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AN UNEASY PARTNERSHIP

Americans are so accustomed to the concept of a separation between church and state that it may sometimes come as a surprise when we discover that other faiths and other cultures have quite a different attitude. Our viewpoint is, of course, enshrined in our constitution and a long line of reenforcing judicial decisions. Going still further back we find authority in sacred scriptures and Christ's words that we should "render unto God that which is God's and unto Caesar that which is Caesar's."

One of the cultures in which a different viewpoint is held is that of Islam. A modern interpretation of the Islamic attitude is set out in the writings of Hassan al-Banna, founder of the Muslim Brothers, who was born in Egypt in 1906 and assassinated by the then Egyptian government's secret police in 1949. Banna enjoyed no widespread acclaim among Egyptian intellectuals. But his revivalist organization, the Muslim Brotherhood, was thought to have at one time a million Egyptian followers. In his writings he affirmed in vigorously assertive language the classic Islamic doctrine of the relationship between religion and politics. The Islamic concept is that everything on earth, and indeed in the universe, belongs to God. Thus Banna argued that politics is a part of religion. Islam commands a unity of life. Islam is not synonomous merely with religion. Rather it includes religion, politics, economics and society generally. Proceeding from these premises he spells out the role of the state. There are certain duties incumbent on Muslims which they cannot pursue individually.

The state is necessary to assure fulfillment of these duties. The Islamic faith requires "a political stronghold to give it protection and to champion the cause of believers everywhere." "Seldom if ever," Hassan al-Banna says, "has Islam needed the state more than today not merely because the state is an integral part of it but also because Islam itself is threatened with extinction in a world where only the strong can survive."

Let us look for a moment now at some of the events in the early history of Islam from which sprang this close intertwining or partnership. Some knowledge of the origins of this relationship is needed if we are to understand the ferment and tension in the modern Muslim world.

The Prophet Mohammed you may recall played three important roles. His mission initially was a spiritual one in which he communed in the wilderness with God--through the Angel Gabriel. The Prophet became thus God's messenger bearing the word of the Lord which when duly inscribed by his followers formed the Koran, the fundamental basis of all Islamic beliefs. Gradually the Prophet gathered a band of followers. Much of Mohammed's preaching was directed against the corrupt and dissolute ways of the citizens of Mecca. These soon perceived that Mohammed's injunctions against gambling, prostitution and the worship of pagan idols were beginning to interfere with some of their most profitable activities. Learning of Mohammed's growing prestige the citizens of the neighboring city of Medina invited him to come with his followers to take up the leadership of their community which had recently been rent by factional strife. Under pressure from

the hostility of the Meccans, the Prophet welcomed this opportunity.

In the Medinan period, the Prophet emerged into his two subsequent roles, first as a general leading his community in military engagements against neighboring tribes and against the Meccans. Soon too Mohammed was required to play the role of statesman. He settled conflicts among groups of followers. He negotiated agreements with the Meccans who eventually converted to Islam and accepted the Prophet as a leader of their community also.

Thus by the time the Prophet died in the year 632, the newly formed Islamic community had expanded to include geographically the two holy cities, Mecca and Medina, and a considerable slice of territory along the western edge of the Arabian peninsula. Immediately the question arose as to who would be Mohammed's successor or the Caliph (which means successor) of the enlarged Islamic community. The Prophet left no clear-cut instructions regarding who should succeed him. His followers were at once plunged into conflict as to who should be chosen and the method of selection. So we see that almost at the outset of a new community based on religion an important and controversial political problem arose.

On one hand there was the camp which urged that the Caliph be chosen through consultation and consensus in the more or less traditional manner of bedouin tribes. Theoretically this method would place in charge of the community's affairs an individual of proven leadership abilities and enjoying widespread respect. In actuality, however, the first Caliph was named by a group of Mohammed's closest friends and advisers without reference to the community at large. The person selected was Abu Bakr, father of the Prophet's wife Aisha, and an early

and important convert to Islam.

But another claim to the Caliphate and the right to succeed Mohammed was asserted vigorously by Ali ib Abi Talib, husband of the Prophet's daughter, Fatima. (The Prophet left no living sons.) But the assertions of Ali, the Prophet's son-in-law, and his party to leadership of the Muslims were not recognized until three Caliphs had come and gone. By that time additional powerful elements had risen up within the Islamic community whose geographic extent had been greatly enlarged to include Syria and its capital city of Damascus. The rulers of Damascus challenged Ali's right to remain as Caliph and a series of events led to Ali's assassination in the year 661. His oldest son, Hassan, abdicated his claim to the Caliphate. In due course a second son, Hussein (also, of course, the Prophet's grandson), laid claim to the Caliphate and marched with a tiny band of soldiers to challenge the Syrians. Hussein and his followers were massacred and buried at a place called Karbala in Iraq. Hussein became thereby the deeply venerated martyr of the Shi'ite sect of Islam and Karbala his burial place is a site of holy pilgrimage for the Shi'ites.

There was not inherent in the concept of the Caliph or his office any idea of divinity. The Caliph was seen as having responsibility for general leadership of the community including making certain that God's admonitions as set out in the Koran were adhered to. His selection and his performance of his duties were essentially political in nature. Out of controversy over what was a <u>political</u> event--the method of selecting the Prophet's successor--there arose a great

religious schism: the division between Sunnis and Shias. The word Shia means party, that is the party of Ali. They do not believe Ali and his sons to be in any way divine. They do regard them to have been divinely selected by virtue of their relationship and descent from the Prophet.

Now when Ali's second son, Hussein, and his band were massacred by the Damascus Caliph, one of Hussein's sons managed to escape the slaughter and survive. From that son and from Hussein, therefore, are descended the long line of nine additional holy men who are the central figures of Shi'ite belief and whom they call Imams (counting Ali and his two sons as the first three Imams). The Imams were harried from pillar to post, often living in secrecy to avoid persecution by the Caliphs. In almost every case they eventually met death through poisoning at the hands of their tormentors. The last Imam of the twelve was born in 868 and disappeared in the year 939. The mystical Shi'ite belief is that he did not die but still lives under circumstances which are known by the interesting term, "occultation". He is alive and on earth but we cannot see or know him. He will return again to the daylight when perfect justice is restored on earth and all mankind can live in harmony.

Claiming divine designation (but not any quality of divinity in themselves) and responsibility for the religious and spiritual guidance of Muslims, the successive Imams drew growing numbers of followers, steadily expanding the Shi'ite community. Many were attracted by sharing common oppression at the hands of the Syrian

Caliphs and the majority Sunri's. It should be noted that it was not too long before the office of Caliph, moving its headquarters from Damascus to Baghdad became little more than a colorless appendage to a hereditary monarchy which had the real political power. The Mongols finished off the last remnants of the Caliphate in the 13th century when they destroyed Baghdad. The Caliphate was revived by the Ottoman Turks again for about three centuries prior to the modern era but now it has disappeared entirely from Turkey. The followers of the Imans, on the other hand, experienced a tremendous increase in their political influence when in the 16th century the Shah of Iran declared Shi'ism the state religion of Iran--a function it has retained into modern times.

The present state of affairs in Iran might well be termed "ali's revenge" or "the triumph of the Shi'ite Imams". Our Muslim friends like to claim that unlike Christianity, Islam has no religious hierarchy. While not as carefully structured nor with such wide power as in Christianity, there is in fact a priesthood with places of worship, an order of seniority and differing functions for its members. There are religious seminaries and even, in the Sufi orders, monasteries. Power and promotion in the system are dependant on extent of the individual's scholarship and his ability to attract followers through learning, eloquence as a preacher and strength of personality--all qualities which the ayatollah Khomeini possesses in abundance. Senior religious figures are known as ayatollahs. But another more general term for a learned man of the cloth is

alim or in the plural, ulama.

Today there can be no doubt that the Shi'ite ulama are wholly dominant in the government of Iran. Khomeini has appropriated to himself the role of the one who represents the Imams on earth during the continuation of the prolonged absence of the twelfth Imam. This is not a new concept in Shi'ism but Khomeini has enlarged it to a degree almost unheard of heretofore in Shi'ite theology. Under him come a president and prime minister, both clerics, but Khomeini's powers are supreme. Eighty percent of the Iranian parliament are also ulema. There exists a special council of a dozen ulema designated to review all legislation passed by the parliament to assure that it is wholly consistent with Islamic principles. This august body, of a conservative turn of mind, has managed over the last several years to block several pieces of social legislation such as that providing for land reform which was promised to the public initially by some of the revolutionary leaders as part of a program for economic reform. Religious types are scattered throughout the bureaucracy. There are mullas (lower level religious figures) attached to many Iranian military units, acting as kind of religious commissars to assure that Islamic orthodoxy and loyalty to the regime are fully maintained among the troops.

Clearly in Iran religion has emerged fully triumphant over politics in one of our century's most extraordinary revolutions--all this in a period when elsewhere Islam has struggled against a tide of secularism, modernization and westernization.

A couple of years ago I listened to a talk by a thoughtful observer of world affairs who predicted that what had happened in Iran could be expected to occur in other Islamic countries. He went so far as to foresee the creation of a new, Islamic bloc of nations poised between the superpowers and of more benefit perhaps to the United States than the Soviet Union.

I found myself intrigued, if not particularly convinced, at this rosy vision of the future of Islamic revivalism. With your indulgence I should like to look a bit further at the factors that have motivated it and may well determine its future.

I think I am accurate in identifying this particular struggle as a contest between religion and state. These two forces have indeed collaborated at many stages in Islamic history and in many ways still do so today as I will show in a moment. Much attention has, quite rightly, been paid to the forces that have and continue to stimulate Islamic revivalism. These include such things as westernization of Islamic countries where long-held cultural and social practices prescribed in Islamic law are being undermined. Nationalistic impulses have usually lined up both secular and religious forces in a struggle against a perceived foreign enemy. Thus Islamic religious elements in Arab countries are always in the forefront of those condemning Israel. Each in their turn, both the United States and the Soviet Union have been targets of bitter attack by Islamic revivalists. Other Islamic groups, drawing on plentiful material to be found in the Koran, have given heavy emphasis in their assertions to the need for rectification of the problems of poverty and economic inequality in Islamic countries.

But in the study of these phenomena much less attention has been given to the forces opposed to or attempting to contain Islamic revivalism. Obviously we cannot arrive at even the most general or broad estimate of the significance of Islamic movements without understanding the nature and strength of the forces resisting them.

First we should note, again in a very broad generalization, that there are in many countries of the Islamic world two kinds of Islam: establishment Islam and popular or radical or revivalist Islam.

Saudi Arabia can be regarded as a situation in which--in sharp contrast to Iran--the political has over the years come fairly well to dominate the religious. But it is a relationship at which the Saudi rulers have worked assiduously since the establishment of the predecessor kingdom in the 1744. It might almost be called a successful partnership--one between the Saudi royal family and the Wahab family. The latter were founders of a dynamic puritanical sect of Sunnism which is called Wahabism. It remains today as the official religion of Saudi Arabia. Descendants of Mohammed Abdul Wahab continue to hold the top positions in the religious hierarchy. Generally attentive to all their constituencies--the military, the business community and so on--Saudi political leadership is particularly attentive to their religious establishment. And over the years the Royal family has managed to develop the relationship in a manner which gives it the dominant position. This has been achieved in significant part through government control of religious income. All ulemn, qadis, grand sheikhs etc. are in financial terms civil servants of the Saudi government. Most of the ulema have no other sources of income

though a few may own some private property. The government finances all new mosques and religious schools.

In the fall of 1979 the Saudi Arabian government received a rude shock from the forces of popular or radical Islam. A ragtag group of some 200 armed fundamentalists managed to seize control of the Islamic holy of holies: the Grand Mosque at Mecca, central object of the annual pilgrimage and a venerated site for Muslims throughout the world. Saudi security forces setting out to overcome the rebels were constrained by the need to avoid damage to sanctified structures and it took two weeks to defeat the would-be revolutionaries. Once captured the rebels affirmed their creed of oppostion to almost every modernized aspect of Saudi life: they were against soccer playing for schoolboys, working positions for women outside the home (permitted by the government in any case only for nursing and teaching), television, foreign aducation for students and so on. The rebels confirmed also their bitter cindemnation of luxurious living and corruption in the Saudi royal family. Not a single one of the upstarts had come from the regular religious establishment.

Despite the very limited following of the group, the Saudi government decided nevertheless to take out some insurance. Accordingly a series of practical steps was initiated affirming unmistakably the government's support for Islam: salaries of all members of the religious hierarchy were raised, 250 additional mosques were ordered to be built and a couple more religious academies. Fro good measure, the few Saudi women working in offices were ordered to return home and extra

vigilance was exercised in enforcement of restrictions on use of alcohol, closing of shops at prayertime, etc.

Clearly the state in Saudi Arabia is the dominant partner in the collaboration between mosque and state. On the whole it seems to have been over the years a relationship beneficial to the interests of both sides. A study of recent history will reveal how skillfully the modern kingdom's first monarch, King Ibn Saud, a genuinely devout man, manipulated the religious community and religious sentiment to achieve his political objectives. This is not to say that Saudi Arabia does not face some serious threats to its stability from other causes. But, as we shall see, the threat from radical Islam seem less ominous than that which other Islamic countries face.

In Egypt the difference between establishment Islam and radical revivalist Islam is clearly visible. Center of the establishment is al-Azhar University, considered the Arab world's leading institution of Islamic learning. Al-Azhar has had its independent minds and personalities. But over the years its leading figures could be counted on to give loyal public support to the policies of any Egyptian government in power, whether British-Royalist, Nasser-socialist or or one returning toward private enterprise under Anwar Sadat. Part of this posture may be attributable to the tradition of political passivity to be found in much of Sunni Islam (in contrast, to the traditional political activism of Shi'ite Islam in Iran.) But part of the loyalty of Egypt's Islamic establishment may come also, as in Saudi Arabia, from its financial dependence on government subsidies or government-managed endowments.

At the same time, radical-revivalist Islam has a longer history and deeper roots in Egypt than in any other Arab country. At the start of this paper I mentioned Hassan al-Banna, founder of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. As a young man in the late twenties and early thirties he became deeply alarmed at the steady undermining of Muslim morals, law and culture by the relentless onset of westernization in Egypt.

Al-Banna set out to purify Egyptian society with fanatic devotion and a personality embodying charm, integrity and organizing ability. Imitating Christian uplift patterns, he established Young Men's Muslim Associations in various places throughout Egypt. In these centers young, mostly male Egyptians could participate in sports, hear edifying lectures on Islam and in time join rather mild paramilitary and marching units. Time does not permit recounting the details of the Brotherhood's long and turbulent history. Unfortunately Al-Banna's relentless dislike of the trends he saw evident in Egyptian life soon drew him into terrorist activity which ultimatley cost him his life. The Brotherhood has experienced a cyclical existence with successive Egyptian governments trying first to co-opt and then determinedly to suppress it. It has spread its shadowy semi-secret branches into other Islamic countries. In some of them, Syria in particular, the Brotherhood has gained a reputation for extensive and violently terrorist activity directed against the present government.

Since the birth of the Brotherhood, Egyptian society has been shaken by attacks carried out by several <u>other</u> clandestine terrorist organizations aiming to destroy persons and institutions deemed anti-

Islamic. The most tragic action of these groups was, of course, the assassination of President Anwar Sadat in October 1981.

Today the Egyptian government is following conciliatory tactics. Egypt's present president, Husni Mubarak, has gradually released the less dangerous radicals from among the many hundreds jailed by his predecessor, Anwar Sadat. Mubarak has made determined efforts to revive limited parliamentary democracy in Egypt. This has probably contributed to some abatement in the violent tactics of the Islamic radicals. The Muslim Brothers, for example, have not been allowed to put up candidates for parliament under their own emblem but have been permitted to join with the new Wafd, the major opposition party in the present Egyptian parliament.

In Egypt as well as in other Islamic countries, governments have sought to devise defensive measures against Islamic radicalism by the re-intorduction into their legal systems of many of the traditional principles and practices of Islamic law. Back in the colonial era those Islamic countries that experienced long periods of colonial rule had western legal codes imposed on them largely replacing pre-existing Islamic law.

Now Islamic law is drawn principally from the Koran with its many very specific rules for men's everyday living. Further admonitions for the community's guidance are found in the Prophet's informal comments to his followers, separate from the messages he received from the messages he received from on high which made up the Koran. Also noted by his followers were the examples provided by the Prophet's behavior. In time these were all written down to form when published

what are called in Arabic the hadith. Thus Islam's second most important body of legal authority is in the hadith. In some countries, particularly Saudi Arabia, Koranic law or the Shari'a as it is called was never replaced by Western forms. Since Islamic law is drawn from religious sources, its judicial administrators or judges are part of the religious and clerical hierarchy. Under the Islamic system, judges are as much religious figures as are the clerics who give Friday sermons in the mosques.

Restoration of the Islamic legal system would involve revival of absolute prohibitions on the use of alcohol, elimination of payment of interest on money loaned, cutting off of hands for theft and so on.

Islamic revivalists and radicals have generally made full restoration of Islamic law and procedure a central part of their demands for political and religious reform. In Egypt President Mubarak and leaders of his majority party in Parliament have somewhat defused the issue by promising comprehensive study and appraisal of all sources of Egypt's legal system. As a further means of mollifying the radical Islamic elements efforts have been promised for expansion and renewal of Islamic religious education in Egypt. In many other spheres of national life, President Mubarak faces numerous and overwhelming difficulties. But in his relations with Egypt's extensive community of Islamic radicals Mubarak has created for the moment at least a situation of tenuous equilibrium: if not exactly a partnership of religion and politics atleast an uneasy standoff.

Leaders of other Islamic countries have pursued different tactics, some with less success than others. In recent years Sudan has been rent by various forms of religious and political strife. Jaafar

Numeiry, President until about a year ago when he was removed by a military coup d'etat, strove to embrace his Islamic community as a means of buttressing his own wobbly political position. Two and a half years ago Numeiry allied himself with the Muslim Brotherhood, re-introduced Islamic law, including all its draconian punishments, and selected Muslim mystics to serve as his advisers. In an outraged response the southern, Christian regions of Sudan renewed their guerilla war on the central government at Khartoum. In time elements of Numeiry's own army ousted him from power. The country's disastrous economic circumstances were an important motivating element but so was dissatisfaction with Numeiry's policies of Islamic revivalism. The Generals who have succeeded Numeiry are taking steps to reverse at least partially the process of Islamization which Numeiry commenced.

Pakistan's president, Zia-al-Haq, has similarly endeavored to shore up political stability by co-opting Islamic ideology and by partially Islamicizing the state. Pakistan's advocates and founders have proudly and repeatedly acclaimed it as an Islamic state. In fact what they wanted and created was a homeland for the large Muslim minority in British India who deeply feared domination at the hands of the Hindu majority.

In the years since 1947, Pakistan has continued largely to follow the administrative, legal and military procedures of British India. There has been nothing very Islamic about the three constitutions which Pakistan has tried out as it struggled toward achievement of a national identity. Several years ago, however, General, now President, Zia-al-Haq

determined that the country's need for a sense of direction urgently required a closer identification with the country's professed Islamic goals. Accordingly he adopted a policy of frequently and publicly re-affirming his own personal and his country's identification with Islam. Part of this program has been a partial re-introduction of Islamic law. President Zia has also moved toward re-establishment of parliamentary democracy. Meanwhile the outcome of his experiment in partnership between religion and state remains somewhat uncertain.

Circumstances in two other Arab states are worth noting briefly as examples where military secularism seems firmly in control. In Syria several years ago the Muslim Brotherhood and allied groups engaged in a program of violent and widespread terrorism against the government with extensive loss of life. The government responded with even more ruthless measures to wipe out the terrorist centers. Today the Syrian government, beset with many other problems, seems at least to have the problem of Islamic revivalism (mixed one should note with an important element of sectarian conflict) under control. The same thing can be said of Iraq. In these countries the generals are not about to embrace the mullahs nor relinquish to them control of national affairs.

Let me close with a few tentative estimates as to trends in the future. First the takeover by Shi'ite Islam of Iran's government represents culmination of some unique circumstances. I have noted earlier the long history of political mobilization of the Shi'ite religious hierarchy. For four hundred years the established Shi'ite

clergy has periodically interfered in political affairs, sometimes in support of the government and sometimes against it. Politics has been second nature to Iran's religious hierarchy. With a few exceptions, the Sunni religious establishments in the Arab countries has no comparable record of activism.

Secondly, the political mekeweight in almost all these countries, with the exception, currently at least, of Iran are the military forces. In their hands generally lies the ultimate residue of political power and generally they are the most westernized secularized elements in these societies. Sudan is perhaps a good example of the classic Middle Eastern military coup d'etat. When matters economic and political deteriorated and Numieri seemed to be turning toward excessive dependence on the religious community and away from his close ties with the military, the latter removed him and replaced him with one of their gernerals.

It is a question also whether in the monarchical governments of the Middle East, such as exists in Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states, their military leaders would stand by to see the present regimes replaced by revolutionary governments controlled by religious elements. It should be noted also that Khomeini has continuously propagated since his assumption of power seven years ago the concept of Islamic government for all Muslim countries, particularly those closest to him geographically. He has failed to win a single convert. His ideological appeal in Iraq, where there is a large Shi'ite population, and in the monarchical Persian Gulf states has over seven years tended to <u>diminish</u> rather than to grow.

In most countries outside of Iran, the Islamic radical appeal is to the institutions and culture of the past. A few Islamic theorists in recent years have endeavored to work out some principles of economic and social equality based on fundamental Islamic scriptures. But no one has so far been able to elaborate economic and social doctrine based on Islam to the point where it might provide foundations for dynamic and workable programs of economic development and reform. Beyond recommending the need for conducting the Islamic community's affairs on the traditional basis of group consultation and consensus, neither the Koran nor any other part of scriptures specifies any organizational form for government. Many interpreters believe Islam actually disapproves the concept of monarchic government, although many have of course throughout history ruled, yet it recommends no other. Thus, radical Muslims have no well defined system of government to aspire to and to propagate publicly.

Similarly, Muslim revivalists have not done very well so far in developing practical economic and political models which they could propagate to garner popular support.

About a year ago my wife and I were having dinner in Karachi with a Pakistani friend of long standing. She is a devout and sincere Muslim in her personal life who had twice made the pilgrimage to Mecca. She has a distinguished career as one of the first Pakistani women to play an important role in public life. When we asked her how she felt about the trend toward greater Islamization of principles and institutions in Pakistan she replied, "Well, I don't know. I

don't see how it's going to increase our output of grain or help our industrial production."

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