# Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood: In Their Own Words

Jonathan D. Halevi

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- The Muslim Brotherhood does indeed participate in political activity and defend the democratic process. That is not, however, because it has accepted the principles of Western democracy, but rather because the democratic process can be exploited to establish an Islamic regime which will then render democracy unnecessary.

- Muslim Brotherhood Supreme Guide Muhammad Mahdi 'Akef told the Egyptian daily *Al-Karama* in 2007 that only Islam was the expression of true democracy. "Islam and its values antedated the West by founding true democracy, exemplified by the Shura [the advisory council under the Caliphs]."

- The Brotherhood's official website notes that *jihad* is Islam's most important tool in effecting a gradual takeover, beginning with the Muslim countries, moving on to reestablishing the Caliphate over three continents in preparation for a conquest of the West, and finally instituting a global Islamic state.

- The Muslim Brotherhood's step-by-step plan dictates its supposed "moderation," which will gradually vanish as its achievements increase and its acceptance of the existing situation is replaced by a strict, orthodox Muslim rule whose foreign policy is based on *jihad*.

**Muslim Brotherhood to Join a Transitional Government**

The Obama administration is discussing with Egyptian officials a proposal for President Hosni Mubarak to resign immediately and turn over power to a transitional government headed by Vice President Omar Suleiman with the support of the Egyptian military, administration officials and Arab diplomats told the *New York Times* on February 3. According to the American proposal, the transitional government will include members from a broad range of opposition groups, including the Muslim Brotherhood.

The Muslim Brotherhood, a global movement with Hamas as its Palestinian branch, has taken a greater role in organizing the protest against the Egyptian regime as it unfolds its independent political agenda, defying both the American administration and Israel. Rashad al-Bayumi, the Muslim Brotherhood's second-in-command, announced in an interview with Japanese TV (and cited by *al-Hayat*) that the group would join a transitional government in order to cancel the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, as it "offends the Arabs' dignity and destroys the interests of Egypt and other Arab states." He further explained that his animosity to the American administration stems from its support for Israel, stressing that Egypt does not need American aid.

**Democracy Is Islam's Entryway to Power**

The Muslim Brotherhood does indeed participate in political activity and defend the democratic process. That is not, however, because it has accepted the principles of Western democracy, but rather because the democratic process can be exploited to establish an Islamic regime which will then render democracy unnecessary, as was made evident by its platform in the 2007 Egyptian parliamentary elections. The organization claimed to be participating in the elections because "the Muslim Brotherhood preaches the path of Allah...[and therefore it is participating] to fulfill Allah's commands in peaceful ways, using existing constitutional institutions and a decision determined by the ballot box." That is, democracy is Islam's entryway to power.

The Muslim Brotherhood platform also noted that "the rule in [Egypt] must be republican, parliamentary, constitutional and democratic in accordance with the Islamic Sharia," and that "the Sharia ensures liberty for all." The organization does not accept the principle of the separation of church and state, and the Islamic rule they aspire to is, for them, a realization of democracy.

Interviewed on September 17, 2007, by the Egyptian daily newspaper *Al-Karama*, Muslim Brotherhood Supreme Guide Muhammad Mahdi 'Akef said that the organization's campaign slogan would be: "Sharia is the Solution" and that human rights and democracy would be included under Sharia rule. He devoted his May 12, 2007, weekly missive to an exposition of democracy as seen through Muslim Brotherhood eyes. He said that only Islam, which was given to men by Allah, was the expression of true democracy. He wrote that

> Islam preceded...doctrines and ideologies devised by men. The final, absolute message from heaven contains all the values which the secular world claims to have invented....Islam and its values antedated the West by founding true democracy, exemplified by the Shura [the advisory council under the Caliphs] and Islam's respect for the equality of other religions....With regard to liberty, Islam reached a goal which secular preachers have not, for the liberty promised by Islam is genuine in every way, even in faith and religion....As to the claim that Islam does not recognize civil authority, the authority of Islam is democratic...it is genuine liberty, it provides equality in practice and is transparent, it neither oppresses nor robs any man of his rights....It is on that foundation and with those values that the Muslim Brotherhood calls for justice, equality, and liberty.

'Akef has never equivocated regarding his views on Western democracy. On April 30, 2005, he told the Egyptian daily newspaper *Al-Ahram* that the Muslim Brotherhood opposed American democracy because it was "corrupt and serves the American agenda....The Muslim Brotherhood has held demonstrations against foreign intervention and against any democracy that serves the Americans....[American] democracy is corrupt because it wants to destroy the [Islamic] nation, its faith and tradition." He told the BBC that Western democracy was "unrealistic" and "false."

One of 'Akef's examples of America's "corrupt values" is the attempt to stop female circumcision in Africa. On July 12, 2007, he wrote that "[the Americans] spend billions of dollars and endlessly plot to change the Muslim way of life, they wage war on Muslim leaders, the traditions of its faith and its ideas. They even wage war against female circumcision, a practice current in 36 countries, which has been prevalent since the time of the Pharaohs."


**The Importance of Jihad**

According to the Muslim Brotherhood, *jihad*, that is, holy war against the infidels, is one of the fundamental elements spread by the Muslim Brotherhood. The organization's ideology, as it appears on its official website, regards "the Prophet Muhammad as its leader and ruler, and *jihad* as its path." *Jihad* has a global strategy beyond self-defense; it is the unceasing attack on every infidel rule, intended to widen the borders of the Islamic state until all mankind lives under the Islamic flag.

Clicking the links "The Goals of the Muslim Brotherhood" and "Muslim Brotherhood Measures" leads to explanations of *jihad* based on the writings of Muslim Brotherhood founder Hassan al-Banna. *Jihad*, it is noted, is Islam's most important tool in effecting a gradual takeover, beginning with the Muslim countries, moving on to re-establishing the Caliphate over three continents in preparation for a conquest of the West, and finally instituting a global Islamic state. The organization's website states:

> We want a Muslim individual, a Muslim home, a Muslim people, a Muslim government and state that will lead the Islamic countries and bring into the fold the Muslim diaspora and the lands robbed from Islam and will then bear the standard of *jihad* and the call [*da'wah*] to Allah. [Then the] world will happily accept the precepts of Islam....The problems of conquering the world will only end when the flag of Islam waves and *jihad* has been proclaimed.

> The goal is to establish one Islamic state of united Islamic countries, one nation under one leadership whose mission will be to reinforce adherence to the law of Allah...and the strengthening of the Islamic presence in the world arena....The goal...is the establishment of a world Islamic state.

> And if prayer is a pillar of the faith, then *jihad* is its summit...and death in the path of Allah is the summit of aspiration.

The Muslim Brotherhood does not hide its global aspirations and the violent path it intends to follow to achieve them. The Brotherhood is meticulous in its step-by-step plan, first to take over the soul of the individual and then the family, people, nation and union of Islamic nations, until the global Islamic state has been realized. The principle of stages dictates the Muslim Brotherhood's supposed "moderation." However, that "moderation" will gradually vanish as Muslim Brotherhood achievements increase and its acceptance of the existing situation is replaced by a strict, orthodox Muslim rule whose foreign policy is based on *jihad*.

For the Muslim Brotherhood, *jihad* is at the center of the struggle against the United States, the West, Israel, and other infidel regimes. The supreme leader of the Muslim Brotherhood regards Islam as waging "a battle of values and identity" against the forces of "imperialism" and the "Anglo-Saxons" attacking the Arab-Muslim world "on the pretext of spreading democracy, defending minority rights, and opposing what they call terrorism." He advises Muslims to adopt "the culture of resistance against the invasion," explaining that Allah gave "the occupied, oppressed nations *jihad* and resistance as a means of achieving freedom." He added that "the culture of resistance to invasion and occupation have intellectual, military, and economic aspects. Experience in Palestine, Iraq, and Afghanistan have proved that resistance is not imaginary or fictitious or impossible, but rather it is possible when the [Islamic] nation presents a united front and uses its weapons and faith to face an imperialist, whether he comes with arms or inundates us with his ideas, values, or obsolete morality." Akef's successor, Mohammad Badi', maintains the same platform.

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A comprehensive analysis of the Muslim Brotherhood's agenda may be found in Jonathan D. Halevi, "The Muslim Brotherhood: A Moderate Islamic Alternative to al-Qaeda or a Partner in Global Jihad?" http://www.jcpa.org/JCPA/Templates/ShowPage.asp?DBID=1&TMID=111&LNGID=1&FID=379&PID=0&IID=1920

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