibilities towards the process of building Egyptian civil peace.

Summary:

The Brotherhood started to focus on liberal issues and topics in building the State and reforming the society. Hence, they meet with other Egyptian political parties, especially the opposition and a few reformists[45] regardless of the attitude of these parties regarding religious affairs. On this, Diya' Rashwan, an expert in political Islam and extremist groups at the "Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies": "I don't think that the Brotherhood will initiate their activities by calling for implementing the Islamic governance… They are clever to start with political reforms, and they will try to benefit from democracy in Egypt."[46] Therefore, it can be said that the Brotherhood's sharing with others of the positions in the issue of building the state and reform, regardless of the call for the ruling regimes in Islamic states to resort to the Quran and the Prophet's Sunna, indicates the Brotherhood's positive capacity to provide something to build the civil peace, ever since they accessed the state institutions in Egypt after scoring a victory in the parliamentary elections.

<u>Iraq:</u>

Iraq is a state in transition to democracy, but de facto in civil war. Iraq seems to be a multi – party system, with numerous parties in which no one party often has a chance of gaining power alone, and parties must work with each other to form coalition governments.

Political religious parties, particularly the Shiite ones, occupy a significant place in the political arena in Iraq currently. Among the most political religious parties that are now active in Iraq, it would be note-worthy to refer to what can be called "reference of Imam Sistani" and the "Sadr current" that is led by Muqtada al-Sadr, and the "Da'awa Party", the most prominent leaders of which is Ibrahim al-Jaafari. On the other hand, there is little Sunni opposition based on any religious background. The members of the Sunni opposition are mostly former officers, or those who worked

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[45] It is worth-mentioning that the "National Party" is the only ruling party in Egypt for more than 18 years.
[46] Loc. It.

with the Baath regime and then left it consecutively for one reason or another. This is in addition to leaders of Sunni tribes in the governorate of al-Anbar and al-Mousel, as well as remnants of Muslim Brotherhood and the Islamic Liberation Party.

As for the issues-topics related to the efficiency of these parties and movements in civil peace conflicts in, they can be limited to the "attitude towards the occupation and the issue of federalization," where these issues have become almost a political and patriotic identity on local, regional and international levels.

- o **Occupation Authority and Federalization:**

It seems that Imam Sistani was aware of the complicated map after ousting Saddam's regime. So, since the beginning, he preferred to back off and leave the political field to the Iraqi people, but he set a general ceiling: the Iraqis should govern Iraq. With the development of events, Imam Sistani did not object the US occupation, but he authorized the dealing with the occupation authority and the participation in the set parliamentary elections[47]. Similarly, he issued a *fatwa* to refuse federalism and the division of Iraq. It seems that the Imam's rejection of federalism can be considered as a strike against the separatists in Iraq on one hand, and in order to pave the way for proximity between the Sunnis and the Shiites in a unified Iraqi standpoint.

However, Muqtada al-Sadr had refused the US presence in Iraq ever since the beginning of the US-international military campaign to overthrow Saddam Hussein's regime. He also insisted on giving the Iraqis a chance to establish their own Islamic state. Al-Sadr attacked the US-backed Iraqi government, describing its members as puppets, and he called for establishing militia to liberate Iraq from occupation[48]. He also unveiled his intention to form a shadow government that would establish an Islamic state in Iraq[49]. Muqtada al-Sadr and his partisans were not content with this extent, but things developed to a level that threatened the civil peace when Muqtada al-Sadr's partisans clashed in an armed fight with the moderate supporters of Imam Sistani in Karbala' near the grave of Imam Hussein that the Shiites consider as

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[47] A statement by Sistani on 1/102004.
[48] Friday prayers speech, Muqtada al-Sadr, on 18/7/2003, Najaf.
[49] Friday prayers speech, Muqtada al-Sadr, on 10/10/2003, Koufa.

sacred.[50] Things aggravated when the Iraqi investigating magistrate issued an arrest warrant against Muqtada al-Sadr in the wake of the assassination of the senior Shitte cleric Abdel-Majid al-Khouei in the city of Najaf.[51] Armed clashes between al-Sadr group and US forces between summer 2003 and the beginning of 2004 killed many members from both sides. Al-Sadr was then accused of stimulating riots and the assassination of the senior Shiite cleric, Abdel-Majid al-Khouei. Later, the Iraqi prime minister announced pardon for what happened[52], giving al-Sadr a chance to get rid of the clashes' repercussions in which some of his supporters were drifted in. Then, things end temporarily when Muqtada al-Sadr joined those who called for cease-fire and took part in the political process in Iraq.[53]

Al-Daawa Party joined the alliance of Iraqi national forces in 2000, and then it officially rejected the US-international invasion of Iraq. The party organized the first demonstration against the US presence. Though the party does not officially wish to cooperate with US officials, its leaders are strongly keen on avoiding activities that might threaten the hand-over of power in Iraq.[54] One of the party's politburo indicated that the party does not see any interest in the immediate withdrawal of US troops. In addition, some of the protestors against US-international troops in Iraq accuse the party of giving information about the resistance forces.[55]

Summary:

The issue of federalization is still an ambiguous according to many, including Iraqis. Generally speaking, it seems that only the Sunni leadership is standing against federalization of Iraq, while Kurds and Shi'as seems to be in favor of it.

The Sunni Arabs, who constitute as regards 20 percent of the Iraqi population, dominated Iraq under the regime of Saddam Hussein and his Ba'athist Party. They generally boycotted the elections for seats in the Transitional National Assembly.

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[50] Local and world newspapers published on 14/10/2003. Clashes started on 13/10/2003.
[51] Local and world newspapers published on 11/4/2003 (the day following al-Khouei's assassination) and on 6/4/2004 (the day following the issuance of the arrest warrant against al-Sadr).
[52] 7/8/2004.
[53] Review the developments of events via Iraqi and world newspapers during the last two weeks of August 2005.
[54] Al-Hayat (London), June 24, 2003.
[55] "al-Zaman" newpaper.

There are four leading groupings in the Sunni parties. The Iraqi Accord Front, including the Conference of the People of Iraq, the Islamic Party, the National Dialogue Front and the Council for National Dialogue. Moreover, Sunnis say they reject federalization, fearing it would deprive them of oil resources near the Kurdish north and Shiite south.

The transitional assembly now is dominated by Iraqi Shi'as, who constitute about 60 percent of the population, and by Iraqi Kurds, who account for about 15 percent. The issue of federalism is one of the main keys in the making of civil peace in Iraq. The issue is tackled, mainly, in accordance with religious platforms. It is, according to the American ambassador to Baghdad Mr. Kahalilzad, "that the Sunni Arab members of the constitutional drafting committee opposed the draft constitution because of federalism more than any other issue. "The Sunni Arab representatives generally argued that there should be no reference in the constitution to federalism," he said; "they believed that federalism means fragmentation."[56]

On the other hand, Kurds and Shi'as, of different political parties, seems to tackle the issue on the bases of the same logic, yet with opposite conclusions. Shi'as' political leaders, amongst whom are those belonging to Dawaa's party and as-Sadr's movement, do support federalization.

However, one may argue if federalism is seen to work in Iraq, it could prove an attractive model for significant ethnic and religious sectors in additional Arab states. On the other hand, a successful federal experiment in Iraq might also generate centrifugal forces in the region. The Iraqi Shi'as south and center are likely to move politically closer to Iran, thereby strengthening Tehran's aspiration to achieve recognized regional power status.

In conclusion, it would be quite ambiguous, for the present time, to say whether the "pro" or "anti" stand from federalization can influence civil peace in Iraq.

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[56] Mr. Khalilzad spoke after Iraq's Transitional National Assembly earlier the same day had approved a draft constitution, which is scheduled to be submitted to Iraqi voters for approval or rejection in a referendum October 15, 2005.
- cf.: local and international news releases of that time.

It is crystal-clear that there are transformations in the political practices of these parties towards the occupation authorities. All the leaders opposed it in the beginning, but all the leaders found themselves involved in the political work and incapable of ignoring the efficiency of the US-international force in the country. Hence, no matter what the result of analyzing the objectives related to each one of the leaders and the parties they lead was, in the end they inclined towards a truce with the occupation forces or some cooperation with them. No matter how one tries to look at it, it is clear that practical involvement in the current international military and political reality in Iraq contributed to a large extent in altering some of the orientations of these political parties in a way that differs from that before and after they entered the state institutions. With such transformations, they contribute in one way or another to promote civil peace in Iraq. The remaining important question is: "Have these transformations taken place to keep apace with the current phase or are they part of a strategic change?".

4. <u>**Preliminary Conclusions**</u>

Can religious thought provide solutions to the crisis of freedoms and democracies in the Arab World, or is it a symptom of the crisis and troubles?

It is not important to find an answer in Islam or in a Quranic text. Islam is the religion of meeting, dialogue and dispute according to respectable means, mercy, justice, fraternity, non-coercion and recognition of the other. The Quran includes many verses that are examples of human values, ethical education and purification of the conduct. Moreover, the Hadeeth and the biography and the heritage of the good successors constituted an extraordinary methodology in respecting freedoms, backing the weak, diffusing justice and equality between people who were born free.

The answer to that question should be derived from the methodology of current practices and the pattern of religious thought in political, social, cultural and scientific issues.

It is hard to give a clear answer according to the crisis that the Islamic movement is witnessing in some Arab countries. Islam concealed behind many Islamic practices.

- The policy of violence and counter-violence just confuses facts. The situation of repercussions and chaos in the Arab World hides the separation line between the Islamic movement that is confronted under the excuse of freedoms and political regimes that are tracking them out of fear for freedoms. If it is true that the governance of regimes enjoy clear description, then the "governance" of the Islamic movement cannot be described, as it is not the authority.

- This is in form and methodology. As for content, the Islamic movement has the right to have its political program and its own perception of the state and a philosophy of the political system, as well as the rights and duties of citizens. Hence, it can be part of the ideological or intellectual suggestions that could get the people's support or rejection. In fact, this issue is not with the Islamists who refuse to impose it coercively and violently, where they tend to run and facilitate it through methods of convincing, democratic dispute and free dialogue. They are similar to all ideologists, whether Marxists, socialists or liberals. The issue is with the ruling political regimes that refuse the principle of political pluralism, pluralism of parties, movements, associations, orientations, ideas, opinions and even emotions. With respect to the Islamic movement, we tend to ask about its commitment to political freedoms as a basis for political work and conflict over power with democratic means, after the openness of Arab regimes to political pluralism and the practical approval of the principle of the circulation of the power.

- In practice, the image is different from what should be the basis to judge the religious thought, whether openness to or closure before freedoms. Regimes strengthen their grip and multiply the liquidation processes. Islamists are intensifying their violence acts. But in return, the Islamists are realistic in the way they deal with political regimes that are partially open to freedoms and democracy.

- In spite of the historical relationship between the political and religious aspect, it is not certain that this relation would exist in the future.

- Most of the Islamic movements have taken religion as the path to politics.

- Islamic movements proposed in their political programs social actions that meet the people's needs, which indicates that they could transform into movements with a democratic/social content.

- Islamic movements that are ambitious to establish the Islamic state in Arab countries have succeeded in founding and promoting their existence among the public as a political force to confront foreign occupation and tyrannical regimes. This means that they could be handed the power whenever the conditions are adequate.

- Progress laws, in the light of principal issues proposed today before Arabs, such as freedoms, democracy, social justice, development, liberation and the state reform, reveal that political future of Arab countries will be in the hands of religious parties.

5. __Overall Summary__

The participation of religious parties in elections and their contribution to consolidate civil peace constitute a complicated problem that requires detailed and deep researches between religion and politics, and more particularly between religion and mechanisms of democratic political work.[57]

The phenomenon of political parties on one hand and the democratic concept on the other, as well as the ambiguous relation between them in Arab countries, necessitate observation, analysis and a profound answer raised all over the region: "What is the position of Islamic currents from the issue of democracy?"[58]

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[57] It is worth mentioning that Carnegie Papers had many publications dealing with relative issues. One may suggest, as an example:
- Islamist Movements and the Democratic Process in the Arab World: Exploring Gray Zones, March 8, 2006, Carnegie Paper No. 7, Nathan Brown, Amr Hamzawy, Marina S. Ottaway
- Aftermath of the Hamas Tsunami, Thursday, February 2, 2006.
- Promoting Democracy after Hamas' Victory, Thursday, February 2, 2006, Marina S. Ottaway
- Can Egypt's Troubled Elections Produce a More Democratic Future?, Tuesday, December 20, 2005, Amr Hamzawy, Nathan Brown

[58] The Arab Center for the Rule of Law and Integrity (ACRLI)- a non-governmental non-profit Arab regional organization, founded in 2003 by Arab judges and lawyers with the support of some colleagues in the Arab World- is currently planning to conduct researches and activities about this problem.

What is constant and perceivable is that the religious situation is aggravating day after day in the Arab World. There are many reasons behind this phenomenon, and we will mention three of them:

- Tyrannical regimes face this situation by resorting to violence, isolation and exclusion.
- Forces of foreign occupation that take the logic of international sovereignty in the globalization system as a cover for them are confronting the religious condition, under the slogan of war on terrorism.
- Weakness of human and sectorial development, the increase in the rates of poverty theft of wealths, and the prevalence of corruption.

These reasons provided religious parties with the essence of their struggle: freedom, liberation, development and social justice.

The essence of political struggle for religious parties is that value since it is linked to the system of Islamic values. For all parties, it is a factor that "revolutionizes" society and prepares oneself to reach power. Yet, in spite of that, these parties do not share a unified position towards challenges looming before Arab societies, especially the challenge of democracy, freedoms and citizenship. Hence, they do not have one constitutional/political perception to reform the society and the state. Moreover, they do not share the same pattern to establish the Islamic government and the mechanisms of change of governments and regimes. Some favor religious violence, while others prefer invitation and the social institutions (good-will, solidarity, charity and good), and some prefer democracy.

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