

## **EMERGING TRENDS IN ISLAMIST POLITICAL THOUGHT**

### **Implications for Islam-West Relations**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Over the past several decades, the study of international relations has taken a keen interest in developments in the Muslim world and their implications for Islam-West relations. Much of the focus has been on the resurgence of Islam as a social and political force in the Muslim world and particularly the rise of Islamic political parties. Infused with ideas about Islam as the solution to the social, economic and political problems of Muslim countries, the first generation of Islamist political parties were able to capitalise on a wave of public frustration with the existing political order and a longing for stability, justice and prosperity envisioned through the implementation of *shariah* and the establishment of an Islamic state.

However, not only did the first generation of Islamist political parties fail to deliver on good governance and socio-economic advancement in accordance with the expectations of the masses but their approach, rhetoric and policies attracted distrust and opposition from a range of constituencies including secularists, moderate Muslims, and non-Muslim minorities as well as Western governments. In response to internal and external forces, a second generation of Islamist political parties has emerged that base their approach and policies on the *maqasid*. These parties are Islamic in orientation and identity but base their political programs on universal principles of democracy, social justice, rule of law, human rights, pluralism, and government accountability, rather than crude appeals to implementing punitive aspects of *shariah* law or creating an Islamic state in the conventional, modern sense. Also, unlike most of their first generation counterparts, second generation Islamist parties advocate positive relations with the West. Through their advocacy of the *maqasid*, they are not only redefining the concept of Islamic democracy and political Islam but also the fate of Islam itself in the socio-political context.

This paper draws on almost two decades of United States foreign policy documents on political Islam and relations with the Muslim world as well as interviews conducted with key representatives of Turkey's Justice and Development Party (AKP), Malaysia's People's Justice Party (PKR), and Indonesia's Prosperous Justice Party (PKS). It begins with an overview of Islam-West relations drawing on salient implications of European colonial rule of the Muslim world as well as the post-colonial era. The paper then examines United States foreign policy on Islam and the Muslim world from the first policy document in 1992 until United States President Barak Obama's landmark address on 'a new beginning' delivered in Cairo in 2009. It then discusses the rise of the second generation of Islamist political parties in the context of the failure of the first generation, the revival of the *maqasid*, and its implications for political Islam and relations with the West.

## Islam-West Relations

The history of Islam-West relations might best be described as a history of co-operation and co-existence combined with clashes and conflicts. Throughout much of its history, however, Islam has displayed a strong syncretistic inclination, embracing and building upon the intellectual, institutional and infrastructural contributions of non-Muslim civilisations, including the Greeks, Romans, Persians, Indians, and Chinese. A dramatic reversal of this outlook came with the onset of European colonisation of the Muslims world. Since that time until today, Muslim perceptions of the West have been dominated by negative sentiments, confrontation, and suspicion.

A popular perception among Muslims today is that European colonial rule attempted to remove Islam from Muslim societies and replace an Islamic identity and culture with Western norms and values. The rise and success of Islamist political parties in Muslim countries is, therefore, seen by many Muslims as completing the process of independence from European colonial rule and achieving meaningful freedom. As observed by Mark Juergensmeyer, the parties that achieved independence from colonial rule and came to power were largely seen, in a cultural sense, as an extension of the former colonial rulers. For many Muslims, the process of independence was not complete and only the election of Islamically-oriented parties that reflect the identity and values of the people would finally mark the country's true independence from colonisation (Juergensmeyer 2009, p.10).

In economic terms, colonisation destroyed the Islamic systems of social security, local industry, and economies more generally. Colonial policies inhibited manufacturing industries by imposing heavy taxes on locally produced good for export and placing low taxes on European produced imports. Agriculturalists were made dependent through loans. Moreover, the natural resources of Muslim lands were plundered and cheap labour was exploited. In socio-political terms, ethnic, linguistic, religious, and regional differences were emphasised under colonial rule as part of 'divide and rule' policies. Maps were redrawn and the new state boundaries became a source of continued conflict and instability. Muslim lands, once part of vast Muslim empires, were carved-up and emerged from their nationalist struggles for independence as smaller and weaker nation-states. Moreover, colonial rule left a legacy of authoritarian ruling elites in most Muslim countries.

Muslim educational systems and institutions also suffered. The *waqf* (endowment) properties used to fund social services such as schools and clinics were confiscated under such policies as 'permanent settlement' as in the case of British rule in India. Without a source of revenue such services and institutions collapsed. Schools were opened by the colonists to serve their interests. Islamic education was discouraged which resulted in a widening dichotomy between religious and Western sciences. Colonialism also left an intellectual legacy on both Muslim and non-Muslim thinking characterised by a view of Islam and the West as distinct, contrasting and opposing entities. Termed by Edward Said as orientalism, this perception continues to have a profound impact on Islam-West relations not only in terms of Western perceptions of Islam, but also in the reverse. Colonialism has left Muslim with a profound suspicion and mistrust of Western culture, ideas, norms, systems and institutions.

A cycle of conflict between Islam and the West has ensued in the post-colonial era. The reassertion of Islamic identity among Muslims and the re-emergence of Islam as a social and political force over the past several decades has been met by the West with concern and even perceived as a threat. The perceived Islamic threat is in terms of stability of allies and security of access to vital resources, but it is first and foremost a matter of ideology. The role that Muslims envision for Islam in politics goes against the grain of the secularising mission of modernity. The infusion of Islam in the politics of Muslim countries, otherwise referred to as political Islam, runs 'counter to the entire modern history of

the Western tradition of secularising revolutions’ (Gerges 1999, p.64) and represents ‘a divergence and/or infringement upon neutral secular public space, as a throwback to pre-modern forms of Muslim political order’ (Hurd 2007, p.348).

Ideological factors have been evident since the West’s first major encounter with political Islam in the modern era: the overthrow of the Shah of Iran, a key Western ally in the Middle East, by revolutionary Islam and the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979. Americans have historically been alarmed by revolutions in general due to their radical nature and the inherent challenge they present to the *status quo* based on order and the predominance of the United States. Foreign-policy elites in the United States have, therefore, displayed ‘hostility toward revolutions that have diverged from the American constitutional, liberal, and capitalist norm’ (Gerges 1999, p.11). In the case of Iran’s Islamic revolution, security concerns were not foremost in the minds of United States policy makers, but rather, the challenge it presented to the ‘existing order’ and the clash of worldviews it represented: ‘Islamic-theocratic’ versus ‘Western-secular’ (Gerges 1999, p.63). The Carter administration, which governed the United States at the time, regarded the idea of an Islamic state to be ‘absurd’ as it ‘ran counter to the entire modern history of the Western tradition of secularising revolutions’ (Gerges 1999, p.64). Carter’s response is indicative of the West’s perception at the time that secularism had become a global norm and religion was no longer relevant in politics.

During the subsequent Reagan administration, the United States was still without a defined policy on political Islam. United States policy makers tended to regard the new phenomenon opportunistically. On the one hand, Iran provided a convenient enemy, but on the other, jihadist forces (*mujahideen*) in Afghanistan and Islamists in Indonesia were used in proxy wars against the Soviet Union and the spread of communism. The case of Afghanistan, in particular, demonstrates not only the pragmatism of United States policy at the time in supporting the *mujahideen* but also the priority given by United States foreign policy to realism over moralism – or strategic matters over and above such principles as democracy and human rights.

In the 1960s, the People’s Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA) gained wide support in the country and came to power by coup in 1978. The PDPA embarked on a program of reform that involved the abolition of feudal power in rural areas, the abolition of peonage, freedom of religion, equal rights for women and ethnic minorities, freedom for political prisoners, the introduction of free medical care in poor areas, and a mass literacy campaign. By the 1980s, half of the university students were women. Women comprised 70 percent of teachers, 40 percent of doctors, and 30 percent of civil servants (Pilger 2003, p.154). However, this was considered by the United States as a ‘threat of a promising example’, in the words of Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Advisor in the Carter Administration (Pilger 2003, p.155). He, like many others, considered the United States defeat in Vietnam humiliating and perceived a challenge posed by post-colonial liberation movements. In 1998, Brzezinski admitted to the United States’ role in destabilizing Afghanistan to force a Soviet invasion. On 3 July 1979, (six months before Soviet invasion) Carter authorised \$500 million for covert action to support a *mujahideen* overthrow of the PDPA (Pilger 2003, p.155). PDPA President, Mohammad Najibullah, was executed by the Taliban in 1996. The Taliban continued to rule almost all of Afghanistan until 2001. Their reign is characterised by profound violations of human rights and basic human dignity as well as providing a safe-haven for Al-Qaeda.

### **US Foreign Policy on Islam and the Muslim World**

A defined United States foreign policy on political Islam, however, did not emerge until 1992 during the administration of Bush Senior. To put this development into context, by the dawn of the last decade

of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Islamist political parties were already in power in Sudan via a military coup; making significant electoral gains in Egypt, Jordan, and Tunisia; and had won the parliamentary elections in Algeria. Additionally, the *mujahideen* in Afghanistan were claiming victory against the world's other superpower, the Soviet Union, and secular Iraq had failed to dislodge Islamic rule in Iran as hoped by Britain and the United States.

In June 1992, the then Assistant Secretary of State, Edward Djerejian, delivered an address at Meridian House entitled 'The United States, Islam, and the Middle East in a Changing World'. The document is framed in a post-Cold War context with Russia as a partner in the new world order. Two major goals of the United States in the Near East are articulated as: 1) 'a just, lasting and comprehensive peace between Israel and all her neighbours, including the Palestinians'; and 2) 'viable security arrangements which will assure stability and unimpeded commercial access to the vast oil reserves of the Arabian Peninsula and Persian Gulf' (Djerejian 1992).

About half-way through the document, a third pillar of United States policy is added: 'support for human rights, pluralism, women's and minority rights, and popular participation in government and our rejection of extremism, oppression, and terrorism' (Djerejian 1992). The factors that underpin this policy are listed as 'diversity', 'interaction', and 'common aspirations'. The United States would relate to others on the basis of understanding and tolerance, accepting differences in values and interests; working across a range of fields including political, economic, social, cultural, and military; and recognising the need for cooperation to realise common goals. The United States pledges its support to those parties that share its fundamental values of 'steps towards free elections, creating independent judiciaries, promoting the rule of law, reducing restrictions on the press, respecting the rights of minorities, and guaranteeing individual rights' (Djerejian 1992).

The document also emphasises that the foreign policy of the United States is neutral in terms of religion; that religion is not a determinant, positive or negative. It makes clear that the United States differs with those,

...regardless of religion, who engage in terrorism, oppress minorities, preach intolerance, or violate internationally accepted standards of conduct regarding human rights; who are insensitive to the need for political pluralism; who cloak their message in another brand of authoritarianism; who substitute religious and political confrontation for constructive engagement with the rest of the world; who do not share our commitment to peaceful resolution of conflict, especially the Arab-Israeli conflict; and who would pursue their goals through repression or violence (Djerejian 1992).

These are fairly unambiguous criteria; however, they do leave significant scope for interpretation and manoeuvre on the part of the United States.

It is noteworthy that the address was not matched by a corresponding policy shift and that the 'liberal themes in Djerejian's speech were not translated into practical policy guidelines' as 'American officials were reluctant to apply the new discourse while formulating American foreign policy' (Gerges 1999, p.84). Fawaz Gerges comments that the Bush Senior administration 'did not exert any pressure on its traditional Muslim clients to open the political process, accommodate the opposition, and expand popular participation in government' (Gerges 1999, p.85). However, the document did establish a broad and positive framework that set a benchmark that was reiterated by succeeding administrations.

During the Clinton era, a number of policy statements concerning Islam-West relations and political Islam were issued. Certain key points were reiterated including that the United States was not hostile towards Islam but violence and terrorism, there is essential harmony between Islamic and Western values, and encouragement for Muslim states to emulate Turkey and Pakistan rather than Iran and Sudan. The Clinton administration was indifferent to Islamists in the main, provided their focus was on domestic issues and not concerned with matters that would negatively impact on the United States national interests. Gerges notes that ‘most Clinton administration officials stressed their concern with the potential implications of Islamists’ foreign-policy agenda, not their internal politics’ (Gerges 1999, p.103). Additionally, like those in the era of Bush Senior, Clinton officials held the view that political Islam is a consequence of a lack of economic, educational, and political opportunities in the Muslim world rather than a product of Islam *per se*.

However, in a major address on political Islam to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy delivered in May 1994, Clinton’s National Security Advisor, Anthony Lake, expressed the challenge in the Middle East in terms of a clash between the forces of good and evil (Gerges 1999, p.90). While the Clinton administration did not always accept the claims of Israel, Egypt, and Algeria that mainstream Islamists were engaged in terror, policy makers at the time failed to distinguish between Islamists committed to the ballot and those who carried out violence. Gerges finds that this generalisation of Islamists contributed to ‘the ambiguity in United States policy statements on political Islam’ (Gerges 1999, p.50).

In its declarations of a war on terror, the Bush Junior administration offered repeated reassurances that the United States was not at war with Islam (Bush 2002). However, the invasion and occupation of Iraq and Afghanistan undermined the Muslim world’s confidence and trust in the United States. Moreover, the failure of the United States to defend the outcome of democratic elections in Palestine in 2006 reinforced the reputation of the United States as having double-standards on the issue of democracy in the Muslim world. Similarly, the cases of torture at United States-run prisons in Abu Ghraib, Bagram, and Guantanamo Bay have resulted in the dismissal of United States rhetoric about human rights as hypocrisy.

The Obama administration has arguably made significant efforts to mend Islam-West relations. His inauguration address announced a new beginning: ‘To the Muslim world, we seek a new way forward, based on mutual interest and mutual respect’ (Obama 2009a) and his first overseas address was delivered in the parliament of Turkey, a secular Muslim nation located at the crossroads of Europe and the Middle East, with a democratic government that both respects and reflects the Islamic values of the Turkish people.

The defining speech, however, was Obama’s address on a ‘new beginning’ with the Muslim world delivered at Cairo University in June 2009. Among the most important dimensions of this address was its acknowledgement of past wrongs and grievances and its placing the Islam-West relationship in context:

We meet at a time of great tension between the United States and Muslims around the world – tension rooted in historical forces that go beyond any current policy debate. The relationship between Islam and the West includes centuries of coexistence and cooperation, but also conflict and religious wars. More recently, tension has been fed by colonialism that denied rights and opportunities to many Muslims, and a Cold War in which Muslim-majority countries were too often treated as proxies without regard to their own aspirations. Moreover, the sweeping change

brought by modernity and globalisation led many Muslims to view the West as hostile to the traditions of Islam (Obama 2009b).

Obama clearly articulates his vision for the future on the basis of ‘mutual interest and mutual respect, and one based upon the truth that America and Islam are not exclusive and need not be in competition. Instead, they overlap, and share common principles – principles of justice and progress; tolerance and the dignity of all human beings’ (Obama 2009b).

He outlines seven sources of tension, issues that the Muslim world and the West must confront together: violent extremism; the Israel-Palestine conflict, the proliferation of nuclear weapons, democratisation, religious freedom, women’s rights, and economic development and opportunities. In terms of United States engagement with political Islam, Obama’s Cairo address did set out some general principles. It states that the United States does not seek to impose any political system but that all people desire a government that allows freedom of expression and political participation, upholds the rule of law and an equitable judiciary, adheres to standards of accountability and transparency, and generally respects human rights.

## **ISLAMIST POLITICAL PARTIES: THE SECOND GENERATION**

This maturing of United States foreign policy towards political Islam coincides with the emergence of a second generation of Muslim political parties that includes Turkey’s AKP, Malaysia’s PKR, and Indonesia’s PKS. Such parties are Islamic in orientation and identity but base their political programs on universal principles of democracy, social justice, rule of law, human rights, pluralism, and government accountability, rather than crude appeals to implementing punitive aspects of *shariah* law or creating an Islamic state in the modern, conventional sense. Moreover, unlike most of their first generation counterparts, second generation Islamist parties advocate positive relations with the West and do not overtly oppose key security and strategic interests of the United States.

### **The Failure of Political Islam**

Since the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Islam has been reasserted as a socio-political force across the Muslim world. Influential Muslim intellectuals and leaders such as Hasan al-Banna, Abul A’la Maududi and Sayyid Qutb saw Islam as the solution to the social, economic and political problems of the Muslim world. To this extent, the *shariah* was seen as a blueprint for Muslim societies. Its implementation was seen as central to establishing an Islamic state that would be the vehicle for the restoration of the former glory of Muslims in this life and ultimate success in the next. This thinking was central to the rise of Islamist political parties across the Muslim world.

The past few decades have seen Islamist parties win elections in a number of Muslim countries, including Algeria, Palestine, and Turkey, and form the strongest opposition to Western-aligned ruling regimes in a host of others such as Egypt, Jordan, and Morocco. Moreover, Islamist parties have won significant proportions of the vote in numerous other Muslim countries, including Indonesia, Malaysia, and Pakistan.

These successes, however, have come amid discussion about the failure of political Islam. The two central counts concerning the failure have been political Islam’s inability to provide an effective blueprint for an Islamic state based on the *shariah* and the abandonment of the pan-Islamic or caliphate model and contentment with a world order based on nation-states (Roy 2004, p.1-2). However, this is

largely a failure only to the extent that it has not met the vision of such post-colonial Muslim thinkers and leaders as Abul A'la Maududi and Sayyid Qutb. The real failure is that political Islam has not met the basic Islamic vision of a just and equitable social order (Rahman 1989, p.62).

The implementation of *shariah* is not the central challenge for political Islam. Even when *shariah* (in its modern, conventional conception) is fully or near-fully implemented, as in the case of Afghanistan under the Taliban, Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, or Sudan, the state is not closer to Islamic ideals in terms of establishing a just and ethically-based social order. Such states are among the poorest in terms of performance on key social economic and political measures. No positive correlation is observable between a more full or comprehensive implementation of *shariah* and progress towards a more just and equitable social order in terms of political stability, good governance and government accountability and transparency, economic advancement, equitable distribution of wealth, educational attainment, and national power (Fuller 2004, p.198). In large part, the problem is that these values, goals and standards are not the emphasised priorities of the modern conventional conception of *shariah*. Rather, they are often associated with the West, devalued, dismissed by Islamists and not included as part of the Islamic agenda (Fuller 2004, p.198).

The first generation of Islamist political parties that based their political program on issues of public morality, the implementation of *hudud* laws, and establishment of Islamic states have lost the confidence of the Muslim electorate across the Muslim world due to their lack of effective response to the major social, political and economic problems of Muslim countries; their inability to connect with non-Muslim minorities and secularists; and the suspicion and concern they evoke among Western powers. Today, Muslims do not necessarily vote on the basis of religious identity but according to their values and interests. If Islam is to contribute positively at the social and national levels in Muslim countries, an alternative approach is needed that is inspired by or derived from Islam but integrates Western democratic political institutions.

### **The Maqasid Revival**

Since the turn of the century an emerging trend has been towards the adoption of a *maqasid*-oriented approach, which focuses on the higher objectives of Islam. This approach establishes justice, human rights, education, pluralism, government accountability and transparency and economic progression as 'Islamic' priorities. It emphasises public interest and well-being, rejects literal readings of sacred texts, and gives priority to the spirit of the message. As opposed to reading verses of the Quran in isolation, the *maqasid* approach required a comprehensive reading of the text as an integrated whole in order to identify the higher objectives.

The *maqasid* can be traced back to administrative approach of the second caliph, Umar bin al-Khattab, and the Maliki school of Islamic jurisprudence, which emphasises public interest or *maslaha* (Raysuni 2006, p.38-45). The concept of *maqasid* was developed by the 11<sup>th</sup> century theologian Al-Ghazali in reference to five fundamental protections. However, this conception was revised and expanded in the 14<sup>th</sup> century by Ibn Taymiyyah and was developed as a new philosophy of Islamic law by Abu Ishaq al-Shatibi. The 13<sup>th</sup> century was a period of turmoil for the Muslim world, particularly for those regions that suffered the invasion of the Mongols. By contrast the 14<sup>th</sup> century was a period of relative peace and political stability that allowed intellectual activity to resume. Much of this work sought to re-evaluate tradition in light of the social, political, financial, commercial, and religious changes that had occurred (Masud 1995, p.86). Masud discusses these changes in some detail and summarises their impact on legal thought as follows:

The spread of Sufi *tariqas* had contributed to idleness and an exaggerated ideal of Islamic piety that constricted the concept of legal obligation. The influence of Razism increased the influence of Shafi'i and Ash'ari schools of thought. The establishment of the *madrassa* system promoted education and widened its scope. The economic changes, especially the new developments in the Mediterranean trade, challenged the Andalusian Maliki legal concepts and theories on trade and commerce. In a number of situations, the new trade practices came into apparent conflict with the prevailing doctrines of Islamic law (Masud 1995, p.86).

Correspondingly, the great social, political, and economic turmoil endured by the Muslim world in the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries has seen a resurgence of interest in the *maqasid* approach since the dawn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This approach allows for a more authentic and viable contribution to contemporary Muslim society and state based on Islamic values and objectives.

One may pose the question as to why, in the Muslim world, have sacred texts, sacred law, and religion in general remained such a potent force in matters of state and social order. Unlike many secular Western countries today where Christianity has been relegated to play only a marginal role in society and even less in politics, Islam has consistently maintained a central role as a social and political force in Muslim countries. More particularly, Islamic law or *shariah* has continued to occupy a central place in Muslim society and consciousness. As expressed by Majid Khadduri, even when the Muslim world became politically divided with simultaneous Muslim caliphates in Iraq, Spain, and Egypt, Islamic law remained the unifying factor as 'one legal superstructure' (Khadduri 1940, p.43). Moreover, the desire to implement Islamic law has been central to the Islamic resurgence, as Esposito explains:

Whatever the differences in orientation and agenda, central to the Islamic revivalism throughout the Muslim world has been the demand for more *shariah* law. The rule of thumb employed to judge the Islamic commitment and character of Muslim society has been the presence or absence of Islamic law. Moderates and radicals alike see the un-Islamic nature of their societies, as epitomised by Western-inspired legal codes, and clamour for the implementation of Islamic law (Esposito 2005, p.234).

With dramatically changing realities and conditions over a 1400-year history, the challenge for Muslims has been to develop an approach to the law that would ensure its continued relevance and vibrancy. During the formative years of Islamic law, the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 10<sup>th</sup> century, jurists could have a wider degree of confidence in a methodology that relied heavily on *qiyas* or analogy. However, in a critique of the continuity of this approach, AbdulHamid AbuSulayman writes:

Now that so much time has passed, and so many internal and external changes have accumulated, Muslims can no longer work within the framework of the classical model which required only a simple maintenance of the existing social system. Modern challenges make new demands on the Muslim methodology. The basic requirement now is to generate thought commensurate with the needs of internal and external affairs, and that does not contradict the intents and values of Islam (AbuSulayman 1993, p.75).

Due to their close proximity to the time and space of the Prophet, the classical jurists could, to a greater extent, engage in literalism and be somewhat confident in analogy as a reliable methodology. However, 'when contemporary jurists function in the same manner and even repeat the old instructions word for word, there is obviously a lack of appreciation for the changes that have taken place' (AbuSulayman 1993, p.77).

Like the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries, the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries had a profound impact on the Muslim world. The most significant and lasting impacts relate to European colonial rule. By 19<sup>th</sup> to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century most of the Muslim world was under European colonial rule. The impact of European colonisation on the Muslim world is multi-layered. In the first instance the impact was psychological. For centuries Muslims ruled the world. They were leaders in science, technology, art, and culture and so it was a shocking experience to find themselves colonised by another people.

### **Implication for Political Islam and Relations with the West**

A *maqasid*-oriented approach can be observed as the preferred perspective of a number of parties around the Muslim world including Turkey's AKP, Malaysia's PKR and Indonesia's PKS. It should be highlighted that the AKP does not regard itself as Islamic or Islamist but rather a conservative democratic party. However, Islamic beliefs and values are a deeply important part of the identity of most Turkish people and the success of the AKP in Turkey is due to the fact that this party and its leadership respects and reflects the beliefs and values of the people. Its political program is not focussed on the issues of implementing *hudud* laws or establishing an Islamic state in the modern conventional sense, but issues of greater substance and centrality to Islam. In this sense, it exhibits a *maqasid*-oriented approach, although the party does not and cannot use the term. Individual members of the party acknowledge the consistency between their party's policies, Islam's higher objectives, and what have become universal norms and ideals (AKP 2010).

Certain political parties in other Muslim countries that do not face the same constitutional constraints as Turkey's AKP are more overt in their commitment to a *maqasid*-oriented approach. Parties such as Malaysia's PKR and Indonesia's PKS are deeply committed to policies that advance justice, human rights, education, government accountability and transparency and economic development, which they regard as the *maqasid* or higher objectives of Islam. According to Dr Muhammad Nur Manuty, head of the PKR's Bureau for Religious Understanding, an Islamic state is one in which 'people have full equal rights, there is democracy, plurality, human rights are respected, and there is education for people, health care, and welfare services.' He contends that the PKR's commitment to *maqasid* is central to its identity and is what distinguishes the party from the first generation of Islamist parties in Malaysia (Manuty 2010). Similarly, the *maqasid* approach is central to the politics of the PKS in Indonesia. In the words of Lutfi Hasan Ishaq, president of the party, 'the international community is now concerned about the [issues] similar to the *maqasid*, the universal values. It's time to declare the original objectives of Islamic teaching...the *maqasid shariah*. We are now moving to that...' He goes on to explain that the main priorities of the PKS are education, public service, health-care, income levels, and the standard of living (Ishaq 2010).

Both the PKR and PKS have not only established themselves as major opposition parties in their respective countries but have become instrumental in promoting an Islamic democracy based on the *maqasid* approach. Through a *maqasid* approach, they have not only demonstrated the consistency of Islam with good governance and socio-economic development but have shown that such an approach is attractive to a broad constituency that includes non-Muslims and Islamists. Manuty contends that the *maqasid* is gaining ground as the preferred approach to Islam among Islamist political parties because 'the traditional approach has failed and the second pressures from the realities of non-Muslims where we are now living in a very globalised world and it is inter-connected with other parts of the world' (Manuty 2010). Similarly, PKS president Ishaq is critical of such countries as Sudan, Pakistan, and Afghanistan that adopt the title of 'Islamic state' and argues that 'it is not necessary to have the name [Islamic state] but move to develop, to serve the interests of the communities of the nation...Just serve the nation, the basic needs should be fulfilled, the services should be provided. This is Islam' (Ishaq

2010). On this point, Syed Husin Ali, deputy president of the PKR, adds that for an Islamically-oriented political party in a pluralistic society, the *maqasid* 'is the best approach because I think it can be easily understood not only by the Muslims but by the non-Muslims alike. If you approach from a fundamentalist angle then it becomes very difficult to explain' (Ali 2010).

In addition to providing the PKR and PKS the scope and flexibility to effectively operate amidst diverse and competing internal social forces, the *maqasid* approach also allows these parties to avoid attacks from external forces that generally hold pejorative views and are suspicious of Islamically-oriented parties. PKS president Ishaq acknowledges that Western countries such as the United States and Australia are better able to identify with Islamist party such as the PKS that adopt the universal values enshrined in the *maqasid* than the first generation Islamists that retain literalist views of *shariah* and an Islamic state. The Islamic values derived from a *maqasid* perspective, he explains, as '*al-Ma'ruf*, the acceptable values [that] everybody will accept even if they don't believe in God' (Ishaq 2010).

However, a *maqasid* approach does not necessarily translate into a wholesale adoption of policies that are conciliatory or compatible with the West. The one issue that even second generation Islamist political parties remain at odds with the United States is the Israel-Palestine conflict. In large part, this is due to an internalisation of and commitment to such principles as peace, justice, freedom, and independence. Former MP and founding member of the AKP in Turkey, Huseyin Kansu explains:

What we want in the region and in the world is peace and serenity... Israel should leave all those areas occupied after the 1967 war – the Golan Heights, West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza Strip. Still they control Gaza. Israel should leave all these lands and Palestine must be an independent state. Both Israel and Palestine must respect their borders, and peace should come to the region; they should live in a civilised way (Kansu 2010).

Similarly, when I asked the deputy-president of Malaysia's PKR about where the party's policies are at odds with those of the United States, he referred to the Israel-Palestine conflict, stating that Israel must withdraw [from the occupied territories] before talks. He elaborated:

We are clear on that, we are clear on that. We would like to have a peaceful resolution to the problem, but we don't want to see the continued injustices there that are perpetrated and the colonisation, occupation that is still being perpetrated (Ali 2010).

When I posed the question of 'how the Western world can improve relations and alleviate tension with the Muslim world' senior figures in the PKS responding by saying: 'many advice can be given but I think that the roots is coming from the condition of Palestine. That must be resolved first, because the roots of all the problems between the West and Islam lie there (Pratama 2010). A founding member and leader of the PKS youth wing, Rama Pratama adds that the reason the condition in Palestine is so significant in terms of Islam-West relations is because it is seen by Muslims as 'the centre of the injustice and instability of the world' (Pratama 2010).

When asked where PKS policy differs most significantly with United States, the president of the party, also responded with reference to the Israel-Palestine conflict and emphasised his party's policy on the basis of a commitment to freedom and independence:

Under the Indonesia constitution, and the Indonesian government, we stand with the independence movement and against any aggression or colonisation in the world so we stand

with this one...We are with American policies on Iraq and Afghanistan but not with them in Palestine. We are with the European community on Iraq and Afghanistan but not with them on Palestine, because nothing changes in Palestine, no positive development...So we stand with them [the Palestinians] until they get their independence in the near future, *insha'allah* (Ishaq 2010).

## CONCLUSION

In sum, the AKP, PRK and PKS demonstrate the viability of Islamic democracy; they show that Muslim political parties can uphold both the principles of democracy and Islam while maintaining positive relations with both the Muslim world and the West. While Turkey's AKP has proven itself through democratic ascension to power and re-election without reference to Islam or Islamic concepts, other parties, namely Malaysia's PKR and Indonesia's PKS, are following on this path but define their approach more explicitly in terms of the *maqasid*. Collectively, these parties represent a second generation of Muslim political parties that are inspired by Islam and committed to advancing justice, human rights, education, good governance and economic prosperity in the interest of their respective people. They are not only redefining the concept of Islamic democracy and political Islam but also the fate of Islam itself in the socio-political context. Additionally, second generation Islamist political parties advocate positive relations with the West and their policies are broadly consistent with those outlined in US foreign policy documents. However, these parties display a high level of self-confidence, are acutely aware of and responsive to the sentiments of their constituencies, and are disinclined to support US foreign policy where it is in disagreement with their values and principles.

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