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MAKING GOVERNANCE WORK AGAINST RADICALISATION

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Countering Radicalisation through Development Assistance

In the spring of 2005 the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs called on the Danish Institute for International Studies to undertake a policy study on how to counter radicalisation through development assistance.

Despite growing interest in the field, very little research has yet been conducted. To expand the knowledge base, a number of subject matter experts were identified and asked to produce papers on select topics. Initially, the papers were intended to serve only as background material for the policy study. Due to considerable international interest it has been decided to publish the papers as DIIS working papers, making them available to a broader audience. All papers can be downloaded free of charge from www.diis.dk.

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The papers do not reflect the views of the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs or any other government agency, nor do they constitute any official DIIS position. For more information on the policy study, please contact Michael Taarnby Jensen (mtj@diis.dk) or Louise Andersen (lan@diis.dk).

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Abstract

The connection between governance and radicalization is explored in this working paper.

Radicalisation requires a number of political and socio-economic conditions. In order to be effective and not remain confined to sub-cultural margins, radicalisation also requires infra-structural capacities in the forms of finance, organisational networks, and guiding ideas, perceptions and political ideologies. Counter radicalisation policy must take account of long-term developments and prospects, and must be concretely related to matters in the field which is complex and continuously changing.

Making Governance Work against Radicalisation

INITIAL OBSERVATIONS

It must be stressed at the outset that radicalisation, and the matter at hand concerns specifically Islamist radicalisation, is a phenomenon which is world-wide, and is not specific to Arab countries or other countries the majority of whose inhabitants are Muslims. As a consequence, any attempt to probe the conditions under which Islamic radicalisation thrives will be woefully incomplete if it confined its purview to the countries where Islamist radicals, or the parents or grandparents of Islamist radicals originated. Correlative with this must be that the view expressed by DIIS researchers on the topic of this paper that governance and the problems generated by poor governance might be the ultimate keywords of both the problem and of possibilities for its solution, is only part of the aetiology of Islamist radicalism. Given the compact nature of space consequent upon the present phase of globalisation (instant communication, geographical proximity, economic relations and conditions overall), it is not unnatural to propose that conditions in Europe and in the Arab World (with which this paper is primarily concerned) form a continuum whose parts are only with difficulty separable.

The question of governance is of undeniable importance. Yet the problem of radicalisation extends to European countries, whose governance is sound by criteria generally employed to assess this matter. The fact is that Islamist radicals arise also in countries with greater -- but nowhere near the absolute measure, for a "deficit" is always there, and one may not legitimately argue that a "deficit" necessarily implies absence -- degrees of transparency, representativity, legitimacy, equity and efficiency than in Arab countries generally. This is a matter of more than little consequence for considering, as the topic of this paper specifies, what negative or positive linkages there might be between the promotion of good governance, and countering Islamist radicalisation.

If one were therefore to approach Islamist radicalisation in a manner that renders it comprehensible, one must eschew the altogether common perspective of exoticisation which regards Islamism as a phenomenon *sui generis*, to be comprehended only in its own terms. One would need to take it as an instance of radicalisation overall, subject like other movements that one may describe generically as radical to the conditions that give rise to radicalisation overall. That poor governance is an important factor is an assertion that can only go as far as looking at ways in which it sharpens certain edges of a general phenomenon, effects its volume, rhythm and incidence, and gives it certain specific forms that it might not otherwise have.

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Radicalisation requires a number of political and socio-economic conditions. In order to be effective and not remain confined to subcultural margins, radicalisation also requires, and requires crucially, infrastructural capacities in the forms of finance, organisational networks, and guiding ideas, perceptions and political ideologies. And although political and socio-economic conditions are inextricably connected to political ideologies and matters associated with them, it will nevertheless be necessary to keep the two apart for analytical purposes. All these matters have implications for the formulation of policy, and they will now be considered in turn. None of them is entirely unknown, but they are not given due weight in discourses commonly used, which seem to wish to steer away from inconvenient facts and repeat facile clichés about the Arab World.

Political and Socio-Economic Conditions. The Treaty of Versailles following the First World War had a traumatic effect on Germany, leading to the accentuation of the more radical nationalist tendencies in place, and ultimately to the triumph within German polity of one particularly acute and xenophobic expression of it. There had long been in Germany a sentiment of hostility to France and Russia and other parts of Europe, correlated with a sense of inconsummate nationhood which persisted after the Bismarckian era, being carried forward in the conception that Germany was a *Kulturnation* deprived of the expansiveness that later came to be known as *Lebensraum*.

A not dissimilar situation of national humiliation, and a politics of humiliation, overcame the Arab World -- the intelligentsia, states, and the broader mass -- after the Arab defeat in the 1967 war. A then considerable constituency of political opinion represented by a number of left-wing political parties and milieus (and some states, such as Syria, Iraq, and the Yemen Democratic Popular Republic, which no longer exists) believed that the fault lay in archaic social and political structures, which render the Arabs weak, and embarked on projects of rapid social, economic and cultural transformation. But the vast majority thought otherwise, and not unlike a considerable number of Germans, ultimately an electoral majority, directed their sense of humiliation outwards, to what was then called colonialism, and what is now known as cultural imperialism.

Thus arose a number of movements which, at first, sought by a number of spectacular actions (mainly the hijacking of airliners) to draw international attention to local problems, and to attempt and pressure some western governments into forms of policy adjustment towards the Arab World. The most notable of these was the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine,

but it must be said that none of international actions by radical Arab groups at the time involved acts of terrorism or the indiscriminate targeting of civilians, nor did they have a demonological conception of the West. Their political ideas were, if anything, informed by a Marxist notion of social and national interest; the era of “civilisational clashes” had not dawned as yet.

If anything, things have got very appreciably worse since then. This is a matter that cannot be overstressed, although there is a general proclivity in much western writing and commentary to dismiss Arab sentiments of nationality and the salience and at times tremendous force of a notion of the nation not unlike that of other *Kulturnationen* historically frustrated. This was not the case with western political and social sciences two decades ago, which noted and tried to come to grips with this point with discernible hostility. And though much weakened, by despair as well as by the notoriety of certain aspects of nationalist regimes, particularly excesses, at once bloody and almost self-parodic, as with Saddam Hussein’s Iraq, this is a matter that needs to be borne very much in mind when considering political radicalisation, and not dismissed as idle rhetoric.

I have said that matters have become much worse. Two prime matters stand out in this regard. The first is of course the Palestine question, in its dual aspects, the first of which is the deepening Israeli colonisation and, in recent years, uncommon brutality: the assassination of individuals, mass killings including the killing of children, demolition of houses, confiscation of land and water resources, closure of roads and economic constriction, the continuous disruption of daily life, the destruction of civil administrative infrastructure by the destruction of offices and the confiscation or destruction of hard disks necessary for civil administration (a variety of statistical information, scholastic records, and so forth). The other aspect of the Palestinian question which is present in the mind of the Arabs, is US policy, which often condones Israeli actions explicitly. As to the European Union, it is generally perceived as being ineffective, in many ways beholden to the Israeli-US axis, and at best pirouetting rather than acting, with the conclusion that Europeans, with France and Spain sometimes appearing as exceptions, are implicitly seen to be hostile, albeit with a measured tone, and ever vulnerable to moral blackmail, complicity or simple failure of nerve and will with regard to Israel, a rank offender against international norms of legality and of justice.

This perception of hostility is seen not only as a hostility to the Palestinians, or at best an indifference to them, they being delivered to a bad fate at the hands of a movement established by European settlers during the era of the Mandate under British auspices, and conceived as a solution to a European problem at the expense of others (the Iranian Presi-

dent's suggestion on 8 December 2005 that Austria and Germany should establish a Jewish state on their territories is an impolitic statement that derives from this last premise). It is seen as hostility to Arabs *tout court*, and most specifically to the long-frustrated wish for national dignity and development.

This point takes us to the second matter mentioned at the outset of the paragraph before last. This concerns the situation in Iraq during the war of 1991, the decade of sanctions following it, and finally the invasion of 2003 and its dire consequences. These are all matters to which the Arab public, opinion makers, and the governments neighbouring Iraq, fearful of consequences, are sensitive. The effects of the sanctions period on infant mortality, education, health (including very high incidences of cancer in areas where depleted uranium was used), the economy, social conditions with drastic impoverishment overall and the virtual disappearance of the middle class (though fortunes were made in the contraband trade), road infrastructure and public services (both quickly restored, despite all odds, by the regime of Saddam Hussein) -- all these matters are widely noted, widely discussed, and very widely known, not least in this era of satellite television, of which there are many Arabic services. That members of the ruling clique lived in increasing luxury and grandiosity does not on balance matter to the wider picture.

As with the Palestine question, the Iraqi question is widely perceived as resulting from western hostility to the Arabs, and most specifically from American hostility driven by loyalty to Israel. Much is made, and rightly so, of using against Iraq legalistic arguments that are not used against Israel, or that are in the latter case at best stated but not consequentially followed. The same applies to censure of Hamas and similar movements, but not applied with equal measure to Hamas' enemy. This is a matter which has by no means escaped the attention of the western media, where it is generally dismissed as hysterical, or at best driven by an Arab mentality which sees conspiracies everywhere (the same was very widely said of Germany at an earlier point in history). It is true that the term "conspiracy" occurs much in Arabic political language. But it is also true that conspiratorial actions do take place (the Sykes-Picot agreement, the Iran Contra affair, both occurring frequently in the Arab press) as does *solo* clandestine activity especially Israeli actions, which are not angelical (the Lavon Affair, for instance), both being undeclared policies carried out by covert means. Leaks of Pentagon and neo-Conservative plans for the Arab World, and particularly for the division of the Arab World along religious and ethnic lines, are not infrequent in the American press, and are immediately reported to Arab audiences. In the final analysis, it matters little whether conspiracies exist or not. What is crucial is that American policies, towards which European powers may pronounce themselves to be in disagreement (the invasion of Iraq earned Jacques Chirac and

Gerhard Schroeder many rosettes, but not, I am afraid, Denmark, Holland, the UK, or Aznar's Spain; Portugal and former Soviet block countries are generally regarded to be insignificant), but who do have a discernable direction.

In this overall mood of humiliation and powerlessness, the Arab World is caught in the web of socio-economic transformations witnessed globally in the past two decades, and ultimately resulting from the globalisation of neo-liberal policies and their use, via the agency of the World Bank and the IMF, for what is widely perceived to be an attempt to control the national wealth of the Arabs, collectively and as separate states.

There are a number of notable consequences of what, in the earliest phases of this globalisation, was known as "rationalisation", the former name for "governance" as conceived economically, including large-scale privatisation, the opening of markets, the introduction of "flexible labour" regimes, the flotation of national currencies and consequent degradation in purchasing power (especially of the middle classes and the poor), the attrition of what government-sponsored social provisions which existed or still exist, and associated phenomena. These matters apply to much of the Arab World (except the oil-rich countries of the Arabian Peninsula, where some of these developments are already being felt, and Syria) as they do to European countries.

Thus a number of economic and social stresses weigh on almost the entire Arab World, leading to impossible conditions of life for large sectors of the population. Thwarted dreams of a stable, normal life, disaffection with rapacious and relatively small politico-economic classes seen not unjustly to be in league with the United States, the dwindling of a stable middle class which guaranteed relative stability in the middle part of the century just past, has led to a fragmentation of the bodies-social and bodies-politic (not unlike the situation in the United States). This fragmentation has led to the spatial coexistence of groups which live in very different worlds. The first consists of groups benefitting from the new regime of globalisation, such as certain parts of the urban fabric in Morocco, Syria, and Egypt, and inhabitants both local and immigrant of the Arabian Peninsula, all of which display many features and indicators of modernity in consumption patterns, rates of fertility, access to the World Wide Web, decent levels of education, tastes in clothing and entertainment, and income. The other consists of groups that live under a structural regime of disadvantage: most specifically, irregular housing settlements on the fringes of cities (the most notorious being in Casablanca) that produce the structurally unemployed and unemployable (a situation not dissimilar to the fringes of some French cities, as recent events showed), certain rural areas that are hardly sustainable any more (Yemen has many examples of this), reasonably well-educated young

people for whom appropriate employment, advancement and the establishment of families is no longer possible (Morocco has in fact a union of unemployed university graduates), and the graduates of a religious educational system who are seriously ill-at-ease with the modern world, most saliently but not exclusively in Saudi Arabia. It must be mentioned here that conditions in some European cities also conform to this picture of segregation, and to its consequences.

It is among the latter groups that radicalisation emerges. It is among the latter groups that the young, particularly young men, react to their conditions by opting for one of the two sub-cultural alternatives presented before them, anomie on the one hand (often related to drug taking, and to underworld and other illicit activities in the variety of shadow economies that have grown up as a consequence, in the Arab World as well as in Europe) and religious mania or political radicalism on the other, and often cross from the one to the other (as with some perpetrators of the atrocities in Madrid and London, and one of the participants in September 11, and many members of Algerian radical groups).

It must be added to this that the shrinkage of possibilities is accompanied under these circumstances by various measures of administrative corruption and inefficiency, and a marked tendency towards clientelism patronised by members of the civilian and security services. This is clearly a governance issue which contributes to the exacerbation of internal stresses and spawns much resentment, but it cannot be seen as a purely administrative issue. The administrations of Arab states had many imperfections, but they functioned adequately, albeit slowly and clumsily, until recent decades, and inefficiency and corruption are to be understood and tackled by means of political and economic means. With some Arab regimes taking on the aspect of a Behemoth, it is not unnatural that vulnerable individuals seek out, reconstruct, and come to value as they had not done before, "elementary" social ties of family, clan and locality.

Finally, it must be stated that certain doctrinal aspects of the Muslim religion are open to interpretation in exclusivist terms, and can thus lend a certain force, and a language, in which to express a vision of friends/enemies, inside/outside that in Europe has been most supremely expressed by Carl Schmitt. The plausibility of such interpretations is in some doubt according to some, and its doctrinal foundation is less firm than what is available in Judaism. But sharp distinctions of this kind are not uncommon in monotheistic religions overall.

Ideology and Infrastructure. It will be asked, and very legitimately, how a sentiment of national disempowerment and humiliation, reinforced by anomie and a subculture of

deprivation, is translated into the idiom of religion. A number of issues can be associated with this, and supervened over the past two decades.

1. There has always been a rhetorical synergy between Arab nationalism and Islam. Religion, however vaguely conceived, is an extraordinarily potent marker of difference and distinction, and Arab nationalism, a complex phenomenon with many tendencies, but traditionally determinedly secular, made use of such rhetorical reinforcement, not unlike Greek nationalism and Zionism. With one national defeat after the other, with the atrophy of modernising nationalist states and the turn of their rulers into rapacious oligarchs, it is not unnatural that the marker of distinction from the perceived enemy became increasingly coloured by religion. This had the added advantage, as it moralised the public sphere in the religious language of the licit and the illicit, of addressing socio-economic distinctions in a manner that is simple and accessible. The Iranian revolution of 1978-79 stands out as exemplary for blending fervent and often xenophobic nationalism with religion, and sustaining the blend with a populist political vocabulary. Denominationalism apart, this revolution had an inestimable effect on the Arab World, giving with the invocation of religious symbols a definite voice to a nationalist humiliation and frustration that required a catalyst to transform it into a hyper-nationalism (perhaps best represented by Hezbollah and Islamic Jihad). It is a fact that quite a number of left-wing activists and intellectuals, fired by the Iranian example of populism, turned to Islamist politics (including a number of persons of Christian origin), and some of them still persist, or at least countenance a grand national coalition of left-wing nationalism and Islamism.

2. With these developments came an infrastructure of organisation and of political ideas, in addition to a propitious international situation. This infrastructure had three generous financial and ideological sponsors: Saudi Arabia, Iran and, at one time, Libya. The last was always unstable and erratic, and immediately instrumental. Iranian support was more consequential but more restricted, and generally governed by ideological and denominational affinities. It was the Saudi role that was the most consequential.

The Saudi role, most generously financed, was driven by a number of factors, but most saliently took two forms: the encouragement of Islamisation very broadly conceived to comprehend the provision of educational, ritual, and charitable infrastructures, but also decidedly political, and internationalist in outlook. The story started in the 1960s, when Saudi Arabia, with encouragement and support from the United States, sought to support the then marginal Islamist political forces in the Arab World, and subsequently beyond, to counter nationalism, socialism, and Soviet influence. To this extent it performed an important task in the context of

what we might call the cultural plank of the Truman Doctrine of containment, continued under Eisenhower, and thereafter a staple of Cold War strategies in the area. It reached its terminal phase with the creation of Taleban, and was curtailed very severely after 2001.

By 2001 a stage had been reached where an international network of organisations existed, having been activated and brought into long-term sustainability, particularly in Europe, by the catalyst that was the Rushdie Affair at a time when the Cold War was coming to a definitive end. Its overall import was the cultural transformation and resocialisation of vast swathes of Muslim populations in the Arab world and in Europe, in terms of the sacralisation of social values, the ritualisation of private life, the propagation of extremely abridged and, without mincing words, indeed primitive versions of Islamic dogma and Islamic history, with an accent on the thesis that to be a Muslim is something quite exceptional, a matter which adds a dimension of public dignity and private worth (exercised against “one’s own women”) to desperate and otherwise bewildered individuals in marginalised conditions, and that this distinction must be expressed in ritualising life visibly, and by determinedly measuring self against the Others.

When such a view becomes politicised, this Other can be none other than the Great Satan which is the United States and International Jewry, and very often Europe and local Christians as well. It is precisely at this point, by default, that the sentiment of national humiliation becomes fully islamised, by being expressed in an Islamic idiom. It is in the interstices of this universe of sentiments that it is possible for radical, primitivist Islamic organisations, in reality organisations of mood and sentiment, but with considerable resources available, to find recruits willing to die suicidally, and to kill a not inconsiderable number of others besides, in order to provide, not so much acts with proximate political consequence, but rather exemplary acts which might cause the world to blow up in order for it to be put into normative order again.

As the world closed in, the tonality of exclusivism heightens, leading to the formation of fully-fledged counter-societies: in the Shubra district of Cairo in the late 1980s, in some villages of Upper Egypt and some districts of Algeria at more or less the same time (and in the 1990s, in certain rural parts of Algeria), in parts of Yemen, in full view in Saudi Arabia, legitimated by official ideology of exile, then extra-territorially: in Afghanistan (with considerable Saudi munificence, Pakistani logistical aid and covert US support), in Chechnya, in Bosnia, and last but not least, in some parts of Europe, in conditions perceived as extra-territorial, in many cases with government subsidies (including political asylum, not unrelated to covert action by security organs) and with support from multiculturalist organisations and moods.

3. All of these matters are condensed in today's Iraq. In fact, Iraq might be regarded as a microcosm of the whole universe of matters discussed above, occurring with extreme rapidity, and making the country unrecognisable: mass impoverishment, the disappearance of the middle classes, the atrophy of social provisions, the fragmentation of social structures, shadow economies and gangsterism, clientelism, national humiliation, and the wholesale manufacture of religious political parties and sentiments quite apart from their emergence through seeking refuge in kin and locality in a situation where political vocabularies came to a catastrophic collapse and made way for more primitive forms of expression, considered in a multiculturalist perspective as not being unnatural, and to chanceries in Washington and London, not unwelcome. It is little wonder that Iraq has become a major breeding ground for the most radical and primitivist forms of Islamic radicalism, sometimes in coalition with nationalist forces, local and extra-territorial.

4. The final point to be made here concerns the international situation, with reference both to official policies (of the United States most particularly), and to Euro-American attitudes to the Arab World and to the Muslims more generally as they evolved in the last two decades. The most salient aspect of this is that the distinction between Arab and Muslim is almost entirely blurred. Culture has been substituted for society and nationality, and politics has generally been substituted by culture and religion. There has emerged a vast culture industry, involving academic scholarship, the media, instant expertise, and exoticist literature, and political analysis has sought, in a way almost demonically driven, to manufacture Muslim Otherness, to explain all that happens with people in countries with Muslim majorities or those who originate from such countries, in terms of religion, not of religion as an historical and social phenomenon but as a cliché in which every Muslim, whatever they do, must *ipso facto* be acting as a Muslim, and indeed and almost without reservation, as a super-Muslim. It is as if anyone of Muslim origin is fully expected to design his or her coiffure and clothing in a bizarre manner which is imagined to be medieval, to punctiliously perform ritual duties, to have an "Islamic view of the world", and to wish for an Islamic state.

One very recent example of this is of course the coverage and analysis of the urban riots in France in October and November 2005. Some described them as "Muslim riots". Others, with an air of sophistication, declared them to be animated by hatred of the West. Yet others invoked "polygamy", emblematically standing for Islam, as an explanation. Yet these were riots, acts of anomic vandalism, that followed the rhythms of rap and heavy metal rather than those of Koranic chanting. In an almost Pavlovian response, the French Interior Minister immediately contacted Imams, some of whom washed their hands from any such, but others

scented opportunity, not unusual for any clerical order -- the French secret service, a few days later, concluded that there was neither an Islamic nor an Islamist connection.

The almost wilful European (and more acutely, American) drift towards this kind of misrecognition, and preference for the easy cliché, is conditioned by two factors, the one Western and the other Islamist, the two mirroring one another. The insistence that Muslims are *ipso facto* Muslims first and social, political and economic actors only by consequence, that they are in fact super-Muslims and by extension only contingently located in geographical and national space, that they are somehow always ethereally extra-territorial, leads to a number of important consequences for the question of radicalisation. Within Europe, and expressed in media (*Media*) coverage that emphasises exotism and manufactures otherness where it does not exist, aided by state institutions and the multiculturalist industry, and, in countries with Protestant habits and notions of Denominationalism, by the segregationism attendant upon such habits and notions which include the readiness to admit special personal status laws to Muslims and enforcing the authority of imams, to the generation of a decided sense of extra-territoriality. If to this is added socio-economic precariousness and geographical isolation (Paris suburbs come to mind, but also Bradford, parts of Stockholm and other European cities), the mixture would be incendiary.

Virtual communities are thus built, living in a hyper-real and most often internet-aided connection with imagined origins, confirming alienation: this applies equally to the situation in Arab countries, but is altogether common among diasporic communities (the role of Canadian Sikhs and overseas Indians in the imagining and encouragement of fundamentalism in their countries of origin stands out exemplarily). Among radicals living in Arab countries, defined by them as infidels, the sense of extra-territoriality, identified with the distant figure of Bin Laden and of Afghanistan, is very strong. Further confirmation of extra-territorial strangeness is obtained from the soft diplomacy of the European Union, which tends to build on these assumptions and reinforce the salience and authority of Islamist political forces (which have radical fringes) and their claims to speak on behalf of all Muslims. The one instance of this is the recent decision by EU foreign ministers to initiate contacts with what they call "moderate Islam" -- to be noted here is that contact is not to be initiated with specific actors, but with "moderate Islam" *tout court*. Of course there is a security aspect to this position, one which continues publicly and politically what had for many years been undertaken by European security agencies. But there is clearly also the premise that, Arab countries being predominantly Muslim, it is somehow natural that their inhabitants would gravitate towards Islamist political creeds. This is an entirely unfounded assumption, whose building blocks are security anxieties and worn clichés.

The other is the vast international industry called “dialogue of civilisations”: the assumption here is one of incommensurable difference between Europeans and “Muslims”, and that a protocol of polite conversation is the way forward. Of course, Muslim civilisation no longer exists apart from it being a romantic bookish memory, much like the Greco-Roman. The world of international relations, national and transnational economies, societies in rapid and sometimes violent transition, is far too complex to be comprehended under such a facile signature of difference. Yet this point is made with persistence, as if it were almost driven to islamise what the French would call sociological Muslims by constraining their capacity into moulds that are normally required by the posturing required by settings of “dialogue”. The discussion behind this paper speaks of “the necessity of working within local value systems”. Yet local values vary tremendously along lines of local, regional, social and economic cleavages, and along lines conforming to the political systems in place.

The implicit assumption that “local traditions” can be sought by means such as reading the Koran are entirely misplaced. Once again, Iraq under US occupation appears almost as a laboratory in which a condition of state collapse was sought and implemented, and in which polity is reconfigured, or is being reconfigured along religious lines, and their communalist analogues. This configuration is in keeping with considering polities under the aspect of “values” and corresponds to the US multiculturalist model of communalism. The result is patently disastrous, as appeal to infra-historical sentiments is leading to social retrogression and conditions approximating those of a civil war.

This manufacture of otherness is finally intimately related to aspects of the international situation as it developed in the past two decades. This is one in which a new primacy, reminiscent of conditions preceding the Second World War and effectively tamed for nearly half a century afterwards, in which discourses on identity, particularity, communities of value, religious affiliation and so forth, are at centre stage, most pungently in the United States, but also in Europe, with the resurgence of the extreme right, no matter in how small a variable measure, the translation of many left-wing liberals to forms of neo-conservatism, a mood of anti-immigration in tight socio-economic conditions (and the increasing multiculturalist strangeness of some immigrant communities) and xenophobia which tallies conceptually with the xenophilia of multiculturalism and of the “dialogue of civilisations”. All these developments are conducive to the rise of radicalism.

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The foregoing account, which tried to mitigate common simplifications with some appreciation of complexity and of matters as they appear from the Arab World, renders the matter of offering suggestions to donor and sponsorship actions a task that is not very easy to formulate in general terms. Clearly, thinking policy must take account of long-term developments and prospects, and must be concretely related to matters in the field which, as I hope will be appreciated, is complex, shifting and various; advocacy cannot and should not be undertaken heedless of warnings and specifications like those outlined in this paper. Nothing can be suggested -- with the lack of concrete proposals -- apart from general guidelines, and one of the major ones in this respect must be scepticism about what "local value systems" might appear to be. Clearly, donors and sponsors will not want to appear to be pandering to climates of opinion they might well regard privately as retrogressive and archaic, and wish to encourage change while pretending they want things to stay the same. It is also important to appreciate that pan-European or multilateral initiatives have distinct advantages, not least for a country like Denmark that had sullied its hands in Iraq.

1. With regard to governance properly speaking, to questions of transparency, efficiency, accountability, and related matters, one must be cognizant of the political setting within which action is sought, and of the limits of the capacity to make a difference. There are already many initiatives in place, by the World Bank, the Ford Foundation, the UNDP (on whose Advisory Board of the Arab Human Development reports I serve), by the Open Society Institute, and variety of other non-governmental organisations.

Many of these initiatives, and particularly those of NGOs, target their activities towards the support of local analogues. This has been of limited value so far, not least because these local analogues have often turned out to be fly-by-night, and have appealed to donors by using a language expected of them, without much regard to local realities. Speaking of languages donors expect to hear, it should be mentioned that Islamic language might in this context be appealing as referring to "the local system of values", but are ultimately political, whose effect is only to increase the weight of a general environment of sacralisation, with the undesirable results that have already been discussed above.

If a concrete proposal might be made, it is that established organisations of a pan-Arab remit might be prioritised, most of them secular, for the choice cannot realistically be seen to be between actions of an Islamist type, and actions of a joyfully globalising orientation. They sometimes use a language which is not that of international donors, and not what international

donors seem to want to hear, but it is a universal language nevertheless, and far preferable to the appeal and allure of exoticism. One might mention the Arab Human Rights Organisation and a number of feminist groups.

As to organisations that have only local purchase by the nature of their activities, these may also be targeted. Empowerment through micro-finance can make a tremendous difference, and the experiences of India and Bangladesh stand out as exemplary. There is in addition one area in which activity is almost totally lacking, and which is potentially of important consequence, namely youth organisations.

2. As the matter at hand is to be thought of in the long term, and as proper governance, as suggested, is to be conceived in terms of broader conditions, I should stress that attention be given to the sectors of education and culture. In this respect one might mention pan-Arab professional organisation whose work is of long-term consequence (such as the Arab Sociological Association and the Arab Organisation for Translation), and attempts afoot to rehabilitate and rationalise the research culture of the Arab World, such as the idea now being canvassed in association with European analogues for the establishment in the Arab World of an Institute for Advanced Study, an idea that has EU support.

In addition, one other sort of actor that has an effect on modifying the culture of sacralisation and defeat is theatre and the cinema. There are important initiatives, producing output of international standards, and these require long-term support.