Between Islam and Islamism: a dialogue with Islam as a pattern of conflict resolution and a security approach vis-à-vis Islamism

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IN THE CONTEXT of broadening the scope of international relations (IR) and of the related field of security studies in light of the changed international system after the end of the Cold War, Islam and Islamic movements have moved to the fore of this discipline. At the surface it looks as if the study of the 'geopolitics of Islam and the West' has taken the place of the earlier Soviet studies (Fuller and Lesser, 1995). Students of IR concerned with the study of the Middle East and those who have turned to focus on Islamic civilization are caught, however, between a tremendously increasing Islamophobia in the West and the need to inquire into the threats to security by what is termed 'Islamism'. Those who study Islamism while dealing with security are thus often challenged by the question: 'Why then are you involving Islam in security studies? Isn't this a part of Western Islamophobia?' This chapter does not escape this challenge which has increased since September 11.

The chapter begins by arguing that there are many different ways of responding to this question. Some scholars specializing in Islamic studies rightly question those efforts in the West that view Islam as a 'threat', a view which they qualify as perpetuating a myth (Esposito, 1992). They also deal with the question of the compatibility of Islam and democracy, and give a positive answer. In light of these answers we may doubt any inclusion of Islam in a study concerned with redefining security in the Middle East. But then we are intrigued by the rise of fundamentalist and rejectionist movements most hostile to the West and the Arab-Israeli peace process.

It is true that when existing threats, violence and instability are related to Islamic movements there is a need for security studies to inquire into this issue. In redefining security in the Middle East after the end of the Cold War while also focusing on the peace process, we cannot escape looking at the events in which political Islam has become the ideology underpinning the rejection of peace and the promotion of anti-Western ideologies. This study, in doing so, takes as its point of departure the distinction between the religion of Islam and Islamism.

The focus is those groups, in the main non-state actors, which represent Islam in a politicized pattern. The term 'Islamism' refers to political Islam – particularly in the Arab world. In this chapter Islamism is viewed as a variety of religious fundamentalism. In the effort to redefine security the challenge of religions fundamentalism, not of Islam itself (Tibi, 1998a), is of concern. The groups representing political Islam¹ do in fact pose a threat to security at domestic, regional and international levels. It follows that the inquiry needs to focus on the politicization of religion, because that process elevates religion to an issue of security, and that compels us to put it on our agenda in the study of IR.² Despite September 11 the main security threat of the Islamists is related to domestic order. This explains why Arab governments themselves feel threatened by Islamism and why, therefore, Islamists encounter hostility in their own countries and therefore seek political asylum in Europe.

Political Islam and post-bipolar security in the Middle East

As a recent development, the politicization of religion is not restricted to Islam, insofar as it can be observed in other religions as well, be it Hinduism or Judaism – among others.³ When it comes to Islam one cannot escape witnessing the Bin Laden and, earlier, the Iran connection of terrorism.⁴ In Algeria the *Front Islamique du Salut* (FIS) and the *Groupes Islamiques Armées* (GIA) envisage the toppling of the existing state order⁵ to replace it by a divine one they call *Hakimiyyat Allah*.⁶ Similarly, we see in Egypt *Jihad* and other groups, which legitimize themselves by references to 'true Islam', attempts to destabilize the state, which they identify as a deviant secular order. On a regional level, militant groups like the Kashmiri (but based in Pakistan) United *Jihad* Commando, the *Hezbollah* in Lebanon (Jaber, 1997) or *Hamas* and *Jihad Islami* in Palestine (see Milton-Edwards, 1999) ignite great tensions and contribute to what one may conceptualize as an Islamization of regional conflicts. Our focus on the peace process in the Middle East, while studying security in post-bipolar politics, compels us to pay specific attention to this anti-peace-oriented Islamization of conflict. The study of regional conflict in light of political religion and ethnicity therefore becomes a major concern in the study of IR. If we are committed to inter-faith dialogue as an instrument and a framework for preventing what is called a 'clash of civilizations' (Herzog, 1999; Tibi, 1999a: 107–26), we must expose ourselves to the serious challenge posed by this question: 'Given the existence of Islamophobia in the West, how can you combine your commitment to dialogue with your inclusion of Islam in the study of redefining security in the Middle East?' This question needs to be taken most seriously, and only a security analysis on sound foundations can provide the proper answer to it. This is not to ignore the assumption lying behind it, namely that Islam replaces communism as the 'enemy' of the West. But this assumption needs to be treated with great caution.

At issue here is a fact-based distinction between the religion of Islam and the political ideology of Islamism (Tibi, 1998a). That ideology refers selectively to the religion of Islam and then engages itself in politicizing it in an arbitrary manner so as to legitimize political action. In our case, this action is directed against the Arab–Israeli peace.

In response to the question of whether Islam poses a threat, Esposito argues that the question itself is misplaced because there is no monolith that we may call ‘Islam’. The religion of Islam must be differentiated from the many varieties of Islamism as political ideology. The religion of Islam is not a threat. However, as a political ideology Islam clearly is, insofar as it poses a threat to the existing order. Esposito fails to see this and explores the relationship between Islam and democracy. Understanding this relationship is crucial to redefining security for two reasons: First, religious fundamentalism and ethnicity are among the major challenges to security in the post-Cold War era. Jean-François Revel suggests we view the tolerance practiced *vis-à-vis* political-religious and ethnic groups, particularly those related to Islam, according to the formula ‘Democracy against itself’ (Revel, 1993: chapter 12). By this Revel means that democratic systems allow non-democratic groups to operate. Supporters of political Islam acting in the West have no problem making use of democracy in pursuit of their ends while they simultaneously antagonize democracy in their actions and look down at it as an indication of the decline of the West. One of the spiritual fathers of political Islam, Mawdudi, for instance argues:

I tell you in all clarity, my brethren in Islam, secular democracy stands in all aspects in contrast to your religion and beliefs . . . Islam being your belief, and that is why you call yourself Muslims, is different from this ugly democracy . . . and therefore there can be no concurrence between Islam and democracy . . . There where democracy rules Islam cannot prevail and when Islam dominates there is no place for democracy. (Quoted in Dharif, 1992: 98)

With regard to this fundamentalist attitude, Islam is only compatible with democracy if it is interpreted in a liberal Islamic manner. In contrast, Islamism clearly rejects democracy. Second, in this security-related study, reference is made to democracy because of the idea of a democratic peace (Russett, 1993).⁷ It is for that reason that democracy is placed on this agenda while dealing with security. Liberal Islam approves of democracy, while Islamism does not. Without outlining the distinction between Islam and Islamism, one can not formulate a new approach necessary to redefining security in the Middle East.

Based on the above distinctions, the hypotheses underlying this chapter are:

- 1 Political religion is becoming a major issue in the study of conflict in the Middle East. Conflicts addressed in religious terms cannot be resolved because the belief in the absolute is the substance of every religion. This leaves no place for negotiating peace.

- 2 With the exception of Iran, groups and parties committed to Islamism – the expression of politicized religion – are not in power and therefore these challengers are basically non-statal actors. Currently they are not able to seize power, but they can destabilize and create more tensions and disorder. This observation creates a challenge to traditional state-centred security studies.
- 3 In acknowledging the relevance of the idea of democratic peace for the post-Cold War era, the assumption to be dealt with is that undemocratic, and to an even greater extent totalitarian, ideologies and the groups representing them are a threat to peace and thus to security.

These three hypotheses must include the differentiation pertinent to all of them. Those who politicize the Islamic faith to make out of it an ideology claiming an Islamic order, both for the state and the world, by and large can be identified as Islamists. To employ a broader concept (see related contributions in Marty and Appleby, 1991) we may address them as religious fundamentalists. Yet there is still a need for further distinction between religious fundamentalism and terrorism. Every supporter of the idea of an 'Islamic state' or an 'Islamic world order' is clearly a religious fundamentalist. Therefore, and in a broader sense, all political groups related to these ideologies are a threat to the stability of the existing orders.

At the same time, not every fundamentalist is a committed terrorist. There are plenty of fundamentalist individuals and groups who do not subscribe to 'terror in the mind of God' (Juergensmeyer, 2000) or the related use of force. This commitment to violence and force is the dividing line between fundamentalist terrorism (e.g. those engaging in *Jihad*) and non-terrorist fundamentalism (e.g. the Muslim Brethren in Egypt). However, both share the intention to topple the existing order; but their means of reaching their goal are different.

In short, the study of security in the Middle East is related to the important task of redefining security in the international system. Post-Cold War developments require a new approach to security that goes beyond preoccupation with the state (see Tibi, 1998c). To do so, one must embrace non-statal actors in the analysis, and put them at the top of the agenda. In this case, groups and parties of political Islam in the Middle East are at issue. The next step is to explain how religion comes to the fore in security studies, i.e. when it undergoes a process of politicization.⁸

The politicization of religion, destabilization and irregular war: redefining post-bipolar security

The analysis begins with the study of the circumstances and conditions that led to the politicization of religion in the international arena. Even during the

Cold War, political religion as a source of potential conflict was on the scene. However, bipolarity was a veil to hide religion, ethnicity, culture and other factors by subsuming these divisions beneath the East–West rivalry. Since the disappearance of bipolarity and the bisected world of the Cold War, new conflicts and new forces related to politicized religion have been on the rise. In fact, emerging religious fundamentalism and ethnicity do indicate these phenomena. These changes necessitate a new concept of security in world politics. There are some, however, who claim that fundamentalism is a passing phenomenon tied merely to current events, and others go even further and maintain it has already ended (Kepel, 2000). Events even prior to September 11 clearly show how mistaken these analysts are because all current international conflicts are related either to fundamentalism or to ethnicity. In some cases, like in the Balkans, Chechnia and Kashmir, we even find a mixture of the two, merging them to a kind of ethno-fundamentalism. The established thought-patterns of the study of security as well as of related policies cannot provide adequate answers to these new challenges. Hence the need of a new approach.

In view of the developments in the post-bipolar Middle East, there is a clear connection between fundamentalism and security. It must be emphasized here that it is not the religion of Islam as such that is at issue. Clearly, there can be a dialogue with Islam as a religion in pursuit of peace; it is Islamic fundamentalism – not Islam – that is a concern of security policy. While Islam is a world religion whose followers number one-fifth of the world population (1.4–1.5 billion people), Islamic fundamentalism represents a new pattern of political mobilization carried out by a great variety of groups. They instrumentalize and misuse religion for non-religious ends. These groups are a minority in the world of Islam, but they are well organized and equipped and cannot, therefore, be ignored. The numbers matter little, though, for these groups are very capable of destabilizing activities and creating disorder.

In short, the new approach for redefining security that takes account of the politicization of religion is one based on a differentiation between Islam and ‘Islamism’, with the latter defined as religious fundamentalism. In dealing with this security concern, the present chapter pursues several lines of reasoning to reach some conclusions about the topic under issue. These are referred to as ‘issue areas’, and they are discussed in this section in the following manner:

First, Islam is a religion and framework for a civilization,⁹ but it is – as argued earlier – not the proper object of the needed security approach, as Huntington suggests. Islam is a monotheistic religion based on divine revelation. As a world religion and civilization, it manifests great religious diversity, between Sunnite and Shi’ite, and between different religious denominations and numerous sects. Islam is further characterized by great cultural diversity. For example, African Islam is entirely different from the Islam of Southeast

Asia, that of the Indian subcontinent, or even its original Arab form. The addressed religious and cultural diversity¹⁰ are also reflected in Islamic fundamentalism throughout the world of Islam. There is thus a weakness in those security studies – e.g. Huntington's 1996 *Clash of Civilizations* – which claim the existence of a monolith called 'Islam'. In highlighting the issue in terms of security policy, there are multiple political Islamist movements that seek to legitimize themselves through religion. They proclaim one Islam but are themselves as diverse as Islam itself. Above all, these groups adhere to similar concepts of political order based on religion and divine law.

When security experts posit the questionable idea that Islam is a threat to the West because of the alleged unity of action claimed by the Islamists, it becomes necessary to clear up this misinterpretation through more precise analyses. In order to do so, two schools of thought must be rejected: first, those who refuse to include Islamism in security studies; and, second, those who confuse Islam and Islamism.

Samuel Huntington, for example, correctly recognizes what is termed the 'cultural turn' in seeing how cultures and civilizations play an increasingly important role in international politics. The major problem with his approach is that he believes civilizations can engage in world political conflicts. Huntington attempts to evade the implicit impasse by introducing the concept of 'core states' (Huntington, 1996: chapter 7), each of which is supposed to lead a civilization in international politics. In the case of Islam, this construct is not promising for the simple reason that none of the existing fifty-five Islamic states is in a position to lead the entire Islamic civilization. The major argument of the present study is that security questions are related neither to Islamic states nor directly to the civilization to which they belong. Some expert may contradict this by pointing at the 'security threat' posed by Saddam Hussein of Iraq (Cockburn and Cockburn, 1999). However the exceptional character of this case must be considered despite all the false connections of Iraq and al-Qaida.

In contrast to Huntington, the argument presented here is that civilizations cannot themselves engage in international conflict, but there is a sense in which they do matter. The study of IR in the post-Cold War era needs to acknowledge that worldviews of civilizations play a more important role in world politics today than they did previously. In considering this fact and in continuing this line of reasoning, war is not understood here as a military conflict between states. *The War of Civilizations* (Tibi, 1995), suggests that we consider the conflict of different worldviews and of particular norms and values in the analysis of security because this conflict affects the issue of order. This conflict revolves around the understanding of five issue areas:

- 1 the state;
- 2 law;

- 3 religion;
- 4 war/peace; and
- 5 knowledge.

The outcomes differ and therefore conflicting concepts of world order emerge.¹¹ Conflicts of values have nothing to do with armies, but they do contribute to the emergence of real conflicts. The 'war of civilizations' is therefore a war of values and worldviews that directly affects conflict on all three levels: domestic, regional and international.

In our time we need to include cultural dialogue as a peace strategy for the twenty-first century in the study of security and the related conflict studies as an alternative to the clash of civilizations (see Herzog, 1999; Tibi, 1999a). Dialogue is a means of conflict resolution. Fundamentalists, by contrast, politicize differences of worldviews between civilizations and thus fan the flames of conflict and create an area of security concern. In this light it must be recognized that security policy has two levels: first, conflicts of values, which have political effects but cannot be settled by military means; and, second, the violence of the fundamentalists believed to be in the 'mind of God'. It is extremely important to distinguish between these two levels at this stage of the analysis in shedding light on the politicization of religion, while being wary of any involvement in Islamophobia.

Second, having clarified the area of concern on the grounds of the distinctions made, the discussion can now move to the area of fundamentalism as a political ideology resulting from the politicization of religion. As argued earlier, this is not an exclusively Islamic issue since the phenomenon is cross-cultural and global, i.e. covers all religions.¹² In analysing fundamentalism in terms of security, two distinctions must be made. One is the fact that it is common to all varieties of fundamentalism to politicize religion in order to arrive at concepts of political order which challenge existing secular orders. The second is that fundamentalism does not confine itself to a confrontation of worldviews; the resort to violence as part of irregular military actions (i.e. the resort to terrorism) is an actualization of the conflict related to worldviews (both aspects are analysed in Tibi, 1998a).

The major target of the political and military activities pursued by the fundamentalists is the secular state. This applies to fundamentalists in all religions. It is, however, unique to Islamic fundamentalists to go beyond the state in embracing the universalism of Islam in order to contend that Islam provides a concept of world order. This belief leads to a contestation of concepts about world order. In addressing this conflict between two concepts of world order, the prevailing Western one and the Islamic one envisaged for the future, the scholar of Islam John Kelsay states: 'in encounters between the West and Islam, the

struggle is over who will provide the primary definition to the world order'. Then, on the same page, he asks, who will lead the world in the future?

Will it be the West, with its notions of territorial boundaries, market economies, private religiosity, and the priority of individual rights? Or will it be Islam, with its emphasis on the universal mission of a transtribal community called to build a social order founded on pure monotheism natural to humanity? (1993: 117)

Islamic fundamentalists answer this question by referring to the spiritual father of their ideology, Sayyid Qutb, who in his *Road Signs* (1989: 6–7) states that Islam will lead the world. It is clear that these questions and the answers given indicate a competition between Western and Islamic concepts of world order that cover different understandings of the notions of war and peace, as well as of law and justice (Juergensmeyer, 2000). This is the content of 'war of civilizations'. It follows that we are confronted not only with a new era for the study of security but with new substance.

Mark Juergensmeyer does not deal explicitly with world order, but with the secular nation state as challenged by fundamentalism. In his study he predicts a confrontation that leads to an emerging 'New Cold War' (1993). When fundamentalists escalate this conflict of worldviews to one related to irregular war as neo-jihad, the politicization of religion becomes a real security problem. Some of the cases in point are Kosovo, Macedonia, Chechnia and Kashmir. In the Middle East it is most unfortunate to see the *al-Aqsa intifada* shifting the conflict over occupation to one of order related to religion and civilizational worldviews in viewing the uprising as an Islamic *jihad*.

At this point, Westerners need to be cautious and to refrain from immediately thinking of Islam when they hear the word 'fundamentalism', since Western media focus almost exclusively on terrorist acts committed by Islamic fundamentalists. Without addressing the substance of conflict and without referring to related cases, for example, the destruction of the *Ayodhya* mosque in India by Hindu fundamentalists or similar terrorist acts by fundamentalists of other religions, such as the Hebron massacre by Jewish settlers in the occupied territories of Palestine, have been downplayed in the media. In stating this concern about the potential for Islamophobia in the West, the objective is not to belittle the threats of Islamic fundamentalism to security. The following three, interconnected, points are essential for an understanding of how fundamentalism can become a security threat.

- 1 A new security agenda must include the threat of fundamentalism. Because fundamentalism has a dual nature, i.e. religious and political (Jansen, 1997), it can draw on the former in pursuit of the latter – thus, it politicizes religion. By drawing on religious symbols and grounding their message in

religion, fundamentalists are very appealing. This makes them able to 'fight' without conventional military means. In order to effectively combat such a security threat, a new kind of security approach is thus required (Buzan, 1991), one that is no longer fixated on the state and on the predominance of military mobilization by organized armies.

- 2 In all religions, fundamentalist ideology is based on the belief in a divine order. Most fundamentalists fight for this goal with political means; only a minority among them employs violence and acts of terror to enforce their concept of order. Thus, it is simply empirically false to equate fundamentalism with terrorism. It follows that 'terror in the mind of God' (Juergensmeyer, 2000) is only one aspect of fundamentalism; much more important are its worldviews about order and its politicization of a conflict of values. Nevertheless, terrorism¹³ has to be covered by the new approach, given the resort of some fundamentalists to this means.
- 3 When referring to the politicization of Islam, certain well-intended Europeans prefer to use the term 'Islamism' as an alternative to the term 'Islamic fundamentalism'. In this chapter, the terms 'political Islam', Islamism and Islamic fundamentalism are used interchangeably. However, if the intent is to use the term 'fundamentalism' as a means of spreading prejudice, then the effect is utterly misleading. Although the term 'fundamentalism' has been hardened into a cliché, it is a scholarly and analytical concept for studying the politicization of religion. By using the term 'Islamism' as an alternative way of referring to the global phenomenon of fundamentalism as such, these scholars unwittingly contribute to the stereotyping of Islam by implicitly restricting the politicization of religion to Islam. By electing to call this fundamentalist phenomenon exclusively 'Islamist', they limit the phenomenon of politicized religion to Islam only, thus denying its global character.

The third issue area refers to the field of security studies itself, and the need to look at fundamentalism as the subject of a new approach within security studies to what has been addressed as 'new frontiers of security'.¹⁴ The new approach demands an advance on the traditional concept of security dominated by military thinking, with a broadening of scope and a deepening of insight. Since the end of the East–West confrontation¹⁵ (see Hogan, 1992) conventional Clausewitzian wars between states and their organized, institutionalized armies have almost disappeared – and it is most unlikely that they will recur in the foreseeable future. Therefore, most of the issues must be thought through anew. Security experts have long been arguing that this change has to be taken into consideration, and have underscored the need for a new security approach. Barry Buzan (1991), and later Martin van Creveld and Kalevi Holsti (see Holsti, 1996: chapter 7), have been pioneers in announcing the end of Clausewitz's

thesis of classical war as a confrontation between institutionalized armies. Non-military aspects are emphasized more and more strongly, and are quickly becoming central subjects of security policy. In that sense, and that sense only, it is argued that religious fundamentalism should become one of the major subjects of study in the new security approach.

Organized armies are helpless against the terrorist acts of fundamentalists or ethnic nationalists, as the examples of Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Afghanistan and, more recently, Kosovo and Macedonia, clearly demonstrate. The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) forces could overpower the Serbian army with its arsenal of weapons in 1999, but in 2000 and 2001 they were unable to contain the religious-ethnic UÇK irregulars' acts of revenge against the Christian Serbs and Macedonians. In the traditional historical (not the theological) Islamic understanding, *jihad* is a war of irregulars against the infidels. This understanding is currently gaining topicality for determining 'Islam' and 'war' (see Tibi, 1996; Kelsay, 1993: chapter 5).

Any security concept for combating fundamentalism should guard against equating the political activists of these new tendencies with Islam itself. It cannot be reiterated enough how important it is to make clear the distinction between the religion of Islam and its fundamentalist abuse. This – missing – distinction also reinforces the claim of the Islamists to be the 'true voice of Islam' as such, and allows them to demonize their critics as the 'voice of Islamophobia'. The logistics of Islamic fundamentalism in the West have become an important component of this movement. Therefore, the study of security must inquire into the networking between the region of conflict itself, in this case the Middle East, and what is termed the 'gated Diaspora'. Categorizing the values-based conflict between political Islam and the West as Islamophobia obscures complex categories and is misleading.¹⁶

The Middle East and the quest for democratic peace: the place of Islamism

The final part of this chapter proceeds to focus exclusively on the attitudes of Islamic fundamentalists *vis-à-vis* the Arab-Israeli peace process. It might confuse some readers to see these attitudes illustrated with respect to neither *Hamas* nor *Jihad Islami*, but rather with reference to the case of Islamic fundamentalism in the Maghreb. There are two reasons. First, the scope of the study is broadened in the Middle East by extending the concept of peace from an Arab-Israeli one to a Mediterranean peace. In this understanding of Euro-Mediterranean peace¹⁷ fundamentalism is viewed as a threat to political stability in the Mediterranean (Tibi, 2000c). Second, the direct security threat posed by *Hamas* or *Jihad Islami* is pertinent, but it is for a scholarly analysis more illuminating to showcase the issue on other Islamist movements.

At the outset some remarks on the differences between the first *intifada* (1987–93) (Hunter, 1993) and the recent one (beginning at the end of September 2000) are necessary and most pertinent to understanding the Islamization of the conflict. The first *intifada* was a national one led by the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO). It is wrong to blame the PLO for initiating the uprising, for early on it did not control it for some time. Clearly, the Islamists led the second *intifada*, referred to as the *al-Aqsa intifada*. In what way does this difference matter to peace and security? In the preceding sections, it was argued that political Islam is not in favour of the peace process as based on mutual acceptance in terms of each 'acknowledging the other's nationhood', as Herbert Kelman of Harvard, a mediator in the peace process, has put it (1992: 18–38). In this regard we need to ask whether, and in a commitment to peace, the Islamists acknowledge the place of Israel in the Middle East¹⁸ and the right of the Jewish people to sovereignty over the grounds of mutuality regarding the rights of the Palestinian people to establish their own state and determine their own destiny (Farsoun, 1997: 311ff.). Clearly, the answers are negative. From this vantage-point, Islamism is seen as an impediment to the peace process. In the dominant stream of security studies, we see a continuing focus on the state, and thus the aforementioned issues are ignored insofar as the so-called 'deadly struggle for peace'¹⁹ is viewed as a struggle between the states of the Middle East.

In a redefined concept of security Islam does have a place in Middle Eastern peace. With reference to the concept of democratic peace pertinent to post-Cold War security studies, there is a compatibility of Islam, understood as morality, with modern democracy. In contrast, Islamism is not a religion-based morality, but rather a concept of political order. To be sure, it is not democratic order (Tibi, 1998a: chapters 7 and 8). The assumption is that a democratic peace is a guarantee of non-belligerent conflict resolution in that democracies negotiate, but do not wage wars against each other (see Russett, 1993). In this regard, the question is whether divine orders, based on the *Sharia* (Islamic law) or, alternatively, on the *Halakha* (Jewish law) could commit themselves to peace. The hypothesis is that states based on divine law can not do so, that only secular orders are able to commit themselves to democratic peace. This is not to ignore the place of religion. However, it is necessary to establish harmony between 'religious commitment and secular reason' (Audi, 2000) while searching for peaceful conflict resolution through dialogue.

For the final part of this study, the working hypothesis is that an Islamic state as envisaged by the Islamists is not designed to accept Israel as an equal partner for Arab Muslims. The Maghribi Islamists are a case in point. In contrast, the traditional Islam-based monarchy in Morocco²⁰ has proved to be most supportive of the idea of peace with Israel. The late King Hassan II left considerable records as a positive legacy in this regard. In commenting on the death of the Moroccan king in July 1999, Shimon Peres acknowledged in a BBC

TV-interview that Hassan II was a friend of the Jewish people and a supporter of an Islamic peace with their State. The published records by Abu Mazen, alias the Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas, support this statement (Abbas, 1995: 186).

Before moving to examine the impact of the working hypothesis on the negative connection between peace and Islamism in the case of the Maghreb, it is pertinent to explore the notion of 'peace' used here. Prior to the age of nationalism and the formation of the State of Israel, Muslims and Jews lived in peace with one another to the extent of having a Jewish–Islamic symbiosis²¹ – to use the term of the most distinguished Jewish historian Bernard Lewis (1984). In arguing on secular grounds for a lasting peace, Jews and Muslims can learn from European history that only after the peace of Westphalia, i.e. after establishing the mutually accepted secular sovereignty of all states, religion-based wars in Europe disappeared.

One must further determine the scope of the envisaged democratic peace in broadening it from an Arab–Israeli and a Jewish–Muslim peace to a Euro-Mediterranean partnership (see Khader, 1997; see also Tibi, 2000c). Domestic and regional stability in the southern Mediterranean is needed, and the Islamization of politics is viewed as a security threat to peace in this region.

In applying the findings of the earlier, more general, deliberations in the preceding parts of this study to the case of Maghribi Islamists, the following two hypotheses are formulated:

- 1 Islamism, viewed as the Islamic variety of religious fundamentalism, is in this concrete case primarily a concept of political order for the Arabo-Islamic Maghreb. Religious fanaticism, extremism or even terrorism are in fact only side-effects of this phenomenon: they do not pertain to its substance as a worldview underpinning a concept of *nizam siyasi* (political order), labelled by the Islamists themselves as *Hakimiyyat Allah* (God's rule) (see Marty and Appleby, 1991). It follows that the pending challenge in the Maghreb is not merely a religious one, but rather one related to a new Islamic order aspired to and as such a security issue. Thus, Islamism matters in the first place as an alternative political order envisioned by the Islamists as counter-elites opposed to the ruling elites. To be sure, in considering the professed commitment to democracy, this is not to suggest that the ruling elites in the Maghreb, or in any other part of the world of Islam, are more democratic than the challenging Islamist counter-elites.
- 2 Religious fundamentalism as political Islam, or Islamism, has been introduced to the Maghreb from outside of this sub-region of the Arab world with the implication that it can only work if successfully indigenized, i.e. Maghrebized in being adjusted to local conditions. The external sources of religious fundamentalism in one of the three Maghreb states (Algeria)

referred to in this section are to be located in their respective domains. In the main, the introduction of Islamism to the Maghreb from outside can be located at three points of impact:

- Ideologically, the major impact comes from the Arab east (the *Mashrek*). In terms of countries, Egypt and Syria are to be mentioned, and in terms of organizations, the Muslim Brotherhood (see Mitchell, 1969) ranks at the top. The writings of the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb and his followers are most pivotal in this regard.
- Politically, the Iranian Revolution (Arjomand, 1988) generated great impact on the Maghreb: it 'breathed life into Islamist movements everywhere' (Burgat and Dowal, 1993: 185). Though the Iranian Revolution has been based on *Shi'i* Islam, which is clearly alien to Sunni Maghribi Muslims, it has been able to exert great ripple-effects on the unfolding of political Islam in North Africa. It is true that the envisaged export of the revolution failed,²² but the addressed ripple-effects should not be underestimated. In addition, there exists clear evidence of an 'Iranian Connection' (O'Balance, 1997) that also applies to the Maghreb. There is evidence that many Maghribi Islamists went to Iran and that several of their movements received funds from Teheran. Both the Egyptian and Iranian connections determine a fundamentalist Maghribi rejection of the Oslo peace.
- Militarily, the war in Afghanistan had considerable effects on the transfer of political Islam into military action throughout the world of Islam, and in particular the Arab world. Again, the Maghreb has been no exception. Algeria is to be mentioned in the first place. The Islamists returning from Afghanistan are the foremost exponents of radical Islam (Draz, 1993). There were numerous Algerians among them who now also act in Western Europe, as well as in North America. Among the *Mujahidin* combating the 'infidel' communist Soviets in Afghanistan, after their invasion of December 1979, about 20,000 Arabs participated in the war of resistance. A leading figure among them was Usamah Bin Laden, who has recently made international headlines and received global media coverage.²³ The origin of the phenomenon that has been named 'the Arab Afghans' in the Western-Islamist co-operative element in the Afghanistan war is well known to experts, but not yet acknowledged by the politicians involved. Among these warriors of political Islam there were 2,000 Algerians and a great, but not exactly known, number of Tunisians and Moroccans. In short, there existed a considerable Maghribi contingent in Afghanistan. After the end of the war these militarily trained Islamists returned to the Middle East and North Africa. They were diffused throughout the

region while engaging themselves in politically destabilizing irregular military actions addressed as terrorism. Students of war like Kalevi Holsti (1996: chapter 7) view this military action as 'war of a third kind'. Irregulars constitute a new type of soldier, which compels revision of earlier concepts of security in favour of envisaging 'new security' (Tibi, 1998c: see chapter 12 in particular). September 11 has been the most prominent case of irregular war.

In addressing this 'new security', it must be reiterated that Islam, as a world religion and a belief system, is by no means a 'whatever threat'. Islamism is a threat, not to NATO, but rather to regional stability in North Africa and other parts of the world of Islam, and also to Arab-Israeli peace. From that point of view the spread of political Islam in North Africa is a tough challenge to the existing political order and thus a distinctly geopolitical issue that matters to stability. A Maghribi Islamist supports the reference to political Islam as a concept of political order with regard to the advocated education in political Islam in this manner: 'These were no longer lessons on how to wash one's hands, or to pray or fast. They had become lessons on how it might become possible to live in an Islamic State' (quoted in Burgat and Dowal, 1993: 258). To be sure, this envisaged 'Islamic State' has roots neither in the *Quran* nor in the *hadith*,²⁴ but is basically a political belief of the Islamists.

The call for an Islamic state unfolded in the Maghreb at three levels and according to three different steps, particularly in Algeria where Islamists resorted to the use of force (Ayashi, 1992). At the outset it was the mosque, which has 'constituted the first framework for a gestation of the Islamist discourse', as François Burgat tells us; the Islamist movement then 'left the obscurity of the mosque . . . and began via the university to come into public view' (Burgat and Dowal, 1993: 86f.). Thus, the mosque,²⁵ the academic campus, and then the urban street as well as the sub-proletarian suburb were the major spaces in which this process unfolded. The outcome has been a new movement, which has become, as argued earlier, a security challenge to the nation state,²⁶ both to its legitimacy as well as that of the ruling political elites themselves.

Another important issue is the contest for power among those who rule and those who want to replace them in office by shattering the system itself.²⁷ The *Hakimiyyat Allah* concept, representing the Islamists' alternative order, is supposed to supersede the existing nominally secular nation state (Tibi, 1990b: 127–52).²⁸ The Islamists target the weak Arab states. The weakness of their statehood affects their ability to make peace. The issue under question clearly pertains to political and regional stability – a top security issue. In response to this challenge the religious establishment backing the existing order made an effort to curb the politicization of the mosque. The Algerian Islamist Abbasi Madani challenged this effort in pointing to the fact that 'the mission of the

mosque is not the same as that of a church . . . The mosque is a place . . . in which all the affairs of the umma are treated . . . It is from there that the armies left to confront the enemy (quoted by Burgat and Dowall, 1993: 90).

In historical terms Abbasi Madani is right, but this is not the religion of Islam as revealed ethics; rather it is Islamic history. The historian of early Islamic *jihad* in the sense of conquest Khalid Yahya Blankinship (1994: 15f.) informs us that the mosque indeed served as part of the logistics of the Islamic wars of *futuhat*, which stand in the historical context of *jihad* and crusades, i.e. of enmity (Tibi, 1999b). In our age, Mediterranean peace and intercultural bridging are necessary in order to avoid revising that tradition, and instead to engage in the politics of preventing the clash of civilizations. This requires an effort on both sides. Islamism in all three Maghreb states is clearly opposed to peace with Israel, as are other varieties of this movement throughout the world of Islam.

Conclusions: how can we cope with fundamentalism?

In considering the fact that Islamic fundamentalism in North Africa is not only a threat to the security of the states of Tunisia, Algeria and Morocco, but an obstacle to Arab–Israeli reconciliation and to peace in the Mediterranean, one can conclude that Islamism is an issue area in the study of security. In this understanding, the present case exceeds the domestic level as a threat to regional security. This is a serious challenge to stability with which we need to cope. Given the great sectarianism of groups and subgroups among the Islamists and the related splits in their movements, their capability to seize power is clearly limited. Islamists will probably fail to establish the divine–political order they envisage, but nevertheless are continuing and will continue to be in a position to destabilize and create disorder (see Tibi, 1998a). The result would be regional instability and turmoil.

The redefinition of security studies is a challenge to design policies capable of dealing with changed situations. We need to put on our agenda the study of the political strength of the Islamist movements and of their ability to mobilize and thus create a real threat to stability. In policy terms Islamism is to be viewed as the major force of opposition in the world of Islam. It follows the need for a policy that helps to determine the ways in which we deal with this political movement.

In moving from the case of Islamism in the Maghreb to the entire Middle Eastern regional state subsystem, which represents the arena of the Arab–Israeli conflict,²⁹ the search is for peaceful conflict resolution, which goes beyond the states. At issue is the rise of Islamism as a new political opposition. The foremost goal of Islamism is to establish a new political order described as an Islamic state. Despite the inclusivist inclination of this study, i.e. the plea not to ‘other’ the Islamists, but rather to integrate them with the political system, the

present analysis views a lasting peace in terms of democratic peace. This position leads to major reservations *vis-à-vis* the Islamists because they would never accept a peace with Israel based on mutual acceptance of sovereignty.³⁰ A tactical peace is not a lasting peace. In addition, an Islamist state based on the *Sharia* is not a democratic state based on democratic pluralism and secular civil society and therefore it could not be part of a democratic peace, either in the region of the Middle East or worldwide. Nevertheless, a temporary peace is better than war, regardless of whether it is waged between states or as an irregular war. Two ideas will conclude the thoughts developed in this study.

First, Islamism is diverse, but it can be viewed in a general manner as a threat to domestic, regional and international security. Most Western experts on Islam, who are trained as philologists not social scientists, correctly point out the cultural diversity of Islam. Unfortunately, from this fact they then go on to draw the false conclusion that any generalized judgement is inadmissible. Rejecting generalization deviates from this traditional wisdom peculiar to the general logic of philology, but not from the study of politics and society. In particular, in security studies it is patently false to argue this way. On the basis of research and expert knowledge, generalization is possible and often even necessary if only up to a certain point. Otherwise, one runs the risk of failing to perceive the true problem. The world of Islam is diverse, but this diversity is part of a general spectrum which could be called Islamic civilization. Similarly, Islamism is characterized both by diversity and unity. Furthermore, as *the* approach which dominates Islamic studies, philology is unable to recognize either the phenomenon of fundamentalism or the security dimension related to it. Therein lies the limitation of Western Islamic studies and its practical relevance for our inquiry. Its anti-social-science attitude hinders a scholarly dialogue toward a better understanding of the problems at issue.

Second, fundamentalism results from both a crisis of meaning and a structural crisis that derives in part from the poverty of populations in many parts of the world. In this environment, fundamentalism functions as an ideology of salvation, which promises a better life by making glorious promises. Terrorists are a minority among fundamentalists; they are in large part youths without any prospects in life who get sucked into the bog of underground terrorism and firmly believe they are acting in the name and interests of Islam. As laymen who are not very familiar with Islamic teaching, they do not realize that their actions violate all basic Islamic norms and values. To be sure, the Islamic doctrine of *jihad* allows violence, but has clear rules that unequivocally prohibit terrorism. For instance, the rules of *jihad* prescribe an early warning of violence and direct confrontation in contrast to terrorist acts based on surprise and the use of ambush tactics (see Tibi, 1996).

In the Middle East itself every politics of confrontation contributes to a diluting of the lines between liberal and militant Muslims. Thus it is a security

concern in the post-Cold War sense of averting all kinds of confrontational politics. The peace movement in Israel contributes more effectively to the security of the country than do current Israeli Prime Minister Sharon and his supporters. The only alternative for a promising future is to return to the spirit of mutual acceptance and respect. This spirit was the ground for establishing mutual confidence. Under the former Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu all confidence measures were shaken (Lockery, 1999),³¹ and under Sharon they were ultimately bulldozed.³² It is time to teach politicians that post-bipolar security is based on a search for peace, not on *jihad* nor on the military and its capabilities for retaliation.

NOTES

This chapter was completed at the Georgia–Augusta University’s Center for International Relations, which I chair. I had the luck of a scholarly encounter with Tami Amanda Jacoby and Brent Sasley at the 2001 Chicago Annual Meeting of the International Studies Association. They invited me to join their project on Redefining Security in the Middle East despite the fact that I was not among the participants of the 2000 Montreal conference. I thank both for including me and for comments on the early draft, which have led to this more elaborated version of the chapter. My research assistant Anja Zückmantel thankfully provided much helpful assistance, which I acknowledge as I do also the meticulous word-processing of various versions of the paper by my staff assistant Elisabeth Luft. My views on security as reflected in this study were deepened through my work at Harvard and the long years of debates with Lenore Martin and with my late colleague Werner Kaltefleiter.

- 1 For further studies on political Islam see Ayubi, 1991; Roy, 1994 and (in Arabic) Dharif, 1992: 98 as well as Tibi, 1998a and 2001c.
- 2 See the special issue of *Millenium* 29:3 (2000) on Religion and International Relations. My contribution is on pp. 843–60. See also Haynes, 1998.
- 3 See the related contributions in Marty and Appleby, 1991.
- 4 See O’Balance, 1997. On Bin Laden see Draz, 1993 and Bergen, 2001.
- 5 On Algeria see Stone, 1997; Malley, 1996; and Willis, 1996.
- 6 On the concept of *hakimiyyat Allah*, see Tibi, 2000b: chapters 5 and 8. See also al-Awwa, 1983. The term *hakimiyyat Allah* was first coined by Sayyid Qutb, 1989.
- 7 See also the reprint of the classic by Emmanuel Kant, 1799, ‘Entwurf zum ewigen Frieden’ (pp. 37–82), in Richard Saage and Zwi Batscha, eds 1979, *Friedensutopien*, Frankfurt am Maine.
- 8 Such an ambitious analysis, which examines all the three listed hypotheses, cannot be exhaustive. These confines are noted and there is no claim to do more than lay out the lines needed for the new approach.
- 9 Civilizations do matter for the study of IR, in particular since the end of the Cold War. Lipson, 1993, is seminal and includes rich references to Islam. On Islam as a civilization see Hodgson, 1974.
- 10 On this diversity see Geertz, 1971.
- 11 *The War of Civilizations* is divided in five chapters, each of which is devoted to one of these listed issue areas of conflict between Islamic and Western civilization.

- 12 These are the major findings of the Fundamentalism Project, pursued at the American Academy of Arts and Sciences under the chair of Martin Marty and Scott Appleby and published in five volumes by Chicago University Press in 1991–95. See Tibi, 1998a; Marty and Appleby, 1991.
- 13 In addition to Juergensmeyer, 2000, see generally on terrorism, Hoffman, 1998; Wardlaw, 1998.
- 14 This is the title of the research project chaired by Lenore Martin and also of the published series *New Frontiers in Middle East Security*, edited by L. Martin (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999).
- 15 Mary Kaldar (1990) suggested viewing the Cold War as an imaginary one. The changed understanding of war since the end of bipolarity is suggested by Toffler and Toffler, 1993.
- 16 This is a criticism of Gerges, 1999, and Hunter, 1998.
- 17 The Kreisky Foundation, Vienna, organized an international conference on this in October 1999. See Tibi, 'Searching for Euro-Mediterranean Peace', published in the *Newsletter of the WCPIA at Harvard University*, 14:1 (Winter, 2000), 2–3 and 6.
- 18 On this issue see Rejwan, 1998.
- 19 This is the perspective of Kemp and Pressman, 1997.
- 20 See the chapter on Morocco in Tibi, 1990a: 160–77.
- 21 See Lewis 1984 and also the review article on the German edition of this book by Tibi, 'Die Geschichte einer Symbiose', in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 24 May 1989, 14.
- 22 See Tibi, 1999c.
- 23 Usamah Bin Laden is a pivotal person as a leader of the 'Arab Afghans'. See Bodansky, 1999; Cooley, 1999.
- 24 *Hadith* (or *Sunnah*) refers to the second source from which the teachings of Islam are drawn. *Hadith* literally means a saying conveyed to man, or the sayings, actions or practices of the Prophet Muhammad.
- 25 On the mosque, see also Rouadjia, 1991.
- 26 On the crisis of the nation state as the background to the rise of Islamism see Tibi, 1998a: chapter 6.
- 27 See Tibi, 'The Attitudes of Middle Eastern Elites and Counter-Elites Towards Political Order: The Islamic–Fundamentalist Challenge to the Secular Domestic and International Order', in Samuel Huntington ed., *Conflict or Convergence: Global Perspectives on War, Peace and International Order*, Project conducted at the Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies (mimeographed Cambridge, MA, 1997). Published version in *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, 23:1 (winter/spring, 1999), 191–210.
- 28 This work was partly reprinted in Anthony D. Smith ed. 1996, *Ethnicity*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 174ff.
- 29 On the scholarly subsystem debate see the conceptual chapters in Tibi, 1998c. See also Tibi, 2001b.
- 30 As evidence, consult the writings of Hamas included in *Ahmad Izulldin, Harakat al-muqawamah al-Filistiniyya Hamas* (the Movement of Palestinian Resistance, Hamas), Cairo: Dar al-Nashr al-Islamiyya, no date; the entire historical Palestine (including the territory of Israel) is considered *Waqf Islam* (Islamic divine property), and p. 54. See also Mush Antobowie no date, *Limadha Narfud al-Salam ma'a al-yahud* (Why Do We Reject Peace with the Jews)?, Cairo: Kital al-Mukhtar.
- 31 For more critical perspective see Tibi, 1997.
- 32 Tibi, 'Bulldozer im Konflikt: Scharons Wahlsieg', *Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung*, 11 February 2001, 6.

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