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The Dissertation Committee for Mahmoud Raouf Al-Sadi certifies that this is the final approved version of the following electronic dissertation: “Al-Jazeera Television: *Intifada* on the Air.”

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AL-JAZEERA TELEVISION: *INTIFADA* ON THE AIR

by

Mahmoud Raouf Al-Sadi

A Dissertation

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Major: Communication

The University of Memphis

May, 2011

Dedication

My father, Raouf Mahmoud Al-Sadi, pressed on my mind that a life without a cause to fight for is not worth living. My mother, Suad al-Sadi, in her wordless eloquence, taught me that a cause that is not grounded solely in love is not worth fighting for.

I have been fortunate to grow up around someone whose life is a living example of a worthy cause grounded solely in love, my uncle, the restless revolutionary, Ahmad Mahmoud Al-Sadi.

Father, mother, uncle, to you I dedicate this work.

Acknowledgements

I never could have completed this work successfully without the support of two “friends indeed,” my cousin Fareed Ahmad Al-Sadi and Aziz Moutiq. Over the past five years, both Aziz and Fareed have made sure that my financial needs are met fully and promptly.

Fareed, Aziz, I could never thank you enough. I am forever in your debt.

I am heartily thankful to my supervisor, Dr. John A. Campbell. Your profound thoughts, Dr. Campbell, influenced me profoundly, gave shape and meaning to my own thoughts, and, ultimately, enabled me to complete this work successfully. Thank you.

Devotion, Devoted, Devout, D. Gray Matthews. Here and there, aware and unaware, I attempted to incorporate a spirit into my work that only the likes of Gray could lay a rightful claim to and command. Have I succeeded, Dr. Matthews? I thank you.

Dr. Sandra J. Sarkela, Dr. Kent F. Schull, the brevity of our encounters is utterly irrelevant so far as the depth of my gratitude to both of you is concerned. Thank you.

Abstract

Al-Sadi, Mahmoud, Raouf. Ph.D. The University of Memphis. May, 2011. Al-Jazeera Television: *Intifada* on the Air. Major Professor: John A. Campbell, Ph.D.

The Doha-based, pan-Arab “al-Jazeera Satellite News Channel” came to life on November 1, 1996 by a Qatari Emiri decree, and began a 24-hour operation on February 1, 1998. Although sponsored by an autocratic government that is similar to other Arab regimes in terms of the wide gap separating them from their masses, al-Jazeera has become, and continues to be, the most popular and trusted news channel in the Arab world.

Media scholars and commentators agree that the popularity of al-Jazeera derives mainly from its identification with the radicalism of the Arab public, as evidenced by the starkly anti-establishment tone characterizing much of the medium’s discourses. There is a disagreement, however, over the meaning and implications of the Channel’s anti-establishment discourses.

Some argue that al-Jazeera is radicalizing the Arab audiences; others argue that it is moderating the beliefs of both the Arab public and the Arab regimes. Not taking the Channel’s radical discourses literally, however, a third group of scholars and commentators argues that al-Jazeera is in line with other official mass media whose primary objective is to advance and defend the interests of the host-government. Al-Jazeera, then, may help perpetuate Arab autocracy.

Alternatively, I argue that both the radicalizing- and moderating-effect perspectives do not provide an accurate interpretation of the Channel’s anti-establishment discourses and their implications. I also contend that the third group’s argument has more

credibility. However, while the proponents of the third argument tell us *what* al-Jazeera does, they rarely tell us *how* al-Jazeera does it.

To answer this animating question, and in order to discern the true nature and motives of al-Jazeera's political rhetoric, I offer a close reading of the Channel's political discourses on issues that sharply divide the Arab public from the Qatari government and other Arab regimes.

Textual evidence indicates that by initially identifying itself with the viewers' radicalism, al-Jazeera, indirectly, deflects such radicalism and channels it towards non-violent political ideologies that are conducive to the Qatari interests and policies. Furthermore, by indirectly connecting Qatar with the anti-establishment viewers, al-Jazeera re-invents Qatari autocracy depicting it as an acceptable form of governance.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The scene: In Gaza Strip, a 12-year-old Palestinian boy and his father were taking refuge behind a concrete block in embryonic positions fighting for their lives in the face of oncoming bullets. Distrustful of the adequacy of the concrete block, the father was offering his body as an extra shield to protect his son. Neither the concrete block, nor the father's body was sufficient. The 12-year-old boy, Muhammad al-Durra, died, live on television—al-Jazeera News Channel.

The Arab viewers have been viewing closely pictures of their victimhood broadcast on al-Jazeera News Channel, pictures from Jenin, Gaza, and other Palestinian cities, from Iraq, from Lebanon, from Afghanistan. The pictures are often accompanied with inflammatory vocabulary; vocabulary that condemns the apathy of their governments—*al-andthimah al-'ameelah* [the treasonous regimes]; vocabulary that invokes resistance and emancipation—*istish-haad* [martyrdom], *intifada* [uprising]. United before the virtual world of al-Jazeera Channel, Arabs seem also to be united in their actual world. They are developing and adopting the same patterns of communication and discourses. They are demonstrating, boycotting American goods, burning American and Israeli flags. They are shouting against their political leaders and raising pictures of national symbols of resistance, Jamal Abdul Nasser, Saddam Hussein, Usama bin Laden, Sheikh Ahmad Yaseen, and Hassan Nasrallah.

While, at one level, the scene of Muhammad and his father represents a metaphor that testifies to and captures the state of victimhood, marginalization and alienation commonly felt by Arabs, the scene also stands as a metaphor for a new era of Arab

television broadcasting that the Qatar-based al-Jazeera has ushered in the Arab world. The death of the Muhammad al-Durra's of the Arab region is now reported instantly to all Arabs by an Arab news channel and from an Arab standpoint. Arab audiences are now no longer constrained to hearing the Western narratives of events delivered to them through a body of international news agencies. Arab audiences are also no longer restricted to hearing the official narrative of events as envisioned and communicated to them by Arab official news media. They now have an alternative, al-Jazeera Channel.

Al-Jazeera is an innovation of the new Qatari Emir—Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, who came to power in a palace coup in 1995 in which he deposed his father. The government of the new Qatari Emir, which, according to Kordesman (2004) and others has a “tendency to start political feuds and aggressively assert its status and independence” (p. 214), found itself facing direct threat to its legitimacy and existence, especially from Saudi Arabia (Freedman, 1998; Herb, 1999; Kordesman, 2004, Sakr; 2007; Telhami, 2004), the acknowledged leader of the Arab Gulf states and a prominent political player on the theatre of Arab politics. To neutralize the threat to his rule, the new Qatari Emir embarked on pragmatic policies that have proven highly effective. Courting both the United States and Israel, openly, were examples of such policies. Another key example of such bold policies was the establishment of al-Jazeera.

The unelected new Emir, “with apparently little to lose from allowing free speech, had decided to adopt freedom of expression as a foreign policy tool,” as Sakr (2005) succinctly put it (p. 68). By doing that, the Emir has given the Arab regimes that pose a threat to his rule what they wanted the least, a network that exposes them and undercuts and challenges their authority. This pragmatic move by the new Qatari Emir has proven

most effective in stabilizing the new Qatari government by enabling it to manage and to control “an outlet that the Saudis and others fear and to reduce the influence of the Saudi-backed media” (Telhami, 2004, p. 85). But by giving the Arab regimes what they need the least, the new Emir has also given the Arab masses what they need the most, a network that exposes their oppressors and seemingly embraces their [the masses’] beliefs and attitudes.

But how did al-Jazeera, despite its well known connection with an Arab regime whose policies towards central political issues are starkly at odds with the beliefs and attitudes of the majority of the Arab masses, become so popular so quickly among the so skeptical Arab audience?

The answer to this question requires the delineation of some of the norms, expectations and beliefs that, for long, have governed the Arab audience’s interactions with various media outlets.

Tyrants, Nomads, and Al-Jazeera

For decades, alienated and marginalized by their regimes and their mass media, Arab audiences were compelled to embark on a virtual journey, traveling from one radio station to another in search for vindication and the truth. As Muhammad Fa’eq, an Egyptian ex-minister of Information, comments, “up until now, we turn to foreign radio stations to know what is going on in our own countries” (personal interview, 2002). I will refer to the Arab audiences’ constant mobility in the realm of mass media as “virtual nomadism.”

In their constant search for vindication and the truth, the nomadic Arab listeners have tuned, routinely, to various mass media regardless of their ideological or political

orientation. Whether it be Nasser's *Sawt ul-`Arab*, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) radio, Voice of America (VOA), Radio Monte Carlo (RMC), and even and often the radio service of the nation's enemy, Israel, Arab audiences have searched the airwaves for alternative points of view wherever they could find them. In light of their nomadic quest for different perspectives, their interactions with mass media, including al-Jazeera, tend to say more about the needs and pragmatism of the Arab audiences than it does about the medium they listen to.

Moreover, despite its inconveniences, the Arab public's virtual nomadism seems to have generated or reinforced a set of stable norms, beliefs and expectations among the ever-wandering Arab consumers of radio messages that al-Jazeera has successfully incorporated into its political discourses. Here are some examples of those norms, beliefs and expectations:

To a nomad who escapes the dearth of resources, abundance *per se* becomes a primary objective. Abundance is something that al-Jazeera incorporates into its landscape of programs; an abundance of programs (that includes news, news analysis programs, political talk shows, sports, women-focused programs, and documentaries), an abundance of anti-establishment guests, an abundance of perspectives and an abundance of discourses on issues they consider central and pressing.¹ Abundance is further manifest textually in the channel's discourses. Notice for instance how Ahmad Mansour in his

¹ Al-Jazeera has in fact become a multi-channel network. Many channels (e.g., al-Jazeera Direct, Sports, Children) have been recently introduced, which testifies to al-Jazeera's awareness of the pivotal role of abundance in attracting the Arab viewer.

introduction to the first episode of “Without Bounds” (February 3, 1999) emphasizes abundance as intimated metaphorically, “boundlessness,” which appears in the naming of the program as well as in the introduction itself:

I welcome you boundlessly to the first episode of Without Bounds through which we open up to al-Jazeera’s viewers broad horizons of dialogue with the program’s guests— politicians, decision makers, thinkers and experts in life’s different fields.

Al-Jazeera meets the nomadic audience’s demand for abundance and multi-sided accounts, as conveyed by the channel concretely and figuratively; concretely, through the presence of various guests who represent different political standpoints and affiliations— pan-Arabist, Islamist, liberal, pro-establishment and anti-establishment groups and individuals, etc., and, figuratively, as conveyed by the names of the channel’s programs (e.g., “More Than One opinion” and “Open Dialogue,” “Without Bounds,” “the Opposite Direction,” among others), as well as the channel’s motto, “The Channel of the Opinion and the Counter Opinion” (*qanaat al-ra’y wa al-ra’y al-akhar*) which set the channel apart from the old paradigm of state-controlled television programming.

Another expectation that the nomadic audiences have developed is to associate mass media with a particular national identity; a British BBC, an American VOA, a French RMC, which, individually, expresses and serves the interests of a fatherland. Why then not a pan-Arab medium that expresses and serves an Arab nation? The question gains more weight and legitimacy as an unintended consequence of the foreign broadcasters’ addressing of the Arab audiences as a homogenous whole, “Arabs,” not Egyptians, Jordanians, Iraqis, Saudis, etc., which ultimately diminished the weight of

their local identities as it simultaneously deepened their sense of pan-Arab identity and their cultural homogeneity. Al-Jazeera has met this expectation; it is a pan-Arab channel with a pan-Arab message addressing a pan-Arab audience without paying homage to any particular Arab sub-national identity or Arab regime. In Naomi Sakr's (2005) words, al-Jazeera as a pan-Arab television "can bring [different Arab audiences] all together in a geolinguistic community configured by the footprints of communications satellites" (p. 78).

The spiral of acquired norms and expectations goes further down still. Due to the competitive nature of foreign broadcastings to Arab audiences, the process of listening to radio messages was in a way an assertion of the self-worth of Arab listeners who have been totally marginalized and alienated by their local media. The Arab audiences, to put it differently, were no longer ignored or spoken down to but instead included, spoken to and their views and attitudes acknowledged and respected by foreign broadcasters. Al-Jazeera does that too. In fact, the channel, through what Sakr (2005) calls "the notion of interactivity" (p. 79), takes the viewers acknowledgement to a new high by allowing them to participate directly (through phone-in, fax, email) in various discussions, and by granting them an unprecedented level of freedom of expression. For the first time in the recent history, Arab audiences can now speak up openly against their governments, in fulfillment of al-Jazeera's self-proclaimed image, "a pulpit for the pulpitless" (*minbaru mann la minbara lah*).

Whether they are listening to the BBC, Voice of America, Monte Carlo or any other foreign radio service, the Arab audiences have also grown accustomed to the relative marginalization of local affairs and local figures of authority. Conversely, state-

owned or controlled Arab radio and television services focus almost entirely on the daily activities of the head of state and his ministers, no matter how unimportant such activities are.² Al-Jazeera, contrary to the focus of local Arab radio and television, rarely reports or comments on the daily activities of the Qatari figures of authority, unless such activities are directly related to issues that interest the pan-Arab audiences at large. By allocating a minimum space to Qatari local affairs and to Qatari figures of Authority in its broadcasts, al-Jazeera emphasizes its pan-Arab identity and concerns, despite its strong ties to the Qatari government.

By identifying with the norms and expectations of the pragmatic nomadic audiences seriously, al-Jazeera has succeeded in attracting them and stirring their interest in it as a new comer to the scene of Arab mass media. But al-Jazeera has to do more than that still in order to avoid becoming yet another “BBC.” This “more” is manifest by the anti-establishment overtone characterizing the network’s political discourses. The channel’s responsiveness to the viewers’ radical beliefs and attitudes is what John Fiske (1984) refers to as “an easy fit between the discourses of the text and the discourses through which its model readers articulate and understand their social experience” (p. 168). In al-Jazeera’s case, such fit is most noticeable in the network’s shockingly unambiguous way by which it consistently appeals to and incorporates many of the viewers’ radical political beliefs. The “shockingly unambiguous way” needs some elaboration.

² This phenomenon earned the Arab mass media the title of “the media of [X head of state has] received and sent off,” as al-Jazeera’s own Faisal al-Qasim—and many others, cynically describe them (personal interview with al-Qasim, Doha, Qatar, 2002).

I am using “ambiguity” in William Empson’s sense of “any verbal nuance, however slight, which gives room for alternative reactions to the same piece of language.”³ As I will show in the second chapter of the study, the ambiguity of Arab political discourses is not a sign of a chronic rhetorical deficiency on the part of Arab communicators; ambiguity, rather, is a rhetorical strategy, a mode of discourse that serves specific functions, whether the interlocutor is a state- or non-state actor. From the standpoint of Arab state-actors, interjecting a degree of ambiguity is a necessary measure that aims at lessening the tension between the unpopular state policies and political perspective with the radical beliefs of the disenchanting Arab public. A classical example of the induced ambiguity by state-actors is found in the excessive use of expressions whose literal sense seems to validate the pan-Arabist public sentiments, as in *wihdat al-maseer* (unity of destiny), *wihdat al-ssaff* (unity of ranks), *wihdat al-hadaf* (unity of objective). While such expressions can be taken as synonyms or metaphors for Arab unity, they, as any Middle East scholar would testify, are actually euphemisms for disunity. Similarly, Arab anti-establishment actors also inject a degree of ambiguity in their discourses to achieve a different goal; to avoid prosecution or even persecution by tyrannical Arab regimes, as Hussein Abdul-Raof (2006) accurately contends in his *Arabic rhetoric: A pragmatic analysis* (p. 234).

³ William Empson (1994 [1935]), *The Seven Types of Ambiguity* (p. 19). London: Chatto and Windus.

With time, the Arab public grew accustomed to a degree of ambiguity. Al-Jazeera has literally shocked the Arab public not only by expressing its adherence to their radical beliefs, but by the unusually unambiguous way of expressing and identifying with such beliefs, as in al-Qasim's cry that "Arab unity is a dream no longer; it is an existential necessity" (The Opposite Direction, August 10, 2000). Al-Qasim is by no means the only host who demonstrates his unity with the viewers. In fact, he epitomizes the al-Jazeera cadre of hosts and presenters at large. Reflecting and validating the Arab viewers' stark resentment of and adamant opposition to the policies of their Arab governments, Ahmad Mansour, the Islamist host of the popular talk show, "Without Bounds" (June 8, 2003) stresses that: "As for the political Arab regimes, they indeed surpass other regimes in their conformity to and implementation of Western schemes, creativity in means of coercion, tyranny, expulsion of their peoples and driving out proficiencies...." Similarly, Sami Haddad, the anglophile liberal-minded host of "More Than One Opinion," emphasizes the same point in his introductory remarks to the February 2, 2003 episode of the program in which he cynically depicts and condemns the ineptness and the inaction of the Arab regimes towards the United States' threat against Iraq:

One wonders, will the [Sharm al-Shaikh] summit rise up to the challenge and take a brave stand against the new Holako's threat to al-Rashid Capital [Baghdad]? Or will it stand at the midpoint between Baghdad and Washington and resort instead to employing the power of Arabic rhetoric, diction, metaphors and puns so that the natural instinct of the vacationers [Arab leaders] in Sharm al-Shaikh would blossom into a broad statement germane to demanding Iraq's full cooperation with the inspection team, weapons of mass destruction and condemnation of threats issued to any Arab country?

Another host, Ghassan bin Jiddo of "Open Dialogue," identifies fully with the Arab viewers' firm belief in the illegitimacy of Israel within any borders and their strong belief in the Arab identity of Palestine, all of Palestine: "Palestine will always be Palestine; Palestine of 1948 and Palestine of 1967 are an indivisible whole" (Open Dialogue, March 31, 2001). Yusuf Al-Qaradawi of "Religion and Life," conveying the Islamic standpoint towards the Intifada, forewarns that "any action [by any Arab figure of authority] aiming at aborting the Intifada is another treasonous act" (Religion and Life, October 8, 2000). On the imminent war of 2003 on Iraq, al-Qaradawi assures those who are eager to fight the American invaders that "he who falls in the course of resisting [them] is a martyr, by the Will of Allah" (Religion and Life, February 16, 2003). Reiterating the state of disgust and anger felt by the great majority of the Arab populations towards the Arab regimes' indifferent attitude and honorless position on the ongoing sufferings of the Palestinian people, Jamal Rayyan, presenting the April 15, 2002 broadcast of "The Palestinian People under Israeli Siege," wonders: "what has become of Arab honor when a

Palestinian young girl is forced to strap on an explosive belt while some of the Arabs have unstrapped the belt of pride, gallantry and valor?”

There is a consensus among media experts and commentators over the central role of the network’s bold expression of anti-establishment position on central issues in attaining the degree of popularity that al-Jazeera enjoys among the Arab audiences.⁴ To Zayyani (2006), for example, the popularity of al-Jazeera derives from the fact that it “has succeeded in aligning itself with the ‘people,’ in fact, with a large section of Arab society which has been disenfranchised” (p. 178). The pro-people, anti-establishment image of the channel as a basis for its popularity among the Arab viewers is also emphasized by El-Nawawi and Iskandar (2003) who stress the uniqueness of the new channel and its responsiveness to the needs and expectations of its pan-Arab viewers:

For the first time in their history, Arab viewers across the Arab world gather in front of their TV sets at the same time every evening to watch al-Jazeera’s news bulletins and talk shows. Al-Jazeera reporters, anchors, and talk show hosts are transnational personalities themselves hailing from all corners of the Arab world: Morocco, Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, Syria, and others.” (p. 210)

The Arab experts whom I interviewed in Jordan, Qatar and Egypt reiterate the same line of reasoning germane to the channel’s popularity; “al-Jazeera has cast a stone in the still

⁴ Numerous surveys and studies point clearly at the uncontested popularity of al-Jazeera. The same results came out of my own research in which I solicited the views of a sample of 68 Arab viewers in Jordan, between the months of March and June of 2002. Also, recognizing the dearth of non-descriptive, analytical literature on Arab media studies among Arab and Western scholars, and to further enrich my analysis, I conducted audiotaped, face-to-face interviews with numerous Arab experts—in Jordan, Qatar, and Egypt, in the same period.

water of Arab politics,” “it gives a voice to the voiceless,” “it breaks all taboos,” they argue. Succinctly summing up all the aforementioned views, Telhami (2004) proposes that “[al-Jazeera] succeeds in large part because it is responsive to public attitude” (p. 77).

But as much as there is agreement among scholars and commentators over the centrality of anti-establishment speech in identifying al-Jazeera with and establishing its popularity among the great majority of the Arab populations, there is disagreement over the meaning, effect and implications of the network’s anti-establishment rhetoric.

Al-Jazeera: The Ongoing Debate

Some scholars and commentators maintain that al-Jazeera, because of its anti-establishment rhetoric, is a radicalizing force; others contend exactly the opposite, arguing that al-Jazeera, because of the anti-establishment tone of its political discourses, is a moderating force; a third group of scholars and commentators see al-Jazeera, despite its anti-establishment rhetoric, as an instrument of deception that, in line with other Arab mass media, aims, first and foremost, at serving the strategic interests of the host-state.

Those who argue that al-Jazeera is a radicalizing force ground their claim in the fact that the network caters to the Arab public’s radicalism and its anti-Western, anti-Israeli and anti-Arab establishment attitude (Ajami, 2001; Al-Shammary, 1999; Alt, 2004; Alterman, 2002; Friedman, 2001, among others). This line of thinking is articulated and summed up by Daniel Brumberg (2002), who argues that:

The potential universe of recruits to the ideology of resentment espoused by Islamists and Arab nationalists is very large indeed. Young people who are frustrated, bored or angry, and who tend to get their news from satellite TV

stations rather than a responsible, professional press, are particularly vulnerable to the simplistic slogans of Islamist demagogues, and to the daily images of strife in various quarters of the Islamic world. (as cited in Zayyani, 2006, p. 82)

Brumberg thus concludes that:

This is why Arab satellite stations, particularly al-Jazeera, have played an important role in shaping the consciousness of young Arab people... [H]aving watched hours of al-Jazeera, I have no doubt that this station has framed the news in ways that portray black and white, evil versus good images of complex conflicts such as the Israeli-Palestinian dispute. Moreover, by regularly hosting extremist ideologues ... al-Jazeera has muddled the boundaries between fact and fiction. (as cited in Zayyani, 2006, p. 183)

On the other hand, scholars and commentators maintaining that al-Jazeera is a moderating force ground their argument in the fact that the anti-establishment characteristic of the network's discourses is a sign of adopting liberal Western values and beliefs, which will eventually contribute to moderating both the Arab regimes and the Arab public. Elaborating on this point, El-Nawawy and Iskandar (2003) contend that al-Jazeera as a democratic and an all-inclusive network "has generated anger and fear among Arab governments, for it has dared to give reporters the ability to uncover and report the news in an environment characterized by freedom of speech" (p. 200). Therefore, al-Jazeera, despite, and perhaps because of, its fiery rhetoric allows the expression of public outcry and hence serves as a "safety valve" or a venue that helps contain the Arab public by granting it an alternative to "illegal or violent means" of expression (p. 208). Al-Jazeera, they thus conclude, "is a force for democracy" (p. 216).

Alterman (2004) reiterates the same view contending that “increasingly informed public debate, the ability of actors living abroad to influence events in the region, and the spread of images from the West are challenging many long-held ideas and transforming the politics of the Middle East” (p. 227). Michael Wolff (2003) of the *New York Magazine* downplays the pan-Arab nature of al-Jazeera and its allegedly incendiary rhetoric contending that “Al-Jazeera, like so much else in the region, becomes part of an Americanization machine.”⁵ The democratizing affect of al-Jazeera is also stressed and commented on by Marc Lynch (2006) who credits al-Jazeera, along with other pan-Arab satellite channels, with the birth of what he calls “the new Arab public” that is “palpably transforming Arab political culture” (p. 2).

The third group of commentators, Arab and foreign, that situates the anti-establishment messages of al-Jazeera in its proper historical context, taking into account its Arab identity and its relation with the sponsoring state, looks at al-Jazeera as a lackey of Qatar; al-Jazeera, they argue, aims at resolving the tension stemming from the highly controversial policies and ideological position of the new Qatari government that has ascended to power shortly before the launching of al-Jazeera (Cordesman, 2004, p.214; El-Nawawi & Iskandar, 2003, pp. 201, 211; Freedman, 1998, p. 278; Herb, 1999, p.119; Sakr, 2007, p. 128; Telhami, 2004, p.84). They thus argue that al-Jazeera as a drastically different and highly attractive form of Arab mass media that intersects with

⁵ Michal Wolff’s article, “Al-Jazeera’s Edge” appeared in the *New York Magazine* (April 28, 2003). The Article is available at: http://www.nymag.com/nymetro/news/media/columns/medialife/n_8648.

the norms, needs and expectations of the alienated nomadic audience (inside and outside Qatar), has dwarfed all the controversial policies of the new Qatari ruler (Sakr, 2005, p.68; Sakr, 2007, pp. 124-125; Telhami, 2004, pp.84-85; Zayani, 2007, p. 178).

Therefore, scholars and commentators subscribing to the third group perceive its anti-establishment messages as superficial, a mere “change in form,” but not in the substance and objectives of the traditional paradigm of state-owned media (personal interviews, 2002).

It is my contention that the three perspectives on al-Jazeera give either wrong or inadequate readings of al-Jazeera as a new phenomenon of Arab mass media. I attribute the shortcomings of these views to a host of factors, among which are the commentators’ own ideological biases and presuppositions with regard to the Arab world. For instance, those who maintain that al-Jazeera is a radicalizing force, like Brumberg, see the political instability of the Arab world as the primary concern, a potential threat to world order and to Western interests in particular. The same commentators, also as evidenced by the previously quoted views of Brumberg, tend to view the Arab public as radical, “vulnerable” and prone to political violence. The ideological biases and presuppositions of many commentators who maintain that al-Jazeera is a radicalizing force are manifest in, or at least linked to, the commentators’ overlooking or exclusion of a set of constraining factors that bear significantly on their interpretation of al-Jazeera’s anti-establishment messages, and, consequently, on their assessment of the possible effect of those messages on the Arab public. I am referring here to three main factors: first, the customary ambiguity of Arab political discourses in general, despite the seemingly unambiguous nature of al-Jazeera’s discourses, second, the pragmatism and objectives of

the Arab nomadic audience and, third, the pragmatism and objectives of the sponsoring state. Overlooking or exclusion of those three factors leads commentators to take the channel's anti-establishment discourse literally, considering it a manifestation of a substantive rhetoric that embraces the radicalism of the viewers and will inevitably further radicalize them. I contend that this reading of al-Jazeera is mistaken.

But dismissing the claim that al-Jazeera is a force for political radicalism does not lend credence by default to the view that al-Jazeera is having a moderating effect on Arab public opinion. Despite the fact that the proponents of the moderating-affect point of view reach an opposite conclusion, their view, nonetheless, reveals that they share with their counterparts in the radicalizing-effect school a common concern—the threat that the potential political instability of the Arab world poses to Western interests and the world at large, and a common presupposition—the Arab public is either inherently radical or prone to radicalism. However, while the proponents of the radicalizing thesis look at al-Jazeera as a hurdle in the path of securing the stability of the Arab world by blocking the presumed radicalism of the Arab public, the advocates of the moderating-effect perspective look at al-Jazeera as an effective means of blocking the radicalism of the Arab public by introducing it to moderate Western values and practices as an alternative to “illegal or violent means” that are inspired by popular radical political ideologies such as Arab nationalism and radical Islamism. Finally, both the radicalizing and the moderating views are also similar in their literal understanding of the anti-establishment discourse, which they both view as substantive and liberational. This misconception of the true meaning of the network's anti-establishment messages is, once again, linked to the failure of the proponents of the moderating view to take into account the three

factors—the customary ambiguity of Arab political discourses, the pragmatism and objectives of both the Arab audience and the Qatari state, that could constrain the impact of al-Jazeera on the Arab public. I, thus, contend that the moderating-effect thesis is as mistaken as the radicalizing-effect thesis.

In contrast with the radicalizing-moderating perspective, the third perspective on al-Jazeera—that the network’s radicalism is more apparent than real and that its broadcasts serve the interests of the sponsoring state, offers a more accurate reading of al-Jazeera; a reading that takes into account what the advocates of both the radicalizing- or moderating-effect line of thinking have overlooked—the politico-historical facts of modern Arab mass media, the calculated ambiguity of Arab political discourse, and the pragmatism and objectives of both the Qatari establishment and the nomadic Arab audience. The group of Arab scholars and experts whom I have interviewed in three Arab capitals echoes Naomi Sakr’s (2007) contention that al-Jazeera is an extension of the foreign policy of the new Qatari Emir that gives the Arab world “a false impression that political reform is under way so as to distract attention from deep structures of political repression in individual Arab states” (p. 123). Consequently, Rami Khouri (2001) concludes rather intuitively that Arab satellite stations like al-Jazeera “may be entrenching autocratic, top-heavy Arab political regimes” (as cited in Ayish, 2002, p. 151).

But while the proponents of the third view tell us *what* al-Jazeera does—serving the interests of the Qatari state, they rarely tell us *how* al-Jazeera does it. Further explanation is needed, especially in light of the fact that the glaringly anti-establishment remarks conveyed by al-Jazeera render the view of the third group counter intuitive. Take

for example the following remarks delivered by al-Qasim who most boldly condemns the policies of the United States and its Arab allies, including Qatar:

Why do Americans find the antagonism of many Arabs surprising? [After all] Who destroyed, and continues to destroy, an Arab country like Iraq? Who killed the innocents in Libya? Who is besieging Syria? Who struck Lebanon? Who bombarded the Sudan? Who gave Israel the green light to exterminate the Palestinians? Who supplies the Fascist Zionists with arms? Who disgraces the honor of the [Arab states of the] Gulf? Who extorts our wealth? Who supports the Fascist and dictatorial regimes of our incarcerated Arab homeland? Who obstructs the democratization of the Arab countries? Who? And who? (The Opposite Direction, September 18, 2001)

How can such glaringly anti-establishment remarks be at the service of the Qatari establishment?

Showing “how” such remarks advance the interests of the Qatari state is the central concern of this study. In addressing this concern, the study raises and probes the following basic research questions:

RQ1 [First Research Question]: how does the government of the new Qatari Prince benefit from the anti-establishment discourse of the network’s prominent hosts and presenters?

RQ2: what implicit premises anchor the network’s anti-establishment discourse?

RQ3: what lines of reasoning or frameworks of interpretations are these premises associated with?

RQ4: to what extent do those frameworks of interpretations converge with or diverge from the radical beliefs of the majority of the Arab populations? Or, conversely, to what extent do such frameworks of interpretations converge with or diverge from the moderate policies, political perspective and strategic interests of the new Qatari Prince?

RQ5: what, in light of the answers to the previous questions, do the network's anti-establishment messages imply? Do they really represent a substantive, liberational rhetoric that embraces and validates the viewers' radicalism? If they do not, what motive do they conceal?

RQ6: what do the frameworks of interpretation associated with the network's anti-establishment discourse and the type of political rhetoric they represent tell us about al-Jazeera itself? Does it represent an anomalous phenomenon, in contrast with other Arab state-sponsored mass media?

In answering those questions, and having watched and analyzed hundreds of hours of al-Jazeera's programming, I will put forth and defend the following alternative reading of the network and its anti-establishment discourse.

Al-Jazeera: An Alternative Reading

Despite the fact that there is no empirical proof indicating that the Qatari government has any direct influence over al-Jazeera, the study will show that the network still complies with the traditional paradigm of state-sponsored Arab mass media, whose main objective is to bolster the strategic interests and policies of the sponsoring state. Therefore, and in agreement with and building upon the insight and arguments of the third school, I argue that the network's radicalism is more apparent than real and that its broadcasts serve the interests of the sponsoring state. In arguing my point, I will analyze

the strategic ambiguity at play in the anti-establishment discourses of the network's most popular figures and programs. Bolstered by the implications of the politico-historical context in which al-Jazeera was born, and taking into account the pragmatism of both the Qatari establishment and the nomadic audience, my close reading of al-Jazeera's discourses will show that the anti-establishment overtone of the network is far from being a manifestation of a radical anti-establishment ideology that undercuts the policies and political perspective of the Qatari state. On the contrary, textual evidence will show that the anti-establishment discourse of al-Jazeera subverts and blocks the radicalism of the Arab audience. The act of subverting and blocking the viewers' radicalism is inextricably linked with three objectives that the anti-establishment discourse helps the network's presenters achieve: a) to initially identify al-Jazeera with the radical values, passions and beliefs of anti-establishment nomadic viewers, as a means of attracting them to al-Jazeera, then, b) to subtly advance a host of implicit premises that problematize the radical beliefs and attitudes of the viewers without alienating them, and, then, c) to create and satisfy a need, among the viewers, for alternative frameworks of interpreting major political issues. The study will show that alternative frameworks of interpretation that emerge out of the network's anti-establishment discourses identify the Arab audience indirectly with the strategic interests and policies of the Qatari state.

The anti-establishment discourse of al-Jazeera conceals a multi-tiered motive: to detach the Arab viewers from the radical precepts of the two most popular ideologies—Arab nationalism and jihadist Islamism. Arab nationalism and jihadist Islamism inspire and anchor the radical beliefs and attitudes of the majority of the Arab public yet, I will contend, al-Jazeera seeks to moderate the attitudes of the Arab public, and, to the same

end, to create a need for and provide the viewers with a moderate political ideology as an alternative to Arab nationalism and radical political Islam.

Closely intertwined with the previous multi-tiered motive is also an effort by the network's representatives to depict Qatar as a new paradigm of Arab state; a democratizing, self-reforming state that could replace radical Arab regimes, such as Syria and Iraq, and unpopular moderate pro-Western Arab regimes such as Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and the Palestinian Authority. In different words, al-Jazeera becomes a means of re-inventing, not challenging, Arab autocracy.

Although re-inventing Arab autocracy and providing the government of the new Qatari Emir with a cover of legitimacy align al-Jazeera with other traditional Arab state-sponsored media, the network, nonetheless, represents an innovation in Arab political rhetoric so far as how language is currently utilized by an autocratic regime to perpetuate the established political order. In the 1950s and 60s—the era of national liberation, grand principles and high hopes and expectations, the official Arab political discourse identified the state with the Arab populations by emphasizing both its willingness and capability to bring about the revolutionary changes desired by the masses. This is no longer the case, as the analysis of al-Jazeera's anti-establishment discourse will show: on the one hand, the network's discourses indirectly identify the Qatari state with the Arab masses by emphasizing its willingness and desire to bring about drastic changes in the Arab world. On the other hand, however, the discourses also focus the viewers' attention on facts—real or manufactured, and compelling circumstances that demonstrate and normalize the state's incapacity to pursue the grand political objectives that the Arab masses believe in and aspire for. Closely intertwined with the network's effort to demonstrate and

normalize the state's incapacity to pursue grand goals—despite its willingness and desire to do so, is also a relentless effort by the network to argue against—implicitly or explicitly, and to disconnect the masses from any radical ideology or program of action that aims at and is generally presumed by the masses to be capable of overcoming such state of weakness and incapability. Subsequently, the network's anti-establishment rhetoric of identification that initially binds the network with the radical beliefs and attitudes of the majority of the Arab viewers is in fact a rhetoric that ultimately deflects their radicalism and binds them with the state by creating a need for a more moderate political perspective and a less ambitious set of objectives that are both in line with the policies of the Qatari Prince.

Method

Selection of Programs and Discourses

To measure the popularity of the different programs aired on al-Jazeera, I solicited the views of a sample of Arab viewers in Jordan through a semi-structured questionnaire that I administered personally in audiotaped interviews, which I conducted between the months of March and June of 2002. Based on these interviews, the following three programs were determined to be the most popular: “The Opposite Direction,” hosted by Faisal al-Qasim, “Without Bounds,” hosted by Ahmad Mansour, and “More Than One Opinion,” hosted by Sami Haddad.

As for selecting the proper discourses to be analyzed, I, using the same questionnaire, developed the following criterion for the selection of proper discourses from the three programs: The discourses should be on issues that the Arab public in general perceives as pressing problems and, at once, takes a stand that is verifiably

different from the official stand of the host-state, Qatar, and other Arab regimes as well.⁶

The three issues that have emerged from the survey are: the state of Arab dividedness and political fragmentation, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the situation in Iraq before and after the invasion of the country in 2003, as covered by the three most popular programs in the period extending from 1999 till the end of 2003.⁷

⁶ To determine what those pressing problems are, I included questions on the survey (questionnaire) that directly address this matter, from which I obtained a list of what is considered by Arab viewers to be the most pressing problems they face. The top 10 problems, in descending order, are:

- 1- The Arab-Israeli conflict.
- 2- The dividedness of the Arab nation.
- 3- The absence of political freedoms.
- 4- Conflict between Arab countries.
- 5- Lack of respect (on the part of the governments) for human rights.
- 6- Moving away from the teachings of Islam.
- 7- Types of political governments (Arab ruling systems).
- 8- The misuse of oil revenues.
- 9- The West's cultural invasion of the Arab nation.
- 10- The unfair distribution of the nation's resources.

Because a thorough examination of al-Jazeera's discourses on the ten problems is impractical, I initially selected the top three problems—the Arab-Israeli conflict, the dividedness of the Arab nation and the absence of political freedoms. However, since the survey was conducted before the eruption of the war on Iraq, and since the pressing nature of the Iraqi file and the Arab viewers' interest in it are uncontested and, finally, due to the interconnectedness of the Iraqi file with other two issues, I have chosen to replace the third most pressing topic with the war on Iraq. So far as the Arab-Israeli conflict is concerned, I will include in my analysis all issues that are direct derivatives of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Those issues include the *Intifada* in Palestine, the peace process and the normalization of Arab-Israeli relations, the role of the United States of America vis-à-vis the Arab-Israeli conflict. With regard to the pressing question of Arab state of division, I will discuss the same topic under the title of Arab unity, or unification (used interchangeably). To this end, and due to a dearth of episodes that discuss the question of Arab unity per se, I will include all topics that pertain to the question of Arab unity and Arab nationalism as derivatives of the same topic.

⁷ Although the 2003 War on Iraq came after conducting the survey, the pressing nature of the issue and the massive interest in it are self-evident. I therefore included it in the three issues that I will focus on in my critical reading of al-Jazeera's political discourse.

Determining the Official and the Public Stand on the Selected Discourses

There are numerous sources from which the Qatari and Arab political establishments' discourses and stand on the three most pressing problems can be obtained. Official archival data is one of them. I will, additionally, utilize the views of a host of Arab and non-Arab scholars for whom the history and politics of the Arab world is their area of expertise. The personal interviews I conducted in May and June of 2002 with a sample of Arab experts will be of great utility as well. As for discerning the stand of the majority of the Arab public on each of the three central issues, besides relying on the views of a host of Arab and non-Arab scholars, I will also benefit from what the Arabs refer to as the "Registrar of the Arabs" ("*diwaan el`Arab*")—poetry. In a world like the Arab world, in which soliciting public views is either risky, unheard of or unreliable due to the legitimate fears of ordinary people, the works of the most popular Arab modern poets become a significant place from which one can discern the general sentiments and beliefs of the majority of the Arab masses.

Theoretical Scaffolding of the Analysis

To avoid shoehorning my analysis of al-Jazeera's discourses in a rigid framework that does not accommodate the cultural peculiarities of Arabic political rhetoric, I will rely mainly on my intimate knowledge of Arabic language and culture of political communication in highlighting the interplay between the form and substance of al-Jazeera's anti-establishment discourse, as a prelude to discerning the true rhetorical work of the anti-establishment discourse. I will, nonetheless, sporadically utilize the interpretive power of concepts and ideas provided us by prominent figures of the field of rhetoric, such as Lloyd F. Bitzer's "rhetorical situation," Kenneth Burke's

“identification,” “consubstantiality” and “framework of acceptance” and Richard Weaver’s focus on the type or method of argument as “a truer index in [the speaker’s] beliefs than his explicit profession of principle” (*The Ethics of Rhetoric*, 1953, p. 59).⁸ What ties together the views and concepts of the three prominent figures is their ability to demonstrate how discourse is used in a culture of purposive rhetorical ambiguity to manage the chronic division between the political establishment and the masses in a manner that benefits, first and foremost, the political establishment without alienating the skeptical-minded nomadic audiences. I find Burke’s (1974) concepts of identification and consubstantiality in particular beneficial in interpreting al-Jazeera’s anti-establishment discourse. From a Burkean standpoint, the speaker establishes his, or her, identification or consubstantiality with the audience members by showing that they both have something fundamentally in common. But since identification, as Burke further explains in *A Rhetoric of Motives*, is necessary “precisely because there is division” between the speaker and the audience, identification, then, allows the speaker to also deal with the implications of such division without compromising his or her own position or beliefs, or in Burke’s own words, the speaker’s “individual locus of motives” (pp. 20-22). A close

⁸ A situation, according to Bitzer, is rhetorical if, “a complex of persons, events, objects, and relations presenting an actual discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigency,” see “The Rhetorical Situation,” in *Methods of Rhetorical Criticism: A Twentieth-Century Perspective*, edited by Bernard L. Brock and Robert L. Scott (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1980), pp. 394. In his *A Rhetoric of Motives*, Burke describes the process of identification in this manner: “A is not identical with his colleague, B. But in so far as their interests are joined, A is identified with B. Or he may identify himself with B even when their interests are not joined, if he assumes that they are, or is persuaded to believe so (1974, p. 20).” As for “framework of acceptance,” Burke, in his *Attitude toward History*, defines it as “the more or less organized system of meanings by which a thinking man gauges the historical situation and adopts a role within it” (1961, p. 56).

reading of the political discourses of some of al-Jazeera's main representatives will reveal that their "locus of motives" is far removed from the motives, beliefs and aspirations of the majority of the viewers with whom they initially identify. The analysis will further show that al-Jazeera's rhetoric of identification represents a relentless effort to subvert the viewers' motives and radical beliefs and, more importantly, to deflect them towards channels that either bolster the policies and perspectives of the political established order or, at least, pose no threat to it. It is this deflective aspect of al-Jazeera's rhetoric that renders it a subversive rhetoric; one that aims ultimately at blocking the radicalism of the Arab viewers by identifying them indirectly with the moderate motives, policies and perspective of the Qatari autocracy.

Literature Review

The body of research available on Arab mass media in general and al-Jazeera Satellite Channel in particular remains inadequate, both in quantity and the scope of interest. The available literature could be divided into two types, historical-descriptive and interpretive. The shortcomings of the first type—historical-descriptive, are in many ways understandable, and do not undermine the great contributions of this type of scholarly work to our understanding of Arab mass media. However, the shortcomings of the second type—interpretive, are more serious, and could in fact undermine our efforts to develop a comprehensive understanding of Arab mass media.

In the following section, I will address the shortcomings of each type of research—historical-descriptive and interpretive, and show how this study of al-Jazeera could hopefully help overcome them.

Historical-Descriptive Literature

Under the rubric of this category one encounters a short list of scholarly work that offers a historical depiction of the evolution of mass media. On top of the list are the monumental and indispensable works of two prominent scholars, probably the most frequently quoted; William A. Rugh and Douglas Boyd.⁹ Both works provided essential background information without which any study of al-Jazeera, or any other Arab mass medium, would inevitably lack the proper context that one needs to develop a comprehensive understanding of the channel, its popularity and implications.

Rugh's (1979) *The Arab Press: News Media and Political Process in the Arab World*, mapped out and classified the Arab press and its relationship with the state. To this effect, he took note of three main categories of Arab press—the mobilization press, the loyalist press, and the diverse press. Though the press was the main focus of Rugh's investigation, Arab radio and television were also touched upon but only briefly. Justifiably, taken into account the nature of the author's area of interest, neither the media message nor its recipients had been the focus of the author's treatment. At a different level, the author's own classification of Arab press was anchored in the Cold War terminology; mobilization press refers mainly to press in the Arab socialist countries, whereas the other two—loyalist and diverse, are classes of press in nonsocialist ones. Useful as it has been, this classification fell short of capturing the full story of Arab press;

⁹ William A. Rugh, *The Arab Press*, (Syracuse, Syracuse University Press: 1979). Douglas A. Boyd, *Broadcasting in the Arab World: A Survey of the electronic Media in the Arab World*, (Ames, Iowa State University Press: 1993).

in fact, all Arab press could be contained within the “mobilization” classification, and most, if not all, “loyalist.” The question is: Mobilization toward what objectives and loyalist to whom? Mobilization and loyalty toward the objectives of the state, regardless of its nature—socialist or capitalist, seems to be the correct answer in the Arab world. As for the “diverse” press, proportionally, such a category is almost nonexistent; the “diverse” press, even in the cases of Kuwait, Morocco, and Lebanon, as suggested by Rugh, tended also to fall back into a loyalist-mobilizing press, when one takes into account the peculiarity of the role and nature of non-state and state-actors and the demographic composition of society (as in the Lebanese and Kuwaiti cases), and the uniqueness of the historical experience of certain Arab countries (as in Morocco). Furthermore, Rugh’s focus on the press, which basically targets the literate segment of society, excluded the common Arab from the cycle of communication. But in fairness to Rugh, he did not suggest that his analysis covers all aspects of Arab mass media. In fact, he clearly stated that:

This study does not focus on media content, however. It examines the organization of Arab media institutions which shape that content, and it analyzes the influences that are brought to bear on Arab journalists in writing their news copy, editorials, and other materials. (pp. xviii)

To fill up some of the gaps in Rugh’s pioneering study, Douglas A. Boyd wrote extensively on the development of Arab radio and television. His prolific writings and research culminated in one of the most pioneering works on the history of Arab electronic media—*Broadcasting in the Arab World: A Survey of the Electronic Media in the Arab World*. Besides his descriptive, historical account of the development of radio and

television broadcasting in 17 of the 22 Arab countries, Boyd (1993) also focused on “the problems of individual Arab countries as well as on more broadly defined concerns such as transmitter construction, broadcast rhetoric, and programming” (p. 335). But as was the case with Rugh’s, Boyd’s study, rich and most informative as it indeed is, also predates the introduction of satellite television broadcasting in the Arab world and lacks an in-depth analysis of the phenomenon beyond the macro structural components that he focused on. Only footnote-like remarks were provided in regard to the role of satellite television. This is exemplified in Boyd’s noticing that “Direct Broadcasting Satellite (DBS) is not yet a major factor in the Arab world” (p. 9). But now, it most definitely is. Furthermore, Boyd overstated the significance of the unique character” of each Arab state, while, on the other hand, downplayed the role of “religious, linguistic, and other cultural similarities” of countries of the Arab world. In Boyd’s (1993) words:

Those who have read much about the Arab world already know that the concept of Arab unity and cooperation is largely a myth. Even many staunch advocates of Arab unity experienced an eye-opening experience on August 2, 1991—the day Iraq invaded Kuwait. Despite religious, linguistic, and other cultural similarities, each nation state in the area has a unique character; usually this character is both defined and promoted by the mass media. (p. 335)

Though results of my own research may not be generalizable, they nonetheless point at the opposite direction; Arab unity is hardly a myth. Boyd’s point of view on Arab unity could hardly explain the increasing awareness of the cultural unity despite all

attempts by the majority of Arab political establishments at uprooting this awareness.¹⁰

Arab unity, as my study of al-Jazeera will show, remains a massive force that drives Arab politics. It is, therefore, my hope that this study of al-Jazeera will somewhat complement the existing historical-descriptive account of Arab media culture by moving beyond categorization of Arab mass media, and by introducing and commenting on other factors—such as the norms, beliefs and attitudes of the Arab audience, as well as new pressing political circumstances, that are necessary for understanding the current landscape of Arab mass media.

While the shortcomings of the historical-descriptive account do not undermine its value, the shortcomings of many works that I describe as interpretive are more serious, as I will show in my brief discussion of the second type of literature on Arab mass media.

Interpretive Literature

The 90s witnessed an exponential increase in the examination of all aspects of Arab mass media and their societal effects. The failing of this kind of scholarly work stems from the fact that it is policy driven. That is to say that the primary objective of this type of literature is to issue recommendations to Western, especially American, policy maker as to how to contain the threat of new emerging mass media to the political stability of the Arab world. Examples of this type of research are Jon B. Alterman's *New*

¹⁰ Boyd's view could hardly explain the never-dying popularity of Nasser, the high level of pro-Saddam Hussein sentiment during and after the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq, the Arab public support for Iraqi resistance groups, as well as the phenomenal popularity of current symbols of Arab resistance such as Hasan Nassrallah. Boyd's claim failed also to explain the massive popular support, against the wishes of local governments, for the Palestinian *Intifada* and for Hezbollah's last war with Israel in 2006.

Media, New Politics? From Satellite Television to the Internet in the Arab World, Dale F. Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson's *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere*, as well as many of Daniel Brumberg's publications as senior adviser at the Center for Conflict Analysis and Prevention. More often than not, this interpretive type of research examines Arab culture from perspectives that exclude internal factors influencing the evolution of Arab mass media, and, consequently misread their implications. As a result, this breed of literature tends to tell us more about the researcher's own culture than it does about the researched culture.

To overcome this most problematic aspect of this type of scholarly work, we need to study Arab media culture on its own terms. By doing that, I hope to add to and complement the excellent work done by the likes of Naomi Sakr, Muhammad El-Nawawy and Adel Iskandar, Mohamed Zayani, Marc Lynch, Suleiman Al-Shammary, among others. The research conducted by this group of scholars has contributed significantly to my study of al-Jazeera and deserves commenting on.

In her insightful work, *Satellite Realms: Transnational Television, Globalization and the Middle East*, Sakr (2001) examines al-Jazeera from a political economy standpoint. By far, this work by Sakr, along with other articles of hers that focused mainly on al-Jazeera, is indispensable for any student of border-crossing Arab television broadcasting. Her research points clearly at the alignment of al-Jazeera with the traditional form of Arab television broadcasting, despite the novel form of the new medium. A rhetorical analysis of the channel's discourses promises to complement and, at once, put to test the inferences Sakr made in her profound studies of al-Jazeera and new pan-Arab mass media in general.

Another valuable work on al-Jazeera is Muhammad El-Nawawy and Adel Iskandar's 2003 book, *Al-Jazeera: The Story of the Network that is Rattling Governments and Redefining Modern Journalism*. In it, the authors gave a comprehensive account of the arrival of al-Jazeera to the scene of Arab mass media. Overall, the authors' account tended to be journalistic. It delineated the immediate context into which al-Jazeera was born, identified the main players involved in its launching and depicted sketchily the reactions of the Arab viewers and Arab governments towards it. Although highly informative, the book, understandably, was only selectively concerned with the channel's content. At certain points, when the authors commented on the content, they misread, for instance, al-Qasim's subtle oscillation between the figurative and the literal use of language, which led them to misjudge his use of an antithetical argument as a sign of his impartiality. As I will argue in Chapter 3, al-Qasim uses antithetical argument as a means of reproducing the atmosphere of discussions within small social circles. Their book, however, remains a valuable source on al-Jazeera.

Mohamed Zayani's "Arab public opinion in satellite television: The case of al-Jazeera," (as cited in Elizabeth Poole & John Richardson, 2006, pp. 176-232) offered a profound inquiry on the network's effect on the Arab public opinion. Zayani's study shed necessary and most needed light on al-Jazeera's interaction with and impact on the Arab public opinion and the Arab political order at large. Raising many of the questions that I have raised here in my study, Zayani, in the process of answering them, gave a brief yet most keen commentary on the array of opinions that other experts offered in relation to al-Jazeera's impact on its viewers' beliefs and attitudes as well as on the Arab political order at large. It is my hope that this study complements and expands on the author's

astute argument by addressing many of the questions that he has raised from a rhetorical standpoint.

Much Like Zayani's work, Marc Lynch's *Voices of the New Arab Public: Iraq, Al-Jazeera and Middle East Politics Today* focuses on the channel's political implications of the Arab network, so far as the beliefs and attitude of the formation of Arab public is concerned. Unlike Zayani, Lynch, though cautiously, assigns more weight to the ability of al-Jazeera to influence the Arab audience and to shape its attitude and, possibly, political actions. But unlike the scholarly work of other researchers, Lynch pays closer attention to the channel's discourses per se. However, Lynch's reading of the channel's discourses lacks adequate appreciation for the common practice of injecting a calculated measure of ambiguity by the speaker in Arab political discourses, as well as other norms of Arab dialogue, especially within small social settings; a setting that some of al-Jazeera's hosts—al-Qasim, is quite familiar with and emulates frequently. Lynch, as a result, reads what is figurative literally. This is a shortcoming that this study avoids so as to discern the true meaning and implications of the channel's anti-establishment discourse.

Besides these studies, other researchers have conducted content analysis of al-Jazeera's programs. Most relevant to my research is Suleiman Al-Shammary's 1998 *Barnamij Al-Ittijah Al-Mu'akis: Derasah 'Ilmeyyah Akkadimeyyah* [The Opposite Direction Program: An Academic, Scientific Study]. Al-Shammary's content analysis sheds light on the subjects of discussion, the program's guest speakers' nationality, ideological affiliation and academic qualifications, as well as the Arab countries covered by the program. The author also attempts to assess the objectivity of the program's

host—Dr. Faisal al-Qasim. To determine how impartial or objective al-Qasim is, al-Shammary relies primarily on one variable, the number and appropriateness of al-Qasim’s interjections (*mudakhalaat*), based on which, the author reaches a conclusion affirming al-Qasim’s impartiality. The author purposively avoids analyzing the content of what has attracted the Arab viewers to al-Qasim’s program first and foremost, his lengthy, glaringly anti-establishment remarks. Having analyzed al-Qasim’s anti-establishment discourse, I contend that excluding al-Qasim’s introductory remarks from al-Shammary’s content analysis renders his conclusion and his interpretation of the program rather inadequate, to say the least.

In summary, the two types of scholarly literature vis-à-vis electronic mass media in general—the historical-descriptive and the interpretive, represent only initial steps toward the understanding of the Arab culture of mass communication. The problem, due to the novelty of satellite television is even more immense. Research is needed especially from a rhetorical standpoint to identify more precisely how the “new” medium relates to the old power relation between the Arab public and its autocratic leaders. I hope this study can be of some contribution toward this goal and to answering the unanswered questions the previous studies have most ably brought to the fore.

Outline of Chapters

Besides this introductory chapter, the study consists of six more chapters. In the second chapter, I provide necessary background information, much of which pertains to the three factors that have been overlooked by scholars and commentators subscribing to either the radicalizing- or moderating-effect perspective on al-Jazeera—the calculated ambiguity of the Arab political discourses, the objectives and pragmatism of the nomadic

pan-Arab audiences and the objectives, pragmatism and strategic interests of government of the new Qatari Emir. The chapter is divided into three sections, the first of which is devoted to substantiating a major presumption underpinning my analysis: the deep divide separating the Qatari government (and other Arab governments in general) from the Arab public in general over three “core issues,” Arab unity, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the war on Iraq. How Arab regimes have routinely used the media as a means of resolving the pressing rhetorical challenge stemming from such deep divide of interests, concerns and objectives is the topic that I address in the second section of this chapter. In it, I depict the evolution of radio and television services in three different countries, Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, and how such services aim mainly at serving and advancing the strategic interests of each of the three countries. In the third and last section of the chapter, I offer a historical account of the Qatari politico-historical context in which al-Jazeera television was born. By doing that, it becomes possible to comparatively determine the extent to which al-Jazeera conforms to the general paradigm of Arab state-controlled television.

The background information of Chapter 2 strongly suggests that al-Jazeera does not deviate from the general paradigm of Arab state-sponsored media, in terms of the time of its arrival, its contribution to stabilizing the political order of the then newly arriving Qatari regime and in advancing the strategic interests of Qatar. The question then is: does textual evidence, too, bolster the perception of al-Jazeera as a typical state-sponsored Arab medium whose political rhetoric aims first and foremost at advancing the strategic interests of the host-state and curbing the radicalism of the Arab populations?

To answer this question, I offer a critical reading of the anti-establishment rhetoric of the presenters of the three most popular programs—al-Qasim’s “The Opposite Direction” in Chapter 3, Mansour’s “Without Bounds” in Chapter 4 and Haddad’s “More than One Opinion” in Chapter 5.

In Chapter 3, I will focus on how the anti-establishment lengthy introductory remarks of Faisal al-Qasim allow him to utilize a primary value and objective of the nomadic viewers—free speech, in a) setting Qatar apart from any other Arab regime, depicting it as a self-reforming, self-democratizing state that embodies the beliefs, values and expectations of the nomadic Arab audiences, and b) undermining their own beliefs concerning Arab unity, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the pre- and post-war situation in Iraq, without running the risk of alienating them.

A similar outcome emerges from the anti-establishment discourses of Ahmad Mansour’s “Without Bounds,” which I analyze in Chapter 4. As does al-Qasim, Mansour gives long introductory remarks to each broadcast of “Without Bounds,” through which he demonstrates his anti-establishment position and thus unites himself with the beliefs of the majority of the viewers vis-à-vis the same three political issues. But by uncovering the premises underpinning his discourses on the three issues—Arab unification, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the situation in Iraq, we find that such discourses provide the viewers with alternative frameworks of interpretation that lend Islamic cover to the controversial policies of Qatari state, and, simultaneously, nudge the audience to see the Islamically inclined, demonstrably self-reforming Qatari state as an acceptable alternative to the irrational, undemocratic, anti-Islamic Arab nationalist regimes (Nasser’s Egypt and Ba`thist Iraq and Syria), as well as other pro-Western moderate states—such as Jordan,

the Palestinian Authority and others, whose policies diverge completely from the beliefs and attitudes of the Arab populations at large.

The same implications also arise out of the discourses of Mansour's liberal counterpart—Sami Haddad, the host of “More Than One Opinion,” the subject of my analysis in Chapter 5. While at face value, Haddad's discourses, to the pleasure of the audience, sound resoundingly anti-establishment, they nonetheless serve the interests of Qatar by providing it with a liberal cover, indirectly depicting it as a self-reforming Arab government whose policies, no matter how controversial, are nonetheless rational and reconcilable with the Arab viewers' aspirations for democratic changes and a just Arab political regime of government. And while the Islamist Mansour provides the audience with a reformist, non-violent Islamist framework of understanding as an alternative to radical Arab nationalism and Islamism, the liberal-minded Haddad provides the audience with a brand of Western liberalism as an alternative to both radical ideologies. The premises underpinning Haddad's version of Western liberalism represent an argument against any and all forms of armed resistance, whether against Israeli occupation of Palestine, American occupation of Iraq or even against Arab tyrannical regimes that systematically oppress, prosecute or even persecute their political opponents. Thus Haddad's alternative ideology, like Mansour's, poses no threat to political order of the Qatari establishment, or, to that matter, to political order of any Arab country.

In order to complete the picture, I complement the analysis of the anti-establishment discourses of the three most popular programs with a macro analysis of the network's programs in general. This is what I do in Chapter 6. The analysis focuses on two programs that are comparably as popular as al-Qasim's “The Opposite Direction,”

Mansour's "Without Bounds" and Haddad's "More than One Opinion." The two programs are "Religion and Life" and "al-Jazeera Pulpit." Both programs are very important, for different reasons, and deserve a close examination of their discourses. "Religion and Life" draws its importance from the extraordinary character of its permanent guest, Dr. Yusuf al-Qaradawi—a world-renowned jurist and Islamic clergyman and scholar, with strong ties to the Qatari government.¹¹ "Al-Jazeera Pulpit," on the other hand, draws its significance from the fact that A) it is presented by several hosts, and B) it represents a genre of programs that broadcast daily in special cases, such as in the wake of seminal events (like the Intifada and the 2003 War on Iraq). The analysis in the sixth chapter will show that both anti-establishment discourses of al-Qaradawi and several presenters of "al-Jazeera Pulpit" are stylistically and enthymematically in line with the discourses of al-Qasim, Mansour, and Haddad. Like them, al-Qaradawi and various hosts of "al-Jazeera Pulpit" legitimize the Qatari policies and perspective. Also, and in terms of emphasizing non-violence as the proper course of action, the discourses of al-Qaradawi and several hosts of "al-Jazeera Pulpit" are an extension of Haddad's political discourses on the three pressing issues, which entail and

¹¹ A 2008 Foreign Policy poll ranks al-Qaradawi number 3 in the list of the Top 20 Public Intellectuals worldwide. <www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2008/06/16/the-world-s-top-20-public-intellectuals>. See also Bettina Graf and Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen (Eds.)'s *The Global Mufti: The phenomenon of Yusuf al-Qaradawi* (2008), Columbia University Press, NY, NY. In it, al-Qaradawi is described as that unquestionably the most important Sunni Religious figure in the world today. In agreement, Marc Lynch (2009) describes al-Qaradawi similarly, contending that he is "probably the single most influential living Sunni Islamist figure, "Qaradawi's Revisions," <lynch.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/07/09/qaradawi-s-revisions>.

encourage a fatalistic attitude among the Arab viewers, especially towards the American occupation of Iraq and towards the tyrannical policies of the Arab regimes.

At this point, the findings of the historical account in Chapter 2, along with the findings of the micro analysis (Chapters 3 through 5) and macro analysis (Chapter 6) allow us to give a more accurate and more comprehensive reading of al-Jazeera and what it implies, so far as Arab politics and mass media are concerned. This is what I will do in Chapter 7. In it, I will bring the study to an end by re-introducing the research topic, summarizing the findings of the study, offering a final commentary on al-Jazeera, and furnishing future researchers with what I consider to be areas and topics worthy of examining from a rhetorical standpoint, insofar as al-Jazeera and other Arab mass media are concerned.

CHAPTER 2

The Arab State versus the Arab Street

In the eerie calmness of the city of Mafraq, Jordan, in the after-dark hours of the post-1967 War period, listening to news was a family ritual. Intimately huddling around the radio, members of my family would roam the airwaves in search for new news on BBC, Radio Monte Carlo and Egypt's Voice of the Arabs. The act of listening to the news was punctuated by cries of disbelief, remarks of sarcasm, sighs of anger and sorrow, and often ended with "*ba` uuha!*" (They [the Arab leaders] have sold it [Palestine] off!). An integral part of the scenario was the rushing in of my mother or grandmother who whisperingly yet solemnly reminded everyone in the room that "walls have ears! Keep the radio and your voices down! The King's men are everywhere!"

The near ritualistic scene captures almost all components of the complex world of Arab political communication of yester years. Distrustful of the mass media of those who *ba` uuha* [sold Palestine off], the Arab listeners were pushed into a restless state of virtual nomadism in search of radio messages that intersect some of their expectations; aware of the despotic nature of their regimes, the fearful Arab mothers urged discretion lest the radio messages fall on the ears of the horrifying "King's men." And out of the same scenario emerged two glaringly antithetical identities, "us," the alienated, marginalized and fearful, and "them," the horrible, oppressive and all-watchful rulers. To "them," radio meant an instrument of control and subjugation, hence, only one perspective and one narrative, theirs, must be sent out and listened to. To "us," radio meant a potential instrument of resistance and liberation, which required a multiplicity of narratives. The dichotomy of interests, beliefs, visions and attitudes produced a dichotomy of political

discourses; a prominent landmark of Arab politics that is so central to understanding the evolution of Arab mass media.

Both as a society and as a state, Qatar is an integral part of the larger context of the intricate world of Arab political culture. Therefore, to understand al-Jazeera one must first of all situate it accurately in its natural niche, as a prelude to determining whether the channel, to borrow Sakr's (2007) words, is a "challenger or lackey" of the established political order (p. 116). To this end, one must initially address two dovetailing aspects of the larger Arab context, the dichotomy of discourses that sets the majority of Arab populations, regardless of their local identities and characteristics, far apart from the Arab regimes as a whole, and, secondly, the common pattern of Arab mass media in terms of the role and functions performed by the them, so as to determine whether al-Jazeera conforms with or deviates from the common historical pattern of Arab mass media.

Dichotomy of Interests and Expectations

So far as discerning how the dichotomy of discourses is treated by Arab electronic mass media, we must firstly begin by isolating a host of existentially important political issues that could serve as a catalyst; meaning, issues that clearly testify to the deep schism between the Arab political establishment, including the Qatari one, and the Arab public at large. Three political issues in particular avail themselves instantly as such catalyst, Arab unity, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the 2003 U.S.-led war on and the subsequent occupation of Iraq. So, where do both parties, Arab states and Arab public, stand on those three issues?

There is hardly any difficulty encountered in finding out where both parties stand on those three issues. So long as the official stand is concerned, archival data is readily

available. As far as the public stand, even though free expression in the Arab world is remarkably limited, different resources are still available. Examples of such resources are discourses within small Arab social circles, the rhetoric of mass protests, the literature of the most popular political movements and, most of all, poetry, which has historically been the true Arab's Registrar (*Diwan el-Arab*).

Discourse on Arab unity and Unification

There may be a good deal of redundancy in attempting to demonstrate the Arab's deep-seated passion for unity, which, as Torrey (1998) put it, is "like motherhood, no politician with aspiration can speak against it."¹

Torrey is by no means overstating the importance of the notion of Arab unity. Therefore, all Arab political leaders realize that "their legitimacy, popularity, and sometimes even survival depended on whether they were viewed as adhering to the norms of Arabism" or not. Thus, they "expended considerable energy conveying the image that they were genuine disciples of Arab nationalism."² One of the early textual manifestations of the Arab regimes' recognition of the weight of Arab unity and, subsequently, their vacant appeals to their populations' nationalist aspiration is found in the 1945-charter of The League of Arab States (or, the Arab League). The charter is a rhetorically rich document; not only because it furnishes us with evidence attesting to the centrality of Arab unity, but also how it reflects the Arab regimes' exploitation of

¹ Gordon Torray, quoted in Michael N. Barnett (1998). *Dialogues in Arab politics: Negotiations in regional order* (p. 130). New York, NY: Columbia University Press, p. 130.

² Ibid, p. 9.

ambiguity as a means of arguing subtly against Arab unity. This is well demonstrated in the second Article of the charter, which is worth quoting at length:

The League has as its purpose the strengthening of the relations between the member-states, the coordination of their policies in order to achieve co-operation between them and to safeguard their independence and sovereignty; and a general concern with the affairs and interests of the Arab countries. It has also as its purpose the close co-operation of the member-states, with due regard to the organisation and circumstances of each state, on the following matters: ...

The establishment of the Arab League is a testimony to the centrality of Arab unity and the nationalist aspirations of the Arab public at large. In this sense, the League *per se* speaks to the Arab regimes' appeal to the beliefs and attitude of their populations.

However, the League, as its charter signifies, represents, as Barnett (1998) put it, "a vindication for statism and a vanquished Arabism."³ Notice, for example, how terms such as "unity," "Arab people" or "Arab nation" are absent from the charter. Notice, also, how the charter normalizes the state of Arab fragmentation by stressing independence and sovereignty of member states, and dismisses Arab unity through a host of euphemisms, "close cooperation," "Arab solidarity," "unity of stand," "unity of ranks," and "joint Arab action." The schism between the official and the public stands vis-à-vis Arab unity is thus too conspicuous and self-evident, as reflected in the views expressed openly by King Hussein's remarks in 1998: "I believe the Arab world is never going to be a united

³ Ibid, p. 80.

nation... We have developed within each part of the Arab world our own identities, and unity in the future must be a unity of sovereign equals.”⁴ The conspicuous schism anchors and becomes a predictor of the dichotomy of discourses on the other two central issues, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the war on Iraq.

Discourses on Arab-Israeli Conflict

I shall carry my soul in the palm of my hand,
And throw it into the cavern of death!
A life must bring joy to the hearts of friends
And a death bring fear to the hearts of foes!
The spirit of a man has two aims:
To achieve victory, or to die fighting.

‘Abd ul-Rahim Mahmud (1913-1948)

No other source is as valuable as the record of modern Arab poetry in discerning the Arab public stand on the Arab-Israeli conflict. In sheer contrast with the crushing majority of official mass media messages, the words of ‘Abd ul-Rahim Mahmud, the Arab Palestinian poet, like Arab poets in general, were an articulation of resistance and resistance a re-articulation of words. So true to his words, Mahmud did indeed “carry his soul in the palm of [his] hand,” and died on the battlefield in Palestine. The phenomenal popularity of the fighter-poet signals his embodiment of the public discourse, then and now. Tawfeeq Zayyad’s (1929-1994) poetic cry:

⁴ King Hussein (1998). (<http://www.kinghussein.gov.jo>).

“Here we shall stay
Like a wall upon your chest
And never leave”

is still sung by all Arabs, especially by the Palestinian youth for whom the *Intifada*, not the peace process, is a representation of the proper path leading to independence. The same stand is re-articulated by the world-renowned poet Mahmoud Darwish, in his “The Native American Speech” of 1992:

Take my motherland by sword
But I will not sign my name on a peace treaty between
The victim and the murderer.

Capturing the mood of the “native Americans” of the Arab world, Darwish’s poem is an eloquent articulation of the public discourse on the Arab-Israeli conflict and the way it should be and should not be resolved. The public discourse is also manifest in the rhetoric of the two most popular political schools of thought, the pan-Arabist and the pan-Islamists. To a pan-Arabist, the Arab identity of Palestine is unquestionable, let alone the fact that an occupied Palestine renders the geographic integrity of the Arab world impossible; to an Islamist, the significance of Palestine is not only a matter of geographical import: occupation of Palestine represents an act of transgression against God and the Muslim *Umma* and land. In such case, *Jihad* for its liberation is the sacred duty of all Muslims. To both groups, nationalist and Islamist, the conflict with Israel is viewed as *siraa` wujuud* (existential conflict). At the street level, the Arab masses’ massive support for the first intifada of 1987 and the second in 2000, as well as their

unquestioned support for political groups that still view the conflict as existential and take a hostile stand from the peace process (Hamas, Hizbullah, among others) testify to the Arab public's sheer opposition to the Arab regimes' policies towards the conflict.

In contrast, the Arab regimes, represented by the Arab League, view the conflict as *nizaa' hudud* (conflict over borders or territorial conflict). Subsequently, the Arab governments demand that Israel respect the pre-June 5, 1967 borderlines and all relevant resolutions of the Security Council of the United Nations. Some Arab countries (Egypt, Jordan, the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO)) have already signed peace accords with Israel and normalized their relations with her. Other Arab countries, such as Qatar, Mauritania, Morocco and Oman have also taken concrete political measures toward normalization of relations with Israel. The Arab governments have been openly calling for a peaceful resolution of the conflict since the Arab League summit in Fez in 1982 wherein the Arab Peace Initiative was adopted. The same initiative was constantly referred to in subsequent summit meetings of the Arab leaders as a means to resolve the conflict and establish "comprehensive and lasting peace" in the region. The last incarnation of the same initiative was re-proposed by Saudi Arabia and adopted by all Arab governments in the Beirut Summit of 2002 and reiterated in all subsequent summits.

Discourse on the War on Iraq

Except for a minority of views (mainly in Kuwait and parts of Iraq), the Arab masses' stand is in line with the stand of the peoples of the world at large; they vehemently oppose the war. Arab masses protested against the war in almost all Arab countries. "Aggression against Iraq is aggression Against All Arabs," a banner carried in Rabat, Morocco's one-hundred-thousand-protester demonstration on February 20, 2003

read; “Declare *Jihad*,” was the cry of the one-million protesters in Egypt on March, 20, 2003; demonstrators in Syria called the pro-U.S. Arab leaders “traitors,” “worshippers of U.S. dollars.” Even the “peoples of friendly governments [toward the policies of the U.S.], as Telhemi observes, bitterly opposed the war.”⁵ Numerous Arab groups have echoed the people’s views. A press release by the Arab Lawyers Federation called the war “crime against humanity,” March, 20, 2003; “the American war against Iraq is just a part of the American plan that aims at controlling the wealth of the region and the executing of the Israeli project in Palestine,” declared the General Federation of Arab Writers in a statement issued following their conference in March 19, 2003; the International Federation of Arab Trade Unions urged the Arab masses to “move quickly and fight for your existence.”⁶

Aware of their populations’ anti-war sentiments, and the potential threat to political stability in the region, the Arab governments have publicly opposed the war. In fact, in the *Sharm el-Shaikh* summit, the Arab leaders decided and pledged to abstain from taking any measures that would facilitate the invasion of Iraq. But the gulf between words and actions was wide; overtly or covertly, the major bulk of the Arab governments participated in the war against Iraq. Bob Woodward (2004) exposed the supportive role of governments such as Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt, who have covertly

⁵ Telhemi, (*The New York Times*, April, 12, 2003).

⁶ Al-Jazeera TV (www.aljazeera.net).

encouraged the United States to press on with war plans, and later provided the invading armies with necessary facilities.

At this point, it must be emphasized that the self-evident dichotomy of interest is a persisting border-crossing marker of Arab politics as a whole. Given the existentially important nature of the three political issues, Arab unity, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the war on Iraq, the split between the interests of the people and that of the state speaks to the same pressing challenge that the Arab regimes in general face and need to resolve in order to maintain political stability. To do so, the Arab regimes have utilized all state institutions, one of which is their mass media, and, time and again, they have proven their credentials as shrewd survivalists; “the record is impressive,” as Telhami remarks (2004, p. 68). The evolution of radio and television in Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia is quite demonstrative of how Arab governments use their electronic mass media primarily as a means of resolving the existential threats that they face.

Evolution of Radio and Television Broadcasting in the Arab World

William Rugh (1979) correctly maintains that “Arab media systems have taken on their current institutional forms only recently, and these forms can only be explained by reference to the underlying political realities in the society as a whole.”⁷ Rugh’s contention can be rephrased in rhetorical terms in the following manner: Within the context of the Arab world, wherein mass media are set up, directly supervised and

⁷ W. A. Rugh (1979). *The Arab press: News media and the political process in the Arab world* (p. XVI). Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press.

heavily guarded by the state, mass media messages are an integral part of the state's attempts at resolving a pressing rhetorical situation that stemmed from the dichotomy of interests. Arab mass media in the majority of Arab states, first and foremost, perform a primary function: To fend off any threats—internal or external, to the established political order, in order to guarantee its perpetuity. To this end, local Arab mass media emphasize the prudence and legitimacy of the notion of “*dawlah qutreyyah*” (local statehood) as an alternative to a pan-Arab state. Put differently, Arab mass media contribute to normalizing and sustaining the state of disunity and political fragmentation in the Arab world. This is a stance that conflicts sharply with hopes and ambitions of the majority of the Arab masses. This stance, in turn, becomes an integral part of what Rugh refers to as the “underlying political realities” of the Arab world.

Depiction of the evolution of Arab radio and television services in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan shows how each of these states uses the mass media as a means of fending off internal and external threats, preserving the political order, establishing the state legitimacy and, whenever necessary, subverting the political beliefs and attitudes of their local populations.⁸

⁸ I have chosen to focus on the evolution of radio and television in Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia based on two considerations that, I presume, have had effect on the evolution of the media in the region. First, the form of government; and, second, the degree of political influence that each of these countries has in the Arab world.

In regard with the first factor, the three countries represent, to a good extent, the four dominant forms of government, correspondingly, of mass media, in the Arab world. Egypt is a doubly rewarding case; it has made a transition from a pan-Arabist, socialist state under Nasser's rule to an inward-oriented, market economy state under Anwar Sadat's and Hussni Mubark's. Thus, a depiction of the evolution of its radio and television broadcasting will enable us to understand the

Radio and Television in Egypt

In Egypt, radio transmission began unsystematically in the 1920s. Radio broadcasting of that period was correctly described as having “no national objectives for the public interest.”⁹ A more defined and a government-sanctioned radio broadcast began on May 31, 1934. Although nominally independent, Egypt was in fact under British control and so was its first official radio transmission. Marconi-started and –operated, Egypt’s radio broadcast was recognizably British and oriented toward serving the interests of the aging empire. In fact, Arabic language became the official language of Egypt’s radio service only in 1949. Renewed in 1943, the Marconi contract was set to expire on January 31, 1949. However, the rising anti-British sentiment among Egyptians and the declining of the former’s influence in the region following WWII brought the contract to an end on March 4, 1947.

Following the characterless initial phase of radio broadcasting, one could depict the evolution of radio in Egypt in two distinct eras: The Nasserite era, which materialized

role of radio and television under two types of government in the Arab world. On the other hand, Jordan and Saudi Arabia represent two additional forms of government—a liberal monarchy and a conservative one, respectively. As for the second consideration, i.e., the political weight of each country, one could discern three groups of Arab countries—the central, the moderate and the marginal. Egypt is undoubtedly a central state. The case of Jordan and Saudi Arabia is also doubly rewarding; politically speaking, Jordan made a transition from a marginal state to a moderate in the post-Nasser era, while the oil-rich Saudi Arabia made a transition from moderate to central, also in the post-Nasser era. Consequently, a depiction of the media regimes in those three countries seems to be reasonably representative of the evolution of mass media institutions in the entire Arab world.

⁹ See A. D. Boyd (1993). *Broadcasting in the Arab world: A survey of electronic media in the Middle East* (p. 16). Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press.

during the reign of Nasser and lasted till his death in 1970, and; the post-Nasser era, which includes the presidencies of Anwar Sadat and Hosni Mubarak. The Revolution of the Free Officers on July 23, 1952 may be considered a benchmark in the modern history of Egypt and the Arab world at large. The rebirth of Egyptian radio service, under the leadership of Nasser, reflects the state's attempts at resolving a double-sided rhetorical situation: Internally, as Hasanain Haykal (1982) notices in his *Hadith al-Mobadarah* (Discourse on the Initiative), Arab nationalism was not a matter of fact in Egypt as it was in other Arab countries. Therefore, it needed a strong argument. To this end, Nasser's radio service was oriented toward reconstituting the Egyptian identity of his local audiences within the barometers and objectives of Arab nationalism. This ambitious project presented Nasser with the second aspect of the rhetorical situation: Other Arab states, for which Nasser's populist pan-Arabism constituted an existential threat, did not share Nasser's enthusiasm for the objectives of Arab nationalism. Nasser must thus reach out for the Arab audiences living under adversarial regimes. He was then in need of a mass medium that could deliver his argument not only to his skeptical Egyptian audience but also to the Arab populations at large. Radio represented an excellent means for addressing both audiences.¹⁰ Armed with a natural talent for public speaking, Nasser had

¹⁰ To achieve this, Nasser expanded the reach of the radio services he inherited to reach all the local audience in Egypt, the Arab audience everywhere, audiences of Third World countries in Africa and in Asia, as well as audiences in Europe and South America. The ambitious objectives of Nasser were matched by an equally ambitious radio service; besides Radio Cairo's Main Program, Egypt's radio carried Nasser's message in eleven other services (in thirty-six languages)—Sudan Program, Second Program, Alexandria Local Service, People's Program,

conquered the hearts and minds of his audience. When he spoke, as Amin Hewedy suggested, “the streets emptied as everyone went into their houses to listen to him on their radios.”¹¹ With great enthusiasm, Arabs also listened to the Voice of the Arab’s chief announcer—Ahmad Said, provoking the masses against their local governments. The Hashemite (in Jordan and in Iraq) and the Saudi royal families were Said’s targets of choice, among others. But the devastating defeat of Egypt and the Arab world in the 1967 War with Israel and the way the war was covered and reported caused considerable damage to the credibility of the Egyptian as well as other Arabic radio services. Thus in the years following the 1967 War, “radio service underwent drastic changes to regain some of its lost credibility.”¹² Nasser’s sudden death in 1970, however, and the arrival of his successors— Anwar Sadat (1970-1982) and Hosni Mubarak (1982-present), have ushered in a new epoch in Egypt’s radio service; an era wherein the official discourse has been rearticulated away from Nasser’s agenda. Neither Sadat nor Mubarak has shown any commitment to Nasser’s views vis-à-vis a multiplicity of issues, such as pan-Arabism, socialism and the Arab-Israeli conflict. The country’s new political direction necessitated a new role for Egypt’s radio service: The dismantling of Nasserism and its

Middle East Program, Holy Koran Broadcast, Youth Broadcast, European Program, Musical Program, Palestine Program, and the Voice of the Arabs Program.

¹¹ In Michael N. Barnett (1998). *Dialogues in Arab politics: Negotiations in regional order* (p. 44). New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

¹² Author’s interview with Mr. Mohammad Fayeeg, an Egyptian ex-minister of Information (Cairo, June, 2002).

objectives, which no longer serve the new interests of the state. To this end, the Arab nationalist rhetoric receded and was replaced by a new discourse that asserted, and still does, the uniqueness of the Egyptian identity and political needs. However, the astonishing success of Nasser's manipulation of radio was paralleled with the unimpressive performances by Sadat and Mubarak who lacked the charisma and the public speaking talent of their predecessor—Nasser.

Nasser's awareness of the crucial role of radio was paralleled by his awareness of the role of television as well. Bids to construct Egypt's first television facilities were submitted by international corporations in 1956. However, plans for television came to a halt because of the joint British-French-Israeli attack on Egypt in the same year. Plans were resumed in 1959 and the contract to build the country's first television service was given to Radio Corporation of America (RCA). On July 21, 1960, the Egyptian television was born and a viewing audience created. Television, however, due to technological limitation, had only targeted local audience. Hence, its direct impact was limited.¹³ This picture however was drastically changed upon the introduction of the new genre of television broadcasting—satellite television.

In December 1990, the economically challenged Egypt launched a 24-hour Egypt Satellite Channel (ESC), via Arab Satellite Communications Organization (ARABSAT). The timing of the introduction of the new service is significant in discerning the primary

¹³ Politically speaking, technological limitations and the apolitical nature of television content rendered it as less effective a medium in comparison with radio. Nevertheless, Egyptian television has had a tremendous cultural effect on the Arab audience through providing other Arab countries with massive television productions (films, songs, soap operas, plays).

rhetorical situation that the new service was intending to resolve: The launching of the new service coincided with the soon to be launched attack on Iraq by the United States-led coalition, of which Egyptian and other Arab soldiers were a part (see Ameen, 1996; Boyd, 1993; Ghareeb, 2000; Sakr, 2001). The Arab soldiers were constantly appealed to and targeted by Iraq's radio service that called upon them to rebel against their governments. The unpopularity of the war justifies Egypt's fears and explains to a great extent its initiation of the ESC as a means of counteracting the inciting Iraqi radio messages and providing perpetual link between the Egyptian soldiers and their government. The ushering in of the new Egyptian television service has ushered in a new epoch of television broadcasting that has changed the role of television in the Arab world. Sensing the important role of the new technology, as a more attractive alternative to bordercrossing radio, all other countries began soon thereafter their own satellite television services.¹⁴

Whereas the setting up of radio and television services in Egypt reflects a calculated action, the setting up of radio and television services in other Arab countries reflects a calculated reaction. Jordan is a case in point.

Radio and Television in Jordan

Nasser's bloodthirsty disciples massacred members of the royal family. President Nasser is the only cause of crises in the Middle East, and unless he is dealt with, these crises will continue. Nasser is the source of difficulties and disturbances in

¹⁴ See Sakr, pp.13-14.

this part of the Arab world....We want Nasser to know that Arab nationalism was born before he was, and that the holy march to which he referred will make tangible progress if he disappears.¹⁵

The above passage points firmly at the King of Jordan's obsession with the potential threat that Arab nationalism and its prime symbol pose to the Jordanian state. Out of the womb of this political context exited a primary rhetorical situation which Jordan's mass media aimed at resolving. The seriousness of the situation is captured by Hourani (1993):

Indeed, the Jordanian monarch had to resort to extreme measures to wrest back power in April 1957 from the first (and last) freely elected, populist, and pan-Arabist government in Jordanian history, that of Sulieman al-Nabulsi, which had come into office in October 1956 at the height of the Arab nationalist fervor preceding the Suez war.¹⁶

This dilemma, conflated with the country's chronic identity crisis, augmented the gravity of the rhetorical situation—the threat that Nasser's Arab nationalism poses to the political regime in Jordan. The country's radio service, which was inherited from colonial Britain, was not sufficient a tool to aid in resolving the pressing situation.¹⁷ To resolve it, Jordan

¹⁵ A speech by King Hussein of Jordan. See Barnett, p.134.

¹⁶In Albert Hourani, Philip S. Khoury & Mary C. Wilson. (eds.) (1993). *The modern Middle East* (p. 541). University of California Press, Berkeley, CA.

¹⁷ Jordan's radio service, like Egypt's, was one of colonial Britain's legacies. Jordan is a new political creature, which came to being in 1921 after WWI. It was then called Transjordan. In

needed a radio service that could help the state reconstitute the identity of the population in a manner conducive to the interests of the state.¹⁸ The radio service must also enable Jordan to “defend its political position in the Arab world,” as the Jordanian ex-minister of Information, Abu Jaber (2002), put it.¹⁹ To find help in framing its political message, the government contracted Syracuse University to improve and expand its service. Two more studios were opened, one in Amman (August, 1959) and another in Jerusalem (March, 1959). Radio Jordan broadcast could then reach most of the Middle East and could even be heard in Latin America.²⁰

Decision to establish a television service came in 1964. On July 11, 1966, King Hussein laid the cornerstone for the television building, and the Jordan Television

1946, following WWII, and in lieu of a treaty that Transjordan signed with Britain, Transjordan became the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and Prince Abdullah of Transjordan was assigned to the throne of the newly born state—Jordan.

The British government, under its mandate authority over Palestine, established the Palestine Broadcasting Service (PBS) on March 30, 1936, locating it in Jerusalem. With Israel’s capturing part of Jerusalem in 1948, the studios were moved to Ramallah. Upon Jordan’s annexation of the West Bank in 1950, the Palestine Broadcasting Service became Jordan’s first radio service and was then renamed as the Broadcasting Service of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (or, Hashemite Broadcasting Service (HBS)). The Government, as in Egypt and other Arab countries, owned and operated the radio service.

¹⁸ Joseph Massad (2001), in his *Colonial Effects: The making of national identity of Jordan*, offers an elaborate account of the processes adopted by the political establishment for the purpose of the (re)making of Jordan’s national identity.

¹⁹ Author’s interview with Jordan’s ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs Kamel Abu Jaber (Amman, Jordan, 2002).

²⁰ See Boyd, p.98.

Corporation (JTV) was created as a government agency.²¹ Delayed by the 1967 war, television was officially introduced on April 28, 1968.²² Marconi supplied the major bulk of studios and equipments. Further development of JTV was somewhat hindered by Jordan's civil war in 1970. However, the government overcame the repercussions of the war and continued on the path of developing its television service. New and more advanced technology that the country acquired allowed it to begin color transmission in April 1974. And in the mid 70s, Jordan joined INTELSAT, which enabled it to broadcast international events. Also in the same period, Jordan has joined ARABSAT. However, its membership with ARABSAT was not of any benefit due to a delay in the launching of ARABSAT (it was launched in 1985).

Hijab (1985) and Boyd (1993) attribute the Jordanian government's decision to start a television service to the fact that neighboring countries acquired it; therefore Jordan should acquire it too.²³ Jordan has in fact been susceptible to developments in neighboring countries, which gives credence to Hijab's and Boyd's explanation. The explanation still suffers a degree of incompleteness, given the Jordanian regime's awareness of and appreciation for the important role of television in advancing the interests of the state. One way to achieve that emerges out of Richard Weaver's (1953),

²¹ See Hijab, pp. 114-115.

²² See Boyd, p. 101.

²³ See I. M. Hijab (1985). *Mass media in Jordan: A historical analysis of the evolution of press, radio and television*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Minnesota, University of Minnesota, p. 114.

comment on Plato's Phaedrus: "The richness of the literary art diverts attention from the substance of the argument."²⁴ This is indeed the case with television in general, giving its artistic nature. Jordanian television service is no exception. The service was a valuable tool in diverting the viewers' attention from the substance of the state's political argument. To further advance the state's agenda, Jordan's television was equally valuable in promoting the state's argument for the uniqueness of the country's national identity as a precondition for the legitimacy of the state. Actually, for more than one reason, television can in fact outperform radio in that respect. For example, unlike radio, the television audience is compelled to settle down due to lack of competition. Consequently, with a prolonged stay, the audience becomes steadily exposed to a stream of messages whose validity is unchallenged, which enhances their persuasiveness. A third reason, and possibly the most important one, is associated with the aesthetic quality of the new medium: Television impresses the audience more simply because it is a *television*, a virtual theater on which tacit political messages could be disseminated artistically—drama, comedy, songs, etc. Massad (2002) depicts how such productions have been oriented toward the making of a national identity through emphasis on what is purported to be purely Jordanian, such as colloquial speech, dress code, folk songs, cuisine. By doing so, the state, which presents itself as Jordanian, creates an audience in its own image and, subsequently, identifies with what it has created. In that capacity, television becomes a valuable landscape of cultural values and markers that are conducive to the

²⁴ See Richard Weaver (1953). *The ethics of rhetoric* (p. 3). South Bend, Indiana, Gateway Editions, Ltd.

state's political discourse and objectives. The same line of reasoning applies to Jordan's next move—satellite television.

In 1993, Jordan launched the Jordan Satellite Channel (JSC). Given the country's dearth of resources, one could hardly explain Jordan's decision to start a satellite channel on economic basis. Again, a mixture of cultural and political considerations seems to carry more interpretive power behind such move. Amin (1996) and Sakr (2001) propose that a satellite channel serves as a link between the country and its citizens living abroad. This rationale sounds logical. It is, nonetheless inadequate: Under scrutiny, the term "chain" appears to be more applicable and fitting a description than "link." For as was the case with Jordan's establishment of a radio service to promote the state interests by fending off the Nasserite threat, satellite television performs the same function by restricting the mobility of its nomadic listeners, or at least by directing them away from hostile radio and television messages. In that capacity, satellite television is a reinvention of radio broadcasting because of its bordercrossing nature. Hence it can carry out the same objectives that radio carried out in the past. But since satellite television is television nonetheless, it can also bolster the functions of terrestrial television. In both scenarios, satellite television is still oriented toward performing the same duty: To advance and promote the interests of the state, which requires a precursor; to resolve rhetorical situations that pose a serious threat to the state's security and identity. Thus the focus should be on investigating the nature of the rhetorical situation that is expected to and need be resolved in the era of satellite television. So, what is the nature of the rhetorical situation that the new mode of television broadcasting can contribute to solving?

By the 1990s, a new host of internal threats has either risen or gained more weight, which demanded the regime's attention. Firstly, a significant increase of the Palestinian population at the expense of native Jordanians had upset the demographic makeup of the country.²⁵ Systematically discriminated against and alienated, the "strongly nationalist, anti-Hashemite, intensely anti-Zionist, and searching for a formula which would help them to regain their homeland," Palestinians are a nuisance to the state interests.²⁶ Beside the demographic factor, there is also the surging of the "Islamic wave"; paradoxically, the Islamic movement that has played a significant role in bolstering the legitimacy and political stability of the Jordanian regime during the reign of King Hussein is now posing a threat to his son, King Abdullah. This turn of events was mainly brought about by the government's stand on the Arab-Israeli conflict and its pursuit of peace with Israel. Adamantly opposed to the peace process, Jordan's Muslim Brothers, heartened by the phenomenal popularity of *Hamas*, has become a potential threat which can gain a higher degree of severity as the government presses on with its aggressive policies of liberalization, which represents another potential threat. To Jordanians, liberalization of the economy has caused the rapid vanishing of the society's safety valve—the middle class; liberalization also meant the introduction of Western

²⁵ Elaborating on the potential impact of Jordan's Palestinians on the stability of the country, Ephraim Kam, in an article written for *Strategic Assessment* (1999, V. 2, No. 1), contends that "there is a threat to the monarch from the Palestinian population on both sides of the Jordan River...The regime fears that the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank might awaken national sentiments of identification among Palestinian living in Jordan."

²⁶ Rashid al-Al-Khalidi, in Hourani, p. 541.

cultural values at the expense of the society's age-honored conservative values. Against this backdrop, a rhetorical situation has materialized in the 1990s. Reflecting on the gravity of this situation, Lawrence Tal (1993) remarks that "while Jordan existence is not at stake, its political future is unclear: Will it be a Jordanian or a Palestinian state?"²⁷ Satellite television, along with other media and political measures, are oriented toward asserting that Jordan will remain a Jordanian state. Under this light, the drastic technological advances in television broadcasting do not necessarily mean a drastic change in the role of television. It is rather reflective of the state's awareness of the role the electronic media can perform in advancing the varying interests of the state, which required the resolution of varying rhetorical situations that arose in various times.

In comparing the evolution of radio and television in Jordan and in Egypt, one does not fail to notice the functional symmetry between both media regimes. In both countries, radio and television were, and continue to be, instrumental in advancing the interests of the state. The Saudi regime of mass media does not seem to be an aberration; ample evidence suggests that the Saudi radio and television institution complies with the general paradigm of Arab mass media.

Radio and Television in Saudi Arabia

Different mass media had served different vital interests of the Saudi state in four dovetailing stages, the initial (1950s), the early middle (late 50s to early 70s), late middle

²⁷See Lawrence Tal's 1993 article, "Is Jordan doomed?" *Foreign Affairs*, Nov. /Dec. issue. URL (<http://www.foreignaffairs.org/1993/5.html>).

(70s and 80s) and the present stage (90s and up). At each of those stages, the state interests could not be properly served lest a primary rhetorical situation, or more, is resolved.

In the initial stage, the primary interest of the Saudi state was to connect the highly dispersed population of the newly established vast kingdom. Radio, in that stage, was a vital tool for Saudi Arabia, which came into being on September 22, 1932. For, to a great extent, the political survival of the state and the state's ruling clan depended on establishing channels of communication with the inhabitants of the vast land. Ibn Saud, in 1949, authorized his son Faisal, later crown prince and king, to create the kingdom's first radio broadcasting service. Subsequently, in 1953, the General Directorate of Broadcasting, Press and Publication (later the Ministry of Information) was established to operate and manage the Saudi mass media (Shobaili, 1971; in Al-Makaty, 1995, pp. 59-60). During this initial stage, the primary rhetorical situation arose to the surface as a result of a conflict in the stands of the country's two powerful groups—the monarch and the Wahhabi “*ulema*” (leading clergymen) vis-à-vis a radio service: For the monarch, the radio was a vital tool in connecting the disconnected country for the sake of nation- and state-building; for the clergymen, radio, and technology in general, represented a Western *bid`a* (an innovation) that posed a threat to the purity of the Islamic faith. Given the influential role of the clergymen in establishing the state, Ibn Saud could not simply ignore their views. He has nonetheless overcome this obstacle by his superb power of persuasion: He, via actual demonstration, illustrated to a group of clergymen how the new technology can be used as a means of spreading God's Word. The extremely conservative nature of the content of radio messages in the early phase of transmission

provided a further proof for the validity of the monarch's argument. Religious and cultural programs were the service's main items (30% for the former, 45% the later), while news broadcasts occupied the remainder of the landscape (25%). As time progressed, the Islamic orientation of the Saudi radio service was more than a means of placating the kingdom's clergymen; it has rather become a marker of the royal family's pan-Islamist rhetoric as a mechanism for resolving a far more important rhetorical situation that came to the surface in the second stage:

To the Saudi regime, Nasserism was not only an ideological threat; it was an actual physical threat with which the Saudi kingdom came face to face in its own backyard, in Yemen, where the Egyptian troops fought on the side of the revolutionary republicans against the Saudi- (and Jordanian-) backed royalists.²⁸ It was thus at the heart of the state interest to repel the threat of pan-Arabism, which has even found supporters from within the royal family; Prince Talal and a group of young princes opposed the absolute monarchy and advocated instead "a constitutional monarchy, based on liberal and socialist principles."²⁹ Therefore, the dissemination of Islamic discourse as an alternative to Arab nationalist discourse at that stage lies at the heart of the Saudi royal family's vision to resolve the rhetorical situation. To achieve that, the Saudi government improved and expanded its radio service remarkably. According to Boyd (1993), Saudi

²⁸See Malcolm Kerr (1970). *The Arab cold war* (pp. 107-109). New York: Oxford University Press.

²⁹See Joseph Kostiner's (1996) "State, Islam, and opposition in Saudi Arabia: The post-Desert Storm phase." *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 8, 75-89.

Arabia has the most powerful and sophisticated radio transmission system in the Middle East.

Also within the same stage, the advancing of the interests of the Saudi state, especially internally, required the bolstering of the radio service by introducing the country's own television. Television, similar to the Jordanian scenario, was rapidly becoming a symbol of independence and a marker of a local identity. In a country with a widely dispersed population, like Saudi Arabia, television was an important catalyst for a local identity. Given the country's wealth, however, the Saudi television had a late start in comparison with other Arab televisions. The influence of the religious leaders may have contributed to that. Nonetheless, with the help of the American government and corporations (RCA and National Broadcasting Company International (NBCI)), television transmission from two stations (in the cities of Riyadh and Jeddah) began on July 17, 1965. In 1968, a new station in Dammam was built, and in 1977, another station was added in the southwestern city of Abha. The number of stations built and with the help of several relay stations, cable and satellite connection, made it possible for the Saudi TV to cover the entire kingdom and could even be received in some of the neighboring countries. The other major developments in terrestrial Saudi television came in 1974—color television was introduced, and in 1983—an English-speaking second channel went on the air. The content of the Saudi television was strictly censored to assure its compliance with the teachings of Islam as envisioned by the officials at the

ministry of Information. Unlike the Egyptian and the Jordanian televisions, the strict regulations of the Ministry of Information had rendered the Saudi TV unattractive.³⁰

The 70s and 80s ushered in a new host of “underlying political realities.” Externally, with the departure of Nasser and the arrival of Sadat, pan-Arabism was no longer a serious threat to the Saudi kingdom. Better yet, with the advent of the oil boom and the pouring of petrodollars into the kingdom, the exiting of Egypt from the scene (after signing the Camp David Accord with Israel, which resulted in the suspension of its membership in the Arab League) and the commencement of the Iraq-Iran long war, Saudi Arabia was in a place that allowed it to bid for the leadership of the Arab world. Internally, as a social welfare state, the Saudi regime has been able to provide its population with better health care, education system and standards of living, which led to the rapid emergence of a Saudi middle class. More sophisticated and well exposed to the outside world, the Saudi middle class has developed a different set of expectations that past generations did not have. With those two primary new realities, the Saudi mass media must now address a different audience, at the local and the Arab levels. Here arises a multilayered rhetorical situation that must be addressed in order to serve the new interests of the Saudi state: At the local level, any laxity of restrictions on radio and TV content would anger the leaders of religious community, and on the other hand, the old paradigm of media does not appeal to or incorporate the expectations of the newly born

³⁰ See S. S. Almakaty (1995). *Direct satellite broadcasting (DBS) in the Arab world: A descriptive study of DBS's impact in Saudi Arabia*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Kentucky, Kentucky, p.64.

Saudi middle class which is now exposed to other political and cultural narratives that may undermine the official Saudi narrative. To resolve this situation, the Saudi government maneuvered its way out of this situation by capitalizing on Arab offshore press. The nominally independent and privately-owned media based outside Saudi Arabia (mainly in London) offered the Saudi government a practical solution. For on the one hand the Saudi government could not be held liable (by the conservative community within the country) for the less censored, more liberal content of the offshore media, while on the other hand it can still monitor the political content of the said media via its financial control over it. To this end, during the 1980s, Saudi nationals with direct connection to their government established the Saudi Company for Publishing and Research in London. The company publishes daily newspapers (*al-Hayat*, *al-Sharq al-Awsat*), and weekly newsmagazines (*al-Majalla*, *Sayyidati*, *al-Rajul*, *Bassim*).³¹ However, limited in its reach, the new medium is inadequate. It must then be supplemented by other media. Satellite television was it and became the primary medium of the last stage, 1990s and thereafter.

To understand the role of satellite television, one should survey the new realities of the 90s. While Saudi Arabia presses on with its attempt to lead the Arab world, its efforts to achieve this goal required to take into consideration a primary new political reality: The country does not appear as stable as it once did. The new scenario in the 90s is well depicted by Champion (1999):

³¹ Ibid., p. 74. See also E. Ghareeb (2000). New media and the information revolution in the Arab world. *Middle East Journal*, 54(3), 396-418.

To outsiders, Saudi Arabia appears calm and stable. Western governments friendly to the Saudi dynasty are keen to promote the image of a firmly-entrenched and legitimate regime, as of course, is the Saudi royal family itself...How accurate are these appearances? It appears that all in the kingdom is not as stable as the image-makers would have us believe. The dramatic social and economic developments of recent years are now visibly opening gaps between generations and enlarging those that already exist among economic classes. A poorly performing economy and a rising, albeit hidden, level of youth unemployment also throw up serious challenges to the regime. Adding to these concerns is the fact that the political development permitted by the absolute monarchy lags far behind the unsteady social and economic changes that are already taking place.³²

Under those conditions, satellite televisions, owned, directly or indirectly, by Saudi Arabia, are oriented toward minimizing the gravity of the new problems and capitalizing on the government's effort to resolve them. Maintaining the old image of a stable country is a major objective of the new mode of television broadcasting. Taking full account of the mechanisms through which an image of a stable country is projected goes beyond the scope of this study.³³ However, it is noteworthy how the margin of freedom has been

³²Champion, D. (1999). "The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia: Elements of instability within stability." *Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA)*, 3(4), 49-73.

³³ This area deserves the attention of media scholars and critics. In my personal and extended observation of Saudi-sponsored satellite channels, political messages embedded in different television productions are easily noticeable. For example, in a reality television show

widened and has become an integral part of the Saudi regime claim to be self-reforming and more accommodating of its populace's demands for taking part in governing themselves.

So long as the resolving of the rhetorical situation that pertains directly to the need to address Arab audience at large is concerned, the task becomes considerably harder and the rhetorical situation more complex: The Arab audience, which has been resentful and skeptical of the policies of the Saudi royal family (e.g., its historical alliance with the ill-perceived West, its unforgotten and persisting hostility toward Nasser and Arab nationalism in general, its support for the First and the Second Gulf War against Iraq and the unattractiveness of the Saudi version of Islam-Wahabism), is not disposed to support the Saudi endeavor to lead the Arab world. Against this backdrop, and with such a damaged ethos, it is most unlikely that the Saudi policy and image makers can argue persuasively for the Saudi bid to lead. Neither did it seem that this was the immediate goal of the Saudi satellite televisions. What is rather apparent is the orientation of the Saudi satellite channels toward imposing, not arguing for, the Saudi leadership of the

called "The Home is not Your Home" [*elbait mosh baitak*], middle class Arab families are taken on trips to remote and impoverished areas of the world wherein Arab family members stay with a local family and experience the hardships of everyday life endured by the host family. The only conclusion that may arise out of watching this series is: "We, Arabs, despite all the problems we have, should count our blessings." This feel-good-about-yourself genre of television productions dominates the landscape of programs. Another dominant genre could be described as "Apolitical Islam." Within this genre, numerous programs and talk shows emphasize on the spiritual aspects of Islam and centralize the role of prayer as a principal means of solving all problems. "*yalla shabab!*" [Let's Do It, Young men (women)!] is a prime example of this genre. Depoliticizing Islam is also self-evident in the "Amro Khalid" phenomenon; young, modern-looking preachers downplay the political aspect of current problems and stress instead the economic, social and moral aspects.

Arab world by depicting it as a de facto matter. This is well manifested in the Saudi dominance of the new realm: A multi-channel Middle East Broadcasting Center (MBC), the first Saudi-owned satellite television, was launched from London in September 1991.³⁴ Conveniently and tellingly, MBC came to life around the same time the Arab-Israeli peace talks in Madrid has started. MBC was meant to be an Arab alternative to CNN that covers the multilateral Arab-Israeli peace talks from a Saudi standpoint” (see Alterman, 2004, p. 232; El-Nawawi and Iskandar, 2003, p. 216; Sakr, 2005, p. 69; among others). Another Saudi-owned popular satellite television is multi-channeled ART (Arab Radio and Television). Operating out of Rome, Italy, ART was launched in 1993, to be followed in 1995 by Orbit TV, which began operating a pay-TV service out of Italy. The Saudi’s circle of influence extends beyond those three satellite networks. The kingdom, through financial support and co-ownership, exerts considerable influence over other satellite channels, such as the Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation International (LBCI), Arab News Network (ANN), Future Television and Al-Arabiyyah channel. The latter, not accidentally, went on the air shortly before the eruption of the 2003 War on Iraq and was “established with the express intention of luring away Al-Jazeera’s large and loyal audience” (Sakr, 2005, p. 66). Although the Saudi government may not be able to capture the hearts and minds of the Arab viewers, it has nonetheless captured their attention by its ever-presence in and dominance over the world of satellite television. Under this light,

³⁴ Ghareeb, p.402; Al-Makaty, p.74; Sakr, p.13.

Saudi Arabia's leadership of the virtual pan-Arab world of satellite television skirts its attempt to lead the actual Arab world.

The foregoing account on the evolution of radio and television in the three study cases—Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, points clearly at the political intermarriage between an Arab state and its mass media. In the three cases, radio and television were oriented primarily toward serving and advancing the interests of the state, more often than not, at the expense of the interests and goals of their populations. This is the general pattern. The question then is: despite the appearances to the contrary, does this pattern hold true in the case of the Qatar-based al-Jazeera Television?

Qatar: Let There Be Al-Jazeera!

Although there is no empirical evidence proving that the Qatari government has any direct influence over al-Jazeera, the political context in which the network was born indicates that it still complies with the traditional paradigm of state-sponsored Arab mass media, whose main objective is to bolster the strategic interests and policies of the sponsoring state.

As an idea, al-Jazeera was explored and proposed by a Qatari government-appointed committee whose three members have strong ties with the ruling family.³⁵ One of the founders of al-Jazeera, Adnan el-Sharif, who spoke admirably of the BBC and its pioneering experience in launching its Arabic-speaking BBC television, saw such an experience as an impetus for al-Jazeera Channel. "The BBC television was the right seed

³⁵ Ghareeb, p. 405

sown in the wrong soil,” he remarked (personal interview, 2002, Doha, Qatar). Therefore, when el-Sharif was recruited by the Qatari government to launch a Qatari satellite channel, he suggested to the state officials the superiority of a specialized news channel instead; for “specialization,” he argued, “is the key to success” (ibid). His proposition was ultimately accepted and the Qatari government began taking steps towards launching al-Jazeera. The channel came to life by an Emiri decree issued on February 8, 1996. It began six-hour broadcasting on November 1, 1996, but it gradually increased its broadcasting hours till it began a 24-hour operation on February 1, 1998. The collapse of the deal between the BBC and the Saudi-owned Orbit served the channel well; “it was a boon to Al-Jazeera,” as Edmond Ghareeb (2000, p. 405) puts it. For all the to-be-stars of al-Jazeera, who worked for the BBC Arabic TV, became available upon the failure of the BBC-Saudi venture. Al-Jazeera took advantage of the situation and hired many of the BBC’s well-experienced Arab staff.

The genesis of al-Jazeera and the way it has come to life make it reasonable to propose that the network is in line with the general pattern of Arab state-envisioned and controlled mass media, despite appearing otherwise. For such proposition to hold true, one must outline in adequate detail the context in which the channel was born and how it helped the host-state overcome serious challenges to its political order. To this end, a brief look at the modern history of Qatar and the challenges it faced is needed.

Qatar: Historical Background and Challenges

Qatar is a semi peninsula strategically situated in the middle part of the Arabian Gulf. The country has a population of about 0.6 million, about 60% of which is non-

Qataris (World Bank, 2003).³⁶ Historically, the country was a British protectorate since 1916. Qatar has been and continues to be ruled by the Al Thani family. It gained independence on September 3, 1971. Oil exports remain Qatar's main source of national income. The rise of oil prices in 1973 transformed Qatar from one of the poorest countries to one of the richest. Its citizens enjoy one of the world's highest per capita income—\$20,300.³⁷

So far as the formation of al-Jazeera is concerned, the most important period is that which witnessed the arrival of the current Qatari government headed by Prince Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani who deposed his father in a bloodless coup on June 27, 1995. The new Emir faced a set of challenges, external and internal, that have posed serious threats to his rule. Externally, as numerous historians and commentators have frequently noted, the historically tense relationship with Qatar's powerful neighbor, Saudi Arabia, deteriorated even further after the coup, especially in light of what Kordesman (2004) described as Qatar's "tendency to start political feuds and aggressively assert its status and independence" (p. 214). Such tendency did not sit well with the Saudi royal family which views itself as the uncontested leader of the GCC. The tense relations and the ambitions of the new Emir were manifest in Qatar's accusing the Saudi officials and other GCC members of attempting to overthrow the new Emir and supporting the return of his father who was still active in soliciting Arab support for his return to power (see

³⁶ World Bank (2003).

³⁷U.S. Department of State (2000).

for example Freedman, 1998; Herb, 1999; Kordesman, 2004; Sakr, 2007; Telhami, 2004). Another manifestation of the tense relationship was the Saudi-backed media outlets' frequent attacks on Qatar, especially in the mid 1990s, in a manner not unlike the Arab media wars of the past. Under those circumstances, the new Qatari ruler, in order to survive, needed to overcome the serious external threat to his political order, and, to this effect, he embarked on a set of bold policies that aimed at asserting the government's legitimacy, sovereignty and perpetuity. Courting the United States was an example of such policies; in January 1996, shortly after the coup, a U.S. armor brigade was positioned in Qatar, and in September 2002, shortly before the war on Iraq, the U.S. Central Command headquarters was moved from Tampa, Florida to Qatar.³⁸ Another bold move came less than nine months after the coup as Qatar decided to court Israel. Qatar was in fact the first of the Arabian Gulf states to take concrete steps towards normalizing its relations with Israel.³⁹ The Saudis read this political move correctly; "an attempt to win support from the U.S. administration should any dispute with Saudi Arabia arise" (El-Nawawi and Iskandar, 2003, p. 81). Both Sakr (2007) and Telhami (2004), along with several other commentators, share the Saudi's interpretation of Qatar's courting of both the United States and its main regional ally, Israel, as a defense mechanism against very serious regional threats posed by its powerful neighbor. Commenting on such mechanism, Sakr (2007) contended that "The ruler of Qatar is

³⁸ See (<http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/facility/>).

³⁹ On March 3, 1996, Qatar and Israel established quasi-diplomatic, commercial missions in both countries. David Makovsky, *The Jerusalem Post*, March 4, 1996.

meanwhile said to have enjoyed special US [U.S.] protection from the wrath of Saudi Arabia as a reward for pursuing diplomatic contacts with Israel” (p. 124). Equally effective was the new Qatari ruler’s bold move, the establishment of al-Jazeera and granting it an unprecedented level of editorial freedom. So bold and effective a move by which “the Qataris have managed to control an outlet that the Saudis and others fear and to reduce the influence of the Saudi-backed media.” (Telhami, 2004, p. 85).

Within this context, it becomes rather clear that the formation of al-Jazeera did not signal any profound structural or cultural evolution within an Arab society. On the contrary, the establishment of al-Jazeera, like the establishment of state-sponsored mass media somewhere else in the Arab world, reflected the government’s attempt at defending and preserving the country’s political order. But awkwardly and to the good fortune of the Qatari and the Arab populations at large, freedom of press at this point in time availed itself as an effective means of stabilizing the state. Succinctly summing up the peculiarity of this occurrence, Sakr (2005) had this to say: “...the unelected leadership of the very small, very rich Gulf state of Qatar, with apparently little to lose from allowing free speech, had decided to adopt freedom of expression as a foreign policy tool” (p. 68). In hindsight, not only that Qatar had little to lose from allowing free speech, but it in fact had a lot to gain from doing so through al-Jazeera; as any observer of current Arab political affairs would testify, al-Jazeera was so effective a tool that it has taken Qatar out of the state of marginality and oblivion to a state of political prominence in Arab politics.

Moreover, the formation of al-Jazeera and the positive drastic change to Qatar’s political status that the channel induced had also contributed to resolving the internal

challenge that the new Qatari government was also facing. The challenge emanated from two main sources, the Qatari population's exposure and susceptibility to anti-government Saudi-backed media messages and from the disenchantment of the Qatari population with the government's courting of the United States and Israel. The Qatari government needed to take drastic measures to overcome the internal challenge, and, once again, al-Jazeera was an integral component of the ruler's new bold policies that aimed at placating the local populace by meeting many of its needs and expectations. Most astonishing among those policies was the abolishing of the country's ministry of Information in 1996, which, in the past, symbolized the state's full control over the flow of information; a step unprecedented in the Arab world, which indicated what seems to be the ushering in of a new era of political freedoms. The new political direction was further bolstered by the Emir's planning of municipal elections in 1999 in which the Qatari women had the right to vote; also an unprecedented move in the majority of Arabian Gulf states. A new constitution was also drafted and citizens-approved via a public referendum in 2003, and, subsequently, the country has had its first parliamentary elections which took place in 2004. Another major achievement of Sheikh Hamad is the inauguration of the Education City Complex in which many American and European universities have opened branches. Within this context, al-Jazeera was fully in line with the Emir's new bold policies that helped him "to secure his authority after overthrowing his father: popular support supplements support from within the dynasty" (Herb, 1999, p. 126). The channel's special relationship with and its service to the host-state is undeniable and was even acknowledged by some of al-Jazeera's zealous supporters like El-Nawawy and Iskandar who contend that:

[T]he station [that] lacks inhibition in critiquing Arab regimes from Mauritania to Oman, has only rarely gone after the government of Qatar with the same vigor...Indeed, domestic issues such as the power struggle between Hamad bin Khalifa and his deposed father, as well as foreign policy issues, have not found an outlet on Al-Jazeera. El-Nawawy & Iskandar (2003). *Al-Jazeera: the story of the network that is rattling governments and redefining modern journalism*. (p. 83)

Conclusion

The foregoing account clearly shows that the interests, stands and expectations of the Arab governments in general were and still are, to a great extent, irreconcilable with the interests, stands and expectations of their populations. The dichotomy between the interests of the public and those of the state is glaringly clear in the contradictory stands that both parties take on issues such as Arab unity, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the 2003 War on and occupation of Iraq. Within this context, the deep divide between the Arab governments and their populations had shaped and underpinned the governments' mass media philosophy and policies; to advance the interests of the host-government, contain public dissent and maintain political order at any cost. Additionally, the foregoing account has also shown that al-Jazeera, in terms of its genesis and the valuable role it preformed in fending off the external and the internal challenges that the government of Qatar faced, is fundamentally comparable with other Arab state-owned radio and television services. How then are we to explain the channel's popularity?

It is important to recall that in the past the popularity of media such as the BBC, Monte Carlo, VOA and Voice of the Arabs told us as much, if not more, about the

nomadic Arab audience as it did about the medium. For instance, to listeners, the political and national affiliations of those media were of marginal import in comparison with the needs and expectations that underpinned the nomadic audiences' interactions with various media, which explains the audiences' virtual nomadism and their disloyalty to any given medium. That also seems to be the case with al-Jazeera whose popularity, at least in its early years, spoke mainly to the urgent needs and expectations of the Arab nomadic viewers in the 1990s; a time period that witnessed, firstly, the deepening of the gap between the Arab populations and their regimes to a point that could potentially threaten Arab political order at large; and, secondly, the Arab audiences' total disillusionment with the Western media that have once served as a comparatively credible alternative to official Arab media. To explain, the Western mass media coverage of the First Gulf War on Iraq, especially by the CNN, totally shattered the Arab audience's confidence in them. As a result, the nomadic audience became open to other alternatives. The views of an Arab journalist sum up succinctly the peculiarity of this decade and the readiness of the Arab viewers to move on in search of an alternative:

There was a time when we avoided looking Western reporters in the eye. They created many a complex in us, made us feel like dwarfs and convinced us that we are incompetent...But we saw them in action and we could not believe it. We saw them committing perjury. We saw them displaying hypocrisy and animosity. We saw them shaping public opinion in their hands like clay...We saw them romanticizing smart bombs and the so-called bloodless surgical technology. We have seen them weep for an oil-soaked bird and describe the torn limbs of Iraqi victims as pro-Saddam propaganda. There was a time when we thought they were

from another planet where regimes, peoples, plants and trees breathe democracy. And we almost believed that. The recent events have opened our eyes. (as cited in Ghareeb, 2000, p. 402)

It was in this decade that al-Jazeera was born; a decade in which the pragmatic nomadic viewers' pressing need for an alternative mass medium outweighed the implications of the channel's affiliation with and total financial dependence on Qatar. In this sense, the channel's popularity does not represent a departure on the part of the Arab audience from their customary norms of interaction with mass media.

However, what is of interest is the fact that despite the passage of time since the founding of al-Jazeera, its departure from and subverting of many of the beliefs of its viewers (as the analysis in the following chapters will show) and the mushrooming of pan-Arab television services, the channel still managed to sustain an enviable level of popularity. The continued popularity of al-Jazeera suggests that there is something unique about the channel, despite its conformity with the general Arab mass media. What is unique about al-Jazeera? How does it manage to serve both an undemocratic state yet retain its popularity with the Arab public?

CHAPTER 3

“The Opposite Direction”: Whose Direction?

America is Israel, isn't she? Israel is America, isn't she? Isn't there a complete harmony in their visions? Therefore, the United States is our principal enemy, however we look at the facts... Why then do the majority of Arab regimes throw themselves into the lap of the enemy, knowing very well that she [the United States] is the enemy of their peoples and their interests?

These rhetorical questions are not delivered by an anti-Western radical Islamist, or by a zealous Arab nationalist orator addressing an Arab nationalist audience in a convention sponsored by an Arab nationalist regime like Ba`thist Syria or formerly Ba`thist Iraq. Rather, these rhetorical questions are delivered by Dr. Faisal al-Qasim in the June 12, 2001 broadcast of his weekly live debate talkshow, *al-Ittijaah al-Mu`akis*, “The Opposite Direction” (OD, henceforth).

To a Western audience, a debate program like al-Qasim's OD is common and is unlikely to stir much interest, but not to the silenced, disenfranchised, nomadic Arab audiences. To them, it was OD, not any other program including al-Jazeera's main commodity, the news, that attracted their attention and introduced them to the, then, new pan-Arab TV station—the Qatar-based al-Jazeera Channel. Unlike the “noncontroversial and do little else but serve as public relation outlet for government” Arab TV programs, as El-Nawawy and Iskandar (2003) describe it (p. 11), OD breaks all taboos, and has thus “brought about the wrath of the Arab leaders and caused great tensions between them and the Qatari government,” in al-Qasim's own words (personal interview, 2002, Doha,

Qatar). It is thus unsurprising that al-Qasim's OD rapidly "became the talk of the Arab world" in the formative years of al-Jazeera (Alterman, 2004, p. 223).

OD stands as a demonstrative example of an unprecedented level of free speech, as demonstrated by the wide gap separating the views of al-Qasim from the views of the Qatari establishment whose foreign minister urges the Arab populations to change their understanding of and attitude towards Israel:

Why talk about Zionism, now that we had the [Arab] Initiative, which we in Qatar supported from the very beginning. We are trying to solve our problems with Israel and to live peacefully in the region. So drop the haughtiness!" (Al-Jazeera, October 16, 2002)

The question is: does al-Qasim's glaringly anti-establishment discourse render him "substantially one" with the anti-establishment viewers? Or, to phrase the same question differently, does the host's discourse represent a truly substantive, liberational rhetoric that embraces the radicalism of the viewers?

Anti-Establishment Discourse: Serving the Interests of the Qatari Establishment

Addressing the issue of "what a prince should do to be held in esteem," Machiavelli (1989) stressed in *The Prince* the role of "great enterprises" that give rare examples of the new prince (p. 87). The anti-establishment discourse of al-Qasim exemplifies such a "great enterprise"—al-Jazeera, which gives tens of millions of the oppressed, marginalized, nomadic Arab viewers a rare example of a new breed of Arab rulers, a respectable, credible, self-reforming Qatari Prince. By emphasizing the uniqueness of the government of the new Qatari Emir, al-Jazeera downplays the negative bearing of what the new Emir has in common with other Arab regimes. Al-Jazeera

achieves that by compelling the millions of viewers watching al-Qasim to ask one question, a rhetorical one, “Did he really say that live on television?” By eliciting this reaction from the viewers, that which is most shocking about the enterprise that al-Qasim personifies subsumes and dwarfs matters that are less shocking; matters such as the Emir’s unpopular policies—open relations with Israel and the strengthening of relations with the United States, for example. Even though al-Jazeera as a great enterprise does not render the new Qatari Prince a new Nasser, it, to say the least, tells the viewers that he is not Anwar al-Sadat or Hosni Mubarak, thus helping the Prince avoid the contempt and hatred of the Arab public. In the current context of Arab politics, “avoiding contempt and hatred” of the public, to once again borrow Machiavelli’s words in *The Prince* (p. 71), is quite an achievement; one that the new Qatari Prince owes to the shocking anti-establishment rhetoric of the likes of al-Qasim.

Besides giving a rare example of the new Qatari prince by personifying a great enterprise, al-Qasim, by giving tens of millions of the viewers what they aspire for—a free pan-Arab medium, has also given the Qatari Emir what he needs, tens of millions of viewers to whom he can unintrusively defend and justify his unpopular policies. Although the Qatari Emir rarely addresses the audience directly so as to convince them of the worthiness of his unpopular policies, other public figures, especially the country’s foreign minister, do so frequently. Defending the policies of the new Qatari Emir is also carried out, indirectly, by many of the network’s hosts. Al-Qasim is one of them.

To delineate how al-Qasim indirectly serves the interests of the Qatari Emir, we need to examine the implications of a primary rhetorical device that he uses throughout

his anti-establishment discourse, rhetorical question, as in “America is Israel, isn’t she? Israel is America, isn’t she?”

While the host uses this rhetorical device to initially engage and validate some of the viewers’ passions, attitudes and radical beliefs, he, simultaneously, uses the same rhetorical device to subtly move the audience away from any radical, principled lines of reasoning and closer to pragmatic ones that consistently bolster the Qatari perspective and policies vis-à-vis issues that concern the pan-Arab audience. Key to the effectiveness of al-Qasim’s rhetorical questions in blocking the viewers’ radicalism is the ability of such questions to induce a subtle topical slippage that benefits the Qatari establishment. By topical slippage, I am referring to the process by which al-Qasim uses rhetorical questions in encouraging the viewers to abandon one line of reasoning that underpin their popular beliefs and attitudes, in favor of an alternative line of reasoning that favors the Qatari state.

Take the excerpt I have begun the chapter with for an example: “Israel is America, isn’t she? America is Israel, isn’t she?” The excerpt is an illustration of how al-Qasim, by using rhetorical questions in engaging and identifying with the viewers’ attitude towards both the United States and Israel, subtly brings about an alternative line of reasoning, or rhetorical topic. Initially, the previous rhetorical questions elicit agreed-upon answers, “Yes,” in both cases. In this capacity, the questions connect al-Qasim with the viewers’ opposition to and contempt for the policies of Israel, the United States and their Arab allies, including the Qatari ruler, who “throw themselves into the lap of the enemy, knowing very well that she [the United States] is the enemy of their peoples and their interests.” However, al-Qasim, in a Shakespearean way, uses such popular

premises—expressed as rhetorical questions, to defend some of the establishment’s unpopular acts or perspective. Just as questions such as “Who is here so base that would be a bondman? ... Who is so rude that would not be a Roman?... Who is here so vile that will not love his country?” (*Julius Caser*, Act 3, Scene 2) provide the audience with a new perspective on a base, unpopular act (the killing of Julius Caesar), and link the new perspective to the audience’s own patriotism and love of freedom rather than to the interests of the ruling elite, so do al-Qasim’s rhetorical questions, “Israel is America, isn’t she? America is Israel, isn’t she?” While at face value, the questions embrace the viewers’ opposition to or even hatred of Israel, the United States and their Arab allies, the same questions bring to the viewers’ mind a compelling circumstance or a present fact that unless taken into consideration will bring negative consequences to the viewers: the United States’ full commitment to the security of Israel and the readiness and willingness of both Israel and the United States to use their devastating military power to defend their strategic interests in the Arab region. At this point, al-Qasim’s rhetorical questions are not only linked to the viewers’ opposition or hatred of the policies of both Israel and the United States, but are also linked to the viewers’ fears, concerns and practical wisdom. In this capacity, the questions elicit from the viewers a question such as “What can a ruler of a defenseless tiny little country like Qatar do against a regional super power—Israel, or the world’s only super power—the United States?” Subsequently, the viewers are invited to see the strengthening of Qatari relations with both Israel and the United States as “*sharrun la budda minh*” (necessary evil), or to even see it as a matter of political prudence on the part of a noble ruler who is compelled by a callous circumstance to embark on base, unpopular political actions. The shift in audience identification is thus

linked to a shift from one line of reasoning to another—from principle to circumstance, facts or consequence, that echoes and is clearly manifest in the Qatari foreign minister’s declaration that: “We are a powerless nation who cannot help the Palestinians against Israel. Therefore, it is far better to beg the Americans for a settlement,” (al-Jazeera, May 14, 2002).

In the previous example, the topical slippage induced by al-Qasim comes about by linking his rhetorical questions to two different sets of the viewers’ passions and attitudes, one of which requires or is conducive to an alternative perspective on the issue under discussion. In different discourses, al-Qasim induces a topical shift by using rhetorical questions to weaken a popular argument by unintrusively undermining the rhetorical topic that supports it, and, concomitantly, by using alternative rhetorical topics that favor the unpopular counter argument. A third way by which al-Qasim pushes the viewers towards an alternative perspective is to use rhetorical questions in constructing a strawman argument that is based almost solely on pathos in defense of popular beliefs. By constructing an argument for popular beliefs, al-Qasim renders them susceptible to a counter argument grounded in tangible facts, self-evident compelling circumstance, and, or, negative consequence.

In numerous discourses, al-Qasim uses rhetorical questions in more than one way to induce a topical slippage. But no matter how exactly al-Qasim induces a slippage in the line of reasoning, the outcome is the same: he bolsters the perspective and policies of the Qatari establishment without appearing to endorse them, and, at the same time, he blocks the radicalism of the viewers without running the risk of alienating them. Bearing such an outcome in mind, al-Qasim’s anti-establishment discourses are far from

indicating a true substantive, liberational rhetoric, as the analysis of his discourses on the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Iraqi issue (before and after the 2003 War) and Arab unification will illustrate.

Arab-Israeli Conflict: From Existential to Territorial

By examining al-Qasim's discourses on the Arab-Israeli conflict, we find that he anchors his anti-establishment discourse in rhetorical questions that initially unite him with the viewers' outrage at and contempt for the policies of the Arab-regimes towards the conflict. However, as we look closely at al-Qasim's rhetorical questions, we uncover an effort to undercut the viewers' radical popular beliefs by indirectly emphasizing circumstance or present facts that render the pursuance of noble principles or objectives impractical and, or, harmful to the Arab masses. Alternatively, al-Qasim's rhetorical questions nudge the viewers towards less desirable programs of action, such as a negotiated settlement, which emerges as "*sharrun la budda minh*" (necessary evil). Concomitantly, al-Qasim also tacitly depicts armed resistance, no matter how noble and legitimate it is, as an impractical means of resolving the conflict, and the establishment of a Palestinian state on parts of historical Palestine as an acceptable solution to the conflict. Clearly, this alternative reading of the conflict is a mere re-articulation of the Qatari narrative on the conflict, as the analysis of three episodes of OD—October 3, 2000, September 19, 2002 and October 24, 2000, will show.

The Intifada: the Noble versus the Base

Typically, al-Qasim's lengthy introductory remarks, which sometimes last for four or five minutes, are divided into two sections that are separated by al-Qasim's famous transitional phrase, "*lakin bilmuqabel*" (but on the other hand). Al-Qasim

introduces one argument in the first section and the counter argument in the other. This is not the case in the October 3, 2000 broadcast of OD. This session of OD is particularly significant as it illustrates al-Qasim's deliberate and purposive use of rhetorical questions as a means of identifying him with the viewers' beliefs and attitudes, as evidenced by the odd measure that al-Qasim takes in this session of OD: sensing the level of support for the second Palestinian Intifada which has just erupted, and the Arab public's anger and intolerance of any counter argument, al-Qasim has completely altered the format of the program by obliterating any argument against the Intifada. But even in this session of OD, and despite the calculated measure that al-Qasim has taken, we can still detect an effort, though faint in comparison with other broadcasts of OD, on al-Qasim's part to block the radicalism of the viewers who continue to believe in the illegitimacy of Israel, the superiority and nobility of armed resistance and the futility of the peace process.

Al-Qasim begins the episode by reciting an excerpt from a poem by an Iraqi poet, Mudthaffar al-Nuwwab, followed by a barrage of al-Qasim's own rhetorical questions:

“Jerusalem is the bride of your Arabness [you say]!

Hurray! Hurray! Hurray!

Why, then, have you ushered all the fornicators of the night into her chamber,
Stood behind the door eavesdropping to the screams of the shredding off of her
virginity,

Drew your daggers, and hushed her, lest her screams stain your honor?

[Sons of bitches!] Should a woman being raped remain silent!”¹

Do Arabs [the Arab leaders] still seek peace with the enemies of peace?

Is the conflict between us a conflict over borders or over existence?

Why such ignominious shortcoming on the part of the Arab regimes?

What do they have to offer besides their overused, despicable statements of denunciation, condemnation and reproof [of the Israeli actions]?

Who said that the Palestinian people have acquiesced to this degrading peace [with Israel]? Here they are rising up like a phoenix from beneath the ashes to shake the earth from beneath the feet of their executioners.

Who said that an eye cannot fend off the assault of a borer? Here are the heroes of Palestine rising up like one man in the face of the Israeli brutality, which many see as far more heinous and barbaric than Nazism.

In this atypical session of OD, there is no counter argument. Al-Qasim, instead, models his anti-establishment discourse after the viewers’ own discourses within the safety of small social gatherings.² In such social settings, discussions are primarily

¹ Author’s translation of the part of one of Mudhaffar al-Nuwwab’s famous poems that al-Qasim began the episode with. Well aware of the audience’s familiarity with the poem, al-Qasim did not actually utter the bracketed expression “sons of bitches.” He, nonetheless, gestured it non-verbally by pausing for a second to give the viewers a chance to fill in the blanks.

² Among the scenarios that have left an ever-lasting impression on me as a young Arab boy is the loveably chaotic atmosphere of *saharaat* (nightly social gatherings). In them, certain activities are performed almost ritualistically by the group members. They drink tea and coffee, play cards and backgammon, listen to traditional music, recite poetry and, amidst all of this, talk politics. Every now and then, the ordinary activities of the group come to a halt as everyone listens to news bulletins aired on the BBC, *Sawt ul-Arab*, Monte Carlo, VOA, among other radio stations. Afterwards, the group members exchange political views and commentaries in a most

epideictic; the discussants present their views as truncated arguments phrased sarcastically as rhetorical questions,³ through which the speakers dispraise the Arab regimes and freely express their anger and hatred for their rulers using common modes of speech—poetic, Islamic, proverbial. This is exactly what al-Qasim does in this session of OD. He, as do the viewers, uses rhetorical questions to praise what or whom the audience praises and to dispraise what or whom the audience dispraises, using the viewers' common mode of expression.⁴ To demonstrate his unity with the viewers' support for the Intifada and the Palestinian people, al-Qasim borrows the most moving

disorderly and highly passionate fashion that actually diminishes the informative value of the discussions. For in these exchanges there are hardly any recognizable boundaries between the speaker and the listener, the verbal and the nonverbal modes of expression, between shouts of anger and disbelief and sighs of calm and relief, between the political and the social, between the figurative and the literal.

³ To give an example, a participant would play the role of the devil's advocate, a common practice that complies with and is inspired by a common Arab maxim, *naqel el-kufr laysa bikafer* (the transmitter of infidelity is not [necessarily] an infidel).” To this effect, the participant may report cynically that “the people around our beloved king deny categorically any secret negotiations between him and the Israelis. They also affirm our lion's (*sabe`na*) commitment to armed struggle.” “Are you surprised?” another one may reply maintaining the same cynical overtone, “isn't he after all the descendent of the greatest of men—our prophet, Muhammad, peace be upon him? Isn't he the one who courageously declared that he is “*al-fida'i al-awwall*” (the first freedom fighter)?” In such exchange, rhetorical questions, raised sarcastically, are used as a means of conjuring the official argument for the sole purpose of denouncing it, which in turn, reinforces, antithetically, the group's beliefs, attitude and identity.

⁴ As Hussein Abdul-Raof (2006) observes, *hijaa'* and *madeeh* (dispraise and praise) oratory comprises two of the five offices of Arabic rhetoric, “to praise, dispraise, inspire, influence, or entertain” (p. 3). The aptness of this strand of oratory stems from its ability to serve as a catalyst on which the shared ethos, beliefs and identity of the “noble” group members precipitate in juxtaposition with the inferior ethos, beliefs and identity of the “base” enemy that they dispraise. In the words of George A. Kennedy (1994), epideictic rhetoric “does not aim at a specific action but is intended to influence the values and beliefs of the audience,” *A New History of Classical Rhetoric*, p. 4.

words, imageries and rhetorical questions of a most admired anti-establishment poet—al-Nuwwab. The poet, hence al-Qasim, echoes the viewers’ perception of Arab leaders as immoral, conspiratorial, self-serving “sons of bitches,” who shamelessly prostitute “pure” Palestine to the “fornicators of the night,” and, most audaciously, hush her “lest her screams stain [their] honor!” The perspective on the Arab-Israeli conflict that emerges out of al-Qasim’s rhetorical questions in this part of the first portion of the introduction defines the conflict in easily comprehensible universal terms that echo the viewers’ simplistic, non-elitist conception of the conflict: a battle between the good and noble—the masses, and the evil and base—the Arab leaders and Israel. The same “noble versus base” line of reasoning, which taps the viewers’ sense of morality re-emerges out of the rhetorical questions that al-Qasim delivers prosaically right after al-Nuwwab’s poem. In this set of questions, al-Qasim expands further on the cowardliness, immorality, or even amorality, of the short-sighted Arab rulers who ceaselessly “seek peace with the enemies of peace”—the “brutal,” “Nazi-like,” “barbaric” Israeli enemy. The baseness of the nation’s “enemies”—the Arab rulers and Israel, is intensified by al-Qasim contrastively in the remainder of the rhetorical questions, by which he sings praises to the proud Palestinian people who courageously and against all odds (the naked eye fending off the assault of a borer) have risen in the face of their executioners “like a phoenix.”

But despite excluding any counter argument from his pro-Intifada, anti-establishment introductory remarks, and despite the surface meaning of his rhetorical questions, which engage the viewers’ norms of communication and their sense of Arab honor (*sharaf`arabi*) and morality, as well as their rage and contempt for the Arab regimes, one can still sense a faint effort on al-Qasim’s part to induce a topical shift in

understanding the Intifada and the conflict at large—a shift from a principled reading of the conflict to a pragmatic one. The alternative perspective tacitly advanced by al-Qasim is associated with the conduciveness of his rhetorical questions to framing the conflict between the Arab leaders and Israel, on one side, and the Arab masses on the other on primarily ethical basis—which is a natural concomitant of “base versus noble” perspective on the conflict. By using rhetorical questions to overinflate the ethical dimension of the conflict, al-Qasim, indirectly, either relegates or blurs the political and ideological aspects of the conflict, which anchor and inspire a non-compromising radical perception of the conflict among the Arab masses. In different words, al-Qasim’s rhetorical questions press on the minds of the viewers that the baseness of the enemy—Israel, not the enemy *per se*, is the primary problem. In this context of understanding, as al-Qasim’s rhetorical questions emphasize, to the pleasure of the audience, the impossibility of peaceful co-existence with a base, Nazi-like, brutal enemy, the same questions tacitly suggest to the viewers a controversial premise: it is possible to co-exist peacefully with ethically reformed Israelis who cease to be the “enemies of peace” and stop their “barbaric” and “Nazi-like brutality” against the Palestinians. Similarly, al-Qasim’s rhetorical questions provide the viewers with an alternative premise pertaining to the Arab rulers: it is possible to co-exist peacefully with ethically reformed autocratic, pro-peace process Arab rulers who exhibit some degree of dignity, self-respect, pride and courage in dealing with Israel, much like the Qatari foreign minister, who, unlike other pro-U.S. Arab regimes, has supported the Intifada and boldly condemned

the Israeli recklessness and the massacring of Palestinians and the destruction.

This is not acceptable. That’s why there is a change in our discourse [towards

Israel] after Israel has changed; from a state interested in and discusses the peace process to a state wishing to impose her own version of peace through the killing of the innocents, the killing of children throwing stones in self defense. Based on that, it is natural that the Qatari stance and rhetoric [towards Israel] have changed. (Al-Jazeera interview, November 15, 2000)

In light of the conduciveness of al-Qasim's rhetorical questions to alternative premises and perspective on the conflict, it is arguable that even in this atypical session of OD, al-Qasim's identifying with the viewers' norms, beliefs and attitudes is linked to an effort to bring about a topical shift in understanding issues germane to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Granted, al-Qasim's ethical framing of the conflict that he emphasizes throughout his rhetorical questions in this broadcast of OD is quite common in the Arab world. However, overly emphasized and nearly completely detached from a principled, ideological reading of the conflict or from a radical program of action, the ethical frame emerging out of al-Qasim's rhetorical questions can be understood as an alternative to rather than a supplement of a radical reading of the conflict. Should that be the case, and bearing in mind that dogmatic principles, by definition, are not compromiseable, al-Qasim, by excluding such principles from his rhetorical questions, creates a need for a more flexible line of reasoning; one by which the viewers are encouraged to judge different policies germane to the Arab-Israeli conflict based on which policy is more ethical, rather than which policy complies with the long-held ideological givens of the conflict. In this context, the previously quoted stance of the Qatari foreign minister emerges as "*afdall al-mawjood*" (the best there is), or the least of evils, in comparison

with the political position of other Arab regimes, including the Palestinian Authority itself which has taken an adversarial stance from the Intifada.

But in order to ascertain al-Qasim's effort to induce a topical shift in favor of moderate, more pragmatic perspective on the Arab-Israeli conflict, we need to examine rhetorical questions that al-Qasim raises in other broadcasts of WB, which have the original format of the program, as in the September 19, 2000 broadcast of OD:

Debating "Palestinian Statehood"

The pre-Intifada episode of September 19, 2000 offers a good example of how al-Qasim anchors his anti-establishment discourse in rhetorical questions that serve two masters. On the one hand, his rhetorical questions identify him initially with the viewers' radical beliefs and disdain for the Arab regimes' and the Palestinian Authority's opting for negotiations with Israel as the only strategic option. At this point, al-Qasim's rhetorical questions suggest a principled opposition to the political perspective and policies of the Arab regimes. However, the analysis will show that the family of terms which al-Qasim uses in constructing his rhetorical questions indicates that his objection to the Arab regimes' and the Palestinian Authority's perspective and policies is grounded in "measure," not in "principle." Thus, the subtle shift from principle to measure creates an opening for a more pragmatic basis for judging pressing questions such as the worthiness of a Palestinian state. Ultimately, al-Qasim's rhetorical questions provide the viewers with premises that identify them with a more pragmatic course of political—that is to say, the creation of a Palestinian state, despite its inadequacy, on parts of historical Palestine as an acceptable resolution of the conflict.

This is how al-Qasim introduces the argument against “Palestinian statehood” and the Palestinian Authority (PA):

Why did the Palestinian leadership become obsessively obsessed with declaring a state?

Why this excessive obsession with the question of state, overtly or covertly?

Why did the state become the primary objective—nay, the only objective, in the Palestinian discourse?

Why [in the Palestinian case] did the state become the antithesis of, an alternative to or in exchange for the national objectives, while in the political discourse of other liberation movements it is considered the final step in the struggle march and the crowning and embodiment of national rights—In Palestine, the state has become an alternative to national rights instead of being part of the them?

Hasn't the Israeli side found in the Palestinian side's eagerness to establish a state an opportunity to lure and to blackmail it in other matters?

Isn't the erection of a Palestinian state a matter of placing the carriage before the horse?

What price will the Palestinians pay in exchange for declaring a state? Isn't such a price extravagant, crushing, obliterating by all measures?

Doesn't the establishment of the state mean the forsaking of 80 % of Palestine?

Doesn't it mean the construction of a cartoonic entity, without land, without borders, without control over the sky or the sea?

In this part of the introductory remarks, al-Qasim presents the argument *against* the “state” through a host of rhetorical questions that, at face value, imply his opposition

to and condemnation of the policies of the PA, which unites him with the majority of the viewers who despise the PA considering it as a lackey of the Arab regimes and even Israel and the United States. Take for example the first question (Why did the Palestinian leadership become obsessively obsessed with declaring a state?). The question is a mere expression of the audience's astonishment at and dismay with the PA's policies and her "obsession" with the question of "statehood" and the abdication of liberation as the ultimate objective of the struggle of the Palestinian people. The same implication is amplified by al-Qasim through the second and third rhetorical questions (Why this excessive obsession with the question of state, overtly or covertly?) and (Why did the state become the primary objective—nay, the only objective, in the Palestinian discourse?). In the last question, the underlined *parenthesis* conveys with a higher degree of clarity al-Qasim's opposition to the policies of the PA; a stand that he defends in the fourth rhetorical question:

Why [in the Palestinian case] did the state become the antithesis of, an alternative to or in exchange for the national objectives, while in the political discourse of other liberation movements it is considered the final step in the struggle march and the crowning and embodiment of national rights—In Palestine, the state has become an alternative to national rights instead of being part of the them?

This question is even phrased by al-Qasim as a *hypophora*, since he raises a question and proceeds to answer it leaving no room for doubting his condemnation of the policies of the PA. His opposition and condemnation of the policies of the PA are evidenced by the stream of attributes and keywords (synonyms, in fact, as in antithesis of, alternative to, in exchange for) as well as in the underlined parenthesis (In Palestine...)

that emphasize the unworthiness of the “state” as advocated and pursued by the PA. In the remainder of the rhetorical questions, al-Qasim merely expands the argument against the policies of the PA through *parentheses* (*jumal mu`taridha*) in the third and fourth questions, *analogy* (the carriage before the horse) in the sixth, the *sarcasm* (cartoonic state) and *amplification* (a set of adjectives that he uses in reference to the state, “without land, without borders, without control over the sky or the sea” in the last.

But how do al-Qasim’s rhetorical questions invite the audience to see these issues from a different perspective that serves and bolsters the Qatari policies?

Collectively, the rhetorical questions that the host raises in connection with presenting the argument against “Palestinian statehood” demonstrate clearly his opposition to the policies of the PA. But the keyword here is “policies.” And it is at this juncture that a topical shift begins to emerge: Take another look at the first three rhetorical questions:

Why did the Palestinian leadership become obsessively obsessed with declaring a state?

Why this excessive obsession with the question of state, overtly or covertly?

Why did the state become the primary objective—nay, the only objective, in the Palestinian discourse?

These questions suggest that what al-Qasim takes issue with is not the principle (no negotiation with an existential enemy; no compromising of any part of historical Palestine), but rather the *degree* of the worthiness of the “Palestinian state” as pursued by the PA. “Degree,” as an alternative to “principle,” is manifest in the family of expressions that al-Qasim uses in constructing his rhetorical questions; expressions such as

“obsessively obsessed,” “excessive obsession” and “nay, the only objective.” Using such expressions, al-Qasim condemns the “irrationality” of the PA, but not the act of negotiations *per se* or the appropriateness of “statehood” on parts of historical Palestine as an ultimate objective. Concomitantly, al-Qasim’s rhetorical questions lead the viewers to envision a situation in which peace negotiations aiming at establishing a Palestinian state on parts of historical Palestine can be acceptable and fruitful. In this context, the viewers are invited to judge the peace process based on “circumstance” or “consequence.” If the peace process is handled rationally by the PA, and leads ultimately to establishing a Palestinian state, the peace process, no matter how unpopular it is, is a worthy and effective means of ending the conflict with Israel.

Thus, al-Qasim’s presentation of the argument against the PA falls short of a principled argument against peace negotiations, as it also falls significantly and more drastically short of many of the viewers’ principled stance against negotiations with Israel, which implies and is conditioned on accepting its legitimacy within the pre-June 5, 1967 borders. In this context, al-Qasim, despite the magnificent appeal of his anti-establishment rhetoric, is in fact “overlaying of the problem with solutions emanating from the political system itself” (Benett, 2001, p. 225), which depicts the conflict as territorial and resolvable through negotiations.

The same implication re-emerges subtly out of al-Qasim’s presentation of the argument *for* the “state” in the post-“on the other hand” section of the introduction:

How come Israel undergoes a political seizure upon hearing the phrase “Palestinian state”? Doesn’t a [Palestinian] state represent a nightmare to Israel? Doesn’t the birth of a [Palestinian] state mean the final destruction of a basic

notion of the Zionist project—that is to say, Palestine is an unpeopled land? Who says that the [Palestinian] state lacks the basic requirements? Doesn't it have a land, a populace and excellent international relations? Doesn't the Palestinian Authority have nearly ninety embassies and consulates in the five continents? So what if it does not have its own army? Switzerland does not have an army, does it?

Once again, the rhetorical questions convey contradictory implications. In one sense, these rhetorical questions are an exact echo of the way the ordinary viewers conjure the official argument sarcastically in their intimate social discussions as a means of denouncing it. Notice for instance how the Palestinian state-to-be is presented by al-Qasim *hyperbolically* in the first and the second rhetorical questions in which he depicts it metaphorically as “political seizure” and “nightmare” to Israel. Needless to say of course that a Palestinian state based on the Arab acknowledgment of the legitimacy of the state of Israel and her right to exist peacefully within the pre-1967 borders hardly represents a “political seizure” or a “nightmare” to Israel. On the contrary, a Palestinian state becomes a great achievement so far as the security and perpetuity of the State of Israel is concerned, regardless of some inconveniences to it. In this sense, both of al-Qasim's rhetorical questions, due to their sarcastic nature, imply the opposite; that is, a Palestinian state serves the interests of Israel, therefore it is an unworthy cause. Thus once again, the rhetorical questions demonstrate initially al-Qasim's opposition to the PA's policies. In the third rhetorical question, al-Qasim *overstates* the “state” once again representing it as antithetical to the “Zionist project.” Therefore, the hyperbolic nature of the question suggests sarcasm, which in turn validates the opposite; that is, a Palestinian

state is not the antithesis of the Zionist project and hence it is unworthy. The remainder of the passage makes the problematic character of a Palestinian state explicit. This is quite clear in the last five rhetorical questions

Who says that the [Palestinian] state lacks the basic requirements? Doesn't it have a land, a populace and excellent international relations? Doesn't the Palestinian Authority have nearly ninety embassies and consulates in the five continents? So what if it does not have its own army? Switzerland does not have an army, does it?

In these questions, al-Qasim conveys sarcasm by either *understating* (lacking basic requirements—land, army) or *overstating* (having ninety embassies and excellent relations) very vital issues germane to the viability and worthiness of the state-to-be. As sarcastic rhetorical questions, they validate the opposite meaning. Thereby, the answer elicited by the question (Who says that the [Palestinian] state lacks the basic requirements?) is “Yes, the state-to-be does lack the basic requirements,” hence it is unworthy. This is a stance that unites al-Qasim with the beliefs and attitudes of the majority of the viewers.

Yet once again, a closer inspection of the rhetorical questions reveals that al-Qasim's opposition to the policies of the PA is based on “degree,” not in principle, hence a subtle topical shift. Notice for instance how the rhetorical questions anchoring the argument *for* the state in this passage either *overstate* or *understate* certain aspects germane to the PA's policies, thus creating a need for a middle-ground policy by which the PA treats the question of negotiations and statehood in a more balanced manner (neither overstates nor understates the worthiness of “state”). Worded differently, just as

in his presentation of the argument *against* the PA and statehood, al-Qasim's presentation of the argument *for* the PA and statehood is also based on *degree* rather than a principled rejection of the "state," whether worthy or unworthy. To emphasize the same idea: al-Qasim in both sections of the introductory remarks uses rhetorical questions to exclude "principle" as a proper ground of taking a stand against or for peace negotiations. By consistently excluding principle, al-Qasim redefines the terms of the debate on negotiations and statehood, confining the viewers to using rhetorical topics (such as degree and, or, consequence) that are conducive to perceiving the Arab-Israeli conflict in pragmatic terms. At this juncture, the rhetorical questions characterizing al-Qasim's anti-establishment discourse firmly interlock the Qatari perspective on the conflict.

Using rhetorical questions to initially identify with the viewers' passions and beliefs as a prelude to undermining their radicalism is also discernable in al-Qasim's anti-establishment discourse on the question of "jihad," or armed resistance, as the proper means of resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict. His discourse on "jihad" in the October 24, 2002 broadcast of OD is an illustration of how he utilizes rhetorical questions to induce a topical shift by subtly weakening a principled popular argument (the appropriateness of jihad), so as to create and satisfy a need for a more practical perspective on jihad. Ultimately, while al-Qasim bolsters the nobility of jihad, he, simultaneously, moves the audience to seeing it as impractical and possibly harmful.

Debating "Jihad"

The topic of debate in this episode is the viability and prudence of resistance (*jihad*) as a means of resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict. In introducing the argument *for* jihad, al-Qasim, initially, uses rhetorical questions to identify with viewers' sense of

anger and their firm belief in jihad against Israel as a means of ending the conflict. He begins with a recitation of a very popular poem by Ali Mahmoud Taha:

My brother, oppressors have transgressed all limits,

Hence, Jihad! Hence, self-sacrifice!

Shall we let them strip Arabness of its past glory and magnificence?!

Here, much like in al-Qasim's borrowing the ethos of the revolutionary poet—al-Nuwwab, he borrows the ethos of another poet. The poetic mode of expression corresponds well with the emotionally charged atmosphere and that the general mood of an Arab public that is saddened and outraged by the actions of the Israeli enemy and the inaction of the Arab enemy—the Arab leaders. The fitness of the poetic mode of expression derives also from its ability to suggest an argument from a culturally drawn principle—the Arab code of honor (*sharaf*), for jihad (“Shall we let them strip Arabness of its past glory and magnificence?”) without using a rigid ideological framework or line of reasoning. As a result, the poetic construction of this part of introduction identifies al-Qasim, stylistically, emotionally and enthymematically with the majority of the viewers.

But al-Qasim's narrative in this part of the introduction takes an unexpected turn in the immediately following section, which bears significantly on the true meaning of al-Qasim's rhetorical questions; instead of elaborating on the argument for jihad, he moves immediately to dispraising the pro-United States, pro-peace process, anti-jihad Arab leaders, as he bemoans that fact that:

Alas! It seems that the rulers of the nation have sold jihad for two piasters. As a proof of that, the Organization of the Islamic Conference in the Dakar meeting had obliterated the word “jihad” from its lexicon in fulfillment of the wishes of

the Israeli ex-prime minister—Ishaq Shamir, and to avoid irritating the West.

Bravo! [What's next?] Will they someday obliterate the words “*salah*” [prayer], and “*sawm*” [fasting], in concession to the wishes of America and Israel! Have the Arab and Islamic regimes converted to Judaism! Isn't jihad obligatory of all Muslims!

In this passage, al-Qasim's condemnation of the cowardly and conniving leaders of the Arab and the Muslim world who sold jihad out for “two piasters” identifies him with the audience's perception of and hatred for the Arab leaders. That said, what is most noteworthy about this passage, in which al-Qasim is expected to present the argument *for* jihad, is the fact that it problematizes jihad, as it stirs in the minds of the viewers a central question: “how could we carry out jihad against our enemies with this type of leadership?” By raising such a question in the minds of the viewers, al-Qasim has already and prematurely begun presenting the argument *against* jihad based on present facts and circumstance. Here in this passage, thus, we have a demonstrative example of how al-Qasim uses rhetorical questions to problematize a common, non-controversial premise (the baseness of the Arab leaders) to support two opposite enthymemes. For the baseness of the Arab leaders could either be used as a premise in support of an argument for jihad against both the Arab rulers and Israel, or, alternatively, as a premise supporting an argument against jihad based on the fact that it is impossible to conduct jihad under the banner of such base, cowardly leaders. The Question is: which of the two enthymemes is al-Qasim proposing in this passage? It does not really matter; what matters is the fact that jihad, a non-controversial premise, has now been situated in a compelling circumstance or fact (the baseness of the Arab leaders) rather than in Islamic dogma. Subsequently, the

rhetorical questions anchoring al-Qasim’s anti-establishment discourse, which initially allow him to connect with the viewers’ anger and contempt for the Arab rulers, are now identified with another set of the viewers’ passions—their concerns and fears, that is more conducive to a practical rather than principled judgment of “jihad.” By intersecting this set of the audience’s passions and attitudes, al-Qasim’s rhetorical questions create a need for a different perspective on jihad; a perspective that al-Qasim tethers to the audience’s own passions, and, conversely, detaching it from the interests and concerns of the political establishment. Furthermore, the general atmosphere of the narrative, which is characterized by a premature transition from an argument *for* jihad to an argument *against* jihad, suggests that al-Qasim, who as a moderator is expected to summarize two opposite arguments, has in fact subtly obliterated the argument *for* jihad altogether, leaving the viewers with one argument—the inappropriateness of jihad. This is the argument that he develops in the post-“on the other hand” section of the introduction:

Are Muslims capable of carrying out a true jihad, or they are no more than a vocal phenomenon?... Is jihad, in its primitive form, still suitable for this age? Haven’t the names of some jihadists been associated, in more than one place, with terrorism?

What is the nature of the proposed jihad against Israel? Isn’t it troublesomely possible that this matter [jihad] may turn into a collective suicide? What is the Islamists’ jihadic strategy? Do they possess a vision, or [it is a matter of bringing the temple down] on my head and the heads of my enemies? Isn’t negotiations the most effective means [to resolve the conflict], despite what has happened?

Stylistically, the rhetorical questions raised by al-Qasim in this section of the introduction represent a mere imitation of how an ordinary Arab taking part in a discussion within the safety of social gathering A) practices biting self-criticism as an indirect means of demonstrating profound pain and, concurrently, B) conveying his or her views antithetically by sarcastically conjuring the official argument for the sake of ridiculing it. Al-Qasim's rhetorical questions, in this sense, connect him emotionally and enthymematically with the audience.

But there is more to this passage; that "more" derives from the fact that both sections of the introduction indicate two shared motives, to argue against jihad and to detach the discourse on jihad from any dogmatic principle. Using the same rhetorical device, rhetorical questions, al-Qasim, as I have previously shown, argues tacitly and prematurely against jihad in the first section of the introduction, and, now, explicitly in this section of the introduction. Al-Qasim, thus, is not doing what a moderator is expected to do: to introduce two opposite arguments. Rather, he interferes in the discourse by using rhetorical questions to weaken, if not to obliterate, the argument *for* jihad, which indicates a calculated effort to subtly influence the audience's attitude towards jihad as an appropriate means of resolving the conflict. Also, and in both sections of the introduction, al-Qasim's rhetorical questions are conducive to the same rhetorical topics, present facts, circumstance and, or, consequence, in lieu of principle, in judging the appropriateness of jihad, as in:

Are Muslims capable of carrying out a true jihad, or they are no more than a vocal phenomenon?... Is jihad, in its primitive form, still suitable for this age? Haven't the names of some jihadists been associated, in more than one place, with terrorism?

In this set of questions and the ones that follow, al-Qasim appears to be mimicking the discourse of any typical Arab anti-jihadist. In this capacity, his rhetorical questions sound as entertaining as any rhetorical question raised by a viewer in the safety of a small social gathering would sound. But what is most important about the questions is not what they have in common with the viewers' own questions, rather what they have in common with al-Qasim's own questions that he previously raised in the for-jihad section of the introduction. In both places, the questions are anchored in the same rhetorical topics, or lines of reasoning, that persistently present the issue of jihad to the viewers in terms of its advantages or disadvantages, or its prudence or imprudence. By virtue of excluding "principle," at least by default, as a proper ground for judging the appropriateness of jihad, and also by virtue of using the same rhetorical topics in both sections of the introduction, one concludes that al-Qasim is deliberately using rhetorical questions to subtly introduce an alternative perspective on jihad; one that diverges from the viewers' principled perspective without offending it, as it at once identifies the viewers with the Qatari perspective on the Arab-Israeli conflict and jihad without appearing to endorse it.

Analysis of the three previous episodes of OD on the Arab-Israeli conflict reveals that while al-Qasim uses rhetorical questions to initially identify with the viewers' radical beliefs and attitudes, he also uses the same rhetorical questions to create a need for a

different framework of interpreting the Arab-Israeli conflict. The alternative framework of interpretation is implied by al-Qasim's use of rhetorical questions to indirectly emphasize facts, circumstances and negative consequences that do not favor any radical resolution of the conflict. Al-Qasim, in other words, nudges the viewers subtly towards a practical, more moderate perspective on the conflict; a perspective on the conflict that bolsters and is conducive to the policies and perspective of the Qatari establishment, as the analysis has also indicated.

Analysis of al-Qasim's anti-establishment discourse on Iraq gives us another example of how al-Qasim's initial identification with the viewers' radical beliefs and attitudes leads ultimately to identifying the viewers with the moderate policies and political perspective of the Qatari state.

From Iraq "Occupied" to Iraq "The New Era"

As in his discourses on the Arab-Israeli conflict, an initial reading of al-Qasim's anti-establishment discourse on Iraq indicates an identification with the viewers' outrage and contempt for the Arab regimes that take part in a conspiracy against Iraq, as well as their admiration for Saddam Hussein who dared to stand up to foreign powers and their local allies (Telhami, 2004, p. 88). However, also in a manner consistent with his discourses on the Arab-Israeli conflict, analysis of al-Qasim's rhetorical questions reveals an effort to undermine the viewers' common belief in a "conspiracy" against Iraq, and, tacitly represent an alternative perspective on the problematic situation in Iraq before and after the war. The alternative perspective emphasizes facts, real or manufactured, that prove or attempt to prove the culpability of the Iraqi regime whose policies are at odds with beliefs, interests and aspirations of the majority of the Arab viewers. In fewer words,

al-Qasim's rhetorical questions represent an effort to redefine both the causes and effects of the situation in Iraq before and after the war, in a manner reflecting a congruence with the Qatari position, as summed up by the Qatari foreign minister in an interview on al-Jazeera (December 31, 2003): "Any wise man, politician, intelligent person knows that what has happened to Iraq was brought about by a guy called Saddam Hussein." He further argues for the insignificance of calling or viewing the American "presence" in Iraq as *ihtilaal* (occupation), since this presence is sanctioned by the international law. The Qatari foreign minister goes on to conclude that anti-occupation resistance is unnecessary, "for what reason should we resist occupation?" he asks.

Analysis of three episodes of the program, one before the War of 2003 and two after it, will show how exactly al-Qasim anchors his anti-establishment discourse by rhetorical questions that ultimately undercut the Qatari policy as they simultaneously block the viewers' radicalism.

Conspiracy or No Conspiracy?

The episode of February 2, 1999 is one example of al-Qasim's pre-war anti-establishment discourse. In this session of the program, the question of conspiracy against Iraq is debated; while one party maintains that there is a conspiracy, the other argues for the opposite point of view—there is no conspiracy against Iraq. This is how al-Qasim introduces the argument *for* conspiracy:

Isn't the conspiracy on Iraq rather an Arab one more than it is an Americo-Zionist one?

One writer contends cynically that most Arab regimes pretend to sympathize with the plight of the Iraqi people, wish to preserve the unity and safety of the land of

Iraq, refuse external interference to toppling the Iraqi regime and prefer a diplomatic, not military, resolution. But such pretensions by those Arab regimes, in the writer's view, fool no one no more. For this is a mere hoax; they pretend that they wish to lessen the suffering of the Iraqi people, but in fact they conspire with America in her persistent attempts to starve and blockade the Iraqi people. They say that they are against the American military attack on Iraq, while they secretly give their blessings to the American and British strikes on Iraq.

Is there a serious desire on the parts of the Arabs to see Iraq freed from the shackles of sanctions?

And the writer calls upon the Arab masses to be vigilant and not to be deceived by statements issued by the Arab regimes signaling their support for and sympathy with Iraq. For many of those regimes wish to sink their teeth in Iraq's flesh, for one reason or another.

In this passage, al-Qasim presents the argument *for* conspiracy. By virtue of the fact that he uses "conspiracy" as an organizing theme, the rhetorical questions that he raises in this session illustrate his unity with a very common belief: conspiratorial Arab regimes that "secretly give their blessings to the American and British strikes on Iraq," and "wish to sink their teeth in Iraq's flesh, for one reason or another."

But al-Qasim's identification with the beliefs and passions of the audience does not necessarily amount to endorsing their radicalism and aspirations. On the contrary, other features characterizing al-Qasim's narrative on conspiracy suggest that his engaging the audience's passions and anger is a mere cushion for an attempt to undermine the viewers' belief in conspiracy and to induce a different perspective on the conflict over

Iraq. The alternative perspective emerges initially out of al-Qasim's choice of conspiracy as an organizing theme. By virtue of the fact that the conspiracy against Iraq is a theme considered self-evident and non-controversial by the majority of the Arab viewers, raising the question of conspiracy implies otherwise suggesting to the viewers that such thesis is a controversial one. Al-Qasim, put differently, raises doubt in the minds of the viewers over the validity of "conspiracy" as a framework of understanding the conflict over Iraq. In this passage, al-Qasim's effort to cast doubt over the question of conspiracy against Iraq is manifest in two primary features associated with his rhetorical questions. The first feature is his attribution of a popular belief, such as the belief in a conspiratorial role of the Arab regimes, to another source, as in "One writer contends" and "in the writer's view." Usually, al-Qasim, rarely, if ever, attributes a popular belief (such as a belief in the Arab-Islamic identity of historical Palestine or legitimacy of Palestinian armed resistance) that is destined to unite him emotionally and enthymematically with the audience to a third party. Rather, al-Qasim presents a popular belief as his own, as the analysis of his discourse on the Intifada has indicated. Thus, attributing a popular premise—a conspiracy against Iraq, to a third party represents a rare occurrence, a statistical oddity that, in turn, implies a calculated effort on al-Qasim's part to safely distance himself from a popular belief—conspiracy against Iraq, without offending the audience.

Al-Qasim's calculated effort to distance himself from viewing the conflict over Iraq as a manifestation of a conspiracy is further evidenced by another measure that he takes in this passage. The measure is similar to the one he has previously taken in his discourse on jihad in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict; a premature introduction of

the argument *against* conspiracy in the section in which he is presumably introducing the argument *for* conspiracy. This measure is manifest in the portion of the introduction that follows:

But, one wonders, to what extent is this thesis true! Are the Arabs, really, conspiring against Iraq? Why? What benefit would some Arab [regimes] gain from keeping Iraq under siege, dividing it, toppling its regime and impoverishing it. Is it to keep Iraq out of the oil market for the interests of others? Is it dividing Iraq so it won't constitute a great threat to the neighbors? Is it to ensure Iraq's inability to return strongly to the Arab arena lest it competes against others for leadership? Is it the ambitions of certain parties to return to power and to rule Iraq? Is all of this a matter of groundless conjecture by Iraq which gives more credit to the Arab countries than they actually deserve. After all, [these countries] are helpless, hardly have the ability to conspire and have no choice but to carry out the American vision concerning them and Iraq. In fact, these countries, as some argue, no longer dare to even issue statements of condemnation and denunciation, which have become an object of ridicule and mockery by the Arab masses.

Clearly, the first three rhetorical questions raised by al-Qasim in this passage question the validity of the presumption of the conspiracy thesis. What is odd about this measure is the fact that it is presented by al-Qasim prematurely before he actually makes a transition to the argument against conspiracy. Thus, when coupled with the implication of the statistically odd measure of attributing a popular belief to a third party, al-Qasim's premature introduction of the argument against conspiracy also indicates a calculated

effort to use rhetorical questions to weaken a popular belief. Exactly as he has done previously in his discourse on jihad in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict, al-Qasim in this broadcast of OD assigns a much greater space, hence, a greater weight, to the argument that problematizes a widely held belief—conspiracy against Iraq.

The third feature associated with al-Qasim’s rhetorical questions in this section of the introduction relates to the absence of any suggested specific reaction on the part of the audience towards the conspiratorial Arab regimes. In other words, al-Qasim’s validation of the viewers’ belief in conspiracy against Iraq falls drastically short of challenging the authority of the conspiratorial regimes, let alone suggesting a specific course of action that reflects the audience’s profound desire to face up to such conspiratorial Arab regimes.

While weakening the viewers’ popular belief in conspiracy is conveyed prematurely and tacitly by al-Qasim’s rhetorical questions in his introduction of the argument *for* conspiracy, the same effort to weaken the popular beliefs continues explicitly in the after-“on the other hand” section of the introduction: the introduction of two opposite arguments represents a continuous effort to weaken the same popular belief. This is how al-Qasim presents the argument against conspiracy:

On the other hand,

how rational is it to assume that all the Arab regimes are at fault and [only] the Iraqi regime is right?

How [rational is it] for Iraq to demand solidarity from the Arab leaders while he [the Iraqi regime], at the same time, plants dynamite and explosives in the road, calls for toppling them and showers them with insults?

Why hasn't Iraq attempted to absorb the Arab provocations as he absorbed and withstood the American attacks?

Doesn't it make more sense for Iraq to keep silent?

Will Iraq ever come to realize that in politics there is no *`antariyyaat* (machismo)?

For politics is the art of the possible, therefore had Iraq concealed his rage, he would have embarrassed all Arab regimes. Instead, he gave them the pretext to attack him and make him lose the popular support he enjoyed during the American raids.

Previously, al-Qasim's rhetorical questions in the first section of the introduction tap the audience's morality and code of honor, thus reflecting a principled perspective on conspiracy against Iraq only. But even in that part of the introduction, some of al-Qasim's rhetorical questions are associated with lines of reasoning that are conducive to a more practical, more pragmatic perspective on the Iraqi issue, as in "What benefit would some Arab [regimes] gain from keeping Iraq under siege..." which he has previously raised in his introduction of the argument *for* conspiracy in the previous section.

In this section of the introduction, al-Qasim continues his early effort to attach the rhetorical questions to rhetorical topics that are conducive to a more practical and rational perspective on conspiracy, instead of a principled perspective. The slippage from a principled perspective to a pragmatic one is manifest in the new term that anchors every question which al-Qasim raises in this section of the introduction. The term is "rational," or any of its direct or indirect derivatives, as in "how rational is it to assume that all the Arab regimes are at fault and [only] the Iraqi regime is right?" Or the question "How

[rational is it] for Iraq to demand solidarity from the Arab leaders while he [the Iraqi regime], at the same time, plants dynamite and explosives in the road, calls for toppling them and showers them with insults?” These two questions, along with the rest of the questions in this section, are connected to the viewers’ wisdom and practical judgment, as opposed to their contempt for the conspiratorial Arab regimes. Thus the movement from one set of identification to another allows al-Qasim to achieve two goals simultaneously, A) to nudge the viewers towards a more pragmatic perspective on conspiracy, and B) to detach the pragmatic perspective from the interests of the Qatari state by attaching it [the perspective] instead to the viewers’ own wisdom and practical judgment. As a result, he indirectly connects the Qatari perspective on Iraq to the interests and passions of the viewers, thus minimizing their opposition to it.

As in the previous broadcasts of OD, al-Qasim’s identifying with different passions and beliefs of the viewers entails an effort to encourage them to re-assess their understanding of the conflict under discussion. Put differently, the shift in identification is linked to a shift in re-defining the Iraqi conflict: the conflict is not necessarily the outcome of a conspiracy against Iraq, but rather the result of the irrational policies of the Iraqi regime. Al-Qasim does more than redefining the causes of the conflict prior to the 2003, al-Qasim also redefines the outcome of the conflict itself. Both the war itself and the subsequent occupation of the country can now be linked to the irrational policies of the Iraqi regime. In this context of understanding, it also becomes possible to problematize the question of anti-occupation armed resistance and the viewers’ principled perception of resistance as a legitimate and appropriate means of resolving the conflict in post-war Iraq.

The effort to redefine the questions of occupation and armed resistance is implied by the rhetorical questions that al-Qasim poses in his introductory remarks to the November 25, 2003 broadcast of OD.

Iraqi Anti-Occupation Resistance

In the November 25, 2003 broadcast of OD, the debate is centered on the rising Iraqi anti-occupation armed resistance. While one side argues that anti-occupation Iraqi armed resistance is the proper way of ending the conflict, the other side argues for the inappropriateness of armed resistance.

This is how al-Qasim presents the argument *for* anti-occupation Iraqi armed resistance:

Greetings, my respected viewers, and good `Eid wishes:

Will the blessed month of Ramadan, which has just passed, become a historical turning point? Hasn't it [Ramadan] been a month of resistance, par excellence? Is Baghdad, as Rumsfeld sees it, still safer than Washington, as he claimed at the beginning of the war? Hasn't it become an unbearable hell? Haven't the rockets of resistance reached his aid's [Wolfowitz's] bedroom? Haven't American soldiers been slaughtered like sheep in the streets of Mosul, a writer asked? Are the American people aware of the extent of their president's plight in Iraq? Hasn't the cost of occupation exceeded \$164 billion? Why do Americans and their puppets in Iraq ignore the facts of history? Haven't the Iraqis cut King Faysal II into pieces and dragged his corpus in the streets as a punishment for his collaboration with England? Wouldn't the actions of the occupiers convince everyone of the correctness of resistance as a choice? Have America's days in

Iraq become numbered? Hasn't the Iraqi resistance inflicted the invading forces in months with more losses than what the Vietnamese resistance inflicted them with in years? Isn't the actual number of casualties much higher than the proclaimed one, someone asked? Isn't the ghost of Vietnam haunting the Americans now? Can the lies of the American media fool the world?

To an ordinary Arab, Islam is more than a faith; it is a way of living, thinking and understanding. This is what al-Qasim captures in the first two rhetorical questions that he raises in this section of the introduction in relation to anti-occupation Iraqi resistance, as evidenced by his allusion to Ramadan. From a religious standpoint, Ramadan is a month-long spiritual journey in which the sincerity of the subscribers' faith and their ability to endure life's hardships and tribulations are tested. Those who successfully pass the test are rewarded with salvation, as the Qur'an teaches.⁵ The hoped-for salvation is celebrated in the *`Eid*, the first day that marks the beginning of the new month of Shawwal. The *`Eid*, thus, represents a metaphorical turning point, a hope for good ending (*falah*) and salvation, as intimated by the "historical turning point" metaphor. It is this metaphorical connection that ties al-Qasim's rhetorical questions to the viewers' hope for victory and salvation for their Iraqi brothers and sisters who endured the hardships and the tribulations of war and occupation. Furthermore, because the questions have a distinctly Islamic overtone, they also present the question of resistance as a matter of principle:

⁵"O you who believe, fasting is decreed for you, as it was decreed for those before you, that you may attain salvation."The Holy *Qur'an*, 2, 183.

obligatory jihad against those who threaten the land of Islam and the well being of the Muslim community.

In the remainder of the rhetorical questions, al-Qasim creates the celebratory atmosphere of *`Eid* (resistance) as he surveys various signs of deliverance:

Is Baghdad, as Rumsfeld sees it, still safer than Washington, as he claimed at the beginning of the war? Hasn't it become an unbearable hell? Haven't the rockets of resistance reached his aid's [Wolfowitz's] bedroom? Haven't American soldiers been slaughtered like sheep in the streets of Mosul, a writer asked?

Despite the ability of these rhetorical questions to identify al-Qasim with the viewers' belief in jihad and their hope for victory and salvation, the questions nonetheless allow him to problematize the question of anti-occupation armed resistance to a point at which it is possible to narrow the gap separating the stance of the Qatari establishment from the position of the majority of the Arab populations. Al-Qasim's subtle effort to create a point of identification between the Qatari establishment and the viewers is manifest in an equally subtle topical transition; for whereas in the beginning of the passage, he clearly situates the argument for resistance in the principles of Islam, he, towards the end, grounds the argument for resistance in facts, circumstance, or consequence. Thus, while al-Qasim identifies initially with the viewers' principled support for and belief in anti-occupation resistance, he ultimately re-anchors resistance in its ability, or lack of, to bring about tangible, advantageous effect, inflicting harm on the enemy. Al-Qasim, in other words, creates a condition or a contingency whereby it becomes possible to abandon resistance without offending the principled viewers. The contingency created by al-Qasim becomes a point at which it is possible to identify the

viewers with the anti-resistance stance of the Qatari establishment, which views Iraqi resistance as unnecessary and disadvantageous.

The effort to introduce alternative way of looking at resistance is further evidenced by the subsequent rhetorical questions that al-Qasim raises:

Wouldn't the actions of the occupiers convince everyone of the correctness of resistance as a choice?

Hasn't the Iraqi resistance inflicted the invading forces in months with more losses than what the Vietnamese resistance inflicted them with in years?

Isn't the actual number of casualties much higher than the proclaimed one, someone asked?

In the first of these questions, for instance, al-Qasim speaks of resistance as a response to the “actions of the occupiers” not to the act of occupation per se. By doing that, al-Qasim implies that a modification in the actions of the occupiers may render resistance as a choice unnecessary. The subtle effort to problematize resistance is also manifest in the second rhetorical question, in which al-Qasim detaches resistance from principle and attaches instead in tangible facts: resistance is appropriate because it has inflicted the enemy with great losses. Al-Qasim, indirectly, intimates that should a new circumstance arise, in which resistance ceases to be effective in a tangible way—inflicting great losses on the enemy, resistance, as a course of action, must be re-evaluated. Thus by introducing facts as a ground for judging armed resistance, al-Qasim, simultaneously, paves the way for using other facts in arguing against it, rendering resistance a “choice” among other choices.

Al-Qasim's early effort to subtly induce a rhetorical slippage away from an uncompromising principled perspective on armed resistance is now easily discernable in al-Qasim's introduction of the argument *against* armed resistance. This implies a calculated effort to emphasize facts and other rhetorical topics that are conducive to a practical understanding of the conflict in post-war Iraq, as illustrated by the rhetorical questions raised by al-Qasim in the after-"on the other hand" section of the introduction:

Isn't it possible that the size and achievements of Iraqi resistance are over inflated?

Isn't it confined to what is known as the Sunni Triangle in the middle of and to the west of Baghdad? How can the targeting of Iraqi civilians and the embassies be called resistance? Aren't those who commit such acts the archenemy of the Iraqi people, democracy and all human values? Hasn't one opinion poll shown that 64% of Iraqis find the attacks on the occupation forces unjustified? Isn't the Shiite giant still immersed in a deep sleep?

Why don't the Iraqis give a peaceful resolution a chance? [After all] Did the Palestinians begin their anti-Israel resistance directly after occupation or waited more than fifteen years? Isn't it strange that what is happening in Iraq be called *muqawama*, as a Kurdish write asks? Algerians have liberated their country from the filth of the French colonialism, haven't they? Are they in a better shape now?

Shouldn't Iraqi resisters measure well the meaning of victory and not be overtaken by the passion for liberation for the sake of liberation?

In this set of questions, the Islamic overtone, which has previously implied a principled argument for anti-occupation resistance is totally absent. Alternatively, al-Qasim's rhetorical questions are anchored in facts, sometimes manufactured.⁶ Present and past facts stressed by al-Qasim in each rhetorical question invite the viewers to judge anti-occupation resistance based on consequence—positive or negative, or being advantageous or disadvantageous, instead of judging in terms of its legitimacy or illegitimacy. To minimize the negative impact of a pragmatic reading of armed resistance on the viewers, al-Qasim identifies the argument against armed resistance with the viewers' practical wisdom as well as their fears and concerns over the well being of the Iraqi people. Creating this identification is implied by the rhetorical questions that al-Qasim raises in reference to the drastic conditions endured by the Algerian people in the post-liberation era:

Algerians have liberated their country from the filth of the French colonialism, haven't they? Are they in a better shape now? Shouldn't Iraqi resisters measure well the meaning of victory and not be overtaken by the passion for liberation for the sake of liberation?

This set of rhetorical questions is an illustration of a) a shift in identification—from identifying with the viewers' principled support for all resistance movements to an identification with their prudence and practical reasoning, and b) how the shift in the locus of identification is also associated with a shift in understanding the question of Iraqi

⁶ As in the delayed Palestinian anti-Israeli armed resistance, which actually began even before the establishment of Israel, or by creating a connection between the current political instability of Algeria and the revolution against French colonialism.

resistance based on compelling facts, circumstance and outcome rather than principle. Consequently, the shift in identifications and its concomitant—shift in understanding Iraqi resistance, allows al-Qasim to indirectly identify the viewers with the Qatari stance against Iraqi resistance (“Why should we resist occupation?”) by attaching the argument against it to the viewers’ own beliefs and concerns rather than the beliefs and concerns of the Qatari establishment.

Analysis of the rhetorical questions anchoring al-Qasim’s anti-establishment discourse in this broadcast of OD as well as in the previous one reveals the same pattern: as al-Qasim demonstrates his consubstantiality with the viewers, he indirectly identifies them with the policies and perspectives of the Qatari state vis-à-vis Iraq. Key to al-Qasim’s effort to create identification between the Qatari government and the majority of the viewers is his emphasis on facts—real or manufactured, circumstances and lines of reasoning that deflect the radicalism of the viewers without offending them and link them with the moderate position and policies of the Qatari government without endorsing them.

Using rhetorical questions to ultimately block and deflect the viewers’ radical views and attitudes and to bolster the Qatari perspective is also discernable in al-Qasim’s discourse on the fall of the Iraqi president Saddam Hussein in captivity in the December 16, 2003 episode of OD.

Saddam: Arrested and Paraded

The episode discusses the implications and motives of the parading of the Iraqi president by the invaders in a humiliating way on television. To this effect, the central question is: “Was the manner by which Saddam Hussein was paraded on television

screens an act of deliberate humiliation and insult to all Arabs?” In the pre-“on the other hand” section of the introduction, al-Qasim introduces the “Yes, it was” argument:

In light of the capturing of the Iraqi president, we will devote this episode to this topic. We will however air the previously announced topic—the available means of [political] change in the Arab world, next week.

Was the manner by which Saddam Hussein was paraded on television screens an act of deliberate humiliation and insult to all Arabs? Wasn't such a display an American movie par excellence? Someone asks. Isn't it likely that it was a matter of an extremely well woven theatrics? What is the number of the Arabs who [actually] felt happy, despite their cognizance of the dictatorial nature of Saddam's regime?

One commentator argues ‘Let the spiteful show spite, the joyful joy, and let he \who wishes to dance dance, the fact however remains that this wretched bearded man, who appeared in the videotape debased and humiliated, was an Arab leader. Yes he was a despot, yes he was a criminal, but his country has been occupied and plundered.’ Hasn't this image of Saddam perpetuated the virus of humiliation from the ocean to the Gulf? After all, it was not the Iraqis who changed the regime; it was not them who arrested Saddam; and it will not be them who will prosecute and pass judgment on him, despite the fact that the judges will be Iraqis. Isn't Saddam, despite it all, one of the Arabs? Did he really give himself up in the manner propagated by the Americans? For if he really wanted to capitulate the way he did, he could have [instead] recognized the legitimacy of Israel or accepted the option to abdicate and lived happily and

luxuriously in exile. But he instead, according to some commentators, chose to live in holes and to fight till the very end. Why did the majority of Arab media mimic the American story like parrots? Haven't the American narratives been a chain of audacious lies since the start of the invasion?

Can't this one be another American lie, a heavy-caliber one?

But on the other hand,

In this part of the introduction, the rhetorical questions clearly project the anger, disbelief, sadness and sorrow felt by al-Qasim upon seeing an image of a wretched bearded Saddam, debased and humiliated, paraded on television. The intensity of al-Qasim's emotions is delivered powerfully through the first rhetorical question which he phrases as a *hypophora*. "Only a very few number of Arabs have actually enjoyed seeing Saddam paraded the way he was" is the answer he is eliciting. This meaning is clearly and poetically delivered through the second part of the *hypophora*, "Let the spiteful show spite, let the joyful show joy, and let he who wishes to dance dance..." (*leyashmut mann yashmut, leyafrah man yafrah, leyarqos mann yarqos...*). The rampant feeling of shock and disbelief is reiterated by al-Qasim towards the end in the questions that validate the viewers' skeptical attitude towards the American story of Saddam's arrest and towards American media in general. In this sense, the rhetorical questions demonstrate the host's unity with the shocked and saddened Arab viewers.

The implication one is to draw from al-Qasim's rhetorical questions in this section of the introduction is not as clear as one might at first suppose. Delving beneath the surface meaning of al-Qasim's rhetorical questions reveals an effort by al-Qasim to downplay the political weight of Saddam's arrest and to divide the viewers from seeing

his arrest as the fall of a national hero into the hands of the nation's enemies. This tacit effort is a corollary of al-Qasim's use of rhetorical questions to alter the narrative on Saddam's arrest: ironically, Saddam, the centerpiece of the dramatic scene in Arab televisions, is not exactly at the center of al-Qasim's narrative; Arab pride (*sharaf*) is, as indicated by the main question that shapes and animates the debate: "Was the manner by which Saddam Hussein was paraded on television screens an act of deliberate humiliation and insult to all Arabs?" What al-Qasim bemoans here and elsewhere in the passage is not the act of capturing Saddam per se but rather the audacity of using it by the captor as a deliberate means of humiliating all Arabs, "from the [Atlantic] ocean to the [Arabian] gulf." The rhetorical questions thus tether al-Qasim with the viewers' perception of the "enemy"—the immoral American captor. Simultaneously, however, the same questions also bring to the minds of the viewers the immorality of the captured—Saddam, as evidenced by the implications of many parentheses that anchor al-Qasim's questions, such as "the dictatorial nature of Saddam's regime," "Yes he was a despot, yes he was a criminal" and "despite it all." Thus what the rhetorical questions emphasize both explicitly—the immorality of the captor, and implicitly—the immorality of the captured, hints at an effort by al-Qasim to invite the viewers to look at the story of Saddam's arrest as a cosmic irony or a manifestation of poetic or divine justice: an immoral oppressor has fallen into the hands of another immoral oppressor.

What is equally noteworthy about this introduction is its ability to illustrate how stylistically consistent al-Qasim is. In this broadcast, just as in the two previously discussed ones, he begins the process of problematizing a popular belief or sentiment in the section of the introduction in which he is supposed to present the popular argument

(in this case, the base motives behind that the American authority's parading of Saddam Hussein). Put differently, the host consciously prepares the viewers to be more receptive to an alternative way of looking at Saddam's arrest, the fall of an oppressor in the hands of another oppressor. The alternative way, naturally, emerges with a greater degree of clarity in the in the after "on the other hand" phrase:

Why is it that the majority of the Arab people are schizophrenic? For on the one hand, they seek revenge against the despotic oppressors who rule over them by steel, fire and heavy boots, yet at the same time they feel bitterly saddened by the falling of the ugliest of Arab despots. A writer, thrilled by the fall of the Iraqi president, asks: was Saddam and the likes of him a true personification of Arab pride so we bemoan its desecration? Were they not a catastrophe, as attested by their crimes and brutality, which has befallen the nation? Shouldn't they [the Arab peoples] have instead felt overtly joyful? Shouldn't the spectacle of a shackled Saddam give them hope of deliverance from their oppressive rulers, even on the hands of external forces?

Will the Arab rulers learn from Saddam lesson? Will they reconcile with their peoples? Will their security agencies, which the Iraqi poet Abdulwahhab al-Bayyati describes as 'stinking hunting dogs,' stop pursuing the [exiled] people to prevent them from visiting their homeland? Shouldn't we rather congratulate the Iraqi people for the fall of Great Hubal [a pre-Islamic pagan] and wish a similar ending for other oppressors?

Are the Arab rulers great legendary heroes, as usually depicted by their media, or actually most of them are a group of cowards, according to Abd ul-Rahman

al-Kawakibi's description of oppressors, assuming that Saddam has indeed capitulated as reported?

In this section of the introduction, al-Qasim is supposed to introduce the opposite point of view: no, the parading of Saddam Hussein does not indicate a calculated effort by the American authority to insult the Arab peoples. This argument is peculiarly absent from al-Qasim's remarks. He rather continues his early effort to use rhetorical questions in casting the fall of Saddam under a positive light. The effort now is explicit and is clearly conveyed by the family of terms and expressions comprising each of al-Qasim's rhetorical questions; terms and expressions such as the "despotic oppressor," "the ugliest of Arab despots," the self-proclaimed God (delivered by the metonymy "Great Hubal"), the "criminal," and the "cowardly" Iraqi president, as well the schizophrenic viewers who sympathize with such a character. Thus given the irrelevance of the substance of this section of the introduction to the central question raised in this broadcast of OD, and in terms of the rather clear implications of the family of terms and expressions anchoring al-Qasim's rhetorical questions, this section is a mere extension of the host's early effort to reconstruct the story of Saddam's arrest in a manner that downplays its political weight and its negative bearing on the audience.

And in keeping with his ordinary style, al-Qasim disconnects the alternative perspective on Saddam's arrest from the policies and interests of the Qatari regime, and identifies it instead with the viewers' own hopes and aspirations for bringing an end to Arab political tyranny. Nonetheless, the alternative perspective on Saddam's arrest is still

resoundingly similar to the Qatari perspective,⁷ as expressed by the Qatari foreign minister in an interview with al-Jazeera that aired two weeks after this broadcast of OD:

The Interviewer: First as an Arab citizen and second as an Arab official, what sort of feelings you had when you saw the Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in the form he appeared in the fist of the Americans in the fourteenth of this December?

⁷ In light of the implications of the analysis of al-Qasim's discourses on Iraq, textual evidence supports a contention by Sakr (2007) who argues that two particular measures taken by al-Jazeera in the post-war period are indicative of enthymematic congruence between the network and the Qatari establishment with regard to the Iraqi issue. The first measure is the dismissal of the channel's first managing director, Mohammad Jassem al-Ali, in May 2003, who was charged with being a pan-Arabist by Ahmad Chalabi, leader of the US-backed Iraqi National Congress and a favorite of the Bush administration at that time (p. 126). The second measure, in Sakr's (2007) own words, is the

Qatari compliance with US demands for the taming of Al-Jazeera [that] surfaced openly in 2004. After meeting the US Vice President Dick Cheney and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld at the White House in April 2004, Qatar's foreign minister Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim, said he would instruct Al-Jazeera to be more professional and avoid 'wrong information' (BBC, 2004). In May 2004, Al-Jazeera journalists underwent a training course paid for by the Media Outreach Center at the American Embassy in London and run by Search for Common Ground, a non-governmental organisation specializing in conflict transformation.

Sakr further explains that "As part of training, Al-Jazeera staff were encouraged to choose a new vocabulary when reporting suicide bombings, Palestinian casualties and hostilities in Iraq." See Sakr (2007), "Challenger or lackey? The politics of news on Al-Jazeera." In Thussa, D. K., (2007) (Ed.), *Media on the move: global flow and contra-flow* (p.126). New York: Routledge.

Al Thani: In the name of Allah, the most merciful most gracious. Truth be told, the spectacle was painful. After all, Saddam Hussein is an Arab. What is more painful is the fact that the ex-Iraqi president did not learn the lesson and did not ponder the consequences that he reaped. In my opinion, the problem is not in the way Saddam Hussein appeared; rather, the main problem is the tragedies that have befallen the Iraqi people as a result of the erroneous policies—known to everyone, of the Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.... (al-Jazeera, December 31, 2003)

Analysis of al-Qasim's rhetorical questions in this broadcast of OD reveals that his anti-establishment discourse is stylistically and substantively in line with his anti-establishment discourses on both the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Iraqi issue: while he uses rhetorical questions to initially prove that he is substantially one with the viewers' stance on both issue, he simultaneously creates points of identification between the viewers and the Qatari establishment by stressing facts, circumstances and frameworks of interpretation that induce a shift in understanding both conflicts. The shift in understanding associated with the shift in the locus of identification with the viewers undermines and deflects the viewers' radicalism in a manner conducive to the interests of the Qatari government.

But there is more to this particular session of OD, in which the implications of the arrest of Saddam are debated. Bearing in mind that the Iraqi president was one of the two remaining representatives of Arab nationalism, al-Qasim's discourse in this session of OD is equally significant in illustrating how he also undermines and attempts to block another set of the viewers' radical beliefs and attitudes pertaining to the question of Arab

unification—the cornerstone of the ideology that has driven and shaped much of Saddam’s policies, and has endeared him to a wide segment of the Arab population. In the previous session of OD, for instance, al-Qasim suppresses Saddam’s ideological identity and excludes it from debating the demise of Saddam and his Ba`thist regime. Instead, al-Qasim focuses the audience’s attention on the tyrannical nature of Saddam’s rule. Both al-Qasim’s dismissal of Arab nationalism and its cornerstone—Arab unity, and his emphasis on the tyrannical nature of Saddam’s regime indicate a tacit effort to destabilize the viewers’ pan-Arabist passions and aspirations by excluding Arab nationalism and the nationalist project—Arab unification, from the debate altogether. The dismissal of Arab nationalism as perspective, in turn, also indicates an effort on al-Qasim’s part to create a need for an alternative political perspective, as the discussion in the next section will show.

Arab Unity: From “Existential Necessity” to “Sloganistic Ideology”

To Qatar, as well as to the majority of the Arab regimes, the basic components of Arab nationalism, liberation and unification, conflict sharply with the concept of a sovereign local statehood (*dawlah qutreyyah*). But, since the Arab governments from the standpoint of the Arab public in general, as Telhami (2004) notes, “are legitimate to the extent that they are seen as serving the causes that their people support” (p. 72), especially the question of their pan-Arab identity and their aspirations for a united Arab world, any direct assault on the notion of Arab unity becomes a rhetorical liability. Therefore, to boost its legitimacy, Qatar, much like other Arab governments, deploys a political discourse and often embarks on policies that intimate the government’s adherence to the principles of pan-Arabism. Al-Jazeera per se was one of such policies

which, in the words of the Qatari foreign minister, aims at “being a free medium that speaks on behalf of all Arabs” not only Qataris (Al-Jazeera, November 15, 2000). Within this context, as Sakr (2007) contends, it is hard not to imagine OD and the channel that carries it as anything other than “an attempt by Qatar’s ruler to burnish his Arab nationalist credentials,” as a means of cushioning the highly controversial policies of his government towards key issues such as relations with the United States and Israel (p. 125).

What is necessary for a politician is also necessary for a TV personality like al-Qasim, who boasts hyperbolically that “We have succeeded in what Nasser failed; we united the Arab world” (personal interview, 2002, Doha, Qatar).

A close reading of the host’s anti-establishment discourse in which he directly or indirectly addresses the question of Arab unity indicates that he does to the notion of Arab unification just what he does to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the war on Iraq. He uses rhetorical questions that identify him initially with the majority of the viewers’ pan-Arab identity and their hopes and aspirations for an integrated and powerful Arab world. However, beneath the surface meaning of al-Qasim’s rhetorical questions, we discern an effort to induce a shift in understanding the “one Arab nation” premise in a way that disconnects it from the argument for Arab unity, and, consequently, identifies the viewers with less ambitious, less radical objectives, such as the pursuance of political reforms, economic progress and democratization within each individual Arab state. By creating this point of identification, al-Qasim positions the demonstrably self-reforming, self-democratizing Qatar in a manner that identifies it with the viewers’ “redefined” hopes and aspirations.

Despite the scarcity of discourse on Arab nationalism in OD, introductory remarks given by al-Qasim in various sessions of the program exemplify his use of rhetorical questions to ultimately undermine and to attempt to ration the viewers' pan-Arabist hopes and aspirations. Take for example the following remarks given by al-Qasim in the February 25, 2003 session of OD: "Don't the people who acquiesce to a life of humiliation and submissiveness deserve to be stepped on night and day?" Or the questions he raises in the December 23, 2003 broadcast of the program, in which he begins by reciting the following verses of poetry:

We pretentiously declare that we are Arabs.

But actually we are sheep.

Are we being led like sheep? Yes.

Are we as submissive as sheep? Yes.

Are we being slaughtered like Sheep? Yes.

This is what sheep are.

In both examples, al-Qasim's rhetorical questions or their kin, hypophora (in the second example) are a manifestation of self-loathing; an extreme form of self-blame used commonly by ordinary Arabs as an expression of profound grief and, or, anger. The act of self-loathing, however, is also a manifestation of the grievers' desire to overcome whatever state or ordeal they are bemoaning. Thus by lamenting the fact that Arabs are servile and weak (the sheep analogy), al-Qasim reiterates the viewers' anguish over the state of Arab disunity, as he also appears to echo and endorse their hope for a prouder and an integrated Arab world. Moreover, what is equally important about al-Qasim's practice of self-loathing is the "self" part of the hyphenated expression. Al-Qasim's rhetorical

questions, then, affirm and vindicate a transcendent Arab selfhood, or identity, as opposed to a localized selfhood (Egyptian, Saudi, Qatari, etc.). This transcendent Arab identity is further evidenced by the transcendent pronoun “we” that anchors each and every question raised by the host. Looked at under this light, al-Qasim’s remarks acknowledge and reinforce a popular premise, “one Arab nation” (*ummah `arabiyyah wahidah*), which represents the cornerstone of the Arab nationalist ideology.

But what does al-Qasim do with, or to, the “one Arab nation” premise? Does he use it as an anchor for an argument for the viability of an Arab nationalist project—Arab unification?

The answer to these two questions is found in one of al-Qasim’s rare broadcasts in which the subject under debate is Arab nationalism itself, the July 16, 2002 session of OD, in which the legacy and experience of the godfather of Arab nationalism and Arab unity, President Nasser, is debated. This is how al-Qasim introduces the pro-Nasser and Nasserism argument:

What, despite the passing of fifty years, is the secret behind the great Arab interest in the July Revolution, which President Jamal Abdul Nasser led, while other Arab revolutions have become no more than footnotes in history notebooks? There must be a grand secret and a strong reason.

Are we not in a dire need for the soul of Abdul Nasser in this appalling Arab age in which our leaders loiter around and beg at the doorsteps of the White House, and the red, green and neon yellow houses?

One asks: are we not in a dire need for someone who can restore part of our vanished dignity? Wasn’t Abdul Nasser, and still is, a symbol of pride, dignity

and defiance?

Which of the Arab leaders' names is still cheered by the masses up until now?

Isn't Nasser a genuine Arab product, whose value ever increases with the passage of time, despite the wishes of the hypocrite, the spiteful and the opportunist?

Isn't Nasserism still alive and well in the hearts of the millions, even if it doesn't take a partisan shape?

Aren't the Islamists, the enemies of Nasser, following in his footsteps in many of their ideas and policies?

Why do some depict the July Revolution as a mere [military] coup? How come they don't refer to the French Revolution as such [a coup]?

But on the other hand ...

In this part of the introduction, al-Qasim sums up the argument *for* Nasserism and, hence, for Arab nationalism at large. Bolstered by personification (Nasser of Arab nationalism and, by extension, of Arab unity), the rhetorical questions in this section illustrate al-Qasim's agreement with the Arab masses' undying love and respect for Nasser, and, simultaneously, their hatred of and contempt for the Arab leaders who "loiter around and beg at the doorsteps of the White House..."

At face value, both the rhetorical questions and personification validate what the majority of the Arab population considers non-controversial presuppositions, the oneness of the Arab nation—implied by the transcendent "we," and the greatness and nobility of Nasser. There is something peculiar about al-Qasim's account, however; Nasser emerges as a great leader in the most restrictive sense; he is either great in an apolitical tribal

sense—“a genuine Arab product” that personifies “[Arab] pride, dignity and defiance,” or in contrast with “the hypocrite, the spiteful and the opportunist” Arab leaders. The greatness of Nasser, then, is practically cut off from what endeared him to millions of Arabs throughout the Arab world, the Arab nationalist, liberational political ideology that he subscribed to and its corresponding program of action that resonated well with the aspirations of the Arab public at large. Nasser, in different words, is a personification of a great common value—Arab national pride, but not necessarily a personification of a great common ideology—Arab nationalism, or a great common goal—Arab unification. This implication is further evidenced by the absence of any substantive facts pertaining to Nasserism from al-Qasim’s accounts, as illustrated by his hardly explained assertion that “Nasserism is still alive and well in the hearts of the millions.”

By attaching the greatness of Nasser to a common value, rather than a common ideology or program of action, al-Qasim’s rhetorical questions allow him to subtly problematize the viewers’ pan-Arabist sentiments and aspirations by presenting them with an inadequate argument for Nasserism and the Nasserite program of action. The inadequacies of al-Qasim’s argument for Nasserism in this part of the introduction pave the way nicely for an argument against Nasserism in the second part of the introduction:

Aren’t the shortcomings of the July Revolution as great as its leader is?

Had the age of enslavement [colonialism] truly disappeared, as Nasser has foretold right after the revolution, or it had only been replaced by another form of enslavement? National enslavement, that is, which renders Nasser’s cry “raise your head high, my brother” meaningless.

Hadn’t Abdul Nasser bolstered the one-man regime, which was catastrophic for

all Arabs? Isn't the state of suppression, oppression, tyranny and dictatorship, which has ruined the Arab nation, a mere replica of the Nasser era? Who passed on the legacy of hero worship and the idolization of leaders who were the Arab's worst evil, and what an evil?

Hadn't many of the Arab leaders followed in the footsteps of Nasser in becoming personifications of their countries?

Another skeptic wonders: Hasn't it been proven that which the Nasserites refer to as [Arab] regressive regimes are many tens of folds more progressive than those who call themselves progressive?

A writer wonder: Hadn't the policies of nationalization and socialization which were ushered in by the July Revolution produced catastrophic results for the Arab economy up until now? Hadn't such policies dealt a deadly blow to labor ethics and transformed the establishments of production into nuclei for personal gain and fatal corruption?

Where is the Arab cultural [revolution] that should have come after Arab Revolutions? Why hadn't the second half of the past century produced other than pseudo intellectuals, men of letter and writers whose only role is to strike the tambourine, beat the drums and play the flutes for the [amusement of] generals?

Facts that were clearly missing from al-Qasim's presentation of the argument for Nasserism in the previous section of the introduction are clearly present in this part of the introduction, in which he presents the argument against Nasserism. The tactic of excluding facts from the first section and the heavy reliance on facts in this section

indicates that al-Qasim's presentation of an inadequate argument for Nasserism in the first section was a calculated measure; one that leads the viewers to see Nasserism and its program of action as non-factual, impractical, or even irrational, and thus must be abandoned. Each of the rhetorical questions al-Qasim raises is a manifestation of the calculated measure. In the first rhetorical question, for instance, al-Qasim disconnects the Arab nationalist project of unity—epitomized by “the July Revolution,” from the person of the great leader himself, Nasser. In a way the question tells the audience that *Nasserism* and Nasser are two different things. Thus, while the greatness of the latter—Nasser, is a given, the greatness of the former—Nasserism, is not. Nasserism, the rhetorical question implies, should rather be judged based on historical record and present facts, which al-Qasim elaborates on in each of the questions that have followed, as in the second rhetorical question:

Had the age of enslavement [colonialism] truly disappeared, as Nasser has foretold right after the revolution, or it had only been replaced by another form of enslavement? National enslavement, that is, which renders Nasser's cry “raise your head high, my brother” meaningless.

In this question, al-Qasim emphasizes the divide between the viewers' passion for national liberation and Nasserism, by stressing that Nasserism is a mere romantic, sloganistic call that has ushered in a new age of enslaving the Arab masses in the name of national liberation and Arab unity. By depriving Arab nationalism from its basic component—a liberational ideology, al-Qasim invites the prudent viewers to re-examine their pro-Nasserism attitude based on facts; facts that he stresses in each of the questions he then poses:

Hadn't Abdul Nasser bolstered the one-man regime, which was catastrophic for all Arabs? Isn't the state of suppression, oppression, tyranny and dictatorship, which has ruined the Arab nation, a mere replica of the Nasser era? Who passed on the legacy of hero worship and the idolization of leaders who were the Arab's worst evil, and what an evil?

While in the preceding questions al-Qasim detaches Nasserism from the audience's passion for liberation, unity and political progress, in this set of questions, he attaches Nasserism to that which the Arab masses hate and object to, a present reality of tyrannical, autocratic regimes that enslave and oppress them.

Convincing or not, the explicit, substantive, facts-based argument against Nasserism in the second section of the introduction bolsters what al-Qasim has prematurely and implicitly argued for in the first section of the introduction: Nasserism is sloganistic, romantic and irrational. What is most noteworthy, then, is that al-Qasim has practically eliminated the argument for Nasserism from the entire discourse, presenting the viewers with only one argument, implicit in the first section, explicit in the second, which invites the viewers to judge Nasserism as an unworthy ideology. By extension, Arab unity, the primary objective of Nasserism is also an unworthy political cause, despite the nobility of the idea of Arab unity per se. Al-Qasim, thus, uses the rhetorical questions characterizing his anti-establishment discourse to create an alternative framework for understanding Arab unity; a framework based on facts not fancy. The alternative perspective is advanced by al-Qasim in a plethora of discourses, as in the broadcast of August 1, 2000, in which he asks:

Isn't it time the Arabs abandoned the nationalist discourse that caused more disunity than unity? Shouldn't Arabs approach amalgamation on new bases and away from the outworn and antiquated nationalist slogans?... Shouldn't the national ideology be rather replaced by viable and sustainable interests instead of the hollow ideology?

Taken by the sympathetic audience at face value, al-Qasim's rhetorical questions may be interpreted as sarcastic remarks; ones that identify him with the way an ordinary Arab conjures and ridicules the argument of pro-establishment anti-Arab unification elements. In this sense, the rhetorical questions are illustrative of al-Qasim's consubstantiality with the audience's Arab nationalist beliefs and aspirations. However, what is noteworthy about the rhetorical questions in this passage is that fact that they also identify the audience with another perspective on Arab unification, which is the same perspective that al-Qasim has previously advanced implicitly in his argument for Nasserism and explicitly in his argument against it. The alternative perspective on Arab unification is manifest in al-Qasim's use of rhetorical questions to repeatedly stress the same premise, whether he is arguing for or against Nasserism—that is to say, the irrationality of the “outworn and antiquated nationalist slogans” and “the hollow ideology” that anchors Arab unity. The controversial premise could initially identify al-Qasim with the viewers' widespread feeling of frustrations with Arab nationalist regimes and parties that have failed to attain what the majority of the populations aspires for—unity and liberation. However, al-Qasim's identification with the norms and the passions of the audience appears significantly less substantive, once we position his purported unity with the viewers in the context of the new premise anchoring his remarks. The

premise of an irrational, outworn, antiquated hollow ideology, by virtue of its prevalence in al-Qasim's discourse, becomes a new perspective through which the viewers must look at and assess their stance on Arab nationalism and its concomitant—Arab unity. The new perspective that anchors al-Qasim's arguments for and against Arab nationalism indicates in turn a consistent and a calculated effort to divide the prudent, calculating Arab viewers from the precepts of Arab nationalism, and to nudge them towards a more viable and pragmatic course of action that guarantees "sustainable interests" in lieu of Arab unification. It is at this juncture that a new point of identification is created by al-Qasim; a point that connects the viewers with the pragmatic, less ambitious, business-like attitude of the Qatari government towards Arab nationalism and its concomitant—Arab unity. The alternative perspective on Arab unification is implied by the expression "amalgamation" (*takattoll*), which anchors the second rhetorical question. The expression—amalgamation, can be initially read as a mere "synonym" for unity. However, since "amalgamation," as a political term, implies the coming together of sovereign states as a means of serving the separate interests of each individual state (e.g., NAFTA, ASIAN and the European Union, to which al-Qasim makes numerous references), the term then does not imply strictly the fusion of various political entities into only one entity as does the term it replaces—unity. Rather, "amalgamation" becomes an alternative to it. And as such, it serves as euphemism for disunity or at least a diluted form of Arab unity. In this capacity, the euphemism identifies the frustrated prudent Arab viewer with the policies and perspective of the Qatari state whose representatives speak constantly about Arab solidarity, coordination and cooperation.

Against this backdrop of a consistent effort to undermine and to block the viewers' Arab nationalist sentiments and aspirations, all of the previous examples suggest that the anti-establishment overtone of al-Qasim's discourses on Arab unity is far from representing a substantive, liberational rhetoric that endorses the radicalism of the pan-Arabist viewers. On the contrary, textual evidence indicates that al-Qasim's initial identification with the beliefs and attitudes of the pan-Arab audience entails an effort not only to block the viewers' radical beliefs and passions, but also identify the audience with the policies and perspective of the Qatari state by creating a need for an alternative framework of interpretation; an unprincipled one that is less ambitious and is reconcilable with the pragmatic policies of the Qatari state.

Al-Qasim's discourses on the three important issues (the Arab-Israeli conflict, the Iraqi issue, before and after the war, Arab nationalist aspirations) are consistent in terms of al-Qasim's style and the implications of his anti-establishment discourse. Stylistically, the rhetorical questions that characterize al-Qasim's anti-establishment discourse on the three issues enable him to tap the radical beliefs and attitude of the majority of the viewers. But al-Qasim's anti-establishment discourse constantly undergoes a shift in the audience's identification; a shift that deflects their radical beliefs and attitudes towards the three issues by creating a need for alternative frameworks of understanding that are conducive to the interests of the Qatari state.

CHAPTER 4

The Islamically Bounded “Without Bounds”

The interviewer: What does it mean to drop war [against Israel] as an option, while the enemy is ambushing, geared up and armed?

The interviewee: This opinion [dropping the war as an option] has been decided at the highest level in the Arab and the Muslim world. We respect this opinion. I believe it is not devoid of rationality and validity. We differ over...

The interviewer [interrupting]: Rationality, dropping war as an option while Israel is slaughtering [Palestinians] at will and as it pleases!

(Al-Jazeera, November 15, 2000)

Questioning, interrupting and challenging a top Arab official by an Arab TV journalist on an Arab television was, until a few years ago, an unthinkable scene, especially when the Arab official is a prominent member of the ruling elite of the state hosting and financing the mass medium itself. The interviewee in the above excerpt is Hamad bin Jassem Al Thani, the Qatari Foreign Minister; the medium is al-Jazeera; the scene is no longer unthinkable. Thanks to the interviewer, Ahmad Mansour of “Without Bounds” (*bila hudood*), WB, what once was unthinkable has become commonplace.¹

¹ Mansour is among the most prominent faces at al-Jazeera. Besides hosting WB, he was the first host of one of the channel’s oldest, very popular and still running talkshows, “Religion and Life” (*al-shari`a wal-hayat*). He is also the host of an equally popular documentary program called “Witness to the Century” (*shahed `ala al-`asrr*), and, when the need arises, he is a capable war reporter as in his landmark live coverage of the battle between the U.S. forces and the Iraqi resistance groups from inside Falluja itself.

Steeped in irony, the rhetorical question that Mansour poses to the Qatari official is a manifestation of an unprecedented occurrence in state-sponsored Arab mass media; a bold objection to the government's policies expressed face-to-face to a prominent figure of authority. Not only that Mansour, just like al-Qasim, epitomizes free speech expressed boldly and unambiguously, but Mansour also shatters the idea that Arab policy makers are above the law and Arab media dare not hold them accountable. This exchange between Mansour and his guest is not an isolated incident in WB; it is common, as made evident in his memorable confrontation with one of the Palestinian Authority's most fearsome figures, Muhammad Dahlan, the head of a notorious Palestinian security apparatus known as Preventive Security Services (*al-a'mn al-wiqa'ey*): "Your jails are filled with Hamas members....Before, you were fighters, *mujahedeen*, combatants. Now you have capitulated and are working to protect the security of Israel" (WB, October 13, 1999).

But much like the anti-establishment discourse of al-Qasim leads ultimately to bolstering the interests, policies and political perspective of the Qatari state, so does Mansour's anti-establishment discourse. Mansour's exchange with the Qatari foreign minister, along with his introductory remarks to the same session of WB reveal four ways from which Qatar benefits from his anti-establishment discourse:

Qatar is accused by many Arab countries, especially the neighboring ones, that it carries out a peculiar foreign policy, following the comprehensive political change undertaken by its Emir, Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani, after his ascendance to power in June 1995. For while Qatar has very close relations with the United States and is considered by it as one of its closest allies in the region,

it [Qatar], at the same time, has exceptionally good relations with what is considered to be the United States' most ardent enemy, Iran; Qatar also has good relations with Iraq, which is being battled and blockaded by the United States for more than ten years. And while Qatar has established relations with Israel, bypassing its [Qatar's] neighbors headed by Saudi Arabia, it [Qatar] opened its doors for the leaders of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), considered to be Israel's most devoted enemies, whom it granted a safe heaven on its territories after brokering a deal with Jordan to secure their release.

Also, hosting the Islamic Summit, which has just concluded its activities last night at Doha [Qatar], and being its president for a three-year term, is also considered a magnificent achievement of its [Qatar's] policies. [It is noteworthy that the] Summit has had a great success with regard to the Iraq-Kuwait crisis in terms of the relations between the two countries and demanding an end to the embargo imposed on Iraq and the banning of commercial flights, as well as in its [the Summit's] call for establishing an international regime to protect the Palestinians.

Nevertheless, the establishment of al-Jazeera Satellite Channel by Qatar in November 1, 96 remains to be the most controversy- and charges-stirring achievement, after al-Jazeera Channel has become a matter of international, not only Arab, interest. Qatar is now accused of using it as a fatal weapon that terrorizes its sisters, the Arab regimes, and drives a wedge between them.

The first way from which Qatar stands to benefit from Mansour's discourses derives from the ability of these discourses to burnish the democratic credentials of the

Qatari ruler who has ascended to power in a palace coup in 1995 and is depicted by Mansour as a leader of a corrective political movement. Burnishing the democratic tendencies and vision of the non-democratic government of the new Emir is manifest in the first and the last sentences of the introduction. In the first sentence, Mansour reminds the viewers of “the comprehensive political changes” undertaken by the new Emir and objected to by other Arab countries. In the last sentence of the introduction, Mansour re-emphasizes the same point by providing the viewers with the most tangible proof of such comprehensive political changes, the establishment of al-Jazeera, the “fatal weapon that terrorizes” other Arab governments which terrorize them, the viewers. Emphasis on al-Jazeera by Mansour is not confined to this introduction. He rather repeatedly reminds the viewers of such a magnificent achievement in his numerous discussions with the Qatari foreign minister (WB, November 15, 2000, WB; October 16, 2002; WB, December 31, 2003).² Al-Jazeera is “a revolution in Arab media that Qatar has carried out” (WB, October 16, 2002), which, ever since its establishment more than seven years ago, has changed the face of Arab media”; al-Jazeera is “the first Arab satellite channel broadcasting...that is independent from the policies of the [Qatari] government” (WB, January 7, 2004).

In this context, the exchange between Mansour and the Qatari official that follows immediately becomes another demonstrative proof of the self-reforming Qatari government. For what is shocking about the exchange is not only what it implies about

² Along with other broadcasts such as the January 7, 2004 and June 22, 2005. See <www.aljazeera.net/channel/archive>.

Mansour, his program and al-Jazeera at large, but also what it implies about the Qatari government itself, which now, to the pleasure of the pan-Arab audience and in contrast with other Arab governments, tolerates political dissent and is open for public criticism.³ Although Qatar is far from being a democratic government, it nonetheless emerges out of Mansour's introduction and his exchange with the foreign minister as a liberal autocracy, which in contrast with other Arab governments appears as democratic.

The second way from which Qatar stands to benefit from Mansour's anti-establishment discourses stems from the ability of such discourses to defend, implicitly, the foreign policy of the self-reforming, comparatively democratic Qatari government. To this effect, Mansour downplays what Qatar has in common with other Arab countries and focuses the viewers' attention instead on what sets Qatar apart from other Arab regimes; its higher degree of sovereignty, independence and national pride, as reflected by its balanced foreign policy. Granted, Qatar shares much in terms of its foreign policy with other Arab governments. But, unlike those governments, as Mansour argues by example and contrast, the Qatari foreign policy does not concur always with the policies and interests of the United States and its Arab allies (such as the governments of Saudi

³ This argument is further perpetuated by the Qatari foreign minister's frequent appearances in WB, in which he answers questions raised not only by Mansour but also directly by viewers who call into the program asking the minister to comment on his government's controversial policies towards Israel, Iraq, as well as his country's strong relationship and cooperation, militarily and politically, with the United States.

Arabia, Jordan and Egypt and the Palestinian Authority) that work diligently and openly against Iran, Iraq and Hamas.⁴

That brings us to the third way from which Qatar stands to benefit from Mansour's discourses. He provides its policies with a religious cover. Notice, for instance, how he alludes to the Islamic movement, Hamas, in the introduction to demonstrate Qatar's support of the organization, while in his exchange with Dahlan, he brings Hamas in the discourse to show how the security apparatus of the moderate Palestinian Authority works diligently and openly against the Islamic movement. By contrasting the Qatari position with the position of the Palestinian Authority (PA) from Hamas, Mansour identifies Qatar with one of the most popular Islamic movements. As a result, he burnishes the Islamic credentials of Qatar. Other ways by which Mansour provides Qatar with Islamic cover emerge subtly out of the general atmosphere of WB; from Mansour's well known affiliation with the Muslim Brotherhood Society,⁵ the

⁴ Qatar, in fact, has been severely criticized by friends and foes alike for granting Hamas and the Brotherhood a privileged treatment: "Qatar has joined the terrorist state of Iran in pledging millions of dollars to the government [of Hamas]," Weinstein writes in an article in the *Cornell Daily Sun* (April, 21, 2006). A similar critique is extended by Dahlan, who, in justifying the defeat of his security forces in Gaza in 2006 on the hands of Hamas fighters, "accused Iran and Qatar of providing Hamas with hundreds of millions of dollars" (*Jerusalem Post*, July 5, 2007).

⁵ The Brotherhood was founded in 1928 in Egypt by Hasan Al-Banna as an organization seeking to combat the secularization of the Egyptian state. But it evolved into an organization that saw itself as struggling against Western civilization, as a whole, in order to advance what it defines as Muslim civilization (Mitchell, 1969, pp.224-231). The group's over-emphasis on secularization as the major threat to the Islamic character of the Arab society brought about a peculiar political scenario, one in which the organization found itself competing with and fighting against popular yet secular groups, especially groups subscribing to Arab nationalism. The Brotherhood's unyielding enmity towards such groups culminated in an attempt on Nasser's life

overwhelming presence of Islamists in WB, especially from the Brotherhood and Hamas in comparison with other groups which are either unrepresented or under-represented in the program, and the pervasive use of Islamic vocabulary.⁶ Therefore, much like one expects the discourses in Keith Olbermann's *Countdown* or Chris Matthews' *Hardball* to be consistent with the precepts and the line of reasoning of the Democratic Party, the viewers of Mansour's WB expect the discourses to be anchored in an Islamic framework

in 1954, a bloody military confrontation with the Ba`th ruling party in Syria in the 1970s and 80s, in the wake of President al-Asad's adoption of a secular constitution for the country, and in the Iraqi chapter of the Brotherhood's overt support of the U.S. toppling of the Ba`th regime in Iraq in 2003 and the active role the organization played in Iraq's post-war U.S.-appointed Iraqi government and all subsequent ones. Another characteristic of the peculiar political scenario stems from the Brotherhood's marriage of convenience with Arab regimes (Jordan and Saudi Arabia, for instance) and even non-Arab regimes (Britain, the United States and even Israel) that share the organization's hostility towards Nasser and other anti-Western secular groups. Commenting on this topic, Bassam Tibi (1997) and Mass`ad (2001) took account of the preferential treatment granted the Brotherhood by the Jordanian government "in recognition of the support they [Brothers] had given to the Hashemite regime against its leftist and Arab nationalist opponents" (Tibi, p. 184; Mas`ad, p.194). From the Israeli side, Peled (2001) suggested that "In the 1980s, the [Israeli] government had supported the burgeoning Islamist movement in the Occupied Territories as a counter weight to the PLO..." (p.132). From the American side, Baer (2003) and Deryfuss (2005) disclosed information pertaining to the CIA's financial support of the Brotherhood in the past due to its "commendable capability to overthrow Nasser" (Baer, p. 99; Deryfuss, pp. 101-108).

⁶ Here are a few examples: Hamas prominent leaders, Sheikh Ahmad Yasin (June 9, 1999, October 13, 1999), Abdul`Azeez al-Rantisi (April 4, 2001) and Khalid Mish`al (March 31, 1999, August 30, 2000, June 20, 2001, May 15, 2002, December, 24, 2003); prominent leaders of different chapters of the Muslim Brothers such as, the Syrian `Ali Sadr al-Bayanuni (July 7, 1999, August 20, 2003), the Iraqi Usama al-Takriti (February 2, 2000, May 14, 2003) and the Jordanian Ishaq el-Farhan (May 16, 2000); the list also contained other Islamists such as Muhsin al`Awaji (December 5, 2001, July 10, 2002, November 5, 2003), Muhammad al-`Awadi (January 3, 2001), Abdul Wahab al-Miseeri (February 3, 1999, November 8, 2000, February 6, 2002, September 24, 2003) and Abdullah al-Nefisi (June 16, 1999, June 23, 1999, June 30, 1999, April 12, 2000, January 31, 2001, February 13, 2002, June 26, 2002, September 8, 2002, February 12, 2003, June 4, 2003), among many others. To the same effect, Mansour devotes a great number of episodes to delineating the conditions under which the Brotherhood and its various branches operate in Arab countries like Syria, Iraq and Palestine, or the achievements and performances of these groups in local elections (as in Kuwait, Algeria, Yemen, Sudan).

of interpretation, or line of reasoning. This is highly significant in terms of its implications. Normally, universal rhetorical *topics* such as “facts,” “testimony,” “anecdote,” or “example” induce the audience to judge a certain notion as either right or wrong, or worthy or unworthy, and so on. But in the presence of an Islamic rhetorical *topic*, Mansour invites the viewers indirectly to judge the notion under discussion from a religious standpoint; that is to say, *haqq* or *baatel* (*haqq* being the religious equivalent to secular terms such as factual, true, valid, sound, good, and *baatel* is its antonym). In this case, given that Islam to the crushing majority of the viewers is not only a line of reasoning but a mindset, a perspective, an identity, an organizer of behavior, and the main provider of values that even the skeptical viewers feel uneasy to take issue with, Mansour employs the uncontroversial precepts of Islam to justify or at least to mitigate the negative impact of the controversial policies of Qatar.

Finally, by burnishing the democratic credentials of the state, minimizing the negative impact of its controversial foreign policy, providing Qatar with an Islamic cover, and by setting it apart from other pro-Western moderate Arab establishments, Mansour leads the viewers to see it as an example of an acceptable type of a moderate Arab state. Worded differently, Mansour’s anti-establishment discourses are underpinned by a controversial premise that could be stated as follows: a state can be both pro-Western and pro-Arab simultaneously. This premise conflicts sharply with a popular premise anchoring more radical ideologies (such as Arab nationalism and radical Islamism), which tend to essentialize the conflict with the West. By challenging this long-held belief that equates pro-Westernism with anti-Arabism and, or, anti-Islam, Mansour subverts the radical tendencies of many viewers who sympathize with radical political ideologies, and,

thus, brings the viewers closer to the standpoint of the new type of Arab moderate state which Qatar exemplifies.

Against this background of ways from which Qatar stands to benefit from Mansour's discourses, I contend that the anti-establishment discourse of Mansour, just like the anti-establishment discourse of al-Qasim, cannot be read literally; meaning that such discourse represents a genuine liberational discourse that embraces the radicalism of the viewers. By no means; analysis of Mansour's anti-establishment discourse leads ultimately to identifying the viewers with the Qatari political perspective and moderate policies towards pressing political issues.

To show how Mansour creates such identification between the viewers and Qatar, I will analyze some of his discourses on the three controversial issues, Arab unification, Iraq, and the Arab-Israeli conflict. But since Mansour's views on the Iraqi question, before and after the War of 2003, are discernable in his discourses on the Iraqi version of Arab nationalism (Iraqi Ba`th), I will discuss them in the context of his discourses on Arab nationalism in general.

Re-inventing Arab Nationalism

As I have previously argued, the Arab leaders, "because their legitimacy, popularity, and sometimes even survival depended on whether they were viewed as adhering to the norms of Arabism, [...] expended considerable energy conveying the image that they are genuine disciples of Arab nationalism" (Barnett, 1998, p.9). The Qatari officials are not an exception; they too, as Sakr (2007) accurately contends, have to "burnish their Arab nationalist credentials" (p. 125). Neither is a public figure like Mansour an exception to the rule; he also, despite his Islamist orientations, has to burnish

his Arab nationalist credentials, or, to say the least, conceal or mitigate any divergence from popular beliefs such as the belief in the oneness of the Arab nation and the nobility and worthiness of the notion of Arab unity.

Mansour's anti-establishment discourse plays a central role in concealing or mitigating the Islamist host's divergence from some of the viewers' popular beliefs and attitudes. At face value, Mansour's anti-establishment discourse identifies him with the viewers' nationalist hopes aspirations. However, Mansour uses the same anti-establishment discourse to divide the viewers from Arab nationalism's three primary messengers—Nasser, Saddam Hussein and al-Asad, depicting their regimes as inherently oppressive, undemocratic, irrational and anti-Islamic. Thus in the context of Mansour's argument against the three leaders, Arab unity per se is spared any criticism but it is nonetheless relegated to the margin of Mansour's political narrative.

Furthermore, the primary premise—that is, the inherently oppressive, undemocratic, irrational and anti-Islamic nature of the advocate of Arab nationalism and Arab unity, anchoring Mansour's political narrative creates a need for an alternative form of Arab political ideology. The major characteristics of his anti-establishment discourse on the three primary representatives of Arab nationalism lead the viewers towards moderate political Islam as the proper alternative framework. More specifically, Mansour depicts the Muslim Brotherhood's political worldview as the proper alternative to Arab nationalism. It is at this particular point that Mansour's discourse becomes clearly conducive to the interests and policies of the demonstrably self-reforming and – democratizing, Islamically inclined Qatari state, which maintains excellent relations with the Brotherhood and, to a good extent, shares its pragmatic and moderate line of thinking.

To show how such an implication materializes, I will examine Mansour's discourses on each of the three primary representatives of Arab nationalisms, the Iraqi Ba`th, the Syrian Ba`th and Nasserism.

The Case of the Iraqi Ba`th

The Qatari Foreign Minister, Hamad bin Jasim Al Thani, argues in the December 31, 2003 episode of WB that: "It was a person called Saddam Hussein who brought Iraq to such a state." This is the same argument that Mansour elaborates on in his discourses on Iraq. The argument can be phrased as follows: the Iraqi Ba`th is irreformably undemocratic, irrational, anti-Islam and, hence, *baatel*.

This argument is conveyed by Mansour contextually and textually. Contextually, Mansour in the first year of the program totally excludes the Iraqi issue.⁷ Politically, the act of excluding the Iraqi issue is mindless and unjustifiable, given the tremendous weight of a central Arab country like Iraq and the viewers' great interest in it. Rhetorically, however, the act is meaningful. Exclusion is a deliberate act that enables Mansour to argue safely for the unworthiness of the Iraqi Ba`th without angering the skeptical viewers, who admire Saddam Hussein, despite his iron-fisted policies and the

⁷ The deliberateness of exclusion is further manifest in Mansour's extensive coverage (over-representation) of issues germane to Iraq's archenemy, Kuwait, whose affairs he has covered in 1999 in three consecutive episodes (June 16, June 23 and June 30), or, similarly, in the number of episodes covering Algerian affairs in the same year (four episodes—February 10, February 17, March 3 and March 24), Sudanese affairs (two episodes—December 22 and December 29), Yemeni affairs (two episodes—September 1 and September 8). Even the political affairs of non-Arab countries are comparatively over-covered (Iranian affairs in three episodes (March 3, August 4 and November 17), affairs related to Malaysia, Kosovo, Pakistan and Turkey in four episodes, (July 4, June 2, November 10 and November 24, respectively)).

undemocratic nature of his rule, and consider him a symbol of Arab pride for his firm stand against Israel, the United States and its Arab allies.

Textually, Mansour's tacit argument for the baseness, unworthiness or *baatel* quality of the Iraqi version of Arab nationalism can be discerned in two sections of his discourses, depending on whether he addresses the issue of Iraq indirectly or directly. In both cases, however, Mansour uses anti-establishment discourse to initially identify himself with the pan-Arabist popular beliefs and passions of both the secular minded and the Islamically inclined viewers. Mansour, then, shifts the center of identification, from tapping the viewers' pan-Arabist beliefs and sentiments to tapping their passion for justice, democracy and Islam. The shift in identification enables Mansour to consistently focus the viewers' attention on one primary premise concerning the Iraqi regime: the fact that it is inherently oppressive, irreformably undemocratic and consistently anti-Islamic. Mansour thus suppresses any other premise that casts the Iraqi regime under a positive light; premises such as its bold anti-U.S. stance, its call for Arab unification and continued support for the Palestinian people in their struggle against occupation

An example of Mansour's restrictive perspective on the Iraqi Ba`th is found in his discourses on the Iraq-Kuwait relations and the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990, as in the following remarks that he has given in the June 16, 1999 session of WB: "Although Kuwait is one of the smallest Arab countries in terms of its area and the size of its population, it is, nonetheless, as many observers see it, considered the largest of the Arab countries in terms of the political freedoms and the democratic experience." For two decades, Kuwait has been looked at by many Arabs as the conservative Gulf state that has successfully introduced a measure of liberalization and democratization of its society and

politics without undermining the Arab and the Islamic identity of the country. Parliamentary elections and relative freedom of the press are the major markers of Kuwaiti politics that set it apart from other Gulf states. In this context, Kuwait of yester years is analogous to nowadays Qatar, which has also introduced a certain degree of liberalization and democratization of its politics, society and media without undermining the Arabic and the Islamic identity of its population. This is what Mansour emphasizes in the previous remarks, which lead the viewers to see the Ba`thist regime of Iraq as the antithesis of Kuwait and, by extension, Qatar, and as a thug that has invaded and brutalized its peaceful, democratic Arab neighbor, thus “destroying the dreams of Arab unity and Arab nationalism.” Regardless of the truthfulness of Mansour’s account, his remarks suggest to the viewers the incompatibility of their aspirations for political freedoms with the undemocratic nature of the Ba`thist Iraqi regime. Moreover, whether intentionally or unintentionally, Mansour’s remarks create a context in which the viewers are invited to contrast Iraq with other demonstrably reformable Arab governments such as Kuwait and Qatar. A comparison that Qatar, “which has undergone comprehensive political changes led by its Emir Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani” (WB, November 11, 2000), is destined to win.

A similar outcome emerges out of Mansour’s political narratives on the United States-Iraq relations saga. Such narratives also challenge the viewers’ perception of Saddam as the Arab nationalist leader who has dared to stand up to and fight against the ambitions of a new imperialist Western power—the United States, supported by its regional allies. Mansour’s narrative has two villains, as in his introduction to the November 8, 2000 episode, in which he forewarns that “the Arab identity and character

are subjected to a dangerous process of dissolution. The process which was being carried out covertly in the past is now carried out systemically and overtly by the United States.”

The framework of interpretation identifies Mansour, initially, with the beliefs of the majority of the viewers for whom the suffering of the Iraqi people and the Arab populations at large are the result of the policies of the American villain. The same framework of interpretation is found in his remarks in the episodes of September 4 and 18 of 2002, wherein he condemningly emphasizes the fact that the United States and her allies “plan to strike Iraq and to topple its regime.” But Mansour’s political narrative undergoes a divergence from the beliefs and attitudes of many viewers as he depicts the plight of the Iraqi people as the outcome of the policies of the other villain, the undemocratic, conniving Iraqi Ba`thist regime. Mansour goes even farther suggesting to the viewers that there is a clandestine cooperation between Saddam Hussein and the nation’s enemy, the United States, as evident in the implications of the expletive, “*haqqan*” (truly, true, indeed, actually), that he uses often in the questions he raises, as in the following one: “Is America truly serious in its intentions to topple the regime in Iraq?” (WB, February 2, 2000). The underpinning premise in this question is: there is no intention on the part of America to topple the Iraqi regime. The premise can then support an argument along the following line: the U.S. anti-Saddam rhetoric is only a matter of theatrics aiming at manufacturing a false image of an anti-U.S. Arab nationalist. The thesis of a clandestine cooperation between Saddam Hussein and the United States is even more conspicuous in Mansour’s exchange with Edward Beck, the U.S. ambassador to Iraq between 1977 and 1988, in the episode of WB (August 2, 2000). In it, Mansour actually begins the discussion by raising the same question (Does the United States really

want to get rid of the Iraqi regime?) three times. Dissatisfied by Beck's assertion of the actual seriousness of the United State's intentions to topple the regime, Mansour rebuts:

I was in Iraq only four weeks ago and I realized that the sanctions have destroyed the humanness of the Iraqi people not the Iraqi regime, which perhaps grew more powerful. That confirmed the fact that the United States' fundamental objective is not the termination of President Saddam's regime but the destruction of the humanness of twenty-two million Iraqis.

The rhetorical significance of this passage lies in its ability to strip Saddam Hussein, who "grew more powerful" as a result of the U.S. policies, of the image of an anti-U.S., Arab nationalist hero, by offering an alternative framework by which Mansour moves the viewers to see the hostility of the United States not as a marker of a war against Saddam and the Ba`th but rather as a marker of the U.S. war against Islam itself, a war that aims at "redrawing the map of the Arab and the Islamic region anew, and Iraq is a mere first step in the new American scheme for the region" (WB, October 23, 2002).

The previous examples demonstrate the centrality of the undemocratic and the conspiratorial nature of the Iraqi Ba`thist regime, which leads the viewers to believe that the Iraqi Ba`th is incompatible with their aspirations for Arab unity, liberation, political freedoms and reforms. Meanwhile, Mansour's remarks identify the viewers indirectly with the demonstrably self-reforming Arab states such as Kuwait and Qatar.

The same framework of interpretation is advanced by Mansour in the first session of WB, in which he discusses Iraqi affairs directly in the episode of February 2, 2000. But here Mansour adds the anti-Islamic nature of the Iraqi Ba`th as another premise that bolsters his argument against the Ba`thist doctrine of Iraq.

This is how Mansour introduces the subject of discussion:

In this week's episode of WB, we broach the Iraqi file for the first time in this program. We also broach it from an angle that perhaps has not been examined in other programs, the Islamists in Iraq—the Iraqi Islamic Party, more specifically. The Iraqi Islamic Party was founded in April, 1960 as a political cover for the Muslim Brotherhood Movement in Iraq, which was [in turn] founded in [19]48 by sheikhs Muhammad Mahmoud al-Sawwaff and Amjad al-Zahawi, as a natural extension of the Muslim Brotherhood Group established in Egypt by Hasan el-Banna in 1928.

The [Iraqi Islamic] Party has nonetheless run into political confrontation with the communists and with the authorities in Iraq then, which led to President Abdul-Kareem Qasim's issuance of a decree banning the party and arresting its leaders in the fifteenth of October in 1960, only seven months after the establishment of the party. That in turn forced the Islamic Brotherhood in Iraq to become an underground movement from 1960 till now, when they, once again, announced the re-activation of the party and the resumption of political action in 91, under the leadership of Dr. Usama al-Tikriti with whom we talk today about his clandestine movement, which some observers describe as the most powerful, organizationally, among all opposition groups in Iraq.

Dr. Usama al-Tikriti was born in the city of Tikrit in 1939. He was the Iraqi President Saddam Hussein's schoolmate throughout the three stages—primary, elementary and secondary. As a result [of this intimate acquaintance], some of the opposition Iraqi writers argue that no one knows the Iraqi President Saddam

Hussein at this early stage as does Dr. Usama al-Tikriti.

Dr. Usama la-Tikriti joined the Muslim Brotherhood in Iraq in 1952. He graduated from the Medical College at Baghdad University. He then pursued his graduate studies in Britain, wherein he later worked as a Diagnostic [X]-ray consultant in one of Britain's hospitals.

This introduction is an illustration of how Mansour's consubstantiality with the viewers' passion for justice, democracy and political progress in general divides them from Saddam's regime and, at once, identifies them with an alternative regime, or ideology, that Mansour identifies indirectly with the viewers' own Islamic passions and principles. The introduction, furthermore, illustrates how Mansour's initial identification with the viewers' passions and political aspirations leads ultimately to identifying the viewers with the Qatari policies towards Iraq. In different words, by shifting the center of identification with the audience, Mansour also induces a shift in the viewers' minds who are encouraged by the host anchor their perception of Saddam Hussein not in his anti-U.S., anti-Israel position but in the inherent incongruence between Saddam's Ba`thist policies and the audience's Islamic beliefs and its aspirations for a democratic, just political regime.

Key to Mansour's effort to disconnect the audience from Ba`thist Saddam is the host's emphasis on a particular line-up of historical facts that is conducive to identifying Saddam's regime not only as base or unworthy but *baatel* as well. The facts selected by Mansour entail, as Kenneth Burke (1992) contends, "a strategy for inducement,"⁸ or to

borrow Black's words, facts have "uncommon implication and entailment" (p. 53). What they entail in this passage is an attempt by Mansour to characterize the Iraqi Ba`th as consistently and perpetually anti-Islam. And it is at this juncture that Mansour's identifying with the audience's Islamic beliefs and their aspirations for a just political becomes a strategy for inducing the viewers to re-assess their pro-Saddam attitude. To this end also, Mansour selects and re-arranges "facts" pertinent to the modern history of Iraq in a starkly simplistic manner that overlooks the complexities of Iraqi politics, as conveyed metaphorically through the implications of the "dates" (1960, 1948, 1928, 1991) that punctuate his introduction. Although such dates can be initially justified based on their relevance to the Iraqi Islamic Party the fact remains that the Party has been, unlike other Iraqi political parties, practically absent from the Iraqi political scene for about four decades, which he attributes to the despotic Ba`thist polices that have pushed the Brotherhood "underground." Subsequently, and most importantly, as Mansour's historical account suggests to the viewers that the battle with the Iraqi Ba`th is not a new one, but rather an ongoing confrontation with the undemocratic, anti-Islamic Ba`thist regime, such an account reflects an attempt to downplay the weight of the policies of the United States and her Arab allies (such as Qatar) as the primary or the only cause of the conflict, and, hence, the historical account downplays the significance of any anti-Iraqi position or policies taken by Iraq's adversaries. Both consequences are evident in the

⁸ In Bernard L. Brock (ed.) (1992), *Kenneth Burke and the 21st Century* (p. 4).

guest's answer to a question pertaining to the viability of the Iraqi Brotherhood's cooperation with the Ba`thist government:

We have reached a point at which it is hard to imagine the possibility of cooperation between the regime and others, because the regime is seeking followers [not partners] and wishes to contain others and to exploit them for its own benefit. [The regime] does not want people working freely and without restraint; otherwise, it [the regime] would have provided, in theory and in practice, an atmosphere that inspires people's confidence in it. Where are the freedoms? Where are the laws? Where are the regulations? Where are the [human] rights? Where is the sign showing that the regime has repented for matters it committed in previous stages?

At a different point, al-Tikriti reaches the following conclusion:

Truthfully, if we found that it was beneficial from an Islamic point of view to deal, at any point in time, with the regime, we would have done it. But we have reached a conclusion, as have others, that this regime reached a point where it has lost its trustworthiness in the political arena. We can no longer imagine that this regime is able to back away from the negative actions it took, and still taking, which caused a truly awful state of affairs. This matter compels us to refrain from cooperating with the regime.

Exactly like Mansour, the guest anchors his opposition to the Iraqi regime in its undemocratic, totalitarian nature, as evident in the first paragraph. In the second paragraph, the guest emphasizes the anti-Islamic attitude of the Ba`th. As a result, his assertions identify Saddam Hussein with a character that the Islamically inclined viewer

detests and should fight against; the character of an unrepentant *sultan ja'er* (oppressive ruler) that “has no specific religion.” This supposition, in turn, creates an identification between the viewers and any party that attempts to remove the heretical, unrepentant *sultan ja'er* of Iraq by any means necessary, even if it means to cooperate with the United States. This line of reasoning is well captured by the remarks of al-Tikriti, who, unsurprisingly, was also Mansour’s first guest in the post-war episodes of WB, in which he offers his “congratulations to all Iraqis for such a finale, the elimination of despotism,” (WB, May 14, 2003).

Convincing or not, this argument keeps re-emerging in various episodes, as in Mansour’s introductory remarks to the episode of December 31, 2003, in which he and the Qatari foreign minister, the guest speaker, exonerate the Arab regimes and blame the outcome of the war on Iraq solely on the policies of Saddam Hussein, whom Mansour holds responsible for the “destruction of the country”:

Although many Arab officials, among others, pled with Saddam Hussein to spare Iraq and the region the fate that befell it, the man had nonetheless carried on obstinately until Iraq had fallen and he has fallen into the hands of the Americans in the manner he was displayed [on television].

In conclusion to this section, Mansour’s anti-establishment discourse on Ba`thist Iraq echoes the viewers’ passion for Arab unity, justice, democratization and Islamic values only to utilize them in dividing the viewers from the Iraqi Ba`th that shares their anti-U.S., anti-Israel sentiments.

Mansour’s discourses on the other two representative parts of Arab nationalism further illustrates how the shift in the basis of Mansour’s identification with the audience

is a manifestation of an effort to divide the Arab viewers from the radical precepts of Arab nationalism and, at once, to identify them with the Qatari government as a viable and advantageous alternative to radical Arab nationalist regimes.

The Case of the Syrian Ba`th

One must bear in mind that Syria, unlike Qatar, has dared to oppose the United States' war on Iraq and to support the Iraqi resistance groups. One must also bear in mind, that Syria, like Qatar, maintains excellent relations with popular organizations such as Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Hezbollah, among others. Therefore, in order to tilt the comparison in favor of Qatar, Mansour performs three functions in his discourses on Ba`thist Syria. He, first, focuses the viewers' attention on the Syrian internal affairs, rather than the Syrian foreign policy, showing how tyrannical the Ba`thist regime is. He, secondly, emphasizes the anti-Islamic nature of the Ba`th. But, thirdly, unlike his discourses on Ba`thist Iraq, he anchors the Syrian Ba`thist anti-Islamic attitude in religious sectarian basis, `Alawite—the minority sect to which President Hafez al-Asad and his son, President Bashar al-Asad, belong, versus Sunni—the dominant Islamic sect to which the majority of Syrian and Arab populations at large subscribe. Finally, when Mansour finds himself compelled to address the Syrian foreign policy, he resorts to raising doubt in the minds of the viewers about the true objectives of the Syrian foreign policy depicting it as a base political maneuver that has no connection whatsoever with the precepts of Arab nationalism (liberation and unification). By performing these four functions, Mansour creates among the audience a political and mental context that favors the Sunni, demonstrably self-reforming and democratic Qatari establishment.

The Syrian affairs are addressed by Mansour in only five episodes in the five-year period extending from 1999 till the end of 2003.⁹ Out of the five episodes, Mansour has allocated four of them to Syrian opposition figures (July 7, 1999, June 5, August 15, 2001 and June 5, 2002), granting them an opportunity to speak freely against the regime. In this sense, “opposition” to the regime becomes the major theme of Mansour’s political narrative. Moreover, anti-Syrian opposition is presented by Mansour primarily from a religious standpoint, as made clear by the identity of the guests—Dr. Ali Sadr-ul-Deen al-Bayanuni, the leader of the Syrian Brotherhood, was the guest in two broadcasts (July 7, 1999 and August 20, 2003), while Haytham al-Maleh, who has “close connections to the Syrian Brotherhood,” was the guest in the third episode of August 15, 2001 (Jacobson, 2005). Al-Bayanuni, in the July 7, 1999 broadcast of WB reminds the viewers that:

The origin of the conflict between the Ba`th and the Brotherhood is a concomitant of the conflict between secularism and Islamic ideology. Up until late 70s, the conflict was ideologically and dogmatically driven. To give an example, the Ba`th Party ideologues and propagators used to boast saying ‘I have believed in Ba`th as a god, the one and only, and in partner, in pan-Arabism, as a religion that has no equal.’

Therefore, the context of the discourses in general also invites the viewers to see anti-Syrian opposition as a matter of religious duty (*wajeb deeni*), especially from a Sunni

⁹ Najib Ghabbian offers a good depiction of al-Jazeera’s coverage of Syrian politics in his article, “Contesting the state media monopoly: Syria on Al-Jazira Television.” See *Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA)*, 5(2), June 2001. <<http://meria.idc.ac.il/>>.

standpoint.¹⁰ Thus, indirectly, Qatar, the Sunni government that maintains and supports Islamic organization, is well served by the general context of Mansour's discourses on Syria.

Textually, "opposition" to the tyrannical, anti-Sunni Syrian regime is the common feature permeating all of Mansour's discourses on Syria is defended and elaborated on by Mansour in each of the five discourses, as in the session of June 14, 2000. In it, Mansour discusses the future of Syria after the passing of President Hafiz al-Asad. This is the body of Mansour's introductory remarks to this episode:

After thirty years of continuous rule, President Hafez al-Asad has departed, leaving behind him a burdensome legacy and dense shadows of anxiety over the future of Syria, which has been the region's most susceptible country to military coups—the sole pathway to power since Husni al-Za'im's coup in March 49 and President Hafiz al-Asad's Corrective Movement in March of 71; as a matter of fact, the leader of one of those coups, Ma'mun al-Kusbari of February 54's coup, was in power for only one day.

Against this backdrop, it is feared that the might of the military [apparatus] and the security forces that the state ruling regime relies on may become a threat to the future [of the country] when the ruling regime changes; especially in light of the selection of Dr. Bashar al-Asad to succeed his father as head of the state will

¹⁰ See Michael Jacobson's article "What Role for the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria's Future?" in *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, Policy watch, No. 972, March 11, 2005.

extend the contentious issue of the right of the presidents of [Arab] republics to hand down power to their sons, not only in Syria but in the Arab world at large, especially that this issue is being currently deliberated on in four other Arab countries now.

Seventeen millions, the population of Syria, are looking forward to a new era that would help them make up for what they have missed out on in the last fifty years; [a period of time] in half of which the country drowned in military coups and internal conflicts and in the second half fell under the rule of the military and the security institutions to ensure its stability, which has led to a burdensome legacy at the political, social, freedoms, human_rights, and foreign relations levels.

A quick glance at this introduction reveals that the question of “instability” is the most ubiquitous theme in Mansour’s narrative, as conveyed by the historical events that he emphasizes (the numerous coups that took place in the past) as well as through the *parenthetic* nature of most of the paragraph, especially in the last sentence of the first paragraph. The centrality of “instability” in Mansour’s narrative is not coincidental and deserves a pensive pause.

Despite numerous objections to the policies of the late Syrian President Hafez al-Asad, and despite the fact that he has never enjoyed the degree of popularity that the champion of Arab nationalism, Nasser, had, his Ba`thist regime has nonetheless gained a degree of respect among a good segment of the Arab populations, due to certain policies that resonate well with majority of the Arab public. Examples of such policies are his role in October War of 1973, his central role in bringing an end to the civil war in Lebanon,

his foiling of the May 17 Agreement between Israel and Lebanon in 1983, his relatively firm stand on the Arab-Israeli conflict and his dignified handling of peace negotiations, his opposition to the policies of the Palestinian Authority and the way it handles negotiations with Israel, and his support for many Arab popular “radical” groups. With this in mind, given the intensity of emotions generated by the passing of the admired al-Asad among a wide segment of the Syrian and Arab populations, Mansour runs the risk of alienating many of them; a risk that he minimizes by his clever choice of “instability” as a locus of identification, or as an organizing theme, which represents a common concern that connects Mansour, emotionally and enthymematically, with the great majority of the viewers who are worried about the future of Syria. But there is more to “instability” than that. Initially, “instability” as a common concern over the future of Syria is capable of establishing the host’s unity with the audience. However, “instability” in Mansour’s hand becomes, as described by Weaver (1953), more than a term; it becomes “a name capable of entering into a proposition” or a “perspective” (p. 211). By stressing and using “instability” as a perspective on Syrian Ba`th, Mansour constricts the viewers to looking at instability as the only and inevitable legacy of al-Asad’s undemocratic rule. Hence, the shift from one sense of “instability” to another renders it more than an identification with the audience’s concern with the future of Syria; the shift rather renders instability an unflattering comment on al-Asad’s past legacy, or a restrictive proposition that strips this legacy of any positive aspects. The “instability” theme, thus, becomes an argument for the unworthiness and even baseness of the Syrian Ba`th, and a call to abandon it.

A similar implication arises differently in the second paragraph. In it, we find that the primary type of emotion characterizing the passage is “fear,” which is quite congruent with the “instability” theme, as evident in “Against this backdrop, it is feared that the might of the military [apparatus] and the security forces that the state ruling regime relies on may become a threat to the future....” But this is where we begin to detect a *topical* slippage. From the standpoint of the viewers, “instability” and “fear” are looked at as a possible effect of the passing of al-Asad. From Mansour’s standpoint, however, instability and fear are the *continued* legacy of al-Asad, as implied by the first sentence of the second paragraph (it is feared that the might of the military [apparatus] and the security forces that the state ruling regime relies on may become a threat to the future....”). The same notion is re-emphasized by Mansour as he makes a connection between the passing of al-Asad the father and the arrival of Al-Asad the son (Dr. Bashar al-Asad) to power. In this sense, Mansour essentializes instability and fear as characteristics and natural outcome of the tyrannical Ba`thist regime. Therefore, Mansour suggests to the viewers that the passing of al-Asad should inspire hope not grief, since “Seventeen millions, the population of Syria, are looking forward to a new era that would help them make up for what they have missed out on in the last fifty years....”

Thus, once again, Mansour’s discourse on Syria furnishes the viewers with alternative basis of comparing Syrian Ba`th, the inherently undemocratic, and the Qatari government, the demonstrably self-reforming, whose new “Emir, Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani” has ushered in an era of “comprehensive political discourses,” as Mansour emphasizes in the previously commented on broadcast of November 15, 2000.

Conveniently, Mansour has completely suppressed the fact that the Qatari new Emir, like Hafez al-Asad, has also ascended to power through a coup.

Tilting the discourse towards demonstrating the unworthiness of the Syrian Ba`thist regime arises out of Mansour's discourse in the episode of June 5, 2002 as well. In it, besides re-emphasizing the inherently undemocratic nature of Syria, Mansour brings in the anti-Sunni sectarian identity of the Syrian Ba`th as a means of moving the viewers closer to the new paradigm of government that Sunni Qatar represents. The subject of discussion is "freedoms and human rights in Syria," which Mansour discusses with the Brotherhood sympathizer, Haytham al-Maleh:

Since announcing this week's topic, I have been receiving a tremendous quantity of files, correspondences, questions and appeals through email, fax and telephone calls from all over the world, the majority of which came from Syria. But the ones that were most moving were those sent by mothers, wives and sons who lost their sons or spouses or fathers or brothers during the last twenty years and have no clue about their whereabouts ever since they were arrested by the Syrian security forces, for life's most difficult matter is to lose a son or a brother or a father or a spouse and find no trace of them and live with the hope that you may find out if he is dead or still alive. If still alive, how does he look now? And how did his features turn out to be after twenty or twenty-five years in jail?

Steeped in tragic anecdotes of Syrian mothers, wives and sons who lost loved ones at the hands of the Syrian security forces, the highly emotional narrative focuses the attention of the audience entirely on the tyrannical policies of the Syrian regime. The narrative thus stirs one primary question in the minds of the viewers: what good does

Arab nationalism do, if an Arab nationalist regime such as the Syrian Ba`th is killing its own sons and daughters? This implied question then could bring a shift in the basis of identification with the viewers; from identifying with their concern with the possible threat of instability to identifying the audience with the plight of their Syrian brothers and sisters—the victim's of al-Asad's ruling regime. The shift in the locus of identification induces a shift in the audience's perception of the Syrian Ba`th, which like its Iraqi counterpart, emerges as an epitome of an undemocratic oppressive political system that should be brought to an end. This implication is evidenced by the protracted *parenthesis* with which Mansour brings the narrative to its most dramatic climax:

for life's most difficult matter is to lose a son or a brother or a father or a spouse and find no trace of them and live with the hope that you may find out if he is dead or still alive. If still alive, how does he look now? And how did his features turn out to be after twenty or twenty-five years in jail?

Thus by emptying the Ba`thist doctrine of its appealing ideological content (liberation and unification), and by anchoring the debate on Arab nationalism in the immediate needs of the population in this broadcast of WB, Mansour creates a need for a political alternative that guarantees stability, respects human life and grants its citizenry a measure of dignity and freedom. In this context, the viewers are, indirectly, induced by Mansour to see the demonstrably self-reforming, relatively democratic Qatari system, regardless of its imperfections, as superior to the Ba`thist regime, regardless of the nobility of the notion of liberation and unification.

The same outcome emerges most subtly in the same paragraph as an implication of one phrase in particular which he has used twice in the paragraph, “during the last

twenty years.” The phrase allows Mansour to bring in the `Alawite identity of the Ba`thist regime as a new premise of arguing against it. The phrase suggests to the viewers that the conflict with the Ba`thist regime began in or around 1982. This is awkward, since the Ba`th has come to power in Syria in March, 1963. Conveniently, Mansour has skipped the first twenty years of the Ba`thist rule. Why? In the years extending between 1963 and 1970, al-Asad’s Ba`thist predecessors, Amin al-Hafiz (July, 1963 to February, 1966) and Nur-ul-Deen al-Atasi (February, 1966 to November, 1970), were both Sunni, in contrast with the `Alawite al-Asad. Thus, although Mansour’s exclusion of the first two Ba`thist presidents is historically meaningless, it is rhetorically meaningful, as far as Mansour’s effort to anchor the conflict with the Syrian Ba`th in sectarian basis is concerned. The same line of reasoning also explains Mansour’s exclusion of the first twelve years of al-Asad’s rule (from 1970 to 1982). In this time period, the Brotherhood’s militant activity against the regime, which culminated in the deaths of hundreds of innocent people, was at its peak. Therefore, the 1970s speak more to the Sunni Brotherhood’s brutality and anti-nationalism attitude and less to the Syrian Ba`th’s anti-Islam attitude. This fact of Syria’s recent history, much like the Sunni identity of the two previous presidents, undermines Mansour’s effort, which explains why it is missing from his historical account. He, alternatively, focuses the audience’s attention on the year 1982; the year in which the *Alawite* al-Asad has reacted brutally against the Sunni Brotherhood killing thousands of its members and thousands others of its Sunni sympathizers in the city of Hama. As a result, Mansour attempts to divide the Sunni Arab viewers from the `Alawite, undemocratic, Syrian Ba`thist regime, thus, indirectly identifying them with Sunni Qatar which maintains good relations with the Brotherhood.

An outcome that favors Qatar also emerges out of the broadcast of August 20, 2003, which offers an example of how Mansour downplays the Syrian foreign policy towards post-war Iraq, which endears the Ba`thist regime to many Arab viewers. This is how Mansour introduces the topic of discussion:

The American pressures on Syria began to acquire new and more evolved dimensions during the American war against Iraq, as was evident in the solemn warnings issued by the American President George Bush, the Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld and the Secretary of State Colin Powell who demand that Syria refrain from any action that undermines the American military efforts in Iraq.

And as the war ended, the United States is now standing at the doorsteps of Syria from one direction and Israel from the other direction, which forced Syria to tone down its rhetoric towards the United States. That [the toning down] however did not prevent the Democratic U.S. representative, Eliot Engel, from declaring yesterday in Jerusalem that he has received Sharon's strong support for "The Syria Accountability Act," which points out Syria's support for terrorism, continued military presence in Lebanon, cooperation with Iraq [before the war] and the development of weapons of mass destruction as bases for the sanctions against Syria. [The Act] coincided with the passage of three years of the arrival of President Bashar al-Asad to power—as a successor to his father, who [Bashar] promised to bring about yet-to-come ministerial and political reforms in Syria.

This particular episode of WB shows how Mansour deals with an exigency that undermines his efforts to argue for the ineptness and unworthiness of the Syrian Ba`th. The exigency, which stems from the highly charged political atmosphere of the Arab region in the wake of the invasion of Iraq, has three important aspects. The first one derives from the pro-Syrian attitude of the great majority of the viewers who felt that Syria is the second target on the agenda of the United States and its allies. The second aspect of the exigency derives from Syria's opposition of the war and the Syrian President's public statement in which he spoke positively of the then yet-to-come Iraqi resistance.¹¹ The third aspect of the pressing rhetorical challenge facing Mansour is a concomitant of the Iraqi Brotherhood's support of the war and cooperation with the occupying forces after the war. In this context, the exigency stemming from the Brotherhood's unpopular policies undermines Mansour's efforts to argue against the Syrian regime, especially in light of the change in the Qatari policy whose foreign minister has now openly blamed Saddam alone for what has befallen the country and downplayed the need for or the prudence of anti-occupation Iraqi resistance. Mansour thus needs to neutralize foreign policy and eliminate it as a basis of judging the Syrian regime.

To neutralize the positive influence of Syrian foreign policy on the Arab audience, Mansour organizes the narrative in this session of WB around the hypocritical

¹¹ Bashar al-Asad has "approvingly predicted Iraqi popular resistance." See Anders Strindberg's article "Road from Damascus: The U.S. turns its back on a would-be ally," in *The American Conservative*, September 22, 2003.

and self-serving nature of the Syrian regime. The organizing theme raises doubt in the minds of the viewers about the true intentions behind the Syrian regime's opposition to the United States' policies and its war on Iraq. The introduction is thus *litotic*, in the sense that it downplays the weight and significance of what has endeared the Syrian government to a large segment of the Arab populations; its opposition to the war on Iraq and to the invading country, the United States. Although *litotes* do not take their classical form, they are nonetheless discernable through the implications of other terms anchoring Mansour's remarks, such as the "toning down" [of the Syrian's anti-U.S. rhetoric], which implies the "weakness," if not "cowardice," of the Syrian regime. Mansour, thus, invites the viewers to see the Syrian anti-U.S. stance as a matter of political maneuver and expediency rather than a matter of principle. This claim is further implied by the two *parentheses*, "as a successor of his father" and the "yet-to-come," through which Mansour suggests to the viewers that the continuing legacy of oppression belies the sincerity of the Syrian regime's stance against the United States.

Mansour, in the body of the discussion, provides a religious cover for his argument for the base, self-serving intentions of the Syrian regime. To this end, he invites the viewers to contrast the unprincipled stance of the oppressive, undemocratic, Syrian Ba`thist regime with the principled position of the Syrian Brotherhood, as indicated by the following exchange with which he begins the discussion:

Mansour: To start with, where do you stand on the question of the U.S. pressures on Syria?

Bayanuni: [...] Dear Brother, on the day following the issuance of the American threats to Syria via the U.S. Secretary of Defense, the group [Brotherhood] has

issued a statement in which it asserted its opposition to such accusations [threats] and its full support for and defense of the homeland [Syria]....

Mansour: Don't you think that the [U.S.] threats may benefit you by forcing the regime to make some concessions?

Bayanuni: In this, first and foremost, we stand on principle, religiously and nationally. On principle, we reject any [U.S.] threat to our homeland, and we would never align ourselves with an external enemy in order to bring about changes in Syria. This is a matter of principle. Not for any price!

In an attempt to repair the damaged credibility of the Brotherhood due to the Iraqi Brotherhood's stance on the war, Mansour and his guest disassociate the Syrian Brotherhood from its Iraqi counterpart by making clear that the Syrian Brotherhood opposes, on principle, the policies of the United States and its threats to Syria. From there, Mansour and his guest invite the audience to compare and contrast the assumingly unprincipled, self-serving stand of the Syrian government with the principled stand of the Syrian Brotherhood. Successful or not, the attempts of Mansour and his guest reflect a conscious effort to neutralize the positive aspects of the Syrian foreign policy that endears the regime, especially after the fall of Iraq under occupation, to a good portion of the Arab populations. By eliminating, or at least trying to eliminate, foreign policy as a valid basis of identifying with the inherently undemocratic Ba`thist, `Alawite, Syrian regime, Mansour tips the scale in favor of the Sunni Qatari government, despite its support of the policies of the United States and its occupation of Iraq.

Mansour's anti-establishment discourse on the third and the most popular representative of Arab nationalism, Nasser, is stylistically and enthymematically in line with his discourses on the other two representatives of Arab nationalism.

The Case of Nasserite Egypt

Nasser, from the standpoint of the great majority of the Arab populations, is not only a political figure but also a personification of their personal dreams and values, their sense of *sharaf`arabi* (Arab honor and pride), which explains why the Arab nation at large has rallied most passionately around him even after the crushing defeat of 1967. To avoid alienating a good portion of the viewers, Mansour sounds more Nasserist than Nasser himself, by identifying himself with the primary passions of the viewers who seek liberation from internal and external enemies as well as political freedoms, democracy and a just political regime, as exemplified in two episodes (April 14, 1999 and July 17, 2002) in which he critiques Nasser's legacy.

Given the thematic and enthymematic similarity of both episodes, I will focus my analysis on the April 14, 1999 session, in which Mansour probes the "the nature of Nasserism, its beliefs and principles and the future of Nasserism in the Arab world in light of the intra-conflict between different Nasserite schools of thought." The introduction to this episode reads:

The resignations of the Nasserite Party's two prominent leaders—General Commander Mohammad Fawzi (secretary of defense under Nasser) and Sami Sharaf (President Nasser's chief of staff) detonated a true crisis, which has unveiled part of the disputes, problems, and divisions that existed within the Nasserite Democratic Arab Party since its founding. And [the crisis] has also

pushed the participants in the Nationalist Thought Club, which was held few days ago in Cairo and was attended by many Nasserites, to attempt to provide an objective evaluation of the Nasserite experience to determine its rights and wrongs.

As in his discourses on the Iraqi and Syrian versions of Arab nationalism, Mansour in this introduction shifts the focus of the viewers from what Nasserism is—an Arab nationalist liberational ideology, to what Nasserism has done, does or incapable of doing. In this particular passage, Mansour extends problems that permeate the Arab world at large—weakness, division, indecisiveness, to the Nasserite Party. In this context, the Nasserite Party/ideology becomes, as do both of its Iraqi and Syrian counterparts, a manifestation of the problem rather than a manifestation of a potential solution. This depiction of Nasserism by Mansour raises the following question in the viewers' minds: how could the party or doctrine that has failed to achieve unity within its ranks in its own homeland, Egypt, achieve unity in the more complex Arab world?

In the remainder of the introduction, Mansour provides the viewers with “facts” pertaining to Nasserism incapacity to bring about changes that the Arab viewers aspire for:

Despite the objections of many to the name Nasserism and its existence—since Nasser did not leave behind a methodical strategic ideology that could be adopted and on which regimes could be established, and also since his style of governance was rife with mistakes and negative aspects, Nasserites see the opposite and consider the Nasserite experience as unique and distinctive and the legacy of Nasser as viable.

Nasserism is still viewed by a good portion of the Arabs masses as a unique and an exceptional legacy of an equally unique and an exceptional historical figure—Nasser. In this particular passage, Mansour presents the audience with “facts” that challenge their common perception of Nasserism and induce the viewers to re-asses their attitude towards it. To this end, Mansour begins the first sentence using *aporia*, the rhetorical device that allows the speaker to cast doubt on a given notion, in questioning the very essence of Nasserism (Despite the objections of many to the name Nasserism and its existence). Mansour, clearly, is among those doubters, as implied by the underlined *parenthesis*, in which he gives specific reasons as to why Nasserism is a meaningless concept. As a result, Mansour moves the audience away from their perception of Nasserism as a “unique, distinctive, viable” political dogma. This argument is further developed through the propositions he advances and by which he downplays the achievements of Nasser (Those [positive] societal changes were destined to occur anyway; Nasser should not be credited with them) and stresses the undemocratic nature of his regime, to which “There was nothing besides the single platform, single party, single position; prisons were filled with detainees and some people hanged on the gallows.” The same implication is amplified by Mansour by taking account of the various shortcomings of Nasser’s regime, as in:

Social security was not achieved, nor was self-sufficiency, justice or Arab unity.

In fact, President Abdul Nasser himself made it a de facto policy to pit some of the Arab regimes against each other...With regard to the question of Arab security, the Israeli infiltration of the Arab world was primarily accomplished during Nasser’s reign, [as were] the defeats that befell the Arabs, the absence of

societal security and democracy.

Mansour's political narrative on Nasser's regime in this broadcast of WB identifies it, as he has previously done with both of its Iraqi and Syrian counterparts, empties Arab nationalism from its revolutionary content and aligns instead with Arab political tyranny at large. By shifting the audience's identification from abstract notions—one Arab nation, Arab unification, to an identification with tangible “facts”—tyrannical Arab nationalist regimes that oppress their masses, Mansour opens up the possibility of identifying the audiences with another form of an Arab nationalist ideology; a “form of Arabism” that, according to Laura James (2006), “lacks the secular, the liberational and anti-imperialist qualities of Nasserite [or Ba`thist] Arabism.”¹² In other words, a form of Arabism that is the least threatening to and quite “consistent with sovereignty accepted by the Arab states” such as Qatar (Barnett, 1998, p. 167).

There is more to Mansour's discourses on Arab nationalism. Given that he dismisses nationalism as an unworthy or *baatel* perspective that is incapable of resolving the political conflicts of the Arab world and meeting the expectations and aspirations of the Arab population, Mansour simultaneously creates an appetite among the viewers for an alternative perspective. He satisfies this appetite in his discourses on the most pressing and most important subject, the Arab-Israeli conflict, to which I turn my attention in the following section.

¹² Laura M. James, “Whose voice? Nasser, the Arabs, and ‘Sawt al-Arab.’” *Transnational Broadcasting Studies Journal (TBS)*, Volume 16, 2006. Available at: <<http://www.tbsjournal.com/>>.

Mansour on the Arab-Israeli Conflict

The flip side of Mansour's argument against Arab nationalism is an argument by default for the superiority of a moderate Islamic ideology as the proper framework of interpreting and resolving the political problems of the Arab world. His discourses on the Arab-Israeli conflict demonstrate to the viewers the aptness of one Islamic perspective in particular, the perspective of the Brotherhood (and its various Arab chapters and affiliates, such as Hamas). Mansour, however, is aware of the negative image of the Brotherhood among a good portion of the Arab viewers who look at it as an extension of moderate Arab regimes. To divide the viewers from such perception, Mansour fully utilizes anti-establishment discourse to unite the skeptical viewers with the Brotherhood, depicting it as a radical organization. To this end, he persistently links the Brotherhood, as a whole, with its most popular offspring—Hamas. In this sense, Mansour's anti-establishment discourse represents a synecdochic argument, convincing or not, for the radicalism of the Brotherhood.¹³ Furthermore, in the process of arguing for the

¹³ The pragmatism and moderate perspective of the Brotherhood are the basis on which Robert S. Leiken and Steven Brook "advised the American Administration to enter into a political alliance with the organization" (*Foreign Affairs*, "The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood," March/April, 2007).

The views of the Qatari-based, prominent figure of the Brotherhood—al-Qaradawi, on various issues reflect a congruence with the Qatari views and perspective on important political issues, such as the September 11 attacks on the United States,

"Our hearts bleed for the attacks that have targeted the World Trade Center, as well as other institutions in the United States, despite our strong opposition to the American biased policy towards Israel on the military, political and economic front" (Islam Online and news agencies),

or his views on Al-Qaeda's actions against Western civilians and Jewish places of worship, "Anyone who commits these crimes is punishable by Islamic Sharia [Law] and has committed

superiority of the Islamic political program of the Brotherhood’ most popular offspring— Hamas, Mansour reminds the viewers, directly and indirectly, of Qatar’s support of both the Brotherhood and Hamas. Mansour, thus, presses the image of an Islamically inclined Qatari state, whose policies are at odds with other moderate Arab regimes such as the Jordanian government and the PA. Bearing in mind the well established pragmatism of the Brotherhood and its other offspring, Mansour’s anti-establishment discourse bolsters the pragmatism of the Qatari government.

To show how Mansour’s Islamically sounding radical anti-establishment discourse, ultimately, renders him “substantially one ” not with the Arab viewers but with the policies and perspective of the Qatari establishment, I will look at two episodes of WB (May 16, 2001 and August 30) which exemplify Mansour’s discourses on the Arab-Israeli conflict in general.

Qatar versus Jordan

In the episode of May 16, 2001, Mansour commemorates the fifty-third anniversary of the “Extortion of Palestine” and the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. The guest is Dr. Ishaq el-Farhaan, the head of the Jordanian Islamic Action Front (the political wing of the Jordanian branch of the Brotherhood). This session of WB

‘the sin of killing a soul which God has prohibited to kill and of spreading corruption on earth’” he declares (al-Jazeera, June 23, 2002), his views on suicidal attacks inside Israel,

“I have been asked several questions on TV programs and in public lectures about the martyr operations outside the Palestinian territories [the West Bank and Gaza Strip], and I always answer that I agree with those who do not allow such martyr operations to be carried out outside the Palestinian territories”(Islam Online and news agencies).

See also *Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI)*, dispatch No. 869, February 25, 2005.

begins with a long and highly emotional reportage. In it, a host of Palestinian women and children give anecdotal testimonies to the daily hardships they endure under Israeli occupation:

First Palestinian woman: The house and what's in it were totally destroyed by the [Israeli] tank and bulldozer. I just snatched my children and ran.

Second woman: The homes and belongings of Arabs tending to their fields were also destroyed. We ran. What else can we do, dear?

Third woman: We can never fall asleep; this [bombardment] is a daily affair. Can you hear the bullets? It's like this every night.

Forth Woman: The Jews are criminals. If you only saw the look on the faces of my children yesterday! Beyond belief....

The anecdotes reach a dramatic climax when one of the women shouts hysterically:

Those traitors [the Arab leaders] should be shot, just like the Jews. Where are the Arab leaders? Where are the Arab leaders?

This part of the introduction is capable of uniting Mansour, who personifies the Brotherhood, emotionally with both the sympathetic and the unsympathetic viewers. The unity between them derives from the ability of the testimonial anecdotes to cross all ideological boundaries, since they appeal to universal values and sentiments, instinctive rejection of pain and injustice and the anger, grief and sadness they generate. To intensify the unifying affects of the testimonial anecdotes, Mansour takes part in telling them, as he echoes and re-articulates the last victim's shout of pain and anger:

I do not know how to begin or what I should say after that scream, which has definitely reached their [the Arab leaders'] ears, but [alas!] not the pride of al-

Mu`tasim! As I was choosing this scene, I felt as if I were sucked into a scene of utter destruction, torn limbs and blood. Have these tragic scenes that we see day and night caused a state of apathy, insensitivity and indifference among us, I wondered?

Mansour, in this paragraph, begins to subtly advance an Islamic perspective as a proper means of understanding and resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict. The Islamic perspective is associated with certain features of Mansour's narrative, such as his allusion to "al-Mu`tasim," the Abbasid Caliph (died 842 A.D.), who, as legend has it, prepared a massive army against the Romans in response to a Muslim woman's shout for help, "Oh, Mu`tasim!" Al-Mu`tasim epitomizes the character of honor-defending jihadist. In this sense, the Islamic identity of the savior signals Mansour's early attempt to advance an Islamic perspective on the conflict. The Islamic perspective re-emerges in the next paragraph as a concomitant of two rhetorical tools, the term "*ightisaab*" (extortion) and the "May 15, 1948" date:

The fifty-third anniversary of the extortion (*ightisaab*) of Palestine passed by yesterday with total Arab indifference...The age of the catastrophe, which began in May 15, 1948, is what we will attempt to understand in this episode, and explore the means to come out of it...

"*ightisaab*" (extortion) is a polysemous term; in a political sense, the term serves as a *metaphor* for the occupation of Arab land by Israel. The term however has a different sense, as it fully interlocks with "rape" in the literal sexual sense of the word. Because the context comprises mainly images of distressed women, the usual target of rapists, the context then becomes clearly biased in favor of the sexual sense of the word—"rape."

This is where the *metaphor* gains more depth; through “rape,” Mansour emphasizes the ethical component of the conflict. And because questions such as “honor,” and ethics in general, are neither institutionalized nor regulated by other secular political perspectives (as in Arab nationalism, for instance), the term “rape” points out to the audience the need for an all-encompassing perspective; one that not only accommodates the political dimension of the conflict but the ethical dimension as well. In the Arab world there is only one worthy candidate, an Islamic perspective.

Whereas the ability of the broad Islamic perspective to accommodate the viewers’ code of ethics is demonstrated through the allusion to al-Mu`tasim—the Islamic defender of Arab honor, and the term “rape,” the ability of the Islamic perspective to accommodate the political and dogmatic dimension of the Arab-Israeli conflict is conveyed by Mansour through the implication of the “May 15, 1948” date. To the “moderate” Arab regimes and groups that believe in the territorial nature of the conflict and in a peaceful resolution to it, the War of 1967, which resulted in Israeli occupation of Arab land, is considered the historical point of reference. By contrast, to the “radical” groups who still believe in the existential nature of the conflict, the 1948 War, which resulted in the establishment of the State of Israel, is the historical point of reference. In this light, the historical point of reference (May 15, 1948) becomes a metaphor for the existential nature of the conflict with Israel. And, as such, the metaphor identifies Mansour with the majority of the viewers as it simultaneously suggests to them that the intimated Islamic perspective is quite responsive to their deeply seated belief in the existential nature of the Arab-Israeli conflict and in the illegitimacy of Israel within any borders.

In the remainder of the introduction, the broad Islamic perspective that Mansour distills metaphorically out of the anecdote is narrowed down and is ultimately aligned with one perspective in particular, the Brotherhood's. This outcome is a concomitant of Mansour's own political identity as well as the political identity of the guest, the head of the Jordanian Islamic Action Front (the political wing of the Jordanian branch of the Brotherhood), that Mansour introduces at length:

Doctor Ishaq el-Farhaan was born in Ein Karem, Jerusalem in 1934. He obtained a Bachelor degree in Chemistry from the American University in Beirut in 57, an MA in 58, another MA in Education from Columbia University in New York in 62, and a Ph.D. in Education from Columbia University in 64. He was appointed Minister of Education and Awqaf (Religious estates) in Wasfi el-Tell's government in 1970, Minister of Education and Awqaf in the governments of Ahmad el-Lowzi in 71-72 and Zayd el-Refai in 73. After that he was appointed President of the Royal Jordanian Society in 75 and 76 and President of the Jordanian University till 78. Afterwards, he was appointed member of the Senate (*majlis el-a`yaan*) from 89 till 93.

He is one of the founders of the Islamic Action Front in Jordan, its Chairman between 92 and 99, and the president of the Party's *shura* Council since 98 and the Secretary General of the Arab Parties Union, comprising 80 Arab parties, since 99.

Now with the particular identity of the Islamic perspective revealed, Mansour attempts to divide many viewers from the perception of the Brotherhood as a regime-appeasing organization by stressing its radical, non-compromising, anti-establishment

qualities. Mansour and the guest stress the deep schism separating the organization from the Jordanian government by condemning its prosecution and “pursuing of those who [dare] to express their opinions.” Farhaan considers such action as “a black page in the history of Jordan and the history of the government.” The guest, furthermore, expresses his explicit rejection of “peace as the only strategic option,” which he considers “a back-breaking blow and a politically inapt move.” To further stress Farhaan’s anti-establishment image as a personification of the Brotherhood, Mansour brings to the viewers’ attention the fact that guest “was beaten by Jordanian anti-riot security forces” in a recent protest in support of the Palestinian people.

The disassociation of Farhaan, as a representative of the Jordanian chapter of the Brotherhood, from the policies of the Jordanian government is made more evident when Mansour broaches the question of the indifference of the Arab governments towards the suffering of the Palestinian people and the Arab-Israeli conflict in general. Commenting on this topic, Farhaan has this to say:

There are geographical and security hurdles that stand in the path of a zealous young man who wishes to join the fight on the side of those [Palestinians]. He cannot go and fight because the borders are sealed by the Arab countries surrounding Israel... The normal thing is for these states to partake collectively in rescuing [the Palestinian people] and to let the volunteers cross the borders freely. But on the contrary, some states have partaken in expelling the leaders of resistance from their countries, as what happened with the leaders of Hamas and others...

Mansour [interrupting]: You mean [expelling them] from Jordan?

Farhan [continuing]: From Jordan, which denies the leaders of resistance the right to move freely in the Arab street, whether they belong to Hezbollah, Hamas, the Islamic Jihad or national resistance.

In this exchange, besides re-iterating a very popular premise (the legitimacy and viability of armed resistance against the Israeli enemy), Mansour and his guest remind the viewers that Jordan has expelled the leaders of Hamas, the Brotherhood's Palestinian offspring. By reminding the viewers of the anti-Hamas action of Jordanian government, the discussion brings to their minds that Qatar, in contrast with Jordan, has granted the expelled leaders of Hamas a safe haven and supported them politically and financially. At this juncture, Mansour's argument for the radicalism of the Brotherhood and the conspiratorial role of Jordan leads indirectly to bolstering the Islamic credential of Qatar and to setting it apart from the policies of another moderate state—Jordan. This implication is further emphasized by the guest as he extends his condemnatory remarks towards Jordan to include the policies of another moderate political entity—the Palestinian Authority, as well:

It is truly shameful that the Palestinian Authority, for whatever reason, places Hamas leaders under arrest, especially since such act is in compliance with the Israeli orders. Mind you, there is a CIA-sponsored coordination between Israel and the United States [on the one hand], and the Palestinian Authority [on the other].

Mansour and the guest in this portion of the discussion continue their effort to link the Brotherhood synecdochically with its popular offspring—Hamas, and to disassociate both from the unpopular policies of two moderate regimes—Jordan and the PA. By doing that,

Mansour indirectly challenges the viewers' common perception of the Brotherhood as a moderate, government-appeasing organization, thus creating an opening for identifying the Brotherhood with a wide segment of the population. Mansour, subsequently, furnishes the viewers with a premise that supports his argument for the superiority of the Brotherhood's Islamic worldview as an alternative to Arab nationalism and as the most proper way of understanding and resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict.

This broadcast of WB is important in one final way; namely, what Mansour conveniently downplays by leaving out of the discourse, such as the well established pragmatism of the Jordanian Brotherhood. Despite its explicit, and no doubt sincere, adherence to the beliefs of the majority of the viewers towards the Arab-Israeli conflict, the organization is far from being a radical, anti-establishment organization. On the contrary, it has played a role in establishing the legitimacy of the Jordanian government and in maintaining the political order of the country (Bassam Tibi, 1997, p. 194; Joseph Mass`ad, 2001, p. 194). In this sense, the Jordanian Brotherhood represents a level and strand of political opposition with which the political establishment in Jordan and in Qatar can not only co-exist but also benefit from. The pragmatism of the Jordanian affiliate of the Brotherhood is implied by Farhaan's assertion that what he objects to is not the peace process with Israel but rather rendering "peace as the only strategic option."¹⁴ Worded differently, the identification created by Mansour between the

¹⁴The congruence between Farhaan and the government of Jordan is also self-evident in the remarks he has given in a different forum arguing that "his group outdoes the government [of Jordan] in discouraging jihad: 'We are better able to conduct an intellectual confrontation...[than]

Brotherhood and Hamas leads indirectly to identifying the Arab viewers with a watered down level of radicalism that can then trigger an identification between the Qatari state that supports both the Brotherhood and Hamas with the Arab populations at large. Bearing this implication in mind, the series of identifications triggered by Mansour's radical sounding Islamic anti-establishment discourse deflects the radical beliefs and attitudes of the majority of the viewers towards a more pragmatic resolution of the conflict.

The tacit argument for Qatar's Islamic credentials and its representation of a viable, more rational political path that embodies the viewers' beliefs and attitudes towards Israel re-emerges in Mansour's anti-establishment discourse in the broadcast of October 30, 2000.

Qatar versus the Palestinian Authority

While Mansour in the previous episode argues tacitly for the radicalism of the Brotherhood and, hence, the aptness of its worldview, he, in this session of WB, argues for the same point anecdotally and by example. The guest in this broadcast is Khalid Mish`al, the Chairman of the political bureau of the Islamic Resistance Movement, with whom Mansour discusses the political and the military future of Hamas. This is how Mansour introduces the topic of discussion:

The vain military operation, which was carried out by the Israeli elite force called Dovdavan last Saturday, turned Mahmoud Abu Hannood, the military

security confrontation with the forces of extremism and fanaticism” (*Foreign Affairs*, “The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood,” March/April, 2007).

commander of `Izz el-Din al-Qassam [Brigades], into a mythical hero, after he managed to kill three Israeli officers, of lieutenant rank, and wound a fourth one. He was then able to elude the 500 Israeli soldiers who carried out the operation with the support of Helicopters and Israeli security men and agencies. After his escape, Abu Hannood turned himself in to the Palestinian Authority in the city of Nablus, a few miles away from the village of `Asira al-Shamaleyya wherein the battle took place. In more than one thousand military acts that the Israeli Dovdavan carried out against the Palestinians from the signing of Oslo till now, the losses it incurred in `Asira al-Shamaleyya are considered among the highest that the Israelis suffered on the hands of the Palestinians in the last four years. And while the Israelis turned away dragging the tails of a frustrating defeat and exchanging blame for the slain and the wounded, the Palestinians, on the other hand, were jubilantly telling stories about the mythical heroism of Abu Hannood who, all alone and using his small weapon, prevailed over the strongest unit in the Israeli special forces.

As a result, Hamas movement, in both of its wings—military and political, imposed itself decidedly on the theater of events as a card that no one can overlook.

In this introduction, Mansour gives the viewers, Arabs and Palestinians alike, an al-Mu`tasim-like character—the “mythical” Mahmoud Abu Hannood, the protagonist of Mansour’s anecdote. A close reading of the anecdote indicates that the facts that Mansour includes or alludes to in this anecdote identifies him, and by extension Hamas and the Brotherhood, fully with radical beliefs and sentiments of the viewers, secular-minded or

religious. However, the facts that Mansour suppresses from the anecdote indicate an effort to propose a more moderate framework of understanding the Arab-Israeli conflict. Ultimately, the anecdote lowers the ceiling of “radicalism” down to a point at which a two-state solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict becomes Islamically acceptable, as I will illustrate.

Initially, the anecdote defines the Arab-Israeli conflict in the simplest terms possible, a fight between those whose land has been “raped” and the “rapists” of the land. By suppressing the political and even the religious aspects of the conflict, and by depicting it in the most culturally comprehensible terms, Abu Hannood character transcends all boundaries and, in turn, connects Mansour to the widest stratum of the Arab viewers, regardless of their ideological inclinations. But no matter how much Mansour suppresses the religious and the political aspects of the conflict, he easily distills an Islamic perspective out of the anecdote without intruding on the beliefs and attitudes of the secular-minded viewers who do not share his enthusiasm for a religious perspective. The Islamic perspective in this anecdote makes its first appearance as a concomitant of Mansour’s introduction of the protagonist, Abu Hannood, as the military commander of Hamas’s military wing, which carries the name of a prominent Islamic figure, `Izz el-Deen al-Qassam. Al-Qassam, the Syrian clergyman who in 1911 declared jihad against Italy upon its invasion of Libya, who played a key role in the 1921 Syrian Revolt against the French colonialist, and who, in 1930, founded the Palestinian anti-Zionist, anti-British organization, the Black Hand, and died in 1935 at the hands of the British Mandate police, exemplifies the Islamic nature of the conflict. Furthermore, the general atmosphere of the anecdote (a poorly equipped protagonist—Hannood, standing

up against “500 Israeli soldiers who carried out the operation with the support of Helicopters and Israeli security men and agencies” and prevails) conjures in the minds of the viewers the Qur’anic parallel, the story of the divinely-guided, poorly equipped David versus an evil Goliath. In this light, Hannood’s story takes a clear Islamic flavor, which creates a need for an Islamic organization that embodies an Islamic line of understanding, an organization like Hamas, which “has imposed itself decidedly on the theatre of events.”

In defending the Islamic perspective that Mansour distills out of the anecdote, he uses Hannood’s heroic character to antithetically conjure another character, a villain—the cowardly PA, the product of the Oslo Accords, to which Mansour alludes. As a result, the anecdote intensifies the radicalism of Hamas by dividing it from the policies of the ill-reputed Palestinian Authority.

The image of a radical Hamas that embodies the beliefs and attitudes of the great majority of the viewers re-appears in the second part of Mansour’s introduction:

That said, there are still numerous questions that lurk in the horizon regarding the political and military future of Hamas, in view of the ongoing final settlement of the Palestinian issue and the unyielding pressures by Israel and the United States to eradicate Hamas and to put an end to its existence. In fact, this day, the 30th of August, marks the first anniversary of the closing down of the offices of Hamas in Amman and the arresting of its leaders, who now live between Doha and Damascus after the Qatari government has interfered and [struck] a deal with Jordanian authorities which then released and deported them.

In today's episode, we will discuss the political and the military future of Hamas with Mr. Khalid Mish`al, the Chairman of the political bureau of the Islamic Resistance Movement, Hamas.

Khalid Mish`al was born in the town of Silwad near Ramallah in [19]55. He migrated to Kuwait in 56 and remained there until the eruption of the Gulf Crisis in [19]90. He led the Palestinian Islamic current at the University of Kuwait, from which he obtained a BSc in Physics in 79. He began working for the Palestinian cause since mid 70s, as he is considered one of the founders of Hamas Movement. He was a member of its Political Bureau and was elected its Chairman in 96. In September 25, 97, he was the target of a failed assassination attempt carried out by Israeli Mossad agents in the Jordanian Capital city, Amman. He was later arrested, upon his return from Tehran, in view of the Jordanian Authorities' decision to close down Hamas offices and to arrest a number of its cadres. The Jordanian Authorities deported him, along with other leaders of the Movement, out of the country and was sent to Qatar in November 21, 99.

In this part of the introduction, Mansour expands the boundaries of the anecdote introducing other battlefields, other protagonists and other villains. The battlefield is no longer the little town of `Asira al-Shamaleyya in Palestine. The battlefield now encompasses other Arab and non-Arab cities, Amman, Kuwait, Damascus, Tehran, and Doha. These are the cities in which the new protagonist, the episode's guest—the head of Hamas political bureau, Khalid Mish`al, fights other battles. While Hannood exemplifies the plight of the Palestinian people inside Palestine, Mish`al, in terms of his perilous

exodus out of Palestine, to Kuwait, Jordan, Qatar and Syria, is an epitome of the Palestinians of the Diaspora in their constant mobility and continuous struggle to survive outside their homeland. Like Hannood, who is targeted by Israeli and Arab enemies (the PA), Mish`al too is targeted and surrounded by Israeli and Arab enemies, the Israeli Mossad agents in Amman and later on with the Jordanian government and its security apparatus—*mukhabaraat*, which expelled him from Jordan shortly thereafter. Like Hannood, Mish`al fights back against the Mossad, literally speaking, sustaining wounds and ultimately prevails. Like Hannood, Mish`al is an Islamist, as obvious from his constant use of the term “jihad,” instead of its secular equivalent “thawrah” in his answer to the first question raised by Mansour:

Mish`al: In the name of Allah, Most Gracious, Most Merciful. First of all, the jihadist Mahmoud Abu Hannood did not escape—jihadists do not escape from the battlefield, they fight till the last breath, he retreated. The issue will become clearer, when I address what happened in the `Aseera al-Shamaleyyah Operation and shed light on its various aspects. But with your and the viewing brothers’ permission, I would like to take advantage of this occasion to extend, through the dear al-Jazeera, greetings to the heroic jihadist Mahmoud Abu Hannood, who is now confined in jail or hospital, no difference. I greatly value what he has done and extend a grand salutation to him and to all other heroes whose light of jihad and heroism is a guide to all of us. I also would like to extend the salutation to all of our people in `Aseera al-Shamaleyyah, for the great stand they have taken, and to all of our Palestinian people, in the [West] Bank and in the [Gaza] Strip, in the 48 territories and in the Diaspora. We, I must say this

before getting into the details of what has taken place in `Aseera al-Shamaleyyah, we, as representatives of the political wing of Hamas movement—let me here give the assurance that there is indeed an actual separation between the political and the military wings, would like to tell the Zionists and all the security agencies that are watching that we in Hamas, especially the political representatives, are proud of jihad and the jihadists, who are [a crown] on our heads. We give them no instruction. On the contrary, we learn from them; they are the masters of everything and we bless their jihad and take pride of what they do. After all, jihad is an honor and a crown to us all.

Hence, like Hannood, Mish`al personifies an Islamic perspective that is capable of interpreting and resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict.

But the anecdote brings to the minds of the viewers another remarkable point that sets Hannood apart from Mish`al in a manner that subtly incorporates Qatar into the fabric of the narrative. Take the following exchange between Mish`al and Mansour for an example:

Mish`al: This [Hannood], who performed a miracle, must be venerated, glorified and made a role model to be emulated by all Palestinians. Instead, he, sadly, has been placed under arrest awaiting prosecution [by the PA].

Mansour [in agreement]: Mind you, Abu Hannood was not pursued by the Israelis only; he was also being pursued by the Palestinian Authority. Now he is in the hand of the Palestinian Authority. One wonders, is there a difference between being held by the Palestinian [Authority] or by the Israelis?

Mish`al: Ideally, there should be a great difference between being among your

enemies and being among one's own people. But, sadly, the Oslo Accords and all the security agreement that followed, especially in the last three years, which were engineered at the Wye Plantation under American supervision—through the CIA, which oversees their implementation, have turned the Palestinian Security [agencies] into an instrument for the pursuance of the jihadists and the safeguarding of Israel.

In this exchange, as Mish`al and Mansour emphasize the anti-Hamas policies of the PA which, like Israel and the United States, pursues and imprisons the likes of Abu Hannood, the viewers are reminded of the fact that Qatar, in contrast, has given Mish`al and other Hamas leaders a safe haven and protected them after they were expelled from Jordan at the heels of the failed Israeli Mossad attempt to assassinate Mish`al in Amman, Jordan.

Thus far, the anecdote, seemingly, embraces the viewers' perception of the conflict as existential, their view of Israel as illegitimate and of jihad as the most proper course of action to resolve the conflict. However, the facts that Mansour suppresses in this anecdote render the meaning of jihad ambiguous and the desired level of radicalism indeterminate. Mansour, for instance, pushes to the margin of his narrative facts such as the pragmatism of Hamas and its willingness to accept a two-state solution. This pragmatic stance is emphasized by Khalid Mish`al, who argues that “[I]t is only natural that the movement determines its positions on the various issues—including issues on which it has previously taken positions—in light of new developments and realities” (al-Jazeera, November 12, 2005). In another statement, Mish`al expresses unambiguously the movement's acquiescence to the two-state solution:

Hamas's position, the national Palestinian position, and the Arab position are united [regarding] the need to establish a Palestinian state within the June 4, 1967 borders, [and regarding] Jerusalem [as the capital of the Palestinian state], the refugees' right of return, and an Israeli withdrawal to the [June 4, 1967] borders. Hamas believes in this and is working to promote this [goal] at every opportunity.

Mish'al further adds that "The existence of an entity called Israel is not the problem. The problem is that there is no State of Palestine." (*Al-Quds Al-Arabi*, January 11, 2007; *Al-Sharq Al-Awsat*, January 11, 2007).¹⁵ It is such pragmatism that the Qatari Foreign Minister (and now Prime Minister as well) emphasizes and praises, as reported by Barak Ravid of *Haaretz* in February 26, 2008:

¹⁵ Other prominent leaders of Hamas have expressed their acceptance of the notion of negotiation with Israel, as in Mahmoud Abu Tair's interview in the daily Israeli newspaper *Haaretz*, in which he clearly states "That [Hamas] will negotiate [with Israel] better than the others, who negotiated for 10 years and achieved nothing...." In other words, one can make the argument that Hamas has either changed its position or it, in essence, objects only to the PA's handling of negotiations and the peace process, not the process of negotiation per se. This implication is elaborated on by Muslih who in 1999 has argued that "Hamas' policy, even its most radical aspects, had been over the past year[s] essentially defensive, stemming from a sense of weakness than from an ideological drive. Hamas has shown that it is not averse to modus vivendi both with the PA and Israel" (p. 330). Hamas's policy in later years testifies to the correctness of Muslih's contention, as evident in the organization's participation in the signing of the Cairo Declaration in 2005, its participation in the parliamentary elections in 2006 and the signing of the Mecca Agreement with the PA in 2007. Other commentators go even a step further arguing that Hamas is an integral part of a new political effort that has the blessings of both the United States and Israel. The effort shifts the objective of the peace process in a different direction; towards establishing long-term truce (*hudna*, as used by Hamas leaders). The shift in direction requires the inclusion of wider slices of Palestinian groups, mainly Hamas, as a means of minimizing any objection to and guaranteeing the consent of the Palestinian people for any future settlement. The shift also signals efforts by the United States to use and to align itself with political Sunni Islam as a valuable asset in its confrontation with both Shiite Iran and other militant radical groups.

Qatari prime minister, Sheikh Hamad bin Jassem Al-Thani ‘insisted that Hamas has undergone dramatic changes,” contrary to Israel’s view of the organization.

‘The fact that they are now speaking about a cease-fire and a temporary state in the borders of the 1967 is a significant development that must not be overlooked,’

In this context, Mansour’s anecdote is tacitly underpinned by a level of radicalism that falls short of the beliefs and attitudes of a great part of the Arab populations. The watering down of political radicalism by Mansour is also evident in the peculiar absence of other popular groups, secular or religious, which take a clearly more radical stance on the question of the peace process with Israel from participating in the program.¹⁶ By excluding those groups from WB, Mansour limits the viewers to comparing the Brotherhood (and Hamas) only with moderate political groups and establishments, as a means of proving the organization’s radicalism. This in turn strongly suggests that this degree of radicalism, as the previously quoted views of the Qatari foreign minister suggest, is reconcilable with and capable of normalizing the pragmatic policies of Qatar. After all, if Jihadic groups such as Hamas do not object in principle to negotiations with Israel and to a two-state solution, why should Qatar?

¹⁶ Examples of such excluded groups are Hezbollah and al-Jihad al-Islami. In fact, when compared to the presence of Hezbollah and al-Jihad al-Islami, Hamas (the Palestinian progeny of the Brotherhood) was over-represented in the program by a margin of eleven to one. It is equally noteworthy that the charismatic leader of Hezbollah—Hasan Nasrallah, who is by far one of the most, if not the most, popular and influential political figures in the Arab world, appeared in the program only once on January 12, 2000. Similarly, al-Jihad al-Islami organization which, in comparison with Hamas, takes a more radical stand on the question of peace and negotiations with Israel was not represented in WB at all.

In conclusion, the general context of WB provides the Qatari government with an Islamic cover. Textually, Mansour's radical sounding, Islamic anti-establishment discourses on the three representatives of Arab nationalism as well as his discourses on the Arab-Israeli conflict lead ultimately to deflecting the radicalism of the viewers towards frameworks of interpretation that connect the viewers with the moderate policies and perspective of the Qatari state. This implication arises as a result of Mansour's relentless effort to dissociate the viewers from the radical precepts of Arab nationalism, and to identify the viewers instead with the pragmatic and moderate position of the Brotherhood; a position that is conducive to and, more often than not, falls in line with the interests and the pragmatic position of the Qatari state itself.

We thus notice that the series of identification triggered by Mansour is linked with a shift in understanding both issues—Arab nationalism and the Arab-Israeli conflict. The induced shift in understanding leads ultimately to identifying the viewers with the Qatari position on both issues. Therefore, in his discourses on Arab nationalism, he alters the terms of the debate on Arab nationalism emphasizing the need for democratic changes instead of the basic precepts and objectives of Arab nationalism—liberation and unification. In the context of the new political narrative on Arab nationalism, Mansour creates a need for and identifies the audience with a pragmatic political alternative that does not conflict with the pan-Arab aspirations and the Islamic identity of the great majority of the viewers. Having stressed Qatar's Arab nationalist and Islamic credentials, Mansour invites the viewers to see the self-reforming, democratic (according to Mansour), autonomous Qatari government as an alternative to the irrational, undemocratic, anti-Islamic Arab nationalist regimes of Iraq, Syria, and Nasser's Egypt. In

his discourses on the Arab-Israeli conflict, Mansour identifies Qatar with the Brotherhood's most popular offspring, Hamas. By doing that, he demonstrates to the viewers how the alternative political path that Qatar exemplifies is in line with their own beliefs and attitudes vis-à-vis the Arab-Israeli conflict. Moreover, given the pragmatism of both the Brotherhood and Hamas whose political program is reconcilable with policies of Qatar towards the Arab-Israeli conflict, Mansour, indirectly, provides the pragmatic Qatari policies with Islamic cover.

Therefore, in terms of their ultimate implications, Mansour's anti-establishment discourses are in line with al-Qasim's anti-establishment discourses in OD. The resemblance between the two suggests the presence of a recurring rhetorical pattern. Initially, the discourses of both hosts sound clearly anti-establishment; a characteristic that helps each of them resolve pressing rhetorical challenges and, thus, attract the nomadic viewers to their programs and to al-Jazeera. Upon closer inspection of their discourses on the three most pressing issues, we discover that their anti-establishment discourses lead, ultimately, to deflecting the viewers' radicalism and to identifying them with the policies of the host-state vis-à-vis the three issues. Thus al-Qasim's OD and Mansour's WB serve more effectively the same functions performed by the old paradigm of official Arab media, despite the channel's incendiary anti-establishment political rhetoric.

CHAPTER 5

“More Than One Opinion,” One Argument: Non-Violence

One wonders, will the [Sharm al-Shaikh] Summit rise up to the challenge and take a brave stand against the threat of a new Holako to al-Rashid Capital [Baghdad]? Or will it maintain an equal distance from both Baghdad and Washington and resort to employing the power of Arabic rhetoric, diction, metaphors and puns so that the natural instinct of the vacationers [Arab leaders] in Sharm al-Shaikh would blossom producing a broad statement germane to demanding Iraq’s full cooperation with the inspection team, weapons of mass destruction and condemnation of threats issued to any Arab country? Why they may even mention Iraq in passing! (Al-Jazeera, “More Than One Opinion,” February 02, 2003)

Grounded in sarcasm and irony [underlined], and constructed upon “premises supplied by the audience itself,”¹ this paragraph agrees perfectly with the viewers’ attitudes towards the “vacationers” in Sharm al-Shaikh who “may even mention Iraq in passing!” The paragraph is delivered to the anti-establishment pan-Arab audience by another prominent figure of al-Jazeera, Sami Haddad, the host of another popular talkshow, “More than One Opinion” (MTOP, henceforth).

¹ Bitzer, L. (1959). “Aristotle Enthymeme Revisited.” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 45: 399-408. Cited in Gross, A. G. & Walzer, A. (Eds.) (2000). *Reading Aristotle’s rhetoric*. Southern Illinois University Press. (p.26)

Sami Haddad, an Arab-Britain, is considered among the founders of al-Jazeera.² His MTOP is as old as al-Qasim's OD, but unlike it, MTOP, up until January, 2000, aired live twice, not once, a week. The talk show is modeled after programs such as the McLaughlin Group, and thus accommodates the nomadic viewers' demand for a multiplicity of narratives and perspectives, as opposed to a singular narrative reflecting the views of the Arab establishment.

Haddad's MTOP, like al-Qasim's OD and Mansour's WB, symbolizes another anti-establishment forum. But also as in the cases of his two colleagues, Haddad's initial identification with the viewers conceals an effort to deflect their radical beliefs and to direct them towards programs of thought and action that serve and bolster the policies of the Qatari establishment many ways.

Generally speaking, Haddad's anti-establishment discourse divides Haddad from the Qatari and the Arab position towards Iraq and the war to come; he, like the audience, opposes the anti-Arab nation policies of the United States whose goal is to destroy a central Arab country that has dared to challenge its policies. Looking at it from this angle, the anti-establishment characteristic of Haddad's remarks bolster the image of al-Jazeera at large as a new innovation in Arab mass media, an anti-establishment pan-Arab network that dares to oppose the position of the sponsoring state. Thus, just as does the anti-establishment discourse of both al-Qasim and Mansour, Haddad's anti-establishment

² See Mile, H. (2005), *Al-Jazeera: How Arab TV News Challenged the World*, p. 96. See also Humphrey Davis' interview with Adnan al-Shareef in *Transnational Broadcasting Studies (TBS)*, No. 11, Fall-Winter 2003.

discourse points clearly at the uniqueness of the self-reforming Qatari state that tolerates and encourages political opposition.

Qatar also benefits from Haddad's anti-establishment rhetoric in a way peculiar to MTOP. To explain how, the analysis will show that Haddad's discourses represent an implicit argument for Western liberalism as the most proper framework of understanding and resolving the problems and conflicts facing the Arab world. Initially, there is nothing problematic about Haddad's advocacy of Western liberalism, since the great majority of the Arab populations covet its main values and precepts—personal and political freedoms, human rights, the rule of law, representation, democratization and transition of power, despite an escalating anti-Western attitude in the Arab world. However, by uncovering the implicit premises anchoring Haddad's political discourses, we discover that the strand of Western liberalism he advocates, much like Mansour's strand of political Islam, falls significantly short of the beliefs and aspirations of the majority of the Arab populations. In fact, just as in Mansour's Islamist discourses, the premises underlying Haddad's liberal, anti-establishment discourses identify him with the Qatari controversial policies and political perspective and give both a cover of legitimacy.

How exactly Haddad provides Qatari policies and perspective with a cover of legitimacy can be discerned by isolating four basic implicit premises anchoring his liberal discourses. The first premise pertains to the role of Arab masses in bringing about the desired political changes in the Arab world. Haddad assigns the Arab masses no significant part in the process of transforming the Arab world. In his various political narratives, Haddad does not address the audience members as actors or could- or should-be actors, but as mere spectators. Thus the premise of a limited or no role for the Arab

masses, despite Haddad's biting criticism of the Arab regimes, minimizes threats to the established political order in Qatar and elsewhere. In line with this premise, analysis will also show that Haddad's strand of Western liberalism is also anchored in the inappropriateness of any form of armed or violent resistance against local or foreign enemies as a means of transforming Arab societies, as evidenced by the exclamatory rhetorical question that he raises in the October 12, 2001 broadcast of MTOP: "Are there any ethical pretexts that justify the use of violence against the ruling class, nay, even against the civilians under their rule?"³ The "nay, even against the civilians under their rule" clause defines the first part as a rhetorical question through which Haddad solicits a "No" for an answer. Haddad, put in different words, calls upon the Arab populations to abandon all form of violence. The third premise is the mere flipside of the second one (the inappropriateness of any form of violent resistance or even peaceful mass action); dialogue and negotiations with the enemies, Arab and foreign, are the only worthy means of bringing about positive political changes. Historically and practically, the masses themselves do not conduct dialogue and negotiations, elite groups do. Hence, the third premise interlocks with the first premise as well, which limits political action to Arab leaders and elite groups, as it also interlocks the second premise by suggesting an alternative to Arab mass action and violent resistance—peaceful dialogue and negotiations.

³ See for example the episodes of March 5, March 29, May 28, July 23, November 5 and December 27 of 1999. See also the episodes of April 21, 2000, March 2, March 9, August 17 and October 12 of 2001 and November 14, 2003.

While the first three implicit premises elbow the viewers towards non-radical means as the proper way of achieving their objectives, the fourth premise elbows the viewers towards what objectives are worthy of aspiring for and what objectives are not. By inspecting the entirety of Haddad's discourses, we find that the questions that have divided and polarized the Arab political scene—liberation of Arab land and Arab unification, are nearly completely missing from his anti-establishment discourses. Just like in Mansour's case, exclusion of certain subjects and groups from his political narratives is tantamount to a tacit argument for the unworthiness and insignificance of such subjects. The unworthiness of the twin subjects of liberation and unification is further evidenced by Haddad's particular framing of the issues of the Arab-Israeli conflict and the situation in Iraq before and after its invasion in 2003. In both cases, the conflicts are not deliberated on under rubrics of liberation or unification, but rather under general rubrics, such as human rights, political elections, progress or lack of progress in peace negotiations, the proper means of resolving political conflicts, the shortcomings of traditional political parties (Arab nationalist, Islamist and Marxist), their undemocratic nature and their failure to achieve their stated goals (liberation and unification). In this context, Haddad's liberal discourses present the viewers with an alternative hierarchy of objectives, such as attainments of human rights, personal and political freedoms, and peaceful and gradual transformation of Arab societies.

Against the backdrop of his four implicit premises, Haddad uses anti-establishment discourse to argue tacitly for a passive, non-violent form of political ideology that marginalizes the role of the Arab masses and confines political action to elite groups and state-actors. Phrased differently, because the liberal, anti-establishment

rhetoric of Haddad is detached from radical ideologies such as Arab nationalism and Islamism, for which, as Barry Rubin (2004) notes correctly, “there is a broad and genuine sympathy,”⁴ and since the Qatari government and the Arab regimes at large, as Lav (2007) accurately contends, “are more worried about... than they are about Israel or the West,”⁵ Haddad’s rhetoric intersects with the strategic interests of the Qatari establishment and many other Arab establishments.

A close analysis of Haddad’s discourses on the three issues of Arab unification, the Iraqi situation, before and after the 2003 War and the Arab-Israeli conflict will show that while the anti-establishment overtone of his discourses identifies the host initially with the radical beliefs and attitudes of the viewers, the four implicit premises anchoring his discourses are conducive to a framework of understanding that A) deflects the viewers’ radicalism and B) is capable of subtly identifying the anti-establishment viewers’ with the policies of the Qatari establishment vis-à-vis the three issues.

Haddad’s Liberalism versus Arab Nationalism

Despite the massive appeal of the values and precepts of Western liberalism per se, its Arab advocates are viewed by many Arabs with suspicion, in part because of the ardent and open enmity of many Arab liberals’ towards the two most popular political ideologies—Arab nationalism and Islamism. Given the Arab audience’s “broad and

⁴ Rubin, B. (2004). “Arab liberalism and democracy in the Middle East: A panel discussion.” Reprinted in *The Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA)*, 8(4), Article 3.

⁵ Daniel Lav, “Rethinking ‘Resistance’: Arab Liberal Perspectives,” in *The Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI)*, February 17, 2007, Issue No. 498.

genuine sympathy” for both ideologies, Haddad faces a pressing rhetorical challenge that unless resolved will undermine both his credibility and the effectiveness of his argument for Western liberalism. To overcome this exigence, Haddad utilizes anti-establishment discourse to initially tether Arab liberals to the viewers’ radical beliefs and passions, as a prelude to advancing and defending premises that render Arab nationalism incompatible with the viewers’ political aspirations.

Arab nationalism per se has not been discussed in any broadcast of MTOP in the period extending from 1999 till the end of 2003. Haddad’s views on Arab nationalism are nonetheless distillable in two overlapping contexts; in the context of his discourses on the “radical” Arab political ideologies at large, as well as in the context of discussing numerous other issues such as the Arab-Israeli conflict and the situation in Iraq—before and after the War of 2003. In both contexts, Haddad attaches his anti-Arab nationalism argument to the prudence of the pragmatic nomadic viewers and to their passion for political freedoms. By doing that, Haddad then attaches his argument for his version of Western liberalism, which emerges as an alternative to Arab nationalism, to the viewers own beliefs and passions.

The episode of July 26, 1999 is an illustrative example. In this broadcast, Haddad offers a critical review of “the ideological parties in the Arab world,” which he discusses with three guests, an Islamist—Abdulla al-Nifese, an Arab nationalist—Ahmad al-Jammaal, and a liberal—Ghassan al-`Atteyya. This is how Haddad introduces the subject of discussion:

Ideologies, as political concepts, whether the nationalist, Islamist or communist and Marxist currents, had had a great impact on political developments in our

contemporary Arab world. All of these ideologies presented themselves as the panacea of all of the problems of their societies. One here must acknowledge that all or some of those ideologies have at some point or another played a positive role. In North Africa [for instance], Islam has the upper hand in fighting against colonialism.

Some of the Arab nationalist currents also played a role in battling colonialism in the Arab East, as did the Left too in the same battle. But in later stages, those ideologies failed to establish the virtuous city they constantly propagated in their literatures.

And now, was the problem in the content of those ideological messages or in their messengers? Or were they the victim of a foreign conspiracy, as claimed by their advocates? Is the current state of Arab decline driving us, out of weakness, to emulate and imitate the West? Are the [main] theses of Western thought in politics and in economy the remedy to our problems and [are they our] vehicle to the third millennium?

And do the [Arab] ideological parties, upon seizing power, forego [as a matter of routine] their principles and alienate all others?

Haddad's introductory remarks are divided into two functionally complementary parts; the first part invites the viewers to see Arab nationalism as a member of the ideologies of the past, thus creating a need for a living alternative, which he introduces in the second part of the introduction.

In the first part of the introduction, Haddad's argument for the unworthiness of Arab nationalism is discernable in every sentence. In the first sentence, he begins by

stating the obvious: ideologies have had great impact on the political developments in the Arab world. However, what is most noteworthy about the sentence is that Haddad has excluded Western liberalism from the family of ideologies that he carefully enumerates (Islam, Arab nationalism, and Marxism). The exclusion of Western liberalism is historically meaningless since it has coexisted side by side with the same ideologies that he specifies.⁶ But while the exclusion of liberalism is historically meaningless, it is rhetorically meaningful. Haddad sets liberalism in a category by itself, as he prepares the audience to see it as the contemporary, yet-to-be-tested alternative ideology. Also in the context of the first part, Haddad does not cause any injury to Arab nationalism in any direct way; on the contrary, in order to cater to the Arab viewers' passion for Arab nationalism, he credits it with battling colonialism in the East. He thereby suggests to the viewers that his argument against Arab nationalism is not an argument against their aspiration for liberation from external and internal enemies. But he instead pushes "liberation" to the margins of the narrative and brings in alternative terms for debating Arab nationalism. The new terms are manifest by certain characteristics of his political narrative. Individually and together, the alternative terms (or premises) are capable of replacing the viewers' "broad and genuine passion" for Arab nationalism with a different type of attitude, skepticism, as a prelude to safely dismissing Arab nationalism as unworthy. The first characteristic is manifest in his use of "past tense" in reference to

⁶ When the Arab nationalist guest, al-Jammal, asks Haddad specifically for the reason behind excluding liberalism, which has been in existence in the Arab world since the turn of the twentieth century, from his historical narrative, Haddad offers no answer.

Arab nationalism. Pastness, as such, serves the function of a metaphor implying the death of Arab nationalism. Pastness, in turn, manifests a new perspective, a new way of looking at Arab nationalism, which can be summed this way: Yes, Arab nationalism is noble and has played a key role in fighting colonialism and liberating many Arab countries, but it is, nonetheless, a dead ideology, a thing of the past. Closely intertwined with pastness is an appeal to the viewers' own sense of healthy skepticism, prudence and wisdom, as opposed to their enduring passion for something that has passed away. By invoking wisdom and common sense, Haddad divides his call to abandon Arab nationalism from the calls of the Arab establishments to abandon it as well, thus detaching himself from such establishments. Alternatively, Haddad attaches the call to abandon Arab nationalism with the needs and prudence of the audience's itself. Ultimately, the suspicion stirred in the mind of the audience members by Haddad leads them to ask: what is the alternative?

In other parts of his opening remarks, Haddad provides the viewers with the necessary features of the alternative ideology. It must be rational, practical and conducive to a set of attainable objectives. These are the same features that Haddad strips Arab nationalism of, as implied by the hyperbolic and false claims that he attributes to Arab nationalism in the second and the fourth sentences: Arab nationalism is the "panacea" of all problems, and the objective of Arab nationalism is the establishment of the "virtuous city," respectively. The hyperbole then nudges the viewers to see Arab nationalism as foolish and imprudent, in light of its exaggerated capability and unrealistic goal. And just like the "death" metaphor is capable of creating a need for a "living" alternative, the hyperbole in panacea and virtuous city is also capable of generating a need for a rational,

more realistic alternative—liberalism, which he introduces in the second part of the introduction.

As Haddad proceeds he gives the audience an alternative to Arab nationalism; an alternative that he anchors in the audience's sense of prudence and rationality and in their aspirations for political and economic progress. The argument for the antithesis of Arab nationalism—liberalism, takes the form of questions, which sound initially as real questions. However, beneath the veneer of realness there lie rhetorical questions, which serve as premises for the argument for the superiority of Western liberalism. Take the first question for an example: "And now, was the problem in the content of those ideological messages or in their messengers?" Regardless of the answer, the question asserts two premises, a) there is a problem with Arab nationalism, and b) this problem is intrinsic, stemming either from the message or from the messenger.⁷ An intrinsically problematic and unworthy Arab nationalism is further implied by the second question (Or were they the victim of a foreign conspiracy, as claimed by their advocates?). In it, Haddad bolsters the claim of the irrationality of Arab nationalism and takes irrationality to an even higher level through the implication of the "foreign conspiracy" expression. "Conspiracy" is commonly used in Arab official political discourses, especially in the last two decades, in the same manner and for the same reason it is used often in American political discourses; as a truncated argument by which the speaker dismisses a claim by

⁷ James L. Gelvin (2005) argues in his *The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: One Hundred years of War* that "Nationalisms succeed or fail not because they are true or false but because of factors extrinsic to nationalisms themselves" (p. 83). In contrast, Haddad's account tends to focus on the failure of Arab nationalism based on its intrinsic qualities.

pathologizing the claimant, describing him or her as delusional. Not only that “delusional” dovetails with “irrational,” but it magnifies it and brings it closer to melancholy. The rational, calculating, common sensical audience is then asked by Haddad to equate Arab nationalism with delusion, an illness that has befallen the Arab world. Ills require a remedy; a remedy must be verifiably effective. Liberalism is the “remedy to our problems and the vehicle to the third millennium,” as Haddad claims via the remainder of the questions, as in “Is the current state of Arab decline driving us out of weakness to emulate and imitate the West?” Initially, the question sounds real and legitimate. However, in light of the premises that Haddad has previously advanced (the right ideology is a rational ideology), the question solicits one answer: “It is not a sign of weakness to emulate the West; it is rather the rational thing to do.” The question is thus an argument that takes the shape of a question; an argument that Haddad defends in the last two questions:

Are the [main] theses of Western thought in politics and in economy the remedy to our problems and [are they our] vehicle to the third millennium? And do the [Arab] ideological parties, upon seizing power, forego [as a matter of routine] their principles and alienate all others?

The first question reminds the viewers of a concrete reality; the political and economic superiority of the Western world. Given that liberalism is the theoretical bedrock upon which rests the magnificent political and economic progress that the West has attained, Haddad’s first question represents an argument by example for the appropriateness of Western liberalism as a vehicle towards progress in the third millennium. Haddad defends this argument in the last question by reminding the viewers of another concrete

reality; the undemocratic nature of Arab nationalism (which seized power in three Arab countries, Egypt, Syria, and Iraq) that has failed to bring about progress and has alienated its own populations.

In terms of the suppositions anchoring the second part of the introduction (dismissal of Arab nationalism and the advancement of Western liberalism as the only rational and viable alternative), Haddad's discourse also entails an effort to divide the viewers from their long-held negative perception of the West, which, according to Haddad, epitomizes social, political and economic progress. Put differently, Haddad, in the process of arguing against Arab nationalism, alters the debate on Arab-West relations as well in a manner that downplays the image of the West as a colonial power and emphasizes instead its image as a model of progress and success that echoes the aspirations of the Arab viewers. In this context, the act of maintaining strong relations with the West and borrowing its system of beliefs and values becomes more of an asset and less of a liability. Subsequently, Haddad's liberal discourse normalizes, intentionally or unintentionally, the pro-Western policies of the rational, self-reforming government of Qatar, which, by borrowing and implementing many of the Western beliefs and values, has rapidly and indisputably become a model of success in the Arab world.

In the body of the discussion that ensues, Haddad stresses the same premises that he advances in the introduction. He positions the Arab nationalist and the Islamist guests in a way by which their views become either a personification of the irrational, undemocratic, dead ideologies, or, conversely, as a personification of a rational, democratic, liberational, living ideology, as advanced and defended by `Atteyya, the liberal guest. This tactic is manifest in Haddad's questioning of the Arab nationalist and

the Islamist guests' beliefs and refraining from doing so with the liberal guest. Rather, Haddad assigns the liberal guest the role of a commentator whose task is to rebut the views of the other two guests without having to defend his views. This tactic parallels Haddad's exclusion of liberalism from his introduction. Therefore, when the Arab nationalist guest—al-Jammal, questions Haddad's exclusion of liberalism from the matrix of ideologies that he is critically reviewing, Haddad evades the question, reminding al-Jammal of the totalitarian nature of Arab nationalism: "In the last fifty years, Arab nationalists, Ba`thist and Nasserite, who took over the state have excluded all others. Abdul Nasser, for instant, fought against members of the Muslim Brotherhood and sent them to jail. The inheritors [the Ba`thists in Syria] did the same." At this instant, Haddad attempts to divide the viewers from their perception of Arab nationalism as a liberational movement and focuses their attention instead on its incongruence with their passion for political freedoms. By detaching Arab nationalism from their passions for freedom and liberties, Haddad, conversely, creates identification between the audience and liberalism as a doctrine that focuses on liberties, democratic change and prosperity. Haddad dismisses al-Jammal's call for "a united intellectual Arab front that crosses all ideological lines and works for a set of a mutually agreed upon grounds" (such as the fight against Israel, the fight for national independence, the fight for comprehensive development) as mere "slogans," a *metaphor* for the hollowness of such call. Expanding on and furthering Haddad's argument, al-`Atteyya emphasizes the near-sightedness and irrational hostility of various groups towards the West as he laments the defeat of the old representative of Arab liberalism, the Arab monarchs in Egypt and in Iraq in the 1950s at the hands of the irrational, delusional Arab radicals whose "main thesis, whether Marxist, nationalist or

Islamist, is that the West is the enemy, the adversary who mistreated us and must thus be fought against,” and whose [radicals’] only contribution is “a few illusory battlefields which made things worse than before.” In stressing the same point, al-`Atteyya ridicules the Islamist guest’s emphasis on the actuality of the divergence of interests between the Arab world and the West, through the rhetorical question he raises at the end of his remark: “The West divided us, the West occupied us, the West made us ignorant! What would have become of a country like Kuwait [or Iraq], had it not been for the British rule over this country?”

Whether in Haddad’s introductory remarks to this broadcast of MTOP or in the discussion that follows, both he and the guest invoke an alternative set of emotions, such as the audience’s prudence and natural inclination towards what is rational and their passion and hope for personal and political freedoms, as basis for dividing them from their passion for a dead, radical, irrational Arab nationalism. To the same end, Haddad, in the episode of November 14, 2003, denounces the “deeply seated culture of violence embedded in all of our political and religious parties,” describing some of their leaders as “the rusty princes who issue *fatwas* [religious licenses] to kill women and children.” In the same episode, Haddad makes it clear that “the charge of terrorism must not be attached only to Islamist groups but to Arab nationalist movements and regimes as well.” Alternatively, Haddad’s discourse on Arab nationalism unites the audience with a living, rational political ideology that is based on realistic and evidently achievable set of objectives, as in the case of the self-reforming, liberalizing Qatari government.

Altering the terms of the debate on Arab nationalism leads indirectly to altering the terms of the debate on the other two pressing political issues—the situation in Iraq,

before and after the 2003 War, and the Arab-Israeli conflict. For long, Arab nationalism and Islam, in one form or another, have been the two most popular frameworks of interpreting the pressing problems of the Arab world. The two ideologies have provided the Arab elite and masses with the necessary premises which, in turn, shape the attitudes of the majority of Arab populations and point them towards the acceptable programs of action necessary to resolve any conflict. By dismissing the two “radical” ideologies, Haddad loosens the fabric of the political narratives on both conflicts, creating a room for an alternative reading without offending the Arab audience. The newly constructed narratives position the Arab audience at a point from which the Qatari controversial policies appear reasonable and pragmatic. In other words, the audience is moved by Haddad to judge the Qatari controversial policies not based on principle—inspired by Arab nationalism or Islamism, but rather on alternative bases—such as circumstance and consequence, furnished by the alternative ideology, as the analysis of his discourses on both conflicts will show.

Haddad on the War of the “Extremists” on Iraq

As I have contended in the two previous chapters, Saddam Hussein, from the standpoint of a significant portion of the Arab populations, and despite his tyrannical and in many cases deadly policies, symbolizes Arab national pride and spirit of resistance. From the standpoint of the same populations, the targeting of Saddam, which has finally culminated in the 2003 War and the occupation of the country, is indicative of an unfolding conspiracy against Iraq. The conspiracy is orchestrated by the United States and its regional allies, whose main aim is the toppling of Saddam Hussein in order to perpetuate the state of division and weakness of the Arab world.

Haddad, through the use of anti-establishment discourse, appears to embrace the viewers' belief in the conspiracy theme as he condemns the role of the pro-U.S. "Arab conservatives" (MTOP, December 6, 1999) and the ill-reputed Iraqi opposition groups who "solicit support from and seek the protection of the enemies of yesterday and today [the United States]" (MTOP, December 6, 1999). By identifying with the majority of the viewers' perception of the conflict over Iraq as an ongoing conspiracy, Haddad, as a liberal, attempts to divide the viewers from their common perception of Arab liberals as lackeys of the conspiratorial conservative Arab regimes and Western powers such as the United States. But Haddad does more still with the conspiracy theme; he subtly re-anchors it in new premises that further advance his argument for Western liberalism and bolster the Qatari position on the Iraqi conflict, as the analysis of a cluster of his pre- and post-2003 War anti-establishment discourses will show.

MTOP: Pre-War Discourses

In the episode of August 4, 2000, Haddad offers a critical review of the position of various political players towards Iraq, emphasizing the conspiratorial role of the United States and its Arab allies, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, whose main goal is to weaken or even to topple the Iraqi regime by any means necessary. This is how Haddad introduces the topic of discussion:

Kuwait has been liberated and the Gulf region has witnessed an unprecedented level of American military presence, not to mention the arms deal which the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies estimates at \$150 billion since 1991. The chief of the coalition, George Bush, has gone as will Bill Clinton in a few months and as have, before the two, Margaret Thatcher and

John Major. But Saddam Hussein endured, in spite of the American policy of containment, the international blockade, the attempts by Washington, Tehran, and Iraq's Arab neighbors to bring together and support the Iraqis who oppose the government in Baghdad....

In this paragraph, Haddad's narrative is hardly distinguishable from the narrative of any Arab nationalist or Islamist group on Iraq. The narrative is anchored in a popular theme, an unfolding conspiracy against a central Arab country—Iraq. The conspiring villains are the United States, England, their regional allies and Iran whose aim is to weaken and, or, topple the Iraqi regime in order to serve and perpetuate their interests in the region. At its face value, the clearly anti-establishment overtone of Haddad's narrative sets him apart, as a liberal, from the unpopular pro-establishment liberal individuals. By detaching himself from such individuals, Haddad, in turn, identifies with the viewers.

Haddad's purported unity with the viewers, however, enables him to problematize the conspiracy theme without offending the anti-Arab regimes, anti-Western pro-Saddam viewers. The host's implicit effort to problematize the conspiracy theme is manifest in an explicit effort to expand the identity of the conspirators. They are Arab, Western and Persian; they are Christian—the West, Sunni Arabs—Kuwait and other Gulf states, and Shiite—Iraqi opposition groups and Iran. By expanding the identity of the conspirators, Haddad argues tacitly that the conspiracy against Iraq cannot be interpreted as an anti-Arab nation or anti-Islam Western scheme, since other actors—Arab and Persian, Sunni and Shiite, are playing an integral and fundamental role in the conspiracy. Therefore, by rendering the West *an* enemy among many others rather than *the* enemy, Haddad gears

the viewers gently away from an Arab nationalist or Islamic understanding of the situation of Iraq, leaving the door open for an alternative framework of understanding that transcends all national and religious divisions. Although this paragraph does not reflect that explicitly, Haddad, nonetheless, counts on the persuasiveness of undeniable “present facts,” such as the adamant opposition of certain liberal powers to the policies of the United States—France, Germany and, later on, the anti-war massive demonstrations of Western publics who took to the streets protesting the Anglo-American plans to invade Iraq. Haddad, in other words, divides the Western camp into moderates and extremists, confining the problem with the extremists. At the same time, Haddad also counts on other self-evident facts such as the rigorous and most publicized role played by the Qatari government before the war in an attempt to lift the embargo imposed on Iraq and to mediate a peaceful settlement to the conflict with the United States. Worded differently, Haddad also divides the camp of pro-Western Arab governments into moderates—such as Qatar, and extremists, such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. By dividing the West and the pro-Western camps, Haddad creates among the viewers a need for a different perspective on the conspiracy against Iraq and on the war to come.

As Haddad problematizes conspiracy as a framework for understanding the Iraqi issue, his anti-establishment rhetoric becomes a manifestation of his liberal interpretation of the situation of Iraq: the conspiracy against Iraq and the war to come are perpetrated by “extremist” elements, Arab and foreign, Muslim, Christian, and Jewish. Following this line of reasoning, Haddad’s anti-establishment discourse represents an argument against extremism, regardless of the national, religious or sectarian identity of the extremist.

To further prove his point, Haddad, in several other broadcasts of MTOP presents the viewers with demonstrative examples of extremists, mainly Arabs, whose views are hardly distinguishable from the views of the Bush's White House, as in the October 4, 1999 broadcast of MTOP.

In this session of MTOP, Haddad disassociates himself from a pro-war Iraqi extremist—Hamid al-Bayyati, the representative of the Iran-backed, Supreme Islamic Revolutionary Council, as he [Haddad] identifies himself fully with one of the most vocal, anti-establishment Arab media personalities, `Abdul Bari `Atwan, the Chief Editor of the London-based, pan-Arab daily newspaper, *al-Quds al-`Arabi*. Known for his uncompromising anti-American, pro-Iraqi attitude, `Atwan becomes a living example of the conduciveness of liberalism to the beliefs and attitudes of the majority of the Arab populations. Both `Atwan and Haddad coalesce against the anti-Saddam, pro-war Bayyati, as evidenced by the following exchange:

`Atwan: [Kurds in the north], like the rest of the Iraqi opposition groups, *mashalla*, are enjoying the support of America, of international organizations, of the C.I.A., of all those people. Therefore, they will naturally enjoy a very good health. After all, they are endowed with the blessings of America. Look, *mashalla*, at the faces of the opposition leaders! *Mashalla*, all bright, sparkling, and, *mashalla*, in an excellent shape, because America, the Iraq Liberation Act, the \$99 million, organizations are behind them.

The underlined expression, *mashalla*, literally means “what Allah desires,” but in certain contexts such as the one in this passage it is semantically equivalent to the English expression “knock on wood.” In this sense it is *sarcasm* through which `Atwan appears to

express admiration for the Iraqi opposition groups, while in fact he is expressing his contempt and resentment of such groups. The same meaning is delivered again by `Atwan through the sarcastic-ironic expression “After all, they are endowed with the blessings of America,” as opposed to “the blessings of God.” In this light, the political perspective associated with *sarcasm* is an exact echo of the beliefs and attitudes of the majority of the Arab viewers who charge the U.S.-backed and -financed Iraqi opposition groups with treason. The perspective per se is hardly a new revelation in the Arab street. Haddad identifies fully with `Atwan, as evident in the following exchange in which he reiterates `Atwan’s *sarcasm* using the same term, *mashalla*:

Haddad [maintaining the same level of cynicism, addressing `Atwan]: Don’t generalize when you talk about the Iraqi opposition! [After all]Dr. Hamid al-Bayyati’s face, *mashalla*, is rosy [too].

Al-Bayyati: In fact, the opposition is subjected to imprisonment, oppression, murder, and torture by the regime. I myself was jailed and tortured. And a month ago, Saddam, in *al-Thawra* newspaper, issued a death sentence against me because of my media and political activism outside Iraq. So just imagine what he would do to opposition elements inside the country. In fact, the regime persecutes members of the opposition, kills their families, and annihilates villages and continues...

Haddad [interrupting with clear cynicism]: Kills opposition in prison! But here you are, Dr. Hamid, *mashalla*, alive and well!

In this exchange, the views advanced by Haddad and `Atwan do more than establishing their unity with the viewers’ anti-war, anti-Iraqi opposition stance, they also

present the Arab viewers with an example of one strand of local extremism—the extremism of an Iran-backed Shi`ite organization, which al-Bayyati exemplifies. In a different broadcast of MTOP (December 8, 2000), Haddad presents to the viewer another type of local extremism, Arab Sunni autocracy exemplified by the Saudi apologist, `Abdul `Azeez al-Khamees, who contends that:

The developing of Iraq's capabilities should be oriented toward the building of Iraq, the building of an [Iraqi] nation, the feeding of the people and not for the building of rockets and an army that kills and poisons its own people and investing the Iraqi scientific talents to poison Kurdistan and the Kurds...

Haddad, in response, scolds al-Khamees suggesting to him that “as an Arab, [he] must be proud, as an Arab, to have an Arab country that produces weapons instead of buying them on credit by billions [of dollars] from the Americans and then stores them and never uses them.” Haddad, at this instant, disassociates himself from the pro-establishment, anti-Saddam guest, thus furthering his image as an anti-establishment liberal. This is an image that Haddad further sharpens by disassociating himself from another example of an extremist Arab autocracy, the pro-establishment Egyptian—Waheed Abdul Majeed:

Abdul Majeed: Who is on trial here? The [Iraqi] regime, which has put us all in this strait and before the imminent catastrophe by his [Saddam's] refusal to give up power and to let the nation rebuild what he has [Saddam] destroyed, or the other Arab countries that are doing everything possible, to the best of their abilities, to find a way out of this [problem]?

To which Haddad responds: “Doctor, you are using a line of reasoning that Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Pearle, Rumsfeld—the hawks, Condoleezza Rice and the rest of

American hawks use (MTO, February 28, 2003). While Haddad on the one hand attaches himself to the viewers' anti-Egyptian government, anti-American attitudes, he, at the same time, invites the audience to see the war camp as a coalition of extremists (American neoconservatives—Christians and Jews, and pro-establishment Arab Egyptian).

In all the previous examples, Haddad embraces the viewers' belief in a conspiracy against Iraq, and then turns conspiracy around as he anchors it in a new premise—extremism, or "*ghuluw*," something that ordinary Arabs detest. Extremism, most importantly, allows Haddad to downplay the national and religious identity of the conspirators. Ultimately, by initially embracing the conspiracy theme and then anchoring it in extremism, Haddad is actually borrowing one of the audience's common premises, conspiracy, in tacitly advancing an argument against extremism itself, the cornerstone of his strand of Western liberalism. Concomitantly, Haddad suggests tacitly to the audience that since extremism is the cause of the problem, extremism cannot be the solution. This argument in turn identifies Haddad with the government of Qatar's perspective on Iraq and how the conflict in post-war Iraq should be resolved; that is to say, peacefully.

As the war approaches, Haddad's argument against extremism and for peaceful resolution becomes more discernable. His introductory remarks to the February 2, 2003 episode of MTO with which I have begun the chapter deserve a revisit at this point:

One wonders, will the [Sharm al-Shaikh] Summit rise up to the challenge and take a brave stand against the threat of a new Holako to al-Rashid Capital [Baghdad]? Or will it maintain an equal distance from both Baghdad and Washington and resort to employing the power of Arabic rhetoric, diction,

metaphors and puns so that the natural instinct of the vacationers [Arab leaders] in Sharm al-Shaikh would blossom producing a broad statement germane to demanding Iraq's full cooperation with the inspection team, weapons of mass destruction and condemnation of threats issued to any Arab country? Why they may even mention Iraq in passing!

Clearly grounded in sarcasm and irony (as in "why they may even mention Iraq in passing"), Haddad's narrative on the forthcoming war dispraises, in an al-Qasimisque fashion, the inaction of the Arab leaders and their indifferent and fatalistic attitudes towards the plight of the Iraqi people. By scolding the Arab leaders, Haddad aligns himself with the majority of the viewers whose beliefs and attitudes he vindicates, as he, at once, disassociates himself from Arab liberals who oppose Saddam and support the removal of his regime by all means necessary. However, the Arab masses whose anger Haddad vindicates are peculiarly absent, as active characters, from the narrative, and are assigned the mere role of passive spectators. Thus Haddad's fiery rhetoric in condemnation of the actions, or inactions, of the Arab leaders, is detached from a call for a reaction on the part of the Arab masses. Rather, he confines the political action necessary to fend off the coming assault on Iraq to the Arab official circles, as implied by the questions he raises (as in "One wonders, will the [Sharm al-Shaikh] Summit rise up to the challenge and take a brave stand against the threat of a new Holako to al-Rashid Capital [Baghdad]?", and the questions that follow) and the questions that he refrains from raising with regard to the Arab masses' reactions to the war. At this instant, Haddad's anti-establishment remarks imply, to say the least, a fatalistic attitude towards the imminent war.

Haddad's fatalistic attitude towards the anticipated war becomes more blatant in the episode of March 14, 2003, which preceded the war. In this broadcast, he discusses "the economic and social ramifications of the impending war" with three Arab economy experts. Here are the most important parts of his introductory remarks:

With the rising sounds of the drums of war on Iraq, will the sounds of the stock traders in the international stock markets die down before the storm that will uproot stocks, bonds, currency and raw materials?

Will an American occupation of Iraq make it the second largest oil exporter, after Saudi Arabia, which will lead to a decrease in the oil prices, which, in turn, will invigorate world economy and trade? And how long will it take for that to happen?

Who will pay the bill of this new American war?

What are the economic implications on Iraq's neighbors [Syria and Jordan]?

Will the war quicken the lifting of the economic embargo imposed on Iraq to help rebuild the country, pay off its debts to the Gulf states, which it incurred during the Iraq-Iran war, and compensate Kuwait for its invasion in 90? Will Arab generosity prevail [and all debts will be forgiven] as was the case with the debts of states that took part in the Desert Storm of 91, providing that the Iraqi regime is no longer in the scene?

Almost at every level and in every way, Haddad's narrative in this broadcast of MTOP bears no resemblance to his previous expositions on Iraq. The narrative is emotionally vacant almost to the point of suggesting a total detachment from and indifference to the prevalent mood of fear, shock, resentment and the rising political

mobility not only in the Arab world but worldwide. Also unlike his previous discourses, the narrative has no conspiring villains, no victims and no plot. The narrative rather reduces the conflict to cold economic calculations that are shockingly incompatible with the plight of a nation which will soon be engaged in an existential war with the most powerful military machine on earth. Moreover, the atmosphere of the narrative is conducive to an argument for the inevitability and unstoppable of war. This degree of political fatalism on Haddad's part is quite consistent with his emphasis on extremism as a cause and his disavowal of a counter extremism as a solution.

But Haddad takes "fatalism" a step further, as evidenced by the rhetorical topic consequence anchoring his narrative in this episode of MTOP. Not only does he invite the viewers to look at the coming war as unstoppable and inevitable, but he also asks them to look at it in terms of its possible advantages, as evidenced by the questions he raises, which gear the viewers towards a possible positive outcome—the rendering of Iraq the second larger oil exporter, the lifting of sanctions and the rebuilding of the country which was devastated by the Iraqi regime's war against Iran. Hence, the rhetorical topic associated with Haddad's fatalistic attitude suggests that fatalism is a calculated measure aiming at influencing the viewers' attitude towards the war and constricting their reactions to passive resentment or even cautious optimism. Shockingly, there is a stark resemblance between the rhetorical stances expressed by the Christian, secular, liberal-minded Haddad and his colleague, the Islamist Mansour, who both seem to invite the viewers to see the war in accordance with the Islamic principle "It is possible that ye dislike a thing that is good for you" (Qur'an, 2: 216).

Haddad's shift from a clearly anti-war attitude, regardless of the reasons, to a fatalistic attitude is also astoundingly in line with the shift in the Qatari position, from feverish diplomatic attempts to prevent the war to accepting it as inevitable. In this sense, "fatalism," as the organizing theme of Haddad's narrative, positions the viewers in a place from which they become less critical of the shift in the position of a government like Qatar, which, unlike many other Arab regimes, tried and failed to stop the unstoppable war.

Thus far, the cluster of pre-war episodes of MTOP points at a primary concomitant of Haddad's liberal, anti-establishment discourses on Iraq: extremism is the cause; counter extremism is not the answer. This argument re-emerges from his post-war anti-establishment discourses as well.

In the post-war episodes, Haddad continues his argument against extremism. This time around, however, the extremism that he argues against is that of the groups that have chosen to fight against the occupation force. Aware of the massive popularity of anti-occupation Iraqi resistance groups throughout the Arab world, Haddad resorts to anti-establishment rhetoric in identifying himself with the majority of the viewers, as a prelude to calling upon them to abandon any radical measures and to support the post-war peace process which aims at the "reconstruction" (*i`adat i`maar*) of Iraq. The broadcasts of May 30, 2003 and October 31, 2003 are two demonstrative examples.

MTOP: Post-War Discourses

In the May 30, 2003 session of MTOP, Haddad and the guests offer a reading of the post-war situation in Iraq. This is the major part of Haddad's introductory remarks:

Donald Rumsfeld, the American Secretary of Defense, admitted this week that there were no Iraqi weapons of mass destruction when Washington and London launched their military campaign to disarm Iraq. The Central Intelligence Agency will initiate an investigation to determine the reliability of the information based on which the hawks of the [American] administration decided to go to war. Was the Office of Special Plans, an ad-hoc intelligence apparatus, which Rumsfeld and his deputy—Paul Wolfowitz, founded, behind the fabricated information, provided by Iraqi opposition in exile, as the American *Time* magazine reported in its last issue?

Bush's other ally, Tony Blair, still insists that there are weapons of mass destruction. [That in turn] prompted members of the Parliament to question him and to demand proof. Have both men [Bush and Blair] then lost their credibility? Have [haven't] they misled their peoples and the world for the purpose of changing the [Iraqi] regime and, consequently, occupying the country? As for the [UN] Security Council's last resolution, did it grant legitimacy to occupation in return for the lifting of the sanctions? Did the United Nations return to performing the same role that the League of Nations has played—to legitimize colonial rule under the pretext that a mandate is a transitory state needed for preparing juvenile peoples for self rule? How will the new League of Nations deal with the Washington-chosen league of five or six Iraqis, imported from London, Tehran, and the mountains of Iraq's Kurdistan? Are they now going in circle [chasing after their tail] after Washington has turned its back on them? And, finally, with the dismantling of the Ba`th party, the laying off of the

Iraqi army and the cadres of principal ministries, and in the absence of security and public services, prevalence of unemployment and with the return of prostitution, according to British press, will the situation explode? And will anti-occupation resistance begin like what happened in this week?

In this introduction, Haddad restores the old form of his remarks; the discourse here is clearly anti-establishment and the narrative constructed by Haddad has a villain—the United States and Britain and their regional Arab and Iraqi allies. To the pleasure of the great majority of the Arab populations, the bulk of Haddad’s narrative exposes and condemns the immorality of the conspiring villain in a fashion that is hardly distinguishable from a typical Arab nationalist discourse that depicts the invasion of Iraq as another episode of Western colonialism, as evident in Haddad’s allusion to the “League of Nations” and “the colonial mandate system.” Haddad’s unity with the majority of the viewers is further deepened by his depiction of the base, ill-reputed “Washington-chosen league” of Iraqi opposition groups which aligned themselves with the invaders, and as a result are viewed in the Arab street as conspirators and traitors.

Upon closer inspection of Haddad’s anti-establishment remarks, we discover that much like in his pre-war anti-establishment narratives, the remarks are an integral part of Haddad’s argument against extremism. Also as in his previous remarks, Haddad stresses the heterogeneity of Western societies, which Haddad divides into two segments— pro- and anti-war segments. By doing that, Haddad challenges the near essentialist attitude of many viewers who still look at the West through the lens of colonialism and see the invasion of Iraq as a reincarnation of the colonial past. Haddad challenges this stereotypical attitude by emphasizing, in this broadcast as well as in others, that only a

certain segment of the West, represented by American neoconservatives (Rumsfeld, Wolfowitz, Bush) and Blair's group in England. This is what Haddad reiterates in the September 12, 2003 broadcast of MTOP, in which he condemningly singles out American neoconservatives,

eight of which are occupying important posts under the Bush Administration. For example, the Vice-President, Dick Cheney, the Secretary of Defense, Rumsfeld, and his assistant Paul Wolfowitz—the Godfather of the project [the new American Empire], not to mention Richard Pearle, the Prince of Darkness, as called in America...

But the small gang of American neoconservatives and their British lackeys, or “poodle dog,” Haddad emphasizes, are offset by a majority of Westerners who share the views and attitudes of the majority of the Arab populations; Westerners such as Eric Rouleau, who argues that the Iraqi people have the right resist occupation “by any means necessary, including armed resistance, which is legitimate from the standpoint of the United Nations. That is not a matter of controversy” (MTOP, May 30, 2003), and Jill Mone, who in the September 19, 2003 broadcast of MTOP upstages Haddad in his anti-war, anti-U.S. sentiment, arguing fervently that:

Iraq belongs to the Iraqis. Iraq does not belong to the Americans because it is an Arab state not an American state. The Americans arrived to the land of Iraq in an illegitimate manner. Therefore, they must leave [...]. If they do not leave Iraq, they will die in Iraq as they died in Vietnam.

The views of Rouleau and Mone help Haddad make the case for extremism, not Westernism, as the cause of the war. By doing that, Haddad's anti-establishment

discourse dismisses colonialism as a proper ground for interpreting and opposing the war on Iraq, thus creating a context in which opposition to the war is tantamount to opposition to extremism of all sorts, including Arab and Islamic extremism, as evidenced by the rhetorical question with which Haddad ends his paragraph germane to the neoconservatives “eight of which are occupying important posts in the Bush Administration,” as he wonders: “How much longer will the conflict between Islamic fundamentalism and the neoconservative American fundamentalism last?”

In this passage Haddad is not only redefining the cause of the war, but, by extension, he is also redefining the solution to the problem; a solution detached from anti-occupation resistance and liberation of occupied land. This line of thinking is manifest in two basic features of Haddad’s “anti-establishment,” “anti-war” narrative. The first feature is the nearly, clean, bloodless atmosphere of the narrative, in which there are no Iraqi dead or wounded, no war-orphaned children or Iraqi widows, no homeless refugees; the very dramatic stuff that has galvanized, moved and wounded the Arab public profoundly and, hence, rallied it around anti-occupation Iraqi resistance. The second feature of the narrative relates to the context in which Haddad brings in “resistance” into the picture at the end of the introduction:

And, finally, with the dismantling of the Ba`th party, the laying off of the Iraqi army and the cadres of principal ministries, and in the absence of security and public services, prevalence of unemployment and with the return of prostitution, according to British press, will the situation explode? And will anti-occupation resistance begin like what happened in this week?

In this paragraph, resistance is not presented by Haddad as a natural and legitimate reaction to foreign occupation per se, but rather as a reaction to a set of measures taken by the occupier, the dismantling of the Ba`th party, the Iraqi army, and the state institutions which have resulted in the spread of chaos, insecurity, unemployment and prostitution. Following this line of reasoning, bringing an end to such circumstances would eliminate the need for resistance. This is a line of reasoning that echoes the stance of the Qatari government whose foreign minister asks dismissively: “Why should we resist occupation?” The same line of reasoning also leads the audience to believe that the rebuilding of the country, economically, politically, militarily and socially, not liberation, should be the objective of the Iraqi struggle in the post-war era, as made evident by Haddad’s remarks to the following broadcast of MTOP:

MTOP: “Re-Building Iraq”

The October 31 broadcast of MTOP is an illustration of Haddad’s continuous effort to utilize anti-establishment discourse as a means of arguing against extremism in post-war Iraq. An integral component of Haddad’s argument is advancing a controversial premise suggesting to the viewers that re-building, not liberation, is the resolution of Iraq’s post-war problems. Haddad and the guests discuss “the Madrid Conference of donor states for the re-building of Iraq, which the host introduces as follows:

The Madrid Conference of donor states for the re-building of Iraq, is it a contest between the states that wish to partake in the American workshop in order to get a pound of the cow. Has it become a matter of “hameeha harameeha” (putting a wolf in charge of sheep)? Some of the ajaweed (the generous kind-hearted ones) have donated money, others have donated Vietnamese rice and Sri Lankan

tea, while Iran has promised to encourage hundreds of thousands to visit the Shi`ite holy places every year, assuming of course that the American *al-haakem bi'amr illah* (the ruler by Allah's decree), Bremer, grants them entry visas....

At face value, this passage identifies Haddad emotionally and enthymematically with the anti-U.S., anti-war and anti-occupation viewers. The purported unity between the two emerges from the implications of the *metaphor* in "workshop," the *analogy* in the "cow," whose meat is being divided among the "Shylocks" of the world, as well as by the sarcastic *irony* in "*ajaweed*" (the generous and noble ones) and the ironic *metaphor* in the non-Muslim "*al-haakem bi'amr illah*" (the ruler in the name of Allah) Bremer, who may or may not issue entry visas to Muslim pilgrims visiting Muslim holy places in Muslim Iraq. Using this set of rhetorical devices, Haddad vindicates the viewers' common perception of the causes and objectives of the war: one that does not really aim at ridding Iraq of weapons of mass destruction and political tyranny but at the destruction and plundering of a central Arab country whose regime has dared to challenge Western powers and their hegemonic policies in the region.

But Haddad's purported agreement with the viewers' perception of the causes and objectives of the illegitimate and immoral war against Iraq does not amount to an agreement over how the conflict must be resolved or over the legitimacy, morality and necessity of anti-occupation resistance. On the contrary, beneath the surface of Haddad's anti-establishment discourse, he tacitly proposes an alternative way of understanding the complicated scene of post-war Iraq. To discern the alternative way, one must take a closer look at a host of terms that Haddad uses most frequently in his discourses on post-war Iraq. "Rebuilding" of Iraq, "security and stability," "sovereignty" and "transition of

power” are the primary examples of this family of terms permeating Haddad’s discourse in this broadcast and nearly in all other post-war broadcasts of MTOP (e.g., May 30, 2003, September 19, 2003, October 31, 2003, and November 21, 2003).

The “rebuilding” (*i`adat i`mar*) of Iraq, the topic of discussion in this broadcast of MTOP, is one of the most common expressions used by Haddad in reference to post-war Iraq (and throughout al-Jazeera, as a matter of fact). Strangely enough, the “rebuilding” expression came to life in the pre-war episode of March 14, 2003, in which Haddad asks: “Will the war quicken the lifting off of the economic embargo imposed on Iraq to help rebuild the country and pay off its debts to the Gulf states, which [Iraq] accumulated during the Iraq-Iran war?” In its literal sense, “rebuilding” of Iraq, as the ultimate objective of all parties, hardly stirs any controversy. However, below the surface of the literal sense of the expression there is a figurative meaning that is capable of downplaying the massive weight of the war against Iraq, redefining occupation as liberation and dismissing anti-occupation resistance as undesirable program of action. The “rebuilding” expression allows Haddad to summon up the German example and the rebuilding of Germany and Europe (the Marshal Plan) in the aftermath of WWII. This historical analogy creates a mental context that invites the viewers to make a connection between Saddam’s Ba`thist Iraq and Hitler’s Nazi Germany, to which Haddad makes references more than once. Also, the implied analogy invites the skeptical viewers to extend the legitimacy of the war on Nazi Germany to the war on Ba`thist Iraq. One could then extend the boundaries of the historical analogy to a point at which the act of invasion per se becomes a historical turning point; one that ushers in an era of stability, prosperity

and democracy, as evidenced by another most commonly used expression, “security and stability” (*amn wa istiqrar*).

Combined, and in the absence of any terms and expressions related to anti-occupation resistance from Haddad’s discourse, the expressions “rebuilding” and “security and stability” become a manifestation of an alternative perspective on the outcome of the war and the program of political action needed to resolve the problems of post-war Iraq. In the context of the alternative perspective that emerges out of Haddad’s discourse, the question of occupation as an important term of the debate on post-war Iraq is pushed aside. Consequently, the question of anti-occupation resistance is also pushed aside by Haddad. His effort to marginalize both acts—“occupation” and “anti-occupation resistance,” is further evidenced by the implications of several *euphemisms* that he constantly uses, such as “*wujuud*” (presence) and “*quwwat amreekeyya*” (American forces) and “*sultat al-tahaluf*” (coalition authority) as alternative descriptions of *ihital* (occupation) and *muhtall* “occupier.”⁸ Keeping in mind that the acts of “rebuilding” the country physically, socially and politically, and bringing about “security and stability” are the functions and duties of a state, not revolutionary groups, both expressions, then, contain an argument essentializing state-building, not liberation, as a primary objective. The tacit argument for the primacy of state building as a goal is also delivered figuratively through the pervasive use of restoration of “*seyadah*” (sovereignty) and

⁸ In an exchange with Michael `Awn in the April 13, 2001 episode of MTOP, Haddad protested harshly against `Awn’s description of the Syrian forces present in Lebanon as “occupation,” and suggested instead the use of Syrian “presence.”

“*tasleem al-sultah*” (transition, or handing over of power) to a new Iraqi government. Concomitantly, by depicting the rebuilding of the country, attainment of peace and security, sovereignty, transfer of power and state building as the primary end, Haddad is simultaneously defending the legitimacy or at least the appropriateness of the political process that the occupying force has initiated after the toppling of the Iraqi regime. Given that the elements of the Iraqi resistance consider the political process and the new Iraqi political order as the byproduct of illegitimate war, the family of terms that Haddad uses aligns him with the new political order and against resistance.

The alignment between Haddad and the new Iraqi political order and his opposition to armed resistance indicate that his discourses in the cluster of MTOP broadcasts surrounding the war are an illustration of a conscious effort by the host to redirect the viewers towards a line of reasoning that disassociates them from anti-occupation Iraqi resistance and, at once, identifies them with the new Iraqi political order and, by extension, with the Qatari position on Iraq without appearing to endorse it.

Haddad’s effort to identify the audience with the proposition that underpins his discourses on Iraq and Arab nationalism (extremism is the problem; counter extremism is not the solution) is also discernable in his liberal, anti-establishment discourses on the third and by far the most polarizing political issue—the Arab-Israeli conflict, as the analysis below will show.

Haddad on the Arab-Israeli Conflict: Liberally Speaking

One of the most problematic aspects of both the Qatari government and many Arab liberals, like Haddad, pertains to the Arab-Israeli conflict. They both no longer see the conflict with Israel as existential (*wujuudi*), but rather territorial (*huduudi*) that can

and should be resolved through dialogue and peace negotiations leading to the establishment of a Palestinian state in the territories that Israel captured in the 1967 War.⁹

⁹ Here are a few examples illustrative of the congruence between Arab liberals and Arab regimes over the question of armed resistance and the need to abandon it.

Ali Salem, a prominent and most visible and vocal Egyptian liberal who made numerous appearances in al-Jazeera, blames Arab nationalists and Islamist groups for the political ills of the Arab world. In his depiction, Salem goes as far as depicting the post-Nasser Egyptian regime as a model of positive change and progress that need be emulated by others. To this end, he argues that “In fact, only after Sadat’s successful peace efforts was Egypt able to transform itself from an extremist, revolutionary totalitarian state into a country based on institutions and civil society.” Emphasizing the centrality and primacy of a negotiated peace with Israel and fighting terrorism as basic requirements for Arab progress, Salem contends that “Achieving Arab-Israeli peace and fighting terrorism are important, if positive trends such as liberalism are to develop further in the Arab world.” He, echoing the views of many Israeli leaders, goes on to blame the stalemate in Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations on the Palestinian side: “[T]here is no one to talk to on the Palestinian side today, just gangs and clans.” See Salem Ali (200), “Sadat’s Peace Legacy and Hopes for Arab liberalism,” *The Washington Institute for Near East Policy: Policy Watch No. 674: Special Forum Report*, November 7, 2002. An electronic copy of this article is available at: www.washingtoninstitute.org.

Similar views are advanced by the Iraqi liberal, `Aref `Alwan, who, too, exonerates the camp of moderate Arab regimes and blames the perpetuity of the Arab-Israeli conflict on Arab extremism and inherent cultural and psychological illnesses. To this effect, `Alwan argues in an article he wrote in December 7, 2007 that “Despite the great political and cultural efforts by large and important Arab states such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and some Gulf states to restore Arab ties with the rest of the world, and to curb the culture of terrorism in Arab societies, they have all failed. This is because these attempts to rectify [the situation], from both within and without [the Arab countries], both stemmed from and were a logical extension of the concept of the Nakba [the perception of the establishment of the Israeli state and the Arab defeat in 1948 as a disaster].” Deploring the Arab’s opposition to Israel, he argues that “The Arabs see the Palestinian problem as exceedingly complicated, while actually it appears so only to them-[that is] from point of the Arab’s emotional attitudes and their national and religious philosophy. The Arabs have amassed false claims regarding their exclusive rights to the Palestinian land...” `Alwan’s article was published in December 7, 2007 on the Arab electronic site www.ahewar.org, and was reprinted and commented on by *The Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI)*, *Special Dispatch*, April 15, 2008, No. 1897.

For a summation of the Arab liberal’s argument against resistance, see Daniel Lav’s article in footnote number 4. Another indispensable source for the Arab liberal views on issues such as the Arab-Israeli conflict, peace negotiations, “radical” Arab organizations such as Hamas and Hezbollah, the war of 2003 on Iraq and the anti-occupation Iraqi resistance is the Saudi-backed and financed, the London-based, pan-Arab daily newspapers, *al-Sharaq al-Awasat* and *al-Hayat*, which are considered as a principal niche for Arab liberal writers. For a more

Also, they both see normalization of relations with Israel, even before reaching a final a settlement, as an accepted measure. In Haddad's case, acceptance of normalization is manifest in his taboo-breaking policy of having Israeli guests on regular basis participating in MTOP; a measure that has triggered unflattering speculations and suspicions by many Arab viewers and commentators.

Haddad's anti-establishment discourse on the Arab-Israeli conflict serves two major functions, a) to downplay his unpopular act of having Israeli guests on the program, which undermines his character, by casting dialogue with Israeli guests under a positive light depicting it as a verbal battle with the enemy, and b) to dissociate his call for the abandonment of armed struggle from any demands or expectations of the Qatari state, and to identify such call instead with the demands, passions and concerns of the Palestinian population and the Arab masses at large.

The following excerpts from a discussion between the host and Arab guests on one side and Israeli guests on the other demonstrate what Haddad does with such dialogic moments. The first excerpt is taken from the November 28, 2003 broadcast of MTOP, in which Haddad gives `Atwan ample opportunity to interrupt the Israeli guest, Yitzhak Levanon, and to refute his line of reasoning:

Levanon: There are clear articles in the Road Map to which Israel is committed and each of which she shall implement. But we have to return to the Road Map.

And in order to return to the Road Map, we have to create the suitable

comprehensive list of Arab liberal writers and editorials written by them, see also the electronic site of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs: <http://www.altawasul.com/MFAAR>.

atmosphere and the suitable atmosphere means bringing terrorism to an end...

`Atwan [interrupting cynically]: Oh, brother! The Road Map! Does the Road Map call for the building of a wall and for the uprooting of more than 135000 Palestinians and 400000...

Levanon: Unless...

`Atwan [continuing]: One minute! Does the Road Map call for the partitioning of sixty-five Palestinian villages? Does the Road Map call for the construction of 106 new settlements, which will soon be legalized?

Levanon: Brother...

`Atwan: Does the Road Map call for the killing of Palestinians and for the uprooting of 50000 individuals from Rafah? Does the Road Map call for the ongoing assassinations and murders?

Levanon: Brother, `Abdul Bari, this is...

`Atwan: The world is disgusted! The world is in a state of disgust with Israel! Even Europeans who say...

Levanon: The World is also...

`Atwan: 60% of Europeans [say that] Israel is the biggest threat to world security and stability...

Levanon: The world is also...

`Atwan: This is the truth; the world is disgusted by you; in a state of disgust...

In this excerpt, Haddad orchestrates the dialogue, allowing ample opportunity for `Atwan to clash with the Israeli guest and to refute his views. The likeable character of the well-known, passionate, daring, anti-establishment, Palestinian journalist—`Atwan,

allows Haddad to bolster his own character by association. Moreover, the assent of `Atwan to the principle of having dialogue with an Israeli guest gives the notion of dialogue per se a degree of legitimacy based on the unquestionable patriotism and character of the Palestinian guest. Furthermore, armed with data and pertinent facts, `Atwan, the confrontationalist, turns MTOP into a symbolic battlefield; one in which, to the pleasure of the audience, an Arab could actually win against an Israeli. In this context, Haddad appeals to the anger of the viewers and incorporates their eagerness for a victory over the Israelis by demonstrating to them that having dialogue with the “enemy” is not equivalent to capitulation but rather a winnable battle. Thus, dialogue is another battlefield that Arabs should exploit rather than shy away from.

Haddad’s depiction of dialogue as a battlefield with the Israeli enemy is also discernable from the second excerpt (MTOP, October 20, 2000), in which Haddad pits another Palestinian with a non-assailable character and indisputable revolutionary credentials—Abu `Ali Mustafa, the prominent Palestinian leader of the Popular Front for the liberation of Palestine (PFLP) who was shortly thereafter assassinated by Israel, against the Israeli guest, Yigal Carmon:

Haddad [interrupting Carmon]: Let me just make one point before I forget it!

Carmon [with a commanding tone of voice]: Let me finish...

Haddad: When Palestinians threw [rocks]...

Carmon: Do let me finish...

Haddad: Brother, Carmon! When they threw rocks at Israeli worshipers by the Wailing Wall, no one was hurt...

Carmon: I will finish talking. If you don’t let me, I won’t speak on the program.

Abu `Ali Mustafa [commenting resentfully on Carmon's last statement]: That would be better!

Carmon [forewarning Haddad]: You must decide!

Abu `Ali Mustafa [addressing Carmon]: It's better if you didn't [talk]...

Haddad: Mr. Carmon...

Abu `Ali Mustafa [continuing]: ...you, arrogant Zionist!¹⁰

As in the previous excerpt, Haddad in this one also draws on the character of Abu `Ali Mustafa to mitigate the negative impact of the taboo-breaking measure of having Israeli guests in MTOP. And as does `Atwan, the militant Abu `Ali Mustafa also confronts the "arrogant Zionist," rendering MTOP a battlefield and giving the Arab audiences a fleeting moment of victory and vindication. In both excerpts, Haddad relies on the viewers' admiration for and identification with the two prominent Palestinian guests, as a vehicle for identifying the viewers with "dialogue with the enemy" as an act of resistance rather than capitulation.

The fact remains however that the most novel, striking and consequential aspect of the discussion is not the pathetic power of statements such as "the whole world is disgusted by you" or "you, arrogant Zionist," but rather the pronoun "you," which signals a new era of Arab political discourse; an era in which the Israeli is no longer talked about

¹⁰ Upon looking at MTOP as a whole, we notice that the presence of a minority of "extremist" Israeli guests, such as Levanon and Carmon, is offset by the presence of a majority of "moderate," mild-tempered Israeli guests, such as Yosi Haddas, Shimon Shitrit, Shimon Romeh, Mair Cohen, Lateef Duri, Ghay Bakhure, Yael Tamir, among others (they appeared in the following episodes of MTOP: May 17, 1999, October 8, 1999, December 13, 1999, January 7, 2000, July 14, 2000, December 7, 2001, January 25, 2002, March 1, 2002, November 8, 2002).

in the third person but rather addressed directly in the second person. In other words, the “enemy,” no matter how arrogant and disgusting he is, is nonetheless acknowledged and talked to openly and directly. The act of holding face-to-face dialogue with Israelis in MTOP parallels and normalizes, “through dull repetition,” the act of having Arab-Israeli dialogue in different contexts, such as in peace negotiations. It is at this juncture that Haddad’s anti-establishment rhetoric does more than tapping the audiences’ feeling of anger and disgust towards the Israeli enemy; Haddad’s anti-establishment discourses, which initially identify him with the viewers, induce a shift in the perception of both the enemy and the means to resolve the conflict at large. It is also at this juncture that Haddad’s liberal, anti-establishment rhetoric creates a context in which it is possible to identify the viewers with the moderate Qatari position on the conflict by indirectly redefining the Qatari position as an act of resistance, as in the cases of `Atwan and Abu `Ali Mustafa.

But there is more still to Haddad’s discourse, not only that he argues for the appropriateness of dialogue and negotiations as *a* means to resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict, but as *the only* appropriate means. In other words, Haddad’s discourse mirrors the Arab official discourse at large in which dialogue and negotiations, on one side, and armed resistance, on the other, are seen as mutually exclusive. It is at this critical juncture that Haddad’s discourse (like the Arab official discourse) diverges most noticeably from the beliefs of a vast majority of the Arab populations who see peace negotiations and armed resistance as complementary, as evidenced by their ongoing support for political organizations that still adhere to armed resistance, regardless of their ideological orientation—Sunni Hamas and Jihad Islami, Shiite Hezbollah, or the Arab-nationalist

leaning, Marxist PLFP. To overcome this rhetorical challenge, Haddad utilizes anti-establishment rhetoric in subtly redefining major aspects of the Arab-Israeli conflict in a manner that leads the viewers to see armed resistance as inappropriate and unworthy without offending their beliefs and attitudes, as the analysis of his introductory remarks to the broadcasts of February 5, 1999, April 30, 1999 and December 21, 2001 of MTOP will show.

MTOP: Declaring a Palestinian State

According to Oslo Accords of 1993, officially called “the Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements,” a five-year interim period was supposed to lead to a final settlement of the conflict based on Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. No such outcome was reached. This development casts doubt on the viability and usefulness of the peace process at large, and, thus, has triggered a debate on the worthiness of the peace process itself. The February 5, 1999 broadcast of MTOP is one of the episodes in which the question of statehood is discussed. Here are Haddad’s introductory remarks:

The Palestinian statehood is an old ambition of the Palestinian people and the Palestine Liberation Organization, which was founded in Jerusalem in [19]64, and succeeded at the Rabat Summit of 74 [in its efforts] to become the sole and the legitimate representative of the Arab Palestinian people. Following that, and in the same year, came Mr. Yasser Arafat’s address at the United Nations, when he for the first time gave a public speech in the name of Palestine. As a result, the General Assembly was able to issue resolutions in support of the right of the Palestinian people for self-determination and the establishment of an

independent Palestinian state. Then came Madrid Conference in 91, to be followed by the Oslo Accords whose [five-year] interim period will come to an end on the coming May 4, [1999].

The Palestinian Authority, which considers itself to be [a de facto state] on the ground, says that now [after the five-year period has passed] it is its natural right to declare a state; [this is] a contentious issue [declaration of state]—proponents, opponents and undecided.

Now then, will [should] the Palestinian Authority go ahead and declare a Palestinian state on the coming forth of May that marks the end of the five-year transitional stage according to the Oslo Agreement? Or have negotiations for the purpose of postponing it [already] started? Are the objective circumstances on the ground [in Palestine] and regionally conducive to a successful declaration of a Palestinian state?

Will such declaration improve the opportunities of the Likud Party to return to power after the coming elections on May 17?

The question of the establishment of a Palestinian state per se, regardless of one's political or ideological affiliation in the Arab world, is hardly a contentious issue. It is the objective of various political and ideological groups and the aspiration of the great majority of the Arab populations; it is, in other words, a common political denominator. As such, Haddad's introductory remarks to this episode demonstrate his consubstantiality with the majority of the Arab viewers. The remarks can even deepen Haddad's unity with the majority of his anti-establishment audience based on the implications of certain elements of his narrative; elements such as his allusion to the founding of the Palestine

Liberation Organization (P.L.O) in 1964. Since the struggle of the Palestinian people has begun before the 1967 War and the subsequent occupation of all of Palestine, the Palestinian state that Haddad speaks of may be understood as a state in all of Palestine. In this sense, the initial implication of Haddad's remarks intersects with the beliefs of the majority of the viewers, as it simultaneously diverges from the Arab official stance—a state in the territories occupied by Israel on June 5, 1967.

However, as we inspect his remarks closely, we discover that the introduction is anchored in controversial premises that constitute a new framework for understanding the Arab-Israeli conflict. The new framework encourages the viewers to see armed resistance as impractical and unworthy, as it [the framework] simultaneously identifies them with peace negotiations as the proper means of resolving the conflict. The new framework that Haddad proposes subtly is implied by various rhetorical tools.

One tool in particular, *ploce* (repetition of the same word throughout a discourse), deserves special attention. Throughout the introduction, Haddad uses the term “Palestinian” [underlined] repeatedly. While the term initially is a mere statement of what is obvious, the “Palestinian” identity of the population of Palestine, the term “Palestinian,” used repeatedly in this introduction as well as in the crushing majority of Haddad's discourses, conveys a subtle meaning; the “distinctiveness” or “foreignness” of the Palestinian people, especially when coupled with Haddad's constant use of the third-person in reference to the Palestinians, and in the absence of any significant pan-Arab markers from Haddad's remarks. In this sense, the term “Palestinian” is not a mere identity marker but a perspective on the conflict at large; a perspective that triggers a shift

in the audience's understanding of the conflict, from a pan-Arab conflict with Israel to conflict between the Palestinian population and Israel, a conflict between two "others."¹¹

Although the otherness of the Palestinian people does not necessarily invite or imply indifference towards them, otherness nonetheless re-regulates the Arab viewers' sympathetic attitude towards the Palestinian people, shifting it from a dogmatic requirement based on common identity, common history and common destiny to an ethical requirement based on the horrible injustices that a weak "other," the Palestinians, is subjected to by a stronger and ruthless "other," the Israelis. However, while the Arab masses are ethically obligated to aid the Palestinian people, such obligation does not rise to a level of involvement that requires a commitment to armed resistance on the part of the Arab masses. It is at this juncture that Haddad's discourse represents an effort to challenge the Arab viewers' identification with armed resistance as a matter of principle, and to identify them instead with an alternative that is capable of meeting the ethical obligation to aid the Palestinian people. An example of the alternative means is to stand by and to strengthen the position of the Palestinian negotiator.

Besides the "otherness" of the Palestinian people, Haddad also advances another premise pertinent to the nature of the problem that the otherized Palestinians face. The premise emerges from another characteristic of Haddad's narrative in this introduction; namely, the line-up of particular "past facts" (such as the dates 1964 (the establishment of

¹¹The expression "Palestinian-Israeli" conflict began to enter the Arab political lexicon mainly in the 1990. Haddad is among a very slim minority of Arab media personalities who uses the expression "Palestinian-Israeli conflict" more often than not (as in the episodes of "July 14, 2000, May 16, 2003 and June 6, 2003, among several other broadcasts).

the P.L.O.) and 1974 (recognition of the P.L.O. as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people by the Arab governments and later on, also in 1974, by the majority of the international community). In the absence of the question of liberation of Palestine and the notion of armed struggle, the facts that Haddad emphasizes have one thing in common; they all emphasize and imply that the question of political representation, not liberation, is a, or even the, primary problem facing the Palestinian people. Since representation is the or a problem, Haddad's narrative identifies the viewers with political measures that ensure representation, such as the establishment of political entities (the Palestinian Authority and a Palestinian legislative body, as a prelude of establishing a Palestinian state) as a worthy political cause and the means of achieving the primary goal. A Palestinian state, in this context, becomes an existential necessity, and hence a most worthy political objective. Concomitantly, it becomes possible to identify the Arab viewers with the moderate, ill-reputed Palestinian Authority by depicting it as a continuation of a successful legacy of inventing Palestinian representative political entities (such as the P.L.O. and the P.N.C.), rather than seeing it as an entity that has compromised the basic principles and objectives of the Palestinian struggle.

Moreover, the question of "representation," which emerges from the particular line-up of facts that Haddad selects and stresses, intermeshes with the notion of the otherness of the Palestinian people. After all, the battle of representation which the Palestinians have won, as Haddad's narrative tells us, was not fought against Israel but against other Arabs, Jordan, Syria, and Nasser's Egypt in particular. Also, since the battle of representing the Palestinian people signals the usefulness and success of the political

maneuverings by the Palestinian leadership in the past, another political process, now with Israel, can also be fruitful as a means of attaining another body or political representation—a Palestinian Authority as a prelude to a Palestinian state. This implication is further attested to by the odd exclusions of the principal facts of the Arab-Israeli conflict by Haddad; facts such as “occupation” itself and the “liberation” of historical Palestine and the adamant opposition of Arafat’s policies among Palestinian groups working under the auspices of the P.L.O.¹² The exclusion of such facts signals an attempt to downplay their significance for the purpose of identifying the Arab viewers with less ambitious, less principled resolution of the Arab-Israel conflict, such as a negotiated settlement leading to the establishment of a Palestinian state on parts of historical Palestine.

Since the otherness of the Palestinian people suggests to the audience that dogmatic principles should no longer guide its beliefs and attitudes towards the conflict,

¹²As indicated by the names and the charters of the major Palestinian political movements, which were founded in the 1960s (the PLO, Palestine Liberation Organization; FATAH, Palestine National Liberation Movement; PFLP, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine; PFLP-GC, Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine—General Command; DFLP, Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine; PLF, Palestine Liberation Front; ALF, Arab Liberation Front, among others), the question of “liberation” through long-term armed struggle, not “statehood” or “representation,” was the major concern and objective of all Palestinian political groups. In fact, the question of “statehood,” which appeared officially in FATAH’s “Ten Point Program” and was approved by the FATAH-dominated Palestinian National Council (PNC) in 1974, has resulted in the breaking away of many of the PLO’s organizations and the subsequent founding of the Rejectionist Front, which insisted on “liberation” of historical Palestine as the major objective and armed struggle as the major means of achieving such objective. Later on, the Islamic liberation movements that were founded in the 80s, Hamas and Jihad, echoed the same view; liberation, not statehood, is the primary objective of the struggle. Even in the Ten Point Program of 1974, the establishment of a Palestinian state per se was not suggested, but rather “a national authority” over any portion of liberated Palestinian land, as a prelude to the establishment of a secular democratic binational state over all of historical Palestine/Israel.

he creates a need for an alternative view of the conflict and how it should be resolved. The alternative view is manifested in Haddad's emphasis on "circumstance," or "consequence," instead of principle, as the proper basis for judging any political development germane to the "Palestinian-Israeli" conflict. The alternative view emerges out of Haddad's treatment of this broadcast's main question: should the Palestinian Authority declare, unilaterally, a Palestinian state, in view of Israel's lack of cooperation and violations of the terms of Oslo Accords? This is how Haddad raises the question and nudges the viewers, who are quite frustrated by Israel's insincerity and the Palestinian Authority's ineffectiveness as a negotiator, in a certain direction:

Now then, will [should] the Palestinian Authority go ahead and declare a Palestinian state on the coming forth of May that marks the end of the five-year transitional stage according to the Oslo Agreement? Or have negotiations for the purpose of postponing it [already] started? Are the objective circumstances on the ground [in Palestine] and regionally conducive to a successful declaration of a Palestinian state?

Will such declaration improve the opportunities of the Likud Party to return to power after the coming elections on May 17?

Regardless of the nature of the answers solicited by the questions (the last two in particular), what is important here is the absence of "principle" as a guiding premise. Alternatively, Haddad confines the frustrated Arab viewers to two grounds—circumstance, in the question before the last, and consequence, in the last question. Both circumstance and consequence, especially the latter, are not without merits. Haddad, through both, reminds the viewers of the susceptibility and weakness of the Palestinian

people who may find themselves confronting an extremist, Likudist, Israeli government that is willing to inflict massive pain and suffering on them, should it win the Israeli elections. This is an outcome that no Arab would want or wishes for. In other words, Haddad tethers the alternative line of reasoning (based on circumstance and consequence) to the fears of the pro-Palestinian Arab audience.

While the three previous premises allow Haddad to safely relegate the existential Arab-Israeli conflict to a territorial conflict between two “others,” Palestinians and Israelis, the fourth controversial premise invites the viewers to see the “Palestinian-Israeli” conflict as one fueled by extremist, anti-peace process elements, which Haddad identifies in the last question that he poses as the extremist Likud party. At this juncture, Haddad’s discourse on the Arab-Israeli conflict interlocks fully with his discourses on the other topics, in terms of the effort to disassociate the viewers from any radical ideology or course of action and to identify them instead with an ideology or course of action that is based on the same presumption: extremism is the problem, whether that of “American neoconservative fundamentalism” and its allies, Arab nationalist fundamentalism, Islamist fundamentalism, or, now, Israeli fundamentalism represented by the Likud party. And it is at this juncture in Haddad’s discourse that it becomes possible to connect the viewers with the moderate policy of both the Palestinian Authority and the Qatari state.

“Extremism is the enemy” is the premise that Haddad focuses the audience’s attention on in this broadcast of MTOP and in many others dealing with the Arab-Israeli conflict. In his introductory remarks to the January 1, 2002 broadcast, Haddad stresses condemningly the actions of an epitome of Israeli extremism, Ariel Sharon: “It is unanimously believed that the rightist Prime Minister in the Hebrew State would not

settle for anything short of increasing control over Arab territory and continuing his policy of settlement building, incursions, assassinations and homes demolition.” And again in his remarks to the episode of February 22, 2002, “The Palestinian bloodbath continues to flow daily since the beginning of the Intifada, due to the ferocity and arrogance of the Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and his military machine that targets them from air, sea and land.”

Holding firm to his argument that extremism, regardless of the national or religious identity of the extremist, is the problem, Haddad invites the viewers to see Palestinian “extremism” as part of the problem as well. Phrased as questions, the argument against Palestinian extremism unfolds in the following questions that Haddad raises in the introduction to the June 8, 2000 episode of MTOP:

Can the Palestinian president bring the Palestinian extremists under control and end the suicidal attacks? Are they [the suicidal attacks] the way to achieving victory? Or they in fact give Israel the pretext to kill more Palestinians as they also cause an ebbing of the international sympathy with them [Palestinians].

Anchored by Haddad’s use of the unflattering expression “suicidal attacks,” in reference to the anti-Israel military actions carried out by Palestinian “extremists,” and by his contention that such actions will be used by Israel as a pretext to retaliate and to kill more Palestinians, aside from the fact that such “suicidal attacks” will cause an ebbing of the international pro-Palestinian attitude, the questions he raises here are rhetorical. As such

they entail an argument against Palestinian extremism, and an attempt to identify the viewers with moderate Palestinian elements.¹³

The argument against extremism—Israeli or Palestinian, has a flipside: political moderation and non-violent means are the proper way of resolving the conflict. This alternative line of reasoning is what Haddad advances and defends in the episode of December 21, 2001, in which he and the guests deliberate on the best means of resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict. This is how Haddad introduces the subject:

Four decades have passed on the Palestinian resistance movement, [four decades of] carrying a rifle, hijacking airplanes and finally a campaign of suicidal/martyrdom-seeking attacks. Have all of this resulted in the return of Palestine? The only achievement that the Palestinian rifle has brought about was, perhaps, the gaining back of a sense of national identity and pride. Some argue that resorting to diplomacy, as what has taken place in Madrid and Oslo, has brought about a positive step on the long path of the Arab–Israeli conflict. In the current context, after the explosions that destroyed the financial and military symbols of the United States last September, concepts have been turned upside-down, and anti-occupation resistance, which is a legitimate right of the [occupied] people, is now viewed as terrorism from a Western standpoint. So, does that mean that capitulation is the Palestinians' only choice? Or there

¹³ This argument pervades Haddad's remarks throughout MTOP, as in December 21, 2001, January 25, 2002, March 1, 2002, and November 8, 2002.

may be another choice, peaceful struggle [*kifah silmi*], which can rally the international public opinion on moral ground behind the justness of the Palestinian cause and can snatch the political initiative out of Israel's hand. Does any Palestinian leader dare to take Gandhi's approach in non-violent struggle, or he fears that he will face Gandhi's fate? So far as Europe is concerned, why did the states of the European Union follow the American footsteps, demanding that Yasser Arafat must dismantle Hamas and Islamic Jihad movements and put an end to the Intifada? Do they wish to turn Arafat into Pe'tain and the Palestinian Authority into a Vichy regime which sided with the Nazi occupier against French resistance led by the late General de Gaulle?

And lastly, in light of the state of Arab incompetence, the regional and international balance of power and the change in the European stance, will the Palestinian rifle be deserted, at least till later time, awaiting a new wonder in wonderland?

Haddad's introductory remarks to this broadcast of MTOP are fully in line with his previous broadcasts, in terms of bolstering ultimately the Qatari policies without alienating the anti-establishment audience. Tactically, Haddad initially establishes his emotional unity with the majority of the viewers, as evidenced by his assertion of "the legitimate right of the occupied people" to resist occupation, by lamenting the failure of the Palestinian resistance groups in liberating Palestine, by disassociating himself from and condemnation of the policies of the United States and its European allies who wish to "dismantle Hamas and Islamic Jihad movements" and to "turn Arafat into Petain and the Palestinian Authority into a Vichy regime," as well as by his condemnation of "Arab

incompetence.” Yet again, the presumed unity between Haddad and the viewers veils an attempt to present his liberal views as an extension of their own beliefs and attitudes. However, looking through the veil, we find the same controversial premises that underpin his previous discourses on the conflict, as in his subtle departure from the viewers’ perception of the conflict as existential and their belief in armed resistance as viable, proper and fruitful. His departure from those popular premises is conveyed by his usual emphasis on the distinctiveness of the Palestinian identity (“the gaining back of a sense of national identity and pride”), as a prelude to suppressing the pan-Arab and Islamic dimension of the conflict and narrowing it down to a Palestinian-Israeli one. Also as in the previous broadcasts, Haddad’s common over-use of the “Palestinian” descriptor and the particular line-up of facts, events and individuals (Palestinian resistance movements, Madrid and Oslo, the Intifada, Arafat, Hamas and the Jihad) represent an integral part of his effort to reconstruct the narrative of the conflict in a way that renders “representation” of the Palestinian people and the amelioration of their living conditions (not liberation of occupied Palestine) as the problem. The representation theme is conveyed by Haddad’s narrative contrastively and analogically. Contrastively, while he emphasizes the failure of Palestinian armed resistance, he also brings to the audience’s attention the success of diplomacy (in Madrid and Oslo) in bringing about positive changes (the recognition of a Palestinian representative party and, later, the establishment of a Palestinian Authority). In other words, Haddad divides the viewers from their association of victory with liberation. He, alternatively, equates victory with success in establishing representative political institutions (the P.L.O. and the P.N.C. in the past and the Palestinian Authority in the present). The new definition of victory eliminates armed resistance as a proper

means of resolving the conflict and achieving victory. Simultaneously, the new definition of victory represents or leads to a tacit argument for a negotiated settlement, as evidenced by Haddad's depiction of Arafat as the Palestinian version of the great Gandhi. The analogy challenges the common perception of Arafat and the like-minded by many Arabs as the Vichy regime that collaborates with the occupier.

To minimize the possibility of alienating many viewers, Haddad presents the controversial premises of his assertion in the context of his condemnation of "Arab incompetence" and anti-Palestinian Western policies, as in the policies of the angry and wounded United States (as a result of the events of September 11) that equates resistance with terrorism, or the conformity of other Western actors with the policies of the United States who wish to turn Arafat's regime into a Vichy regime. While the condemnatory overtone of Haddad's remarks vindicates the viewers' beliefs and attitudes towards the United States and the West in general, the remarks, nonetheless, are a mere articulation of a political "circumstance" that renders armed resistance so costly, irrational and undesirable and the peace process as rational, pragmatic and fruitful. Put differently, the shift in audience identification characterizing Haddad's anti-establishment rhetoric is tantamount to an effort to induce a shift in the perception of the conflict in a manner that echoes the Arab and the Qatari stand on the conflict, as made clear by the following remark:

In the current context, after the explosions that destroyed the financial and military symbols of the United States last September, concepts have been turned upside-down, and anti-occupation resistance, which is a legitimate right of the [occupied] people, is now viewed as terrorism from a Western standpoint.

In this remark, as Haddad establishes his unity with the audience's belief in and support for the right of the occupied people to resist the occupier, he at the same time problematizes the question of resistance by anchoring it in a compelling circumstance that renders resistance costly and possibly fruitless. By doing that, Haddad indirectly anchors the argument against resistance in the viewers' own concerns and fears, thus triggering a new set of identification with the official Qatari position. Consequently, the unpopular peace negotiations and the acknowledgment of Israel's legitimacy arise as the "necessary evil" that the Palestinians must resort to lest they anger the wounded United States.

The same connection between the shift in audience identification and the shift in the perception of the conflict is also evidenced by the following rhetorical question that Haddad disguises as a real one:

And lastly, in light of the state of Arab incompetence, the regional and international balance of power and the change in the European stance, will the Palestinian rifle be deserted, at least till later time, awaiting a new wonder in wonderland?

Clearly, in light of the current circumstances that Haddad emphasizes, the answer he is soliciting is "Yes. The Palestinian rifle must be deserted."

Supported by analogy (Gandhi's example), the remainder of the questions that Haddad raises are rhetorical as well:

So, does that mean that capitulation is the Palestinians' only choice? Or there may be another choice, peaceful struggle [*kifah silmi*], which can rally the international public opinion on moral ground behind the justness of the

Palestinian cause and can snatch the political initiative out of Israel's hand. Does any Palestinian leader dare to take Gandhi's approach in non-violent struggle, or he fears that he will face Gandhi's fate?

In this passage, the rhetorical questions that Haddad raises are a manifestation of the following premise: peaceful struggle is not "capitulation," as commonly perceived by many viewers. By dividing the audience from this common perception, Haddad creates a need for an alternative perspective on peaceful struggle: it, he argues tacitly, is a continuation of the Palestinian people's struggle for a homeland. In his defense of the new perspective, Haddad links it to a) the audience's own awareness of the demands of a compelling international circumstance, prudence and morality, as evidenced by the second rhetorical question, and b) to the legacy of a great world figure—Gandhi, as evidenced by the last question. Looked at under this light, then, the rhetorical questions in the previous passage, as in all previous passages, represent a tacit argument against the worthiness of armed resistance as a means of ending the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Therefore, as in the previous broadcasts of MTOP, this broadcast of the program is an illustration of Haddad's use of anti-establishment discourse on the Arab-Israeli conflict to initially use the Palestinian people's aspiration for an independent state of their own as a means to bring an end to "their" *nakba*. However, by consistently anchoring his discourses in the aforementioned controversial premises, Haddad redefines the major elements of the Arab-Israeli conflict in a manner that echoes the typical standpoint advanced by the majority of Arab liberals who argue vehemently against armed resistance and for a peaceful resolution of the conflict. Given the congruence between Haddad's liberal views on the conflict and the position of the Qatari establishment, his

discourses on the conflict lead ultimately to granting the policies of Qatar a cover of rationality, pragmatism and even legitimacy.

In conclusion to this chapter, the analysis of the anti-establishment discourse of Haddad in MTOP suggests that the “More than One Opinion” that Haddad presents the viewers with in regard to the three issues—Arab nationalism, the war on Iraq and the Arab-Israeli conflict, leads ultimately to the same argument: extremism is the problem; extremism cannot be the answer. This implication unites Haddad’s discourses with the discourses of the other two popular programs—al-Qasim’s OD, Mansour’s WB. Therefore, what is most significant about the anti-establishment discourses of the three hosts is not the surface meaning of their discourses; rather, what is most significant is what they “do” with the anti-establishment discourse: to initially identify with the viewers’ radicalism for the sole purpose of deflecting it towards frameworks of interpretation that are conducive to or consistent with the policies and perspective of the Qatari state. This in turn implies that al-Jazeera is not an anomaly, in terms of the primary function it performs: to serve the interests of the state by identifying it with the beliefs, attitudes and aspirations of the disenfranchised Arab masses.

CHAPTER 6

Anti-Establishment Rhetoric, Pro-Establishment Argument

The anti-establishment stance of the alienated nomadic Arab audience is acknowledged not only by al-Qasim's OD, Mansour's WB and Haddad's MTOP, but by al-Jazeera as a whole. The leading Islamic scholar and a prominent leader of the Brotherhood, Dr. Yusuf al-Qaradawi, in the April 8, 2001 broadcast of his weekly talkshow "Religion and Life" (*al-sharee`a wa al-hayaat*), demonstrates that he is substantially one with the Arab audience as he cynically condemns the official policies of the Arab regimes and, by extension, the policies of Qatar towards the Arab-Israeli conflict and the peace process:

The process that they [the Arab regimes] call the 'peace process' or 'peaceful settlement' is nothing but capitulation. Therefore, I oppose the most frequently repeated proposition: 'Peace is our only strategic option.' What is the meaning of telling your foe that peace is the only reaction you have? Attack me, I will offer you peace still! Slay me, I will offer you peace still! Demolish my home and kill my children, I will offer you peace still!... We must, instead, declare that all options are open.

Offering an Islamic reading of the situation in Iraq shortly before the invasion of the country in 2003, al-Qaradawi deepens his identification with the Arab audiences whom he assures that "whoever falls in the course of resisting them [the invaders] is a martyr, by the Will of Allah" (Religion and Life, February 16, 2003).

Jamal Rayyan, presenting the April 15 broadcast of the daily talkshow "Palestinian People under Israeli Occupation," praises the heroism of a young Palestinian

girl and condemns the honorless and indifferent Arab leaders, as he asks rhetorically: “What has become of the Arab honor when a Palestinian young girl is forced to strap on an explosive belt while some of the Arabs [Arab leaders] have unstrapped the belt of pride, gallantry and valor?”

The same anti-establishment position is conveyed by Hassan Ibrahim in the context of the Iraqi problematic issue and the anticipated war of 2003. Ibrahim, presenting the March 1, 2003 broadcast of “The Weekly File” (*al-mallaff al-usbu`i*), and commenting on the Arab leaders’ stand on Iraq and the possible outcome of their summit meeting in Sharm el-Sheikh, identifies with the Arab viewers’ perception of the Arab leaders as conspirators, as he argues that “In fact, some of those [Arab leaders] who have come here wish that the war would not come to an end until Baghdad is in ruins.”

The previous examples, along with countless others, are a testimony to the widespread use of anti-establishment rhetoric, which constantly demonstrates to the alienated, marginalized nomadic viewer who yearns for acknowledgment, inclusion and representation that al-Jazeera as *a whole* is an anti-establishment, pan-Arab mass medium that “talk[s] his language,” to borrow the words of Kenneth Burke (1974, p. 55).¹

But the analysis of the anti-establishment discourses of al-Qasim’s OD, Mansour’s WB and Haddad’s MTOP has shown that talking the viewers’ language does not amount to enthymematic congruence between the speaker and the audience. On the

¹Burke, K. (1974). *A rhetoric of motives* (p. 55). Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

contrary, analysis of the three programs has recurrently shown that anti-establishment rhetoric re-arranges audience identification in a manner that ultimately supports the policies, interests and political perspective of the sponsoring state—Qatar, in three basic ways: by setting Qatar apart from other Arab regimes, depicting it as a novel, self-reforming, self-democratizing political system that has ushered in an era of free speech and free media, despite its controversial policies; detaching anti-establishment rhetoric from any radical ideology or program of action that could possibly threaten the established political order; and by advancing an alternative political ideology that is grounded in controversial premises such as the superiority of non-violence as a means of bringing about the desired political changes. Whether grounded in secular basis, as in the cases of al-Qasim and Haddad, or in religious basis, as in the case of Mansour, the controversial premises, along with the alternative ideology associated with them, bolster the interests and the political perspective of the Qatari state without infringing on the beliefs and attitudes of the viewers.

In light of the ability of al-Qasim, Mansour and Haddad to use anti-establishment rhetoric to indirectly identify the audience with the moderate policies and perspective of Qatar, do the other programs similarly offer radicalism to the masses while in fact serving the interests of the moderate Qatari state?

The answer is: “Yes, they do.” To show how, I will focus mainly on two programs that are comparable to OD, WB and MTOP, in terms of their popularity, format and longevity, Religion and Life” (RL, henceforth) and “al-Jazeera Pulpit” (JP, henceforth). Both programs, each in its own way, reconstruct the narratives on the Arab-Israeli conflict and the invasion of Iraq in a manner that ultimately connects the viewers

with the interests, policies and political perspective of the Qatari government, as the analysis of the discourses of both programs will show.

RL: Re-Interpreting Jihad

Although Dr. Yusuf al-Qaradawi is not the presenter of RL, he is the program's only and permanent guest (except for a slim minority of broadcasts). RL draws its importance from the extraordinary character of al-Qaradawi; he is a world-renowned jurist and Islamic clergyman and scholar, one of the Brotherhood's most influential leaders, who has been living in Qatar for four decades, and he is considered by many, rightly so, as one of the most influential figures in the Arab and the Islamic world at large.² Given his extraordinary status and character, when al-Qaradawi talks, whether from the pulpit of a mosque in his Friday sermons, or in RL, people, in tens of millions, listen. Thus his discourses in RL deserve to be carefully examined.

The discourses of al-Qaradawi in RL serve the interest of the sponsoring Qatari state in the same three ways that the discourses of OD, WB and MTOP serve the state (by setting apart as a new self-reforming Arab government, by arguing against all radical ideologies and actions, and, or, by arguing instead for an alternative moderate political ideology). In al-Qaradawi's case, the three functions of anti-establishment discourses are

²A 2008 Foreign Policy poll ranks al-Qaradawi number 3 in the list of the Top 20 Public Intellectuals worldwide. <www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2008/06/16/the-world_s_top_20_public_intellectuals>. See also Bettina Graf and Jakob Skovgaard-Petersen (Eds.)'s *The Global Mufti: The phenomenon of Yusuf al-Qaradawi* (2008), Columbia University Press, NY, NY. In it, al-Qaradawi is described as that unquestionably the most important Sunni Religious figure in the world today. In agreement, Marc Lynch (2009) describes al-Qaradawi similarly, contending that he is "probably the single most influential living Sunni Islamist figure, "Qaradawi's Revisions," <lynch.foreignpolicy.com/posts/2009/07/09/qaradawi's_revisions>.

manifest first and foremost by his constant efforts to either marginalize physical jihad (armed resistance), rendering it undesirable (*ghayr mustahabb*) from a religious standpoint, or to direct the viewers towards a particular interpretation of jihad favoring its non-violent types. In light of al-Qaradawi's distinct status as a prominent jurist, his discourses carry more in terms of their ability to grant the policies and political perspective of Qatar an Islamic cover.

Al-Qaradawi's discourses on the Arab-Israeli conflict and the invasion and occupation of Iraq are demonstrative examples of how a jihadic, anti-establishment discourse is disconnected from any radical ideology, be it Arab nationalist or Islamist, and is attached instead to an ideology that intersects with the policies and perspective of the sponsoring Qatari establishment.

Al-Qaradawi on the Arab-Israeli Conflict: Jihad is "fardd kefayah"

Whether driven by their sense of shared Islamic identity, shared pan-Arab identity or shared history and destiny, the majority of the Arab masses consider the war, or jihad, against Israel as the collective duty of all Arabs, not only the Palestinian people. No less popular than the previous belief is also a belief in the oppressive, indifferent attitude of many Arab regimes towards the conflict and even in their conspiratorial role in protecting the security of Israel. Therefore, many Arabs make a strong connection between jihad against Israel and jihad against the Arab regimes.

The surface meaning of al-Qaradawi's jihadic discourses on the Arab-Israeli conflict taps into the radical beliefs of the viewers and their jihadic attitudes towards Israel and even towards those rulers who stand in the way of jihad. However, at some point in his jihadic discourse, al-Qaradawi turns "jihad" around creating a new

framework for interpreting the Arab-Israeli conflict. Key to turning jihad around are two premises that al-Qaradawi advances: A) jihad against Israel, at least at the present time, is the sole responsibility of the Palestinian people alone—expressed Islamically as jihad as *fardd kefaya*, which exempts other Arab peoples from taking part in physical jihad against Israel, and B) taking a moderate, pro-peace process stance by conservative Arab rulers, such as the Qatari Emir, does not render them anti-jihad oppressive rulers, from an Islamic perspective; therefore, any jihadic acts against them, despite their unpopular policies towards the Arab-Israeli conflict, are in violation of Islamic teachings.

Al-Qaradawi's re-constructed Islamic narrative of the Arab-Israeli is discernable in numerous answers that he has given over the years in RL. Take the paragraph I have previously quoted for example:

The process that they [the Arab regimes] call the 'peace process' or 'peaceful settlement' is nothing but capitulation. Therefore, I oppose the most frequently repeated proposition: 'peace is our only strategic option.' What is the meaning of telling your foe that peace is the only reaction you have? Attack me, I will offer you peace still! Slay me, I will offer you peace still! Demolish my home and kill my children, I will offer you peace still!... We must, instead, declare that all options are open. Jihad and resistance ought to be an option, nay, the only beneficial option in dealing with the Zionist arrogance and hubris (RL, April 8, 2001).

Because of his close ties to the Qatari government, al-Qaradawi, like many Islamic jurists, is susceptible to the charge of being one of *fukahaa' as-sultan* (jurists at the service of the ruler)—a very common derogatory label that could undermine the

credibility of any clergymen. His explicit condemnation of the peace process, in this passage, and by insisting that “Jihad and resistance ought to be an option, nay, the only beneficial option...,” al-Qaradawi demonstrates to the viewers his jihadist, anti-establishment credentials. The paragraph, however, also reveals that his jihadist, anti-establishment stance, as manifest by his objection to the peace process, is merely grounded in a changeable *measure* not in a dogmatic principle, as made clear initially by his proposition that “all options must be open,” which include the peace process that he condemns. His anti-establishment stance becomes even more questionable, upon uncovering the implications of the rhetorical question through which he ridicules the peace process, “What is the meaning of telling your foe that peace is the only reaction you have?” The surface meaning of the rhetorical question depicts the notion of “peace as the only strategic option” as meaningless or irrational. The question, nonetheless, has an underlying meaning that emerges as a lackey of the type of rhetorical topic associated with the claim that al-Qaradawi makes through the rhetorical question, and the remainder of the passage—the topic of advantageous /disadvantageous. Using this rhetorical topic, al-Qaradawi argues that the peace process is irrational because it has failed to bring any benefits to the Palestinian peoples, as evidenced by the continuation of the hostile actions of the arrogant Israeli enemy. But describing the notion of peace as the only strategic option as meaningless, irrational and disadvantageous is not equivalent to judging it from an Islamic perspective as “*baatel*” (false), “*haram*” (forbidden) or “*makrooh*” (hated). For while describing the peace process as irrational justifies the viewers’ opposition to it, it, nonetheless, does not essentialize fighting against such policy and against the rulers who pursue it. On the other hand, once the peace process is described using any of the

Islamic terms (or rhetorical topics), fighting against it and against the rulers who pursue it becomes a matter of *wajeb* (obligation, obligatory), from an Islamic standpoint.

Therefore, by disengaging the “irrational” from the “*baatel*,” “*haram*” or “*makrooh*,” al-Qaradawi disengages any opposition to the peace process from an actual jihad against it and against the rulers who pursue it. Al-Qaradawi, in other words, is telling the viewers that it is acceptable to oppose the peace process as the only option, but it is not acceptable to react violently against it and against the Arab rulers who pursue it. In this sense, the previous paragraph is a mere demonstrative example of a non-violent type of jihad—*jihad ul-kalemah* (peaceful jihad by words), against Arab rulers who insist on pursuing “peace as the only strategic action” as the only proper type of jihad. And in the absence of an explicit legal prescription (*fatwa*) that considers the peace process as *baatel*, *haram* or *makrooh* (false, forbidden or hated, from an Islamic standpoint), al-Qaradawi’s narrative focuses the viewers’ attention on peaceful jihad by words as the only proper type of jihad.

Moreover, by using the rhetorical topic of advantageous / disadvantageous, al-Qaradawi, intentionally or not, gives a secular pragmatic view of the peace process an Islamic cover. By extension, al-Qaradawi reconciles the pragmatic policies of the Qatari government with the teachings of Islam. Therefore, whether al-Qaradawi expresses his agreement or disagreement with the Arab official stance in the previous paragraph is not the most important point; what is most important is the fact that his narrative on the peace process is anchored by the Qatari establishment’s own pragmatic line of reasoning, which grants it an Islamic cover. Subsequently, given that a pragmatic view is naturally grounded in surrounding facts and circumstances, judging the peace process as

disadvantageous by al-Qaradawi is not a permanent one, since new facts and circumstances may arise at any time. In this passage, for instance, if Israel becomes more humble and ceases to kill the Palestinians and to destroy their homes, the peace process could become advantageous.

Taking into consideration the implications of al-Qaradawi's jihadic overtone in the previous paragraph, his jihadic discourse neither infringes on the right of the state to take whatever initiative it sees fit and pragmatic with regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict, nor does it encourage any physical action against the state. Refraining from challenging the right of the state to embark on any policies it deems appropriate is discernable in nearly all of al-Qaradawi's jihadic discourses on the Arab-Israeli conflict. Take for example the remarks he gives in the November 26, 2000 broadcast of RL, in which he, to the pleasure of the audience, defends any anti-Israel jihadic actions in the clearest terms:

As for those who consider my call to support the intifada and to help those who are defending their land and their sacred places an act of terrorism, [to them I say], if [you] consider this terrorism, then, by Allah I say 'welcome, terrorists,' and I pray, 'O Allah, let me live the life of terrorists, and bear witness that I am a terrorist, and raise me in the Day of Judgment in the company of terrorists'.

In this paragraph, al-Qaradawi's discourse seems to identify him initially with the audience's own, direct, unproblematic conception of jihad, to fight by all means necessary against the Israeli aggressor and to oppose the Arab rulers. The key word in the previous sentence, however, is "seems." Without doubting the sincerity of al-Qaradawi and his complete support of the Palestinian people and his adamant stand against Israel, his jihadic discourse is premised on the ability of the Palestinian people to conduct jihad

against Israel on their own, as demonstrated by the Intifada. Therefore, other Arab peoples, from a religious standpoint, are exempt from taking actual part in physical jihad, and, are rather advised to limit themselves to non-violent forms of jihad, such as financial jihad, jihad by the word (*jihad ul-kalemah*), and, or, jihad by the heart (prayer).

Limiting the Arab viewers at large to one interpretation of jihad against Israel—non-violent jihad, is discernable in a different place in the same broadcast (February 26, 2000), in which al-Qaradawi speaks generically of jihad:

Fighting against those who invaded your land is a defensive and necessary jihad (*jihad idteraari*). I must fight back. Don't tell me otherwise! I must fight back.

This is why the *ulema* consider this type of jihad *fardd `aynn*; the obligatory duty of each one of the people of the country; they must be supported. If they are incapable [of jihad], then those who are [immediately] adjacent to them [must declare jihad, and if those are not capable, the duty falls on], those who are adjacent to them till the entire nation is included.

Initially, this paragraph testifies clearly to congruence between al-Qaradawi's perception of jihad against Israel and the audience's perception of the same issue; jihad against invaders is a legitimate right of the invaded people, therefore "I must fight back." However, in view of the fact that al-Qaradawi does issue a clear *fatwa* demanding that the Muslim populations surrounding Palestine (Egypt, Syria and Jordan) should take part in physical jihad against Israel, the pronoun "I" in "I must fight back" refers exclusively to Palestinian individuals living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Hence, his jihadic discourse in the previous paragraph also represents an argument for jihad against Israel as *fardd kefaya*. The flipside of this argument is an argument that limits, from an Islamic

perspective, the role of other Arab peoples to non-violent forms of jihad against Israel. The argument becomes explicit in al-Qaradawi's answer to a question raised by a viewer—Muhammad Hassan, who asks al-Qaradawi for a *fatwa*: “If I went to cross the borders with Palestine and, in the process, I clashed with Arab forces [protecting the borderlines with Israel] and died, would I be counted a martyr? To which al-Qaradawi replies: “No need, no need for this! Killing each other! Such issues should rather be resolved by mutual understanding. But to go [to cross the border] knowing that I will be stopped and killed, no, no, no need for that” (RL, April 8, 2001). Al-Qaradawi elaborates further on the role of non-Palestinian Arab populations, in the same broadcast, limiting their role

to shoring up this intifada, to bolstering it, to support it financially, which we call '*jihad ul-maal*', so as to help the Palestinian people overcome the economic sanctions, the policies of starvation and to arm themselves; [yes] they must arm themselves, and yes, we support Sheikh Zayid's call to provide our [Palestinian] brothers with weaponry.

In this part of the answer, al-Qaradawi does more than emphasizing *jihad ul-kalemah* (jihad by word) and *jihad ul-maal* (financial support); he also disengages jihad against Israel from jihad against the Arab rulers who support the peace process, as evidenced by his allusion to Shaikh Zayed's call to support and even to provide arms for the Palestinian people. This allusion represents an argument against radical Islamist groups like al-Qaeda which consider all Arab rulers as hypocrites and co-conspirators, and thus, must be rebelled against. At this juncture, al-Qaradawi's jihadic discourse

represents an argument against radical Islamism, as made clear by his answer to the following question that the presenter of RL has raised in the February 14, 1999 broadcast:

Al-Ansaari: The subject of violence targeting the ruling regimes occupies a great area of the literature of those [extremist groups] who claim that the ruling regimes have forced them to resort to violence. They [extremist groups] argue that the regimes are not governing according to God's Shari`a; they are responsible for preventing the implementation of Shari`a; they are secularizing both the state and the society; they are propagating anti-religion thoughts; they are responsible for opening the door for the enemies [of Islam] to come in to the land, corrupting it, having full control over it and stealing its resources. Based on that, it is their view that these regimes are infidel (*kafira*) and apostate and thus it is then a matter of religious duty and jihad in the path of Allah to rebel against them and to topple them. What is your opinion?

In answering the question, al-Qaradawi draws an analogy between current fundamentalist groups, such as al-Qae`da, and the *khawarej* (or *kharejite*), which, as al-Qaradawi explains, “was the first group to use violence against the rulers in the history of Islam.” The analogy is inextricably linked with the rhetorical topic of “Sunna”—the sayings, actions and instructions of the Prophet of Islam himself who, al-Qaradawi further argues “ordered us to fight back against them [kharejite] and to kill them,” despite their apparent religiosity and their strict adherence to Islamic rituals. The audience, here, is moved towards rejecting the legality of the notion of jihad against the Arab rulers, despite their unpopular policies towards the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Al-Qaradawi goes a step further in dismissing the perception of the Arab rulers as hypocrites or disbelievers in the following part of the answer:

It is not permissible to generalize in such matters. Not all the rulers are alike when it comes to their stance from religion or from Shari`ia. There are [among them] who declare Islam as the religion of the state and Shari`a as the primary source of laws and legislations. There are those who do implement many of the Shari`a laws. On the other hand, there are those [rulers] who fight against Islam and declare and adhere to secularism openly [such as Arab nationalist regimes and the Tunisian government]. Those are to be judged differently...

Al-Qaradawi concludes expressly that “not every [Arab] ruler is a disbeliever, not every [Arab] ruler is an apostate or oppressive that should be resisted and fought against.”

Thus, by dismissing the premise of hypocrisy or apostasy of the Arab leaders, al-Qaradawi is calling upon the viewers to abandon any militant or radical attitude towards the Arab rulers.

Together, the previous examples of al-Qaradawi’s jihadic rhetoric on the Arab-Israeli conflict point the viewers towards a specific interpretation of jihad against Israel. Al-Qaradawi presses on the minds of the viewers that physical jihad is the sole responsibility of the Palestinian people, and confines other Arab people to lesser, non-violent forms of jihad—*jihad ul-maal* (financial support) or *jihad ul-kalemah* (jihad with the word) and, or, *jihad ul-Qalb* (jihad with the heart). This perspective on jihad against Israel, despite some inconvenience to the political establishment, hardly poses any tangible threat to its policies. On the contrary, keeping in mind that Qatar is among a very slim minority of states that dares to criticize Israel (*jihad ul-kalemah*) and supports the

Palestinian jihadist groups such as Hamas financially (*jihad ul-maal*), al-Qaradawi's jihadist rhetoric is still in line with the policies and perspective of the Qatari ruler.

Just as al-Qaradawi's jihadist rhetoric on the Arab-Israeli conflict problematizes jihad against Israel, rendering it open for various interpretations, his jihadist, anti-establishment rhetoric on Iraq also problematizes jihad against the United States and its Arab allies, rendering it also open for interpretation, as the analysis below will show.

Al-Qaradawi on Iraq: War as a Divine Scheme

The answers al-Qaradawi gives in his last appearance in a pre-war broadcast of RL (February 16, 2003) and in his first appearance in a post-war episode of RL (February 16, 2003) are demonstrative of his stance on the problematic situation in Iraq before and after the invasion of the country in 2003. Whether in his pre- or post-war jihadist discourses on Iraq, al-Qaradawi depicts the situation in Iraq as part of a divine scheme. The notion of a divine scheme enables al-Qaradawi to re-write the narrative on Iraq, to redefine its causes and to re-assign various roles to various political actors. The reconstructed narrative reflects a fatalistic attitude towards the imminent war and, thus, invites the viewers to see physical jihad against the anticipated U.S. invasion of Iraq unnecessary (*ghayr mustahabb*), from a religious standpoint, as the analysis of al-Qaradawi's discourse in the last pre-war broadcast of RL will show:

In the pre-war broadcast of February 16, 2003, al-Qaradawi begins by commenting on the massive anti-U.S. policy, anti-war demonstrations that have swept Europe. Speaking with great admiration and gratitude, al-Qaradawi commends the activism of the European anti-war masses, as "in the two-million march in the streets of London, in which elderly individuals using their walking canes, some were 80 or 90 year-

old, pregnant women, women carrying two children on their shoulders have taken part in this anti-war demonstration.” Al-Qaradawi further argues that:

The whole world is rising up and down, screaming and yelling, while the Arab world is nearly completely silent; as silent as the dead in their graves, as if the matter did not concern us, as if we were not part of this world. What is the problem? Where are those Arab people?

Granted, the [Arab] peoples are oppressed and are not given the opportunity to express themselves freely; granted, the rulers are muffling their voices. This is all true, I therefore say that our first problem in the Arab and Islamic world is [absence of] freedom, more than it is a problem of implementing Islamic laws, because we cannot do that in such poisonous, deadly, suffocating climates that are imposed on us. We must feel the breeze of freedom, open our doors for it, let it blow on us so we can breathe it in as all other peoples do [...]. Where is the Arab world, where is the Arab nation, where is the Muslim nation?

In this paragraph, it is obvious that al-Qaradawi is using “freedom” as an organizing theme of his narrative in this broadcast of RL. The “freedom” theme sounds easily linkable with the beliefs and attitudes of the majority of the viewers, as it creates a certain expectation among them, suggesting that al-Qaradawi is about to give a religious license (*fatwa*) declaring that jihad against the United States is jihad for freedom of the Iraqi people and the Arab nation at large. This expectation created by al-Qaradawi through “freedom” never materializes. He, instead, turns “freedom” enthymematically around, and he uses it to depict the coming war as part of a just divine scheme that need not be interfered with.

The turning around of the “freedom” theme begins when al-Qaradawi takes it out of its initial context—the imminent war and worldwide anti-war sentiment and reaction, and situates it a different context; one in which al-Qaradawi tells a different story, with different villains, in different times and places. In its new context, “freedom” allows al-Qaradawi to redefine the forthcoming war in a manner that downplays the particularities of the Iraqi scene and marginalizes physical jihad against the foreign invaders of Iraq.

The turning around of “freedom” begins when al-Qaradawi makes an unexpected connection between the absence of freedom (which has led to the problematic situation in Iraq in the first place) and the practices of “Nasser’s regime of the 1950s and 60s.” Elaborating on this connection, al-Qaradawi argues by example contending: “Take for example, Egypt during the revolutionary days, the revolution of July [Nasser’s revolution], due to its despotism and tyranny, there was no Islamic awakening, no Islamic promulgation, no Islamic movement.” Nasser, the oppressive ruler who denies his population its divine right—freedom, according to al-Qaradawi, is, then, added to the list of enemies. Another enemy is “The Algerian government, which aborted the democratization of the country” in the early 1990s in the aftermath of the parliamentary elections that the Islamists won decisively,” is an enemy. The “Tunisian government,” with its anti-Islam “radical secularism” and its oppressive policies towards its Muslim population, is an enemy. Saddam Hussein, “the despot,” is an enemy. The United States, the primary “supporter of all despots” of the region, including Saddam Hussein himself, whom it “has provided with chemical weapons to use against Iran and the Kurds in Halabja,” is an enemy.

By redefining the conflict over Iraq as a conflict with forces that deny the Arab masses their political freedom, and by expanding the list of the nations' enemies, al-Qaradawi plots out a different battlefield; one that goes well beyond the geography of Iraq; one in which the Islamic nation is facing numerous enemies—Arab and foreign, whose main objective was, and is, to fight against Islam and deny Muslims, everywhere, what is naturally theirs—freedom and dignity. The expansiveness of the list of enemies, and the temporal and spatial vastness of the battlefield inspire shock and awe among the viewers who are then driven to ask rhetorically: how could we fight against these many enemies of freedom; how could we fight across time and space?" The natural answer that al-Qaradawi is eliciting is of course "We could not. Only God could and can fight such a battle." Therefore, by taking the original organizing theme—freedom, from its initial context in which it reflects the will of man (expressing anti-war stance) to a completely different context (fight against the enemies of freedom of yesterday and today), the war on Iraq becomes a manifestation of a divine scheme, one which God himself takes up the fight against evil forces. In this scenario, Iraq becomes a mere point in time and space at which God, in his infinite wisdom that escapes the comprehension of man, fights against the oppressors of the world—Arab and foreign, on his own terms. Concomitantly, while "freedom" in the early context grounds hope for salvation and liberation in human actions, freedom in its latter context grounds hope for salvation and liberation in God's actions, which may be incomprehensible but definitely just. In this sense, al-Qaradawi's jihadic, anti-establishment discourse inspires a fatalistic attitude among the viewers, and advises them implicitly to wait and behold God's Power!

War against Iraq as a divine scheme has another dimension to it pertaining to the role of the pro-U.S. Arab governments that, overtly or covertly, support the United States' plan to invade Iraq and to topple its regime. The other dimension of the scheme is manifest indirectly in the conspicuous absence of the pro-U.S., conservative states, such as Qatar, from God's scheme and from the list of enemies that al-Qaradawi enumerates (the Arab nationalist and, or, secular Arab regimes, such as Nasser, Iraq, Algeria and Tunisia). Therefore, since within the confines of a divine scheme, God, not the United States, not Qatar or any other Arab government, is the author and the major actor, the roles of other players could be interpreted as part of the divine script. In other words, God is only using other players—the United States and its Arab allies, to fulfill his will. Given the secondary role that al-Qaradawi assigns to the United States, Qatar and other conservative pro-U.S. Arab governments, Jihad against them becomes also a secondary issue, since God himself is fighting the battle against the oppressors.

Al-Qaradawi's attempt to problematize jihad against the United States and to render its meaning indeterminate has caught the attention of viewers such as the Islamist caller—Dr. Muhammad Ayyash. In an attempt to bring jihad against the United States back into the discussion, Ayyash, has politely accused al-Qaradawi of “deviating from the original topic of discussion,” reminding him, with a compelling example from the Qur'an itself, of the untimeliness and inappropriateness of raising controversial issues such as the Nasserite legacy, the Algerian anti-democracy measures, the radical secularism of the Tunisian government or the oppressive policies of “Hafiz al-Asad and his Ba`thist regime.” Ayyash, instead, reminds al-Qaradawi that “a time of war calls for a *fiqh* (jurisprudence) of war,” “at a time of war, “all efforts must be focused towards one

clear, central objective,” “to prop up the people’s will to fight” and prepare them for fending off the dangers of the coming war. Another caller—Salih al-Maqrahi, has keenly alluded to a well known Hadith which teaches that “the greatest form of jihad in the sight of Allah is a ‘word of truth’ told directly to an oppressive ruler.” The caller thus makes a plea to al-Qaradawi, “Brother, I want ‘a word of truth’ told to the Arab regimes.”

In his reply to such questions or criticism, al-Qaradawi gives generic answers in which he relentlessly suppresses the particular elements of the conflict, contending that “As I have previously stated, we [as Muslims] should oppose any war of aggression against any people; the Qur’an makes the call for jihad in support of and to rescue the oppressed people (*li-innqaadth al-mustadd’afeen*) obligatory. This assertion by al-Qaradawi is highly generic suggesting a calculated and measured effort to keep physical jihad against the United States in the margin of his narrative. The same implication re-emerges in a follow-up question by the presenter and the answer given by al-Qaradawi:

Abdullah: OK, assuming that [Iraq] has fallen under occupation, and [the United States] decides to stay, will it not be considered an occupation of the region?

And, consequently, will he who falls dead while fighting to kick the American occupier out be considered a martyr?

Al-Qaradawi: See, all agreements that were previously signed with the people of the region must be honored, because they were endorsed by the governments [of the region]. And we do not wish to light the fire of sedition (*fitna*) between the peoples and the governments. The people have the right to criticize those agreements, to criticize them in peaceful ways. Meaning that a journalist should be able to say we do not approve the accord signed by Qatar and the Americans,

or between Bahrain and the Americans or between Saudi Arabia and the Americans. He [the journalist] should be able to do that, but we should still honor those agreements. As for the currently anticipated American invasion, those one-hundred and fifty thousand troops coming from America—by sea, air and land, and the forty thousand British troops, this [invasion] should be resisted. And any Muslim who resists, rightly so, this invasion of the region, which lacks any international legitimacy or Arab consent, and falls dead in the course of resistance is a martyr, by the will of Allah.

Three aspects of al-Qaradawi's answer are noteworthy, so far as his effort to marginalize and restrict the meaning of jihad is concerned. The first aspect pertains to his distribution of blame over the Arab regimes. Interestingly, while al-Qaradawi shows no leniency whatsoever towards revolutionary and, or, secular Arab regimes whose policies, as he has previously argued, have, directly or indirectly, led to the current development, in this answer he assigns a lesser degree of blame to the governments that have signed agreements with the United States, allowing the American military presence in their countries (Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, for example). Al-Qaradawi does not view such agreements, no matter how unpopular and how highly consequential they are to the carrying out of the anticipated war, as a proper basis for declaring jihad against those Arab governments. Accordingly, al-Qaradawi focuses the viewers' attention on the need to express one's opposition to the policies of such Arab regimes in peaceful ways (*jihad ul-kalemah*, if possible; if not, *jihad ul-qalb*). Furthermore, since Qatar, in particular, allows the Arab population to express their dissent openly, Qatar benefits from al-Qaradawi's call for freedom of speech and his emphasis on it as the only way needed to

express opposition to state policies, since it is the only state that already allows and encourages free speech. Qatar, to say the least, emerges as the lesser evil.

Moreover, the previous answer also implies an attempt by al-Qaradawi to create a disconnection between those governments and the nation's "enemy," the United States. This implicit effort is associated with the most appealing jihadic moment in al-Qaradawi's answer; the point at which he declares that anyone who falls while resisting the invaders in Iraq per se is a martyr. Here, when al-Qaradawi is forced to deal with the particulars of the situation, he uses a jihadic moment in his discourse to argue indirectly against any acts of resistance against American forces anywhere outside Iraq. Al-Qaradawi, then, is not actually giving a jihad *fatwa*; rather, he is tacitly arguing that anyone who gets killed fighting the American forces outside Iraq is not a martyr, since his actions will result in a greater *munkar* (harm); that is, a bloody "*fitna*" within the Muslim's ranks.

The ability of a divine scheme as an interpretive framework to enable the broadcasters to relate to the Qatari interests is further manifest in the answer al-Qaradawi gives to the last question raised by the host: "What is required from the peoples, words or actions?" To which al-Qaradawi replies:

What is required from us is only that which we can do; to say 'no' to this war, and to appeal to our rulers to take a good stance, and to boycott American goods, and to help our brothers in Iraq to the best of our ability—to pray by the tongue and the heart that Allah grants them victory over their enemy, and turn the plot of the plotters against them and to turn around their poisonous spears. O Allah, amen!

Once more, when al-Qaradawi is forced to deal with the particulars of the Iraqi situation, his narrative reflects a measured effort (“that which we can do”) to relegate jihad against the United States to its least threatening forms, jihad with the word—“to say ‘no’ to the war,” financial jihad—“to boycott American goods,” and jihad with the heart—“to pray by the tongue and the heart” for the victory of the Iraqi people. Premised on the inability of the Arab peoples or the Arab governments to engage the “plotting” United States in physical jihad, al-Qaradawi’s argument shifts the focal point of his identification with the viewers; from identifying with their unproblematic perception of physical jihad against the enemies of the nation—American or Arab, as the duty of every capable member of the nation to a form of a highly regulated, highly restricted form of jihad in which God—“the best of plotters,” not man, is the primary actor.

While “freedom” was the organizing theme of the pre-war episode, “hope” is the primary theme anchoring al-Qaradawi’s narrative on post-war Iraq in the broadcast of May 25, 2003. Having been “shocked and awed” by the war and its outcome, the Arab masses went through a state, which the presenter of this broadcast describes accurately as “a state of frustration, perplexity and bewilderment.” Addressing these masses, al-Qaradawi gives them what they exactly need, hope, which he conveys through anecdote, four anecdotes to be exact, that ultimately end in the victory of the Islamic nation over its enemies.

But al-Qaradawi does with “hope” what he has previously done with “freedom.” He, firstly, uses it as a catalyst for a divine scheme, and, secondly, disconnects it [hope] from anti-occupation jihadic human actions and attaches it instead to God’s will and

actions, which, once again, problematizes and marginalizes the question of physical jihad against the United States.

Key to problematizing and marginalizing physical jihad are two interlocking presuppositions that al-Qaradawi advances: the helplessness of the Arab and Islamic peoples and God's direct involvement which will ultimately result in victory over the oppressors.

The presumption of a helpless Arab and Islamic nations is conveyed in the following answer in which al-Qaradawi comments on the outcome of the war:

The Islamic and Arab peoples were enraged by this matter [the Arab governments' support and facilitation of the U.S. invasion of Iraq]. But, regrettably, I say, there is very little that peoples can do. They can cry out [in condemnation], protest, take to the streets and demonstrate. [That is all], what else can people do?

In this cathartic answer, al-Qaradawi limits the viewers to two non-violent types of jihad against the United States and its Arab allies—jihad by the word and jihad by the heart (to pray and to have patience), that pose no or little threat to the establishment. Closely intertwined with this line of thinking is an important aspect of the “divine scheme” theme, by which al-Qaradawi's depicts the war on Iraq as a war between two oppressors—the government of United States and the Ba`thist Iraqi regime. This depiction is discernable in a contention and a prayer that al-Qaradawi makes in this broadcast: “The oppressor is Allah's Sword on earth; he punishes with it and then he breaks it.” Al-Qaradawi, thus, prays “O Allah, busy the oppressors with the oppressors and pull us out from among them safe and sound.” By emphasizing the role of God as the

major actor who takes up the fight against the oppressors, and limiting people to prayer, al-Qaradawi is indirectly arguing that physical jihad against the United States and its Arab allies is unnecessary.

The same tacit argument re-emerges in the remainder of his answers as a concomitant of attaching the hoped-for victory to God's will and action, as evidenced by a more than 1000-word answer that al-Qaradawi gives, when asked by the presenter about similar events or tragedies that the Islamic nation has had to go through and endure. In reply, al-Qaradawi tells four stories, the stories of the Trench Battle (*ghazwat ul-khandaq*), 627 A.D., of the Desertion (or Apostasy) Battles (*huroob ar-riddah*), 632-633 A.D., of the Crusades (the fall of Jerusalem), 1099 A.D., and of the Mongols (the fall of Baghdad), 1258 A.D.. Each of the four anecdotes sharpens the perception of the war on Iraq as a divine scheme, and bolsters the perception of victory as the outcome of divine intervention, rather than physical jihad (or anti-occupation armed resistance):

This event [the fall of Iraq under occupation] is not unprecedented. Three or four precedents that the [Muslim] nation has gone through in its history are worth recalling. The first took place during the lifetime of the Messenger [Muhammad], peace be upon him, when Medina was besieged by the tribes of Quraysh, Ghatfaan and their allies, who surrounded Medina just like a bracelet surrounds a wrist, as they say.

In this portion of the answer, the viewers' hope for ultimate victory and divine justice is the point identification that al-Qaradawi emphasizes as he reminds them of one of early Islam's most famous battles, the Trench Battle of 627 A.D.. Led by Prophet Muhammad himself, the Muslim nation of Medina, significantly outnumbered and going through near

famine, found itself encircled by enemies from without (the tribes of Quraysh, Ghatfaan and many others) and from within (the Jewish tribes living in Medina and hypocritical Muslims). The atmosphere of the battle is described dramatically in Qur'anic verses part of which al-Qaradawi quotes:

Behold! They came on you from above and from below you,” meaning that Quraysh and Ghatfaan and then the treacherous Jews living in the Maeina, thus became surrounded from without and from within, “Behold! They came on you from above and from below you, and behold, the eyes became dim and the hearts gaped up to the throats, and you imagined various (vain) thoughts about Allah. In that situation were the believers tried: they were shaken as by a tremendous shaking” [33: 10-11]. . . .”

In terms of the nation's enemies, Arab and foreign, and of the state of fear, doubt and near despair, the Trench Battle is quite analogous to the events in Iraq. In this sense, the anecdote foretells the doubt-filled yet hopeful audience of the inevitable victory to-come. The anecdote however entails a subtle turning point that enables al-Qaradawi to shift his identification to another point: as told by the Qur'an and retold by al-Qaradawi, the anecdote gives the viewers a demonstrative example of victory as the fruit of a divine intervention, rather than actual fighting. For in this famous battle, God lures the disbelievers to Medina and paves the way to their defeat, tests the faith and endurance of the believers, and sorts out and uproots the hypocrites from among the believers, just as he sorted out the hypocrites (Arab and Jews) and uprooted them from Medina. In the absence of a *fatwa* by al-Qaradawi calling explicitly for jihad against the United States in Iraq, the anecdote detaches victory from human will or physical jihad, as al-Qaradawi

further explains: “At certain times, . . . when you are physically incapable, fate intervenes directly . . .” as it did in the Battle of Khandaq, in which God saves the believers the evil of fighting the disbelievers and “sent against them a hurricane that ye saw not” [Qur’an, 33:9] . . . “And Allah turned back the Unbelievers for (all) their fury: no advantage did they gain: and enough is Allah for the Believers in their fight. And Allah is full of Strength, Able to enforce His Will” [Qur’an, 33: 25]. The anecdote, thus, enables al-Qaradawi to shift the viewers’ hope for victory as a concomitant of physical jihad carried out by the nation against the United States and its Arab allies in Iraq to victory as a concomitant of a yet-to-come divine intervention.

The second anecdote, pertaining to the Wars of *Riddah* (Apostasy or Desertion, 632-633A.D.), which were waged by the first of the Caliphs—Abu Bakr, in response to mass desertion of Islam by a great majority of Arab tribes following the death of Muhammad. This is how al-Qaradawi presents the anecdote in the same answer:

The second catastrophe in the history of Islam was the *Riddah* catastrophe. After the death of the Messenger, peace be upon him, all of the Arab tribes have deserted [Islam], except for the tribes of Medina, Mecca and Ta’ef. All tribes have deserted and followed false prophets. Each group had its own prophet, Musaylama al-Kadthaab for Bani Haneefa, a woman prophetess—Sujaah bint al-Hares, Tulayha al-Asadi, al-Aswad al-`Ansi. All of those false prophets were followed by their groups out of sheer tribal bigotry. They [different tribes] used to say: we prefer a lying prophet from Rabi`a over a truthful prophet from Mudar [that is to say, Muhammad]; a prophet from among us, false or not, is better than the truthful prophet of Mudar. It was a true catastrophe.

Al-Qaradawi does with the story of the *Riddah* Wars what has previously done with the story of the Trench Battle: he uses the anecdote to initially tap the viewers' firm belief in divine involvement in order to influence the attitude of the audience towards jihad against the nation's enemy as an obligatory act. In this particular anecdote, al-Qaradawi emphasizes another basic aspect of the divine scheme: when Muslims desert their faith and follow false prophets, God intervenes directly to ascertain the purity of faith by uprooting false prophets and their followers. Al-Qaradawi, through this anecdote, is implicitly raising the following question in the minds of the viewers: Could God be using the United States and its allies to uproot one of the modern-age false prophets—Saddam Hussein, whose regime, according to al-Qaradawi,

is responsible [for the war], to a great extent, because it gave [the United States] the excuses [it needed] to invade. It became also clear that there are massive graves [in Iraq]. Thousands and hundreds of thousands of people were killed.

This is what we always hated about the despotic, bloody Ba`thist rule....

Saddam Hussein emerges as a false prophet who, like Nasser, has rallied the Arab masses around a new false secular dogma—Arab nationalism, which al-Qaradawi describes as a new form of “tribal bigotry,” instead of rallying them around Islam. The viewers are thus nudged to see the war on Iraq under a different light: it is a war in which God intervenes directly in order to rid the Islamic nation of a false prophet, just as God has rid the Muslim nation of the false prophets in the *Riddah* Wars. In this context, the viewers are encouraged to re-assess their perception of the United States, which now arises as an oppressor that God uses in order to purify the Muslim nation. Consequently, the anecdote is capable of downplaying physical jihad rendering it unnecessary against the secondary

actor—the United States, which simply emerges as God’s sword that has uses, and which he will soon break.

Continuing his effort to detach the viewers’ hope for victory from any direct jihadic acts against the United States and to attach it instead to God’s scheme, al-Qaradawi ends with the stories of the Crusades and the Mongols:

The third catastrophe is the catastrophe of the *Frenja* Wars (the Crusades), when people came from Europe and invaded the East. Nine Crusades have snuck in taking advantage of the Muslims’ inattention, disunity and weakness; taking advantage of the frivolous, cowardly and weak rulers, signing treaties with them, pitting them against each other and establishing kingdoms and emirates that lasted two centuries. Al-Aqsa Mosque [in Jerusalem] was captive for ninety years, till God prepared men like `Imaduddeen Zinki, Nuruddeen Mahmud and Salahuddeen al-Ayyubi [Saladin] who liberated al-Aqsa Mosque. Before the Crusades have come to an end, another invasion [the Mongols] came from the East, like an impotent wind that leaves nothing in its path but ruins. They were a group of nomads, a new unstoppable ascending power that began attacking the extremities of the Islamic state....

Besides strengthening the perception of the war on Iraq as a divine scheme, the third and fourth anecdotes are also capable of causing a shift in the viewers’ jihadic attitude in one or more of the following three ways: first, by undermining any need for an immediate jihadic action, in view of the fact that it took the Muslims “ninety years” to liberate Jerusalem from the Crusaders, as al-Qaradawi asserts; second, by disassociating victory from the act of physical jihad itself; after all, the Mongols story did not end in

their defeat. It rather ended in their conversion to Islam and becoming the builders of a new Islamic state; third, physical jihad, al-Qaradawi emphasizes, requires a God-prepared, God-guided Muslim leader, like Saladin or Qutuz, under whose banner the nation should fight. In the absence of such God-guided leaders, jihad will be futile. This is a presupposition that al-Qaradawi stresses in a different place from which he assures a caller that victory will come “when an Arab or Muslim nation of institutions emerges, and when there arises a leadership like that of al-Mu`tasseem, who, when a distressed woman cried out, ‘O Mu`tasseem!’ answered ‘O sister, I heard you!’ and prepared armies [in answering her call].”

By stressing the forthcoming divine intervention, al-Qaradawi does with “hope,” the organizing theme of the post-war discourse, what he has previously done with “freedom,” the organizing theme of the pre-war discourse: by initially connecting with the viewers’ hope for victory over the nation’s enemy and the liberation of Iraq, al-Qaradawi, simultaneously, presents the audience with Islamic premises—conveyed anecdotally, that are capable of shifting the viewers’ perception of jihad against the United States as an obligatory act. By doing that, he deflects the viewers’ jihadic attitudes towards channels that are the least threatening to the policies and perspective of the Qatar state which sees anti-occupation resistance as unnecessary.

Analysis of al-Qaradawi’s jihadic discourses on the Arab-Israeli conflict and the situation in Iraq before and after the war reveals a consistent effort to deflect the viewers’ pro-jihad against Israel attitude by offering them a new framework of interpretation that falls in line with the policies of Qatar towards the Arab-Israeli conflict. Also, the implication of the analysis of al-Qaradawi’s jihadic discourses reveals that the discourses

of al-Jazeera in general, whether anchored in secular or religious precepts, are consistently conducive to arguing against radical ideologies and actions.

The analysis of the political discourses of JP will offer further textual evidence of the ability of the anti-establishment discourses to embrace the radicalism of the viewers, while, simultaneously, bolstering the moderate policies of the Qatari state.

JP: Redefining Armed Resistance

Just as the jihadist discourses of al-Qaradawi in RL dovetail with the discourses of OD, WB and MTOP in terms of advancing the interest of the Qatari state in three basic ways, so do the anti-establishment discourses of several presenters of JP. But while al-Qaradawi's discourses are identical to Mansour's discourses in WB in terms of providing the policies of Qatar with Islamic cover, the anti-establishment discourses of JP are closer to the discourses of OD and MTOP in terms of providing Qatari with a cover of legitimacy based on secular basis, such as prudence, pragmatism, democratic reforms and free speech. JP also represents a genre of programs that broadcast daily in special cases, such as in the wake of seminal events (like the Intifada and the 2003 War on Iraq).³ In

³ PPUIS began airing daily on April 1, 2002. Although short-lived, PPUIS, in format and substance, is a mere extension of the "al-Jazeera Pulpit" (*minbaru al-jazeera*). But whereas the latter is a forum for discussing a variety of topics, PPUIS is devoted specifically to developments in occupied Palestine as a result of an increase of Israeli hostilities towards the Palestinian population of the West Bank during the prime-ministership of Ariel Sharon. Like other programs of this genre and other genres, PPUIS is interactive. However, the degree of interactivity here is far higher than other programs, since the primary guest speakers are the viewers themselves who call in to express their views live and with an unprecedented level of freedom of expression. Moreover, PPUIS (as well as its mother-program—al-Jazeera Pulpit) is presented by different hosts (Muhammad Kraishan, Jamal Rayyan, Jumana Nmoor, Faisal al-Qasim, Hafedth Mirazi). In this sense, the uncovering of any common lines of reasoning or common arguments that anchor

this sense, JP becomes more significant in terms of its ability to normalize, through daily repetition, alternative frameworks of interpretation that are conducive to the policies and interests of the Qatari state.

A reading of the anti-establishment political discourses of JP reveals the presence of a tacit argument against political violence. Whether it is inspired by Arab nationalism or by radical Islamism and whether it targets Israeli forces in Palestine or American forces in Iraq, armed resistance is depicted by the presenters of JP as harmful, irrational or both, as the analysis below will show.

The Arab-Israeli Conflict: The Peace Process as “Necessary Evil”

No presenter of JP argues expressly for the legitimacy of Israel, the illegitimacy or baseness of armed resistance against Israeli occupation or the rationality of a peaceful settlement of the Arab-Israeli conflict. The presenters, however, subtly argue that the peace process, no matter how unpopular it is, is the only means available to the Arab peoples. The peace process, put differently, is depicted by the presenters in a manner starkly similar to how it is presented by the Arab establishment in general, as “a necessary evil.”

A case in point are the anti-establishment discourses of one of JP’s offspring, the daily, live and interactive program “Under Siege: The Palestinian People under Israeli Siege” (*tahta al-hisaar: al-sha`ab al-filesteeni tahta el-hisaar al-israa`ili*) (PPUIS,

the introductory remarks of the program’s various hosts says more about the network than it says about any of the program’s hosts.

henceforth). The program began airing on April 1, 2002, in response to the escalation of anti-Palestinian actions during the prime-ministership of Ariel Sharon.

The name of the program itself deserves a critical pause as it signals an initial effort to redefine the conflict and, consequently, to problematize armed resistance against Israel. The effort is implied by, firstly, focusing the attention of the viewers on the plight of “the Palestinian people under siege,” rather than on Israeli occupation of Palestinian land and the existential nature of the conflict. Expressed in different words, occupation of historical Palestine is no longer the organizing theme of the narrative of the Arab-Israel conflict as offered by the presenters of PPUIS; rather, the ongoing and unbearable suffering of the Palestinian people under “siege” is. As a result, the name of the program—PPUIS, creates in the minds of the viewers a new “urgency,” one that is considerably detached from the historical and ideological bases of the conflict, and, alternatively, attached directly to the facts of “the here and now.”

Given the Arab viewers’ genuine concern with and anxiety over the conditions of their Palestinian brethren, and that the facts of the here and now are neither conducive to an all-out war against Israel nor to effective armed resistance against it, the urgency implied and created by PPUIS triggers a need for any political measures, no matter how undesirable they may be, that can lead to alleviating the suffering of the Palestinian people, here and now. Therefore, in the context of the newly reconstructed narrative on the Arab-Israeli conflict as implied by the name PPUIS, base and unpopular political measures that are necessary to bringing an immediate ending to the suffering of the Palestinian people (measures like holding negotiations with the enemy) are detached from the needs and interests of the “base” Arab regimes and attached directly to the

pressing and immediate needs of the “noble” Palestinian people. Negotiation, and by extension the peace process itself, becomes the “necessary evil.”

The new narrative of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and all that it implies, is discernable in almost all of the anti-establishment sounding discourses of PPUIS. Take for an example the introductory remarks of Jamal Rayyan to the broadcast of April 15, 2002:

Is it the destiny of the Palestinian people to go through one massacre after another? Why does the world turn a blind eye on the most heinous massacre of the twenty-first century? How sensible is it [for others] to expect the victim to placate the murderer at the expense of his [the victim's] own blood and sacrifices? Why does Israel continue to hide and deny the presence of mass graves containing the corpses of [Palestinian] martyrs' and to even dispose of them in the sewers? Why is the Palestinian side being pressured [to compromise] while Israel debases and humiliates civilians and prisoners in the most monstrous ways that clearly violate all international traditions and norms? Where is the world conscious from all of this? But before all of that, what has become of the Arab honor when a Palestinian young girl is forced to strap on an explosive belt while some of the Arabs have unstrapped the belt of pride, gallantry and valor? Where is this al-Mu`tassem of the twenty-first century?

The surface meaning of Rayyan's anti-establishment remarks is manifest repeatedly in each of the rhetorical questions that he raises in this introduction. The questions allow him to validate and tap into the viewers' sense of rage over the brutality of the Israeli enemy and the indifferent attitude of the Arab leaders, as he simultaneously

taps into the viewers' profound sadness, concern and anxiety over the miserable conditions that the Palestinian people have to endure. Thus Rayyan's narrative is mainly epideictic and intensely emotional, as evidenced by its climactic ending—the powerful imagery of a Palestinian schoolgirl who is forced by the actions of the brutal Israeli enemy and the honorless Arab leaders to end her life honorably.

Rayyan's introductory remarks, however, offer a classical example of how the narrative of the Arab-Israeli conflict has been reconstructed around one primary organizing theme—the ongoing, unbearable suffering of the Palestinian people; a theme that Rayyan emphasizes in every rhetorical question that he raises. Both the rhetorical questions and the theme embedded in them do more than enabling Rayyan to tap into the fears and anxieties of the audience; they also allow him to elaborate on the tangible facts of the present circumstance. Facts such as the brutality of the Israeli enemy, the indifferent attitude of the Arab regime, unjust world community which pressures the victimized Palestinian people to compromise even more and to accommodate the demands of their victimizer—Israel. This body of facts indicates urgency. Since Rayyan is not using the facts that he emphasizes relentlessly to mobilize the Arab masses against Israel and the Arab establishment, the facts become tangible manifestations of a human tragedy that requires immediate resolution. In the context of an ever-unfolding human tragedy, the rhetorical questions that Rayyan raises in this broadcast acquire another function, They, indirectly, define to the audience what the needed resolution is; to put an end to the suffering of the Palestinian people, to put an end to the brutality of Israel and to hold it accountable, and to awaken world conscious. Despite the legitimacy and nobility of such objectives, they fall significantly short of providing a resolution based on

the “givens” of the past—an existential conflict that can be brought to an end by eliminating the aggressor. In the absence of any allusion to the given facts of the past, and in the absence of a call to rally the Arab peoples against their regimes and against Israel, Rayyan’s anti-establishment discourse in this broadcast is detached from any radical ideology or action. In this sense, the anti-establishment discourse represents a tacit argument for any political measure that is capable of ending the suffering of the Palestinian people. The peace process becomes this measure, this necessary evil that the viewers should embrace.

The anti-establishment discourses of Jumana Nmoor, in the broadcasts of May 23 and May 28, 2002, are hardly distinguishable from Rayyan’s discourses, in terms of using the same organizing theme—the tragic condition of the Palestinian people, and the implications of this theme—to redefine the peace process by detaching from the interests of the Arab regimes, and attaching it instead to the pressing needs of the Palestinian people.

Here are Nmoor’s introductory remarks to the May 23, 2002 episode of PPUS:

With the continuing of [Palestinian commando] operations inside Israel and the escalation of appeals—from Palestinian and international quarters, to put an end to them, Israel still appears unconcerned with what causes such operations.

What is even more dangerous now is [Israel’s] efforts to exorcise the massacres committed by the Israeli military out of the Arab and international memory.

Who among us does not remember the Jenin massacre? Who can ever forget the siege of the Church of the Nativity and the legendary steadfastness of the Palestinians inside it, which has ultimately led to an agreement that resulted in

the expulsion [by Israelis] of a Palestinian group in clear violation of all international laws prohibiting the expulsion of the populations of the occupied territories? Will the coming days prove that the Arab and international memory is [actually] thinner than the Palestinian blood which colored the occupied soil?

As in Rayyan's case, Nmoor's introductory remarks emphasize the human tragedy theme; a heartless, calculating, brutal, Israeli aggressor inflicting pain on helpless Palestinian victims, under the watchful yet unconcerned eyes of the official Arab and world circles. The human and ethical dimension of the tragedy echoes and validates the pain, anger, shock and disbelief of the great majority of the "spectators," the Arab viewing audience. But just as in Rayyan's case, Nmoor's narrative suppresses the ideological, historical aspects of the tragedy and relegates them to the margin of the narrative. By suppressing such aspects, the narrative becomes a manifestation of an effort to reconfigure the viewers' identification with the plight of the Palestinian people; a plight which is now grounded mainly in ethical, not ideological terms. Furthermore, the narrative, in view of the present, ongoing and unbearable suffering of the Palestinian people, stresses "immediacy" as a proper basis for envisioning and judging any current policy towards the Arab-Israeli conflict. In this context of understanding, the narrative identifies the viewers with any immediate measure, no matter how unpopular it may be, that may alleviate the pains of the Palestinian people.

Other aspects of Nmoor's narrative also provide the viewers with alternative bases for judging policies pertaining to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Notice, for instance, how Nmoor's first sentence can be initially read as a condemnation of the Israeli attitude of indifference and its disregard of the legitimate concerns and aspirations of the

Palestinian people, while at the same time, it also suggests to the viewers that there is no consensus over the Palestinian anti-Israel actions of resistance even within Palestinian circles. The proposition is true to some extent; within certain circles, mainly official ones (at the Palestinian and Arab levels), there is opposition to such actions. The assumption, however, is exaggerated, as any observer of the celebratory and supportive mood in the Arab street at large in reaction to such actions of resistance would testify. In this sense, by presenting anti-occupation actions of resistance as a controversial matter even within Palestinian circles, Nmoor, without assaulting the idea of armed resistance, renders the belief in it a matter of opinion rather than principle. This is the juncture at which we begin to discern an enthymematic turn; for whereas a perception of armed resistance as a matter of principle requires a program of action aiming at challenging and altering current circumstances in favor of a given principle, a perception of armed resistance as a matter of opinion requires a program of action based on the surrounding circumstances. By attaching the perception of the conflict to present facts and circumstance, the audience is subtly invited to develop a more pragmatic view of the conflict; a view by which any political program of action will be judged based on its outcome, and, or, consequence. In this sense, Nmoor's anti-establishment narrative is anchored in the same line of reasoning that anchors the Arab official narrative that depicts a peaceful settlement as a necessary evil dictated by unforgiving local and international circumstances.

Another feature of Nmoor's narrative that brings about a subtle shift in understanding the Arab-Israeli conflict and in judging policies pertaining to resolving it is manifest in the remainder of Nmoor's remarks in which she emphasizes what Israel "does." For instance, while Nmoor initially identifies the viewers' perception of Israel as

an inhumane, criminal entity, she, throughout the passage, is actually defining Israel in terms of what it *does* as opposed to what it *is* (an existential enemy with which co-existence is not possible). In the absence of any ideological or historical points of reference from the Nmoor's account, redefining Israel in terms of its actions identifies the viewers indirectly with an alternative way to resolve the conflict: the resolution of the conflict can be attained when Israel ceases and desists from the commission of such criminal actions that it inflicts on the Palestinian people. In other words, Nmoor's narrative indirectly plots out a future scenario in which a reformed Israeli "criminal" can be integrated into the Arab world.

Reforming the Israeli criminal as a resolution of the conflict is further implied by Nmoor's narrative through her appeal to world community to hold Israel responsible for its criminal actions in accordance with the International law. Just as in Rayyan's appeal to world conscious, Nmoor's appeal to international community conveys a belief in the appropriateness of the international law as a point of reference and a framework of resolving the conflict. Given that the international law acknowledges the legitimacy of Israel and calls upon the establishment of a Palestinian state, Nmoor's narrative, by extension, departs from the radical precepts of Arab nationalism and Islamism which still maintain a belief in the illegitimacy of Israel. Thus, once again, while the theme of a suffering Palestinian people and an ongoing human tragedy stresses urgency, the theme, simultaneously, represents an effort to move the audience towards a particular understanding of the conflict; an understanding that lends credence to peace negotiations, no matter how unpopular they may be.

The analysis of the discourses of al-Qaradawi, Rayyan and Nmoor on the Arab-Israeli conflict reveals that the three hosts, whether in the name of sacred or secular facts, use anti-establishment rhetoric to problematize the concept of armed resistance, and to detach the peace process from the policies of the Qatari state. As a result, the anti-establishment discourses of the three hosts create a mental atmosphere in which the audience is moved towards a pragmatic understanding of the conflict and away from a principled understanding, regardless of the unpopularity of the former and the nobility of the latter.

Analysis of the anti-establishment discourses of JP on Iraq reveals similar implications. Just as in the discourse of al-Qaradawi in RL, the pre-war discourses of JP represent a tacit argument for the inevitability and unstoppableness of the war, thus pushing the viewers towards a fatalistic stance from the war. Also as in the discourses of al-Qaradawi, the post-war discourses of JP represent an implicit argument against anti-occupation armed resistance. Thus, in its pre- and post-war anti-establishment discourses, JP creates a need for an alternative understanding of the conflict and how it ought to be resolved. Unsurprisingly, the alternative framework falls enthymematically in line with Qatari policies, without appearing to endorse them, as the analysis below will show:

JP: The Iraq War as “Unique Opportunity”

In the pre-war discourses, the presenters on JP develop a two-fold theme that interlocks their discourses with the beliefs and attitudes of the majority of the Arab viewers: that many Arab regimes are either indifferent or even conspiring against Iraq, and the United States is an aggressor that is resolved to destroy Iraq and to topple its regime at any cost. The theme, at face value, allows the presenters to demonstrate their

disunity with the political establishment and, conversely, their unity with the majority of the viewers. However, the presenters' narrative on the war, in a manner similar to Haddad's and al-Qaradawi's, lacks any call for anti-establishment, anti-war action on the part of the Arab masses. Therefore, in light of what is missing from the narrative, the organizing theme can be turned enthymematically around by the presenters, signaling to the viewers a fatalistic perspective on the coming war. The fatalistic attitude arises from the use of the organizing theme as a premise that generates the following tacit argument: given the Arab regimes' inabilities, indifferent attitudes, and, or conspiratorial roles, given also the United States' massive power, capabilities and resolve to destroy Iraq and to topple its regime, there is nothing that the Arab masses can do to prevent or stop the war, or to influence its outcome. This argument, in turn, interlocks the anti-establishment discourses of JP with the Qatari position on the war.

The introductory remarks to the last two pre-war broadcasts (JP, March 6 and March 20, 2003), hosted by Jumana Nmoor reflect the use of the same anti-establishment organizing theme as a prelude to arguing implicitly for the futility of any anti-war action.

Nmoor's introductory remarks to the March 6, 2003 broadcast of JP:

With fifty-five Islamic states present and two states absent, the Islamic summit concluded its activities in Doha. The summit was hardly different from its precedent, the Sharm al-Shaikh Arab summit of last week; the leaders and presidents [of the Islamic summit], once again, resorted to issuing a final communiqué that is very similar to the communiqué of Sharm al-Shaikh which expresses their firm opposition to a strike against Iraq or to threatening the safety of any Muslim country....And just like in the Sharm al-Shaikh summit

which witnessed a verbal war between the Libyan leader, Mu`ammar al-Qaddafi, and the Saudi Crown Prince, Prince Abdullah...., the Doha summit has also witnessed a verbal war between the Iraqi and Kuwaiti delegates....So the Arab leaders have decided to go along with the Arab street in opposing a strike on Iraq, but did they succeed in taking tangible steps [against such strike]? Why have the disputes between them deepened? Where does the Arab street stand on the outcomes of the Sharm al-Shaikh summit and the Doha Islamic summit?

In this set of the introductory remarks, Nmoor vindicates the viewers' perception of the Arab leaders as frivolous, indifferent and conspiratorial. This premise is evident in three places in Nmoor's remarks: in her allusion to the banality and predictability of the communiqués issued by both summits, and the detachment of such communiqués from any meaningful "tangible steps"; in the implicit sarcasm associated with the question that she raises in the last paragraph ("So the Arab leaders have decided to go along with the Arab street in opposing a strike on Iraq, but did they succeed in taking tangible steps [against such strike]? "); and, thirdly, in Nmoor's allusion to a common characteristic of both summits, "the verbal battles" between different Arab leaders—a comical scenario with which the viewers are quite familiar from past experience.

While the premise of frivolous, indifferent, conspiratorial Arab regimes unites Nmoor initially with the anger and frustration of the Arab viewers, it also dampens such feelings by detaching them from any radical anti-establishment, anti-war action ideology or program of action. By disconnecting the viewers' anti-war sentiment from any radical ideology or action, Nmoor's organizing theme invites the following question in the minds of the viewers: "how can we fight the world's only super power—the United States, with

such individuals as our leaders?” “We cannot” is the obvious answer especially when we take into account that Nmoor’s narrative ties the imminent war exclusively with the actions, or inactions, of the narrative’s two only actors—the Arab regimes and the United States. Thus, by excluding the Arab masses and radical ideologies and programs of action from her narrative, Nmoor organizing theme reflects and inspires a fatalistic attitude towards the coming war; an attitude that renders any anti-war action by the Arab masses futile and unnecessary.

The same organizing theme—incapable, indifferent, conspiring Arab regimes and a totally capable and resolved United States, that conveys a fatalistic perspective on the war is discernable in Nmoor’s remarks to the broadcast directly preceding the war (JP, March 20, 2003). In this broadcast, however, she focuses the viewers’ attention on the United States in particular:

In a few hours, the ultimatum issued by the American President George Bush to the Iraqi President Saddam Hussein, demanding that he abdicates and that he and his two sons, Qossayy and `Udayy, leave Iraq, will expire. In a few hours, a new chapter of the [story] of war and destruction in Iraq will begin.

Field reports unanimously agree that the American forces, amassed in its bases in the Gulf and along the Kuwaiti-Iraqi borders, are in a state of full readiness and are awaiting the signal to launch [the war]; an illegitimate war by which Washington, as the General Secretary of the United Nation, Kofi Anan, put it, challenging all forms of opposition and disappointing millions of individuals across the world.

Given that the countdown has begun, and the continuing military preparations

inside the American bases in the region, many are wondering whether the United States has the permission of states hosting the bases to use them as a launching pad in its war against Iraq, and whether the host-states are capable of preventing their use in the imminent war. It is also well known that during the period of American preparation for the war, some Arab countries have kept the presence of American equipments and bases in their countries a secret, while other countries were open and unapologetic in this matter.

In this set of introductory remarks, Nmoor constructs a narrative that is as eerily objective as Haddad's pre-war broadcast of MTOP. Fact-based and emotionally detached from the robust fears, worries and existential anxieties of the Arab masses who are about to be "shocked and awed" by a war that will devastate Iraq and the entire region, Nmoor's narrative focuses the viewers' attention entirely on the imminence and unstoppable of the war ("In a few hours, a new chapter of the [story] of war and destruction in Iraq will begin"). Because of the primacy of the theme of an imminent and unstoppable war in Nmoor's narrative, other central questions such the legitimacy of the war and the reactions of the Arab governments and the Arab masses are pushed to the margin of the narrative, rendering them inconsequential and unimportant in comparison with the narrative's main theme—unstoppable war.

The premise of an imminent and unstoppable war is elaborated on by Nmoor in the second and third parts of the introductory remarks, in which she demonstrates the political and military readiness of the United States. Unchallenged and prominent, the organizing premise inspires one question: when will the war begin? Unchallenged and prominent, the organizing premise marginalizes all other important questions, such as

“what should and can the Arab masses do?” Both the question that the organizing premise inspires and the questions it marginalizes become a manifestation of a fatalistic perspective on the war. Because the perspective is fatalistic, it purges any collective guilt felt by the Arab viewers who feel a sense of duty towards defending Iraq, as it [the perspective] moves them towards accepting that which they hate—war on and invasion of an Arab country, as a matter of fact, or fate.

Moreover, as much as a fatalistic attitude can justify the inaction of the Arab masses, it can also justify, or at least can be used to justify or downplay, the inaction of the “incapable” Arab establishments, especially the ones that host American bases like Qatar. The effort to downplay the role of Arab establishments like Qatar is tucked inside Nmoor’s condemnatory remarks, as in her wondering “whether the host-states are capable of preventing their use [American bases] in the imminent war.” Despite the condemnatory tone of Nmoor’s remarks, her “fact-based” account overlooks another “present and very recent fact” testifying to the ability of a host-state to prevent the United States from using its base to launch the war from its territory—Turkey. Therefore, Nmoor is not actually wondering but rather she is arguing implicitly the host-states, especially Qatar, are incapable of preventing the United States from using bases in their countries as launching pads. The “especially Qatar” part of the previous sentence is manifest by Nmoor’s attempt to divide the pro-United States Arab establishments into two camps, those who work and coordinate secretly with the United States, such as Saudi Arabia, and those who are courageous and honest enough to confront the Arab masses and present them with the truth, such as Qatar, which emerges as the least evil of the frivolous, indifferent and incapable Arab regimes.

Both the organizing theme of Nmoor's narrative on the coming war in the two previous broadcasts of JP and the implications of such theme unite her discourses enthymematically with the discourses of her colleagues in other programs, especially Haddad and al-Qaradawi. Thus by virtue of its prevalence, the fatalistic perspective suggests a pattern or a concerted effort to re-construct the war narrative in a manner that marginalizes any radical reactions against the war on the part of the Arab masses.

The enthymematic congruence between the discourses of JP, RL and other programs over the Iraqi issue extends to the post-war discourses as well. Shortly after the fall of Baghdad, JP began airing daily for a month. Regardless of who the presenter of the daily broadcast is, they all develop the same theme: regardless of how it came about, the fall of Saddam Hussein's Ba`thist regime represents a historical opportunity to rebuild Iraq on democratic basis and to usher in democracy in the Arab world at large. This line of reasoning renders anti-occupation resistance unnecessary, as evidenced by the complete absence of anti-occupation resistance as a course of action or as a choice from any of the thirty post-war episodes of JP (as well as from the discourses of any other daily post-war program). The tacit argument against resistance, then, ties JP's discourses fully with the "why should we resist occupation" Qatari perspective.

The first three episodes of JP, presented by Jumana Nmoor, Fayruz Zayyani, Faisal al-Qasim, respectively, reveal the salience of "war as historical opportunity" theme and the implicit argument against armed resistance that derives from it.

Take a look at the introductory remarks to the April 11 and April 12, 2003, beginning with the former:

The presenter (Jumana Nmoor): The cities of Iraq are falling in the hands of the Anglo-American forces, one after the other. Today, the oil-rich city of Kirkuk in northern Iraq fell into the hands of the U.S. forces-backed Bishmerga militia of the Jalal Talabani-led Patriotic Union of Kurdistan. Yesterday, Baghdad, or an important part of it, had fallen, and before that Basra, Nassereya and Um Qasr. Many among those who covered the entry of the American tanks to downtown Baghdad have wondered: where is the Iraqi resistance? Why aren't there any Iraqi fighters in the streets of Baghdad? Where is the political leadership? The American side confirms that it has won the battle of Baghdad but not yet the war—the Anglo-American forces command asserts that forty percent of the country is still controlled by the Iraqi forces. Despite that, many believe that the game is over, and Iraq today has entered a new era whose features are not clear yet.

So, what is the future of Iraq? Will the United States fill the political and security vacuum and rebuild Iraq? When will authority be handed over to the Iraqis in their country?

Here are the introductory remarks to the April 12, 2003 episode of JP:

The presenter (Fayruz Zayyani): as a result of the sudden collapse of the regime in Iraq and the absence of security that came along with it, Iraqis are worried about their well being and safety. Looting and pillaging, along with the stench of gun powder, have become integral parts of the daily Iraqi scene. Total chaos is enveloping Iraqi cities one after the other; first Baghdad and Kirkuk, now its Mosul. Acts of plundering spared nothing; not even the Scientific Complex, the

most important books and scientific research that Baghdad University was rife with; not even the Ministry of Education. Such acts have spread to private property; shops owners are now compelled to resort to arms to defend their goods and belongings. The situation is out of control in many Iraqi cities; though seen and heard by the Anglo-American forces, acts of heist and theft continue. Dear viewers: here are Iraqi citizens' eye-witness accounts of the acts of commotion and undeterred plundering: [a reportage followed].

Zayyani [continuing and concluding]: Will the United States fill the political and security vacuum and rebuild Iraq? When will authority be handed over to the Iraqis in their country?

In both sets of remarks, "the war as historical opportunity" theme arises subtly as a concomitant of several implicit sub-themes (or premises), and the arguments that they stir in the minds of the viewers, which characterize the narratives of both Nmoor and Zayyani. Take for example the set of rhetorical questions in the second paragraph of Nmoor's introductory remarks:

Many among those who covered the entry of the American tanks to downtown Baghdad have wondered: where is the Iraqi resistance? Why aren't there any Iraqi fighters in the streets of Baghdad? Where is the political leadership?

In this set of questions, Nmoor constructs a narrative on post-war Iraq in a manner that mainly disconnects the fall of the Iraqi cities under occupation from the actions of the invaders, and connects it instead to the inaction of the invaded. Although the invaders are not out of the picture, they, nonetheless, are not the primary actors in Nmoor's narrative; rather, the primary actor is the Iraqi Ba`thist regime that has run away from the battlefield

(“Where is the political leadership?”). A historical equivalent to Nmoor’s narrative would be the construction of a narrative on the fall of Poland or France under Nazi occupation in a way that primarily focuses and blames occupation on the shortcomings of the Polish and French leaderships and peoples, instead of the Nazi policies and schemes. This is what Nmoor’s questions do; they blur the acts of invasion and occupation by focusing the attention of the viewers on the acts and ethics (or lack of) of the victim, depicting him as cowardly and untrustworthy. Following this line of interpretation, the viewers are encouraged to see the fall of a cowardly regime, no matter how it came about, as a good outcome.

Although the act of blaming the defeated does not amount to praising the victor, it is, nevertheless, conducive to an effort to downplay the political weight of the war and the subsequent occupation of the country. This effort is manifest in the systematic use of the euphemistic expression “the Anglo-American forces” by both Nmoor and Zayyani, in reference to the occupying forces in Iraq, in lieu of “forces of occupation” or “invaders.” By virtue of the fact that the same expression (Anglo-American forces) is used by Nmoor and Zayyani, and throughout JP and other programs, the euphemism then becomes a *ploce* (the use of a single expression) and *expolitio* (repetition of the same idea) at once. In its capacity to serve the functions of these three functionally interlocking rhetorical devices (euphemism, *ploce* and *expolitio*), the “Anglo-American forces” expression, just like the act of blaming the victim, offers the Arab viewers an alternative perspective on the war; a perspective that casts the war in a positive light.

The alternative perspective is discernable in the set of the central questions that both Nmoor and Zayyani raise, verbatim, at the end of their introductory remarks: “Will

the United States fill the political and security vacuum and rebuild Iraq? When will authority be handed over to the Iraqis in their country?” Indirectly, the questions create urgency and define to the viewing audience the proper course of action that is necessary to overcome it, by filling the political and security gap, rebuilding Iraq and handing authority over to the Iraqis. What is significant about the urgency created by the questions is that it overshadows and marginalizes another type of urgency, the presence of foreign occupiers in Iraq, which demands and essentializes armed resistance. Thus the urgency created by the questions and the urgency marginalized by them are conducive to redefining the occupiers and casting them in a positive light. For example, by emphasizing lack of security as the pressing central problem, and attributing it directly to the actions of local Iraqi element, the viewers are nudged to see presence of “the Anglo-American forces,” like them or dislike them, as an existential necessity since they are the only party that is capable of restoring peace and order. In other words, the “occupier” becomes the guarantor of security. Therefore, we notice that the only time in both broadcasts that the Anglo-American forces were criticized was in the context of their failure to prevent the acts of looting and plundering—“The situation is out of control in many Iraqi cities; though seen and heard by the Anglo-American forces, acts of heist and theft continue.” The “security” sub-theme extends beyond the policing aspect, as it encompasses the political and economic aspects as well (“Will the United States fill up the political and security gap and rebuild Iraq?”). As a result, the presence of “the Anglo-American forces” is further essentialized due to their ability to guarantee political and economic security as well.

The “security” sub-theme joins forces with the act of blaming the defeated and referring to the victor as “Anglo-American forces,” as they collectively indicate a concerted effort to mitigate and redefine the outcome of the war. Closely associated with this effort is also an effort to relegate resistance to the margin of the narrative without offending the pro-resistance audiences or appearing to endorse the Qatari “why should we resist occupation” perspective.

At the point at which the discourses in JP begin to indirectly identify the viewers with the Qatari position on armed resistance in post-war Iraq, the discourses become also conducive to seeing the war on Iraq “as a historical opportunity.” The “war as a historical opportunity” theme starts to materialize more rapidly, as both broadcasts of JP conjure in the minds of the viewers the famous historical example of liberating Germany and ridding it of the evil Nazi regime in WW2 by the United States and its allies; a historical example that al-Qasim focuses on in his introductory remarks to the April 13, 2003 broadcast of JP:

Will Iraq become a beacon of democracy in the Arab region, as promised by the Americans? How likely is that? Is it as likely as Satan’s dream of entering Paradise? Will the Americans bring democratic measures to the Arabs, as they have done before for the German and the Japanese peoples after the Second World War? Will there be democracy in a country that is established on ethnic, sectarian, tribal and national bases like Iraq?

At face value, al-Qasim’s remarks seem congruent with the beliefs and attitudes of a great majority of the Arab populations who consider the United States as the epitome of political hypocrisy and doublespeak. Al-Qasim, in other words, is raising doubt about

the intentions and the ability of the United States to bring democracy to Iraq and the Arab region at large. That said, expressing doubt about the intentions of the United States is by no means the most important aspect of al-Qasim's remarks for two primary reasons; rather, the most important aspect is fact that the al-Qasim detaches the act of expressing doubt about the intentions of the United States from any radical ideology or program of action (as evidenced by the total absence of any ideological markers—Arab nationalist, Islamist from his narrative) that challenges the American presence in Iraq and treats as occupation. Hence, the premise of insincere and incapable United States is presented by al-Qasim in a context in which attainment of peace and order and rebuilding Iraq politically and economically are still implicitly depicted as the primary objective worthy of pursuing in post-war Iraq. Phrased differently, as al-Qasim expresses doubt over the intention and capabilities of the United States, he is actually expressing hope as he dares the United States to do what it has previously and successfully done in Germany and Japan after WW2: bring democracy to Iraq and the Arab world. This line of thinking, despite the anti-U.S. overtone of al-Qasim's narrative, echoes the same line of thinking of his two other colleagues, Nmoor and Zayyani, in terms of arguing implicitly that the war on Iraq and the toppling of its regime represent a historical opportunity to introduce democracy in the Arab world.

Analysis of post-war broadcasts of JP reveals that just as al-Qaradawi problematizes the concept of physical jihad in relation with post-war Iraq, JP also problematizes the same concept, jihad (or armed resistance), by problematizing the act of occupation per se. In this atmosphere of indeterminacy, it becomes possible to argue safely against the beliefs of the Arab viewers and to suggest alternative framework of

interpreting and resolving the problems of post-war Iraq. Moreover, the atmosphere of indeterminacy also makes it possible to reinforce and defend the Qatari “why should we resist occupation” perspective on post-war Iraq without having to endorse it.

The network’s tacit advancing of an alternative perspective on Iraq that is reconcilable with the Qatari pro-war, anti-armed resistance perspective has not gone unnoticed by numerous observers. For instance, Asad Abu Khalil (2004) of California State University comments on this type of coverage in the Arab satellite channels, including al-Jazeera, contending that “News coverage of Iraq has an American flavor, as indicated by the commonly used expressions.”⁴ Bakri (2004) uses a language less diplomatic than Abu Khalil’s, condemning the Arab media, including al-Jazeera, that mask the occupier’s “liberalism of blood and democracy of death and destruction.”⁵

In conclusion, analysis of RL and JP (as a genre) reveals that the channel’s anti-establishment overtone is a characteristic of the discourses of al-Jazeera in general. The analysis also, and most importantly, reveals that the anti-establishment overtone of the channel’s discourses at large is consistently detached from any political ideology or program of action that poses a threat to or compromises the strategic interests of the Qatari establishment. On the contrary, the network’s anti-establishment rhetoric is recurrently associated with an alternative ideological perspective—Islamist (from the standpoint of the Brotherhood) or Western liberal, thereby diverting mass anger into politically harmless channels.

⁴ OD, February 24, 2004

⁵ Ibid.

CHAPTER 7

Al-Jazeera: Intifada on the Air

In 1997, after a very long absence, I went to Jordan in a visit to my family. In a *sahra* (a nightly gathering of family and friends), my mother, who seemed highly preoccupied, leaned towards and whispered solemnly: “I am worried sick about your brother, son.” “Why, mother?” I asked. “You know he is getting old and his eyesight is deteriorating, yet he insists on driving at night and staying out so late. By Allah, neither your father nor I, son, can go to sleep before making sure that he made it home safely,” she complained. “Mind you,” she worriedly re-emphasized, “it is not safe for any one, let alone a man with poor eyesight like your brother, to drive this late at night.” “No, mother, it is not,” I commented, approvingly. “So where does he go?” I further inquired. “I am glad you asked, may Allah be pleased with you! Whenever I ask him about his whereabouts, he gives me the same answer: he goes over to some of his friends’ to watch this new television channel.” “A new television channel!” I exclaimed. “Yes, I think it is called Jazeera or something like that. It’s a kind of a TV station that you cannot view unless you install a [satellite] dish,” she continued and then ended with an appeal: “May Allah be pleased with you as my heart is, son, make sure you buy him the dish and have it installed before you go back to America!” “Do not worry, mother. I will do that, God willing,” I assured her.

The dialogue with my mother about my brothers’ unsafe nightly trips has brought back memories of my early childhood, memories of the restless, eerie times following the 1967 defeat and my family’s exodus from Palestine, of the nightly get togethers of family and friends who huddle around the radio roaming its waves searching with deceptive

calmness and a timid degree of hope for something, anything that may help them make sense of an incomprehensible reality: a reality of sudden homelessness, disgraceful defeat, indifferent Arab regimes and a dazed Arab nation.

Little did my mother know that the story of my brother's nocturnal nomadism and his fascination with the new television network will be the same story I am telling here; a story of

The Tyrant, the Nomad and the "Anti-establishment" Al-Jazeera

As I have pointed out in Chapter 1 and elaborated on in Chapter 2, to understand al-Jazeera, one must see it in the context of a chronic tension between the Arab regimes and the Arab populations, and how such tension has shaped the attitudes of both—regimes and populations, towards the media. To those who seek to guarantee the stability and perpetuity of the established political order—the Arab regimes, the mass media, among other social and political institutions, are a tool of cooptation and subjugation; to the oppressed, marginalized Arab masses seeking liberation and liberty, the Arab mass media are an untrustworthy mouthpiece of tyrannical Arab leaders. The Arab audiences, then, were pushed into a state of virtual nomadism in search for the truth, reinforcement and vindication. In their virtual journey, the disenfranchised nomadic audiences made frequent stops at radio services such as the BBC, Monte Carlo and Voice of America. But the nomadic audiences have finally found al-Jazeera Channel; a pan-Arab mass medium that has successfully incorporated their beliefs, attitudes and aspirations into its political discourses.

Nothing captures and manifests the "easy fit" between al-Jazeera and its nomadic audiences more accurately than the bold overtone of anti-establishment discourse that

fuses together and pervades the network's broadcasts. By "anti-establishment," I mean the expression of views and beliefs by the network's cadre that stand in stark opposition to the views and policies of the sponsoring Qatari political establishment (and the Arab political establishment at large).

There is a consensus among media scholars and commentators over the role of the channel's anti-establishment messages in setting al-Jazeera apart from all other Arab TV stations, and, hence, in attracting the nomadic Arab audiences who have been systematically marginalized and alienated by their local media.¹ Zayyani (2006), in common with many other scholars and commentators, maintains that the popularity of al-Jazeera derives from the fact that it "has succeeded in aligning itself with the 'people,' in fact, with a large section of Arab society which has been disenfranchised" (p. 178).²

But as much as there is agreement among all observers over the central role of the prevalent anti-establishment tone in rendering al-Jazeera by far the most popular pan-Arab TV network, there is disagreement over the effect and the implications of the network's anti-establishment discourses.

¹ See the 2008 Annual Arab public Opinion Poll by the Zogby International. According to the poll, the viewership of al-Hurra is 2 % compared to 9 % to al-Arabiyya and 54 % to al-Jazeera.

² Expressing the same idea, Telhami (2004) contends that "[al-Jazeera] succeeds in large part because it is responsive to public attitude" (p. 77). The Arab experts whom I interviewed in Jordan, Qatar and Egypt concur with Zayyani and Telhami proposing that "al-Jazeera has cast a stone in the still water of Arab politics," "it gives a voice to the voiceless," "it breaks all taboos" (personal interviews, Amman, Cairo, Doha, 2002). El-Nawawi and Iskandar (2003) agree and stress the pan-Arab identity of the channel as a primary marker of its uniqueness and popularity: "Al-Jazeera reporters, anchors, and talk show hosts are transnational personalities themselves hailing from all corners of the Arab world: Morocco, Egypt, Iraq, Palestine, Syria, and others." (p. 210).

Interpretations of the Anti-Establishment Discourse of Al-Jazeera

In Chapter 1 of the study, I have divided the views and positions of commentators and scholars into three groups. The first group of commentators argues that the network's anti-establishment rhetoric implies an effort to further radicalize the Arab public;³ a second group argues that the anti-establishment rhetoric signals the liberalization, democratization or Americanization of the Arab media, which will ultimately lead to moderating the Arab public;⁴ a third group of commentators argues that the network's anti-establishment rhetoric is a superficial one that aims at giving the marginalized Arab public "a false impression that political reform is under way so as to distract attention from deep structures of political repression in individual Arab states" (Sakr, 2007, p. 123).⁵

The sharply divided views over the meaning and the implications of the anti-establishment rhetoric have animated this research. In my interpretation of the network's anti-establishment discourse, I have argued that both the radicalizing- and moderating-effect theses fall remarkably short of providing an accurate understanding of the network's anti-establishment discourse, and, hence, its potential effect on the Arab

³ See for example Ajami, 2001; Alt, 2004; Brumberg, 2002; Friedman, 2001; al-Shammari, 1999.

⁴ See Alterman, 2004; Lynch, 2006; El-Nawawi and Iskandar, 2003; Wolff, 2003; among others.

⁵ Sakr's view is reiterated by several other scholars and commentators such as Zeyad Abu Ghanima, `Isam el-`Aryan, Hayyat Atteyya, Mustafa Bakri, Jawad Bsheeti, Sudqi el-Dajani, Muhammad Fa'eq, Mahmoud al-Muraghi, Ahmad al-Sa`di (personal interviews, 2002). See also As`ad Abu Khalil, 2004; Muhammad `Ayish, 2002; Rami Khouri, 2002; Naomi Sakr, 2005, 2007; Hisham Sharabi, 2003; `Abdulla el-Sennawi, 2005; Muhammad Zayyani, 2006.

audiences. I have attributed the shortfall of both views to a failure on the part of commentators subscribing to both theses to take into account the impact of contextual factors that constrain the effect of the network's anti-establishment discourse on the Arab audience. These constraining factors are the pragmatism and objectives of both the Qatari establishment and the Arab audiences, as well as the customary and widespread use of ambiguity in Arab political discourses by state- and non-state actors alike. Failure to take these contextual elements into account has led many commentators to understand the anti-establishment discourse of al-Jazeera at face value, thus considering it a manifestation of a rhetoric that subverts the policies and political perspective of the Qatari establishment and of the Arab establishment at large.

Alternatively, I have argued that the view advanced by the third group of commentators—that the network's radicalism is more apparent than real and that al-Jazeera, as do other state-sponsored Arab media outlets, serves, first and foremost, the strategic interests of its Qatari host-state, offers a more accurate reading of al-Jazeera, in terms of the meaning, effect and implications of its anti-establishment discourse. Unlike the arguments of their counterparts subscribing to the radicalizing- or moderating-effect views, the third argument takes into account the set of factors that constrain the potential impact of the network's anti-establishment discourse. However, while scholars and commentators subscribing to the third group tell us accurately *what* al-Jazeera does—serving the interests of the host-state, they say very little about *how* al-Jazeera does it.

Showing how the anti-establishment messages of al-Jazeera serve the strategic interests of the Qatari state is a primary concern of my study of al-Jazeera and an

essential step towards a comprehensive understanding of the network as a new phenomenon in Arab mass media.

Building on the work of the third group of scholars and commentators, my close reading of al-Jazeera's political discourses proves that the anti-establishment messages of al-Jazeera are by no means a manifestation of a substantial, liberational rhetoric that embraces the presumed radicalism of the Arab public. On the contrary, I maintain that the network's anti-establishment sounding discourses represent a political rhetoric that ultimately blocks and subverts the presumed radicalism of the Arab public. In the section below, I will summarize the findings of my study and what they imply in terms of the potential affect of al-Jazeera on the Arab populations and what the network means as a new phenomenon in Arab mass media.

Findings and Implications

I have proposed in Chapter 1 of this study that the exclusion of facts pertaining to Arab mass media and political discourses in general—that is to say, the pragmatism and objectives of both the Arab audience and the Qatari establishment as well as the customary ambiguity of Arab political discourse, from the debate on al-Jazeera has misled many commentators into taking the anti-establishment discourse of al-Jazeera at face value. The study has shown that once we properly situate the radical sounding messages of al-Jazeera in the politico-historical context of Arab mass media and political discourse, these messages cannot be taken as a manifestation of a political rhetoric that subverts the policies and political perspective of the Qatari state. Rather, the radical political rhetoric of al-Jazeera says more about the pragmatism and objectives of both the

nomadic Arab audience and the Qatari establishment and less about the radicalism of al-Jazeera, as the discussion below will show.

Anti-Establishment Discourse and the Pragmatic Audience

Both the radicalizing- and moderating-effect theses are premised on the readiness of the presumed radical Arab public to be influenced by the anti-establishment discourse of al-Jazeera. However, the argument for inevitable effect of al-Jazeera loses significant weight, once we take into account the implications of the pragmatism and objectives of the Arab public and its own perception of the network. This conclusion is supported by the findings of my interviews with prominent Arab intellectuals and media experts that took place in 2002 in three Arab Capitals—Amman, Jordan, Doha, Qatar, and Cairo, Egypt, as well as my interviews with a sample of viewers in Amman, Jordan. While al-Jazeera uses anti-establishment discourses to lure the public into watching the network, both sectors of the Arab public, meanwhile, incorporate their own beliefs, needs, expectations and attitudes in interpreting and judging the network's anti-establishment sounding discourse.

For example, in my interviews with a group of Arab scholars, media experts and politicians, I have raised the following question: “Are we as Arabs better off with or without al-Jazeera?” Without any exception, they all answered the question without much thinking stressing that we are better off with al-Jazeera. In elaborating, they have all emphasized and praised its capability to offer the Arab audiences a better alternative to traditional Arab official media and Western media at large. They have also commented favorably on the professionalism of its cadre and its live and comprehensive coverage of important political developments throughout the Arab world. Others have emphasized the

fact that al-Jazeera forced other Arab governments to compete with it, which resulted in raising the ceiling of editorial freedoms and professionalism in other Arab media” (Atteyya-Hwayyek, personal interview, Amman, Jordan, 2002). They also conjure the fact that al-Jazeera is a pulpit for opposition Arab groups whose voices could, otherwise, never be heard in their own local media.⁶

The views I have just cited clearly indicate that the popularity of al-Jazeera says as much about the needs and pragmatism of the nomadic Arab audience as it does about the medium itself: the Arab public, as it has always done, desires and looks for a mass medium that incorporates and validates its own pre-existing political beliefs and attitudes. Concomitantly, the Arab audiences judge any particular medium pragmatically based on how much of their own needs, beliefs and expectations are met by medium X or Y. This conclusion is clearly implied by a common answer that I have heard numerous times: Al-Jazeera is “the best there is” (*asslah al-mawjood*). But in the context of the Arab world, “the best there is” expression is hardly a flattering one, bearing in mind that the Arab media are and remain rigidly authoritarian, unabashedly pro-establishment. An additional proof of the constraining effect of the pragmatism of the Arab public is further manifest in the most common answer I have received to the question with which I have ended all my interviews: “Is al-Jazeera a rhetoric of change or a change of rhetoric” (*hall al-*

⁶ Illustrating al-Jazeera’s role in conveying anti-establishment views, Dr. Abu Ghanima, a political activist and a prominent figure of the Jordanian Chapter of the Brotherhood, has stressed this point reminding me of his own appearance in OD in which he spoke most freely in support of Hamas and the legitimacy of military actions against Israel, and in condemnation of the Arab regimes and their conspiratorial role. He has also emphasized how his speech boosted the morale of Palestinian and Arab political prisoners who had the chance to watch this broadcast of OD.

Jazeera khitaab taghyeer am taghyeer fe el-khitaab?). With one exception—a journalist and human rights advocate in Jordan, everyone else has given me almost the same answer: “It is only a change of rhetoric.”⁷ Finally, the disconnection between the perception of al-Jazeera as a positive change in the Arab world and any sense of loyalty to it is further evidenced by the Arab elite’s view of al-Jazeera’s Arab nationalist sounding discourse as vacuous. This attitude is succinctly summed up by the media expert Mahmoud al-Muraghi’s answer to my question: “what do you make of the Arab nationalist rhetoric of al-Jazeera?” Without much reflection, al-Muraghi has this to say: “al-Jazeera’s Arab nationalist rhetoric is vacant; it is devoid of any Arab nationalist ideology or program of action” (personal interview, 2002, Cairo, Egypt). Palestinian historian and a prominent P.L.O figure, Professor Ahmad Sudqi al-Dajani, goes a step further than al-Muraghi contending that not only is the Arab nationalist rhetoric of al-Jazeera vacuous, it also aims at undermining Arab nationalism (Ibid.).

⁷ In elaborating on this answer, many of them have cited the al-Jazeera-Qatari connection as a proof of a cosmetic, non-substantial change, in light of the controversial policies of the Qatari government. Dr. `Isam el-`Arian, a well-known Egyptian political activist and a key member of the Egyptian Chapter of the Brotherhood has assured me that “al-Jazeera, like any other state-sponsored Arab mass medium, expresses the Qatari perspective” (personal interview, Cairo, Egypt, 2002). Additionally, several other interviewees have also spoken, angrily, many times, about al-Jazeera’s breaking of a common taboo—having Israeli guests in its various programs, under the pretext of “objectivity.” Using almost the exact vocabulary, a Palestinian expert and an ex-member of the P.L.O’s Executive Committee, Ahmad El-Sa`di, and an Egyptian journalist and current Member of Parliament, Mustafa Bakri, have both denounced the use of “objectivity as a pretext for undercutting the sacred principles of the nation” (personal interviews, Amman, Jordan, Cairo, Egypt, respectively). Such a practice, Bakri further contends, “is a manifestation of an effort to push forward and to normalize the policy of normalization (*seyasat at-tatbee`*) of relations with Israel (Ibid.).

The pragmatic and skeptical attitude that I have encountered in the course of my research is not limited to Arab intelligentsia. In the sample of ordinary viewers whose opinions I have solicited in a semi-structured questionnaire in Amman, Jordan, no one has spoken of al-Jazeera as a revolutionary network that seeks to induce radical changes in the Arab world. On the contrary, many of them have actually quizzed me, either before or after the interview, on the actual nature of al-Jazeera, and whether I personally consider it as a lackey of Qatar, the West or even world Zionism or not. When I asked them for the reasons behind this accusation, and why they still watch the channel despite it, many of them cited the network's inclusion of Israeli guests as their primary reason. As for why they still watch it despite their skeptical attitude, they have given me similar answers: "*bitfish ghulli*," a vernacular expression which means "it deflates my fury", or "*asslah el-mawjood*" (the best there is).⁸

Thus given the pragmatism of the nomadic Arab audiences, the popularity of al-Jazeera among them is not tantamount to their loyalty to and trust in it, and, hence, their

⁸ Elaborating on the Arab audiences' pragmatism, Atteya-Hwayyek, a prominent journalist and media scholar who appeared numerous times in al-Jazeera, including in al-Qasim's OD, puts the pragmatic attitude of the audience in its proper historical context:

Historically, given the Arab audience's mistrust of their local media, they customarily resorted to media other than their local media, in order to find out what is going on in their own country. For instance, an Iraqi Arab seeking to know what is actually going on in Iraq, tunes to the media of a country whose government is hostile to Iraq, such as Syria [referring to inter-Ba`thist feuds], Israel or the BBC. Or vice versa, a Syrian Arab seeking to know what is actually going on in Syria, he may tune to Iraqi media, Israeli Radio Service or the BBC to find out what is going in his own country (personal interview, Amman, Jordan, 2002).

Concurring with Atteyya-Hwayyek, an Egyptian ex-minister of Information—Muhammad Fayeq, also reminds me that "up until now, we have to turn to the BBC in order to find out what is happening in our own backyard (personal interview, Cairo, Egypt, 2002).

readiness to be influenced by it.⁹ The persistence of the anti-establishment attitude among the Arab viewers is further manifest indirectly by the fact that not even the most ardent pro-peace process personalities, guests or hosts, appearing in al-Jazeera dare to anchor their argument for the peace process in the legitimacy of Israel and its natural right to live peacefully in the region, or in the good intentions of the United States, which strongly suggests that such individuals know very well that it is still rhetorically fatal to do so.

Thus failing to take into account the implications of the pragmatism and objectives of the viewers has resulted in an inaccurate assessment of the affect of the anti-establishment discourse of al-Jazeera on them. The possibility of inaccurate assessment increases further still by overlooking the second constraining factor—that is to say, what al-Jazeera means from the standpoint of the pragmatic Qatari government.

Al-Jazeera: A Manifestation of Prudent Qatari Policy Not Radical Politics

Even in the absence of any empirical proof suggesting that the Qatari government has any direct influence over al-Jazeera, the study has provided us with both contextual and textual evidence indicating how valuable the network is in advancing and bolstering

⁹ In fact, there is no historical evidence suggesting that the nomadic audience's interactions with the BBC, for instance, has resulted in toning down their support of Nasser, who was constantly targeted and attacked by the BBC. On the contrary, the ongoing assault on the Nasserite legacy by elements of the Brotherhood like Mansour and al-Qaradawi, as well as by liberal activists like Haddad testifies to an enduring popularity of Nasser among the Arab masses, despite an endless stream of anti-Nasser messages in both Arab and foreign media. Also, there is no historical evidence suggesting that the nomadic audiences' exposure to the pro-Israel Western media has resulted in moderating their views vis-à-vis the question of the legitimacy of Israel and its right to exist peacefully in the region. On the contrary, public-opinion polls indicate that the Arab public at large still admires leaders and political figures that stand up to Israel and the United States. In such polls, leaders such as the Syrian Bashar al-Asad, Hassan Nasrallah of Hezbollah and Khalid Mish`al of Hamas top, consistently, the list of the most admired Arab leaders (Maryland University polls, 2006 and 2009).

the strategic interests and policies of the sponsoring state. And just as the pragmatism and objectives of the nomadic audience weaken the presumption of a truly radical network that will inevitably radicalize the Arab public, so does the fact that the network was established and is sponsored by a Qatari government that is in essence no less conservative, pro-Western, or pro-peace negotiations with Israel than many other Arab governments. Qatar, in different words, is far from being a revolutionary regime that shares the Arab populations' radicalism. Hence, the radicalizing of the Arab public thesis sounds counter intuitive in view of the Qatari sponsorship of the network. But no less counter intuitive is the thesis of moderating affect, which, as I have previously argued, fails to take into account the constraining impact of the pragmatism and objectives of the audience.

Subsequently, in view of the implications of the Qatari sponsorship of al-Jazeera, the network must be seen under a different light: as maintained by the proponents of the third position on the network, politico-historical evidence indicates that al-Jazeera, in terms of its genesis and services to the sponsoring state, is far from being a radical network. On the contrary, the study provides both contextual and textual evidence indicating that al-Jazeera, as a manifestation of a prudent and pragmatic Qatari policy, serves the strategic Qatari interests consistently and most effectively.

Contextually, my historical account in the second chapter on the evolution of radio and television services in three Arab countries, Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and, later, in post-coup Qatar, indicates that al-Jazeera is an innovation of the Qatari state that came at the heels of the ascendance of the new Qatari Emir to power in a palace coup in 1995. The new Qatari government, which, according to Kordesman (2004) and others has

a “tendency to start political feuds and aggressively assert its status and independence” (p. 214), found itself facing direct threat to his rule, especially from Saudi Arab (Freedman, 1998; Herb, 1999; Kordesman, 2004; Sakr, 2007; Telhami, 2004). To neutralize the threat to his rule, the new Qatari Emir embarked on pragmatic policies that have proven highly effective. Courting both the United States and Israel were examples of such policies. Another key example of such bold policies was the establishment of al-Jazeera.

The unelected new Emir, “with apparently little to lose from allowing free speech, had decided to adopt freedom of expression as a foreign policy tool,” as Sakr (2005) succinctly put it (p. 68). By giving other Arab regimes that pose threat to his rule what they wanted the least—a network that undercuts their authority, the new Qatari Emir, has also given the Arab audiences what they wanted the most—a free pan-Arab mass medium that interlocks some of their hopes and expectations as it undercuts and challenges the authority of the Arab regimes that marginalize them systematically. This pragmatic move by the new Qatari Emir has proven most effective in stabilizing the new Qatari government, directly and indirectly: directly, by enabling the Qataris to manage and to control “an outlet that the Saudis and others fear and to reduce the influence of the Saudi-backed media” (Telhami, 2004, p. 85).

Besides the implications of the politico-historical context in which al-Jazeera was born, textual evidence too indicates that Qatar has benefited tremendously from the anti-establishment discourse of the network: al-Jazeera, as an anti-establishment sounding free pan-Arab network, has re-invented the Qatari state, casting it under a positive light and depicting it as a uniquely different paradigm of Arab regime. The primary example that

illustrates how Qatar benefits from free speech is Faisal al-Qasim, the presenter of OD, who, in the formative years of al-Jazeera, has almost single handedly made al-Jazeera a household name in the Arab world. The substance of al-Qasim's anti-establishment discourse is hardly what is most attractive about his discourse; he rarely tells the viewers anything new. What is rather attractive about his discourse is the fact that he dares to boldly express what is old and trite and using the viewers' own epideictic style, as in his dispraise of Arab leaders calling them "bastards," "castrated," "pimps," or even "sons of bitches." By doing that, al-Qasim does more than tap the viewers' most salient and controlling emotions—their contempt for and hatred of the majority of Arab regimes. He, most importantly, shocks the viewers into asking: "Did he really say that, live on television?" By eliciting this reaction from the viewers, the shocking quality of al-Qasim's anti-establishment dwarfs what is less shocking, the unpopular policies of the Qatari Emir, such as strengthening relations with both Israel and the United States. Moreover, not only that al-Qasim's bold anti-establishment discourse renders him an anomaly, or, to borrow Weaver's terminology "a marked man" (1953, p. 9), but it also renders both al-Jazeera and the new Qatari Emir who sponsors it an anomaly as well, so far as Arab politics and Arab mass media are concerned. Al-Jazeera, in a Machiavellian logic, arises as "the great enterprise" through which the new Qatari Prince gives a rare example of himself (*The Prince*, 1989, p. 87), which helps the Qatari Prince "avoid contempt and hatred" of the public (p. 71). This is quite an achievement in the context of Arab politics; an achievement that the new Qatari Prince owes to the shocking anti-establishment rhetoric of the likes of al-Qasim.

Despite the central role of al-Qasim in the re-invention of Qatar by setting it apart from other Arab regimes, other presenters continue the constant process of re-inventing Qatar and bolstering its positive image. Mansour, for example, also shocks the Arab viewers in his exchanges with powerful figures of authority, especially in his periodic discussions with the second most powerful Qatari figure of authority, the country's foreign minister and, later on, the country's premiere. When Mansour, for instance, questions condemningly the wisdom of the Qatari government's perception of "peace as the only strategic option, while Israel is killing the Palestinians at will," the Arab viewers witness a shocking reversal of roles; an Arab journalist, speaking boldly on behalf of the marginalized and alienated viewers, and holding the Qatari foreign minister accountable, the journalist becomes a figure of authority; quite a rare and most significant event in the Arab world. But most importantly, as much as Mansour's exchanges with the Qatari foreign minister speak to the boldness of Mansour, they, simultaneously, present the viewers with a new breed of Arab public figures; one epitomized by the Qatari foreign minister who, unlike any other Arab figure of authority, tolerates and welcomes criticism. In this sense, Mansour's anti-establishment discourse represents a demonstrative example of how a self-reforming Arab government like Qatar can embrace the Arab public's yearning for free speech, transparency and accountability.¹⁰

¹⁰ Continuing the same effort of setting Qatar apart from other Arab regimes and identifying it with some of the viewers' passions, beliefs and expectations, al-Qaradawi, as the analysis in Chapter 6, has shown, also emphasizes the heterogeneity of the Arab regimes as he blames, almost exclusively, the secular Arab regimes (Nasser's Egypt, Ba`thist Syria and Iraq, Algeria, Tunisia) for the catastrophes befalling the Arab nation, while reminding the viewers directly and indirectly of the achievements of other non-secular states—such as Qatar. Following

What then are we to make of al-Jazeera, “the station [that] lacks inhibition in critiquing Arab regimes from Mauritania to Oman, [which] has only rarely gone after the government of Qatar with the same vigor” (El-Nawawy and Iskandar, 200, p. 83), in view of what the network has successfully done and continues to do *for* the new Qatari Emir? Does al-Jazeera signal a drastic structural change in Qatari political and social life? The answer is “No, it does not,” especially when one bears in mind that the Qatari stance on crucial issues such as the Arab-Israeli conflict, the war on Iraq, relations with the United States is hardly different from the stance of the great majority of Arab regimes, and also the fact that Qatar continues to ban any political parties inside the country.

Thus divorced from any structural changes, freedom of speech becomes a manifestation of what Spinoza refers to as “negative freedom,” or “another word for restraint” (in Garver, p. 3). In this sense, the perception of al-Jazeera as a radical medium whose anti-establishment discourse will inevitably impact the Arab public conflicts sharply with Qatari political reality.

al-Qaradawi’s line of reasoning, the viewers are advised to see the unpopular policies of non-secular states such as Qatar as a matter of human error or political miscalculation, while the policies of secular Arab regimes as an ever-unfolding conspiracy against Islam and the nation. As a result, al-Qaradawi presses on the minds of the viewers the image of a self-reforming, democratizing, Islamic Qatari state. The same image is further pressed by Jumana Nmoor in Chapter 6, as she reminds the viewers of the heterogeneity of the pro-U.S. Arab regimes, emphasizing that while some regimes support the policies of the United States covertly, others, like Qatar, have the courage and courtesy to do so openly. Nmoor, put differently, nudges the Arab audience to judge the Qatari government not based on what it has in common with other Arab regimes, but rather based on what sets Qatar apart from those regimes; that is to say, the overtness and transparency of Qatari policies. This line of thinking on Nmoor’s part renders the conflict between the Arab public and the Arab regimes one over form rather than substance. By inserting “form” as a new term of debating the policies of unpopular Arab regimes, Nmoor creates a context which without any doubt favors the Qatari government.

This conclusion gains more weight still, when we situate the anti-establishment messages of al-Jazeera in their proper rhetorical context; one in which state- and non-state Arab actors purposively and routinely use ambiguity as a rhetorical strategy:

The Network's Anti-Establishment Discourse in a Culture of Ambiguity

I have previously contended that ambiguity, in its direct sense— that is to say, the openness of a discourse for various interpretations, is routinely and deliberately utilized by both Arab state- and non-state-actors. In Chapter 2, I have given examples of the common use of euphemism by state-actors so as to attach the regime's unpopular policies with some of their alienated masses' passions and aspirations. This tactic is evidenced by expressions such as "Arab solidarity," "Arab integration," "unity of ranks" and "unity of destiny," which, at face value, tap the Arab populations' belief in and aspirations for "Arab unification." However, as the analysis of the anti-establishment discourses of many presenters and programs has indicated, those expressions serve actually as euphemisms for disunity rather than metaphors for Arab unity.¹¹ Non-state actors also

¹¹ Currently, the normalization of the state of Arab fragmentation is further conveyed by sloganistic expressions that have been in wide circulation in the last decade or so in the Arab world; expressions such as "Jordan First," "Lebanon First," "Egypt First." Whether conveyed directly by state apologists or by billboards that one sees wherever he drives in a city like Amman, Jordan, such expressions appeal initially to and incorporate one's natural attachment to his or her immediate environment. However, as any expert on Arab politics would testify, the surface meaning of such expressions is far from being the intended meaning. A sloganistic expression like "Jordan First," represents a capsulated ideology in which the local identity—Jordanianness, for example, is the only worthy identity. In this sense, the sloganistic expression manifests a political perspective that undercuts the citizen's sense of a broader pan-Arab identity. Phrased differently, the sloganistic expressions are a manifestation of a rhetoric that subverts the beliefs of the masses and attempts to reconstitute their identity based on newly manufactured facts, such as the normalcy of Arab division. The same perspective is also associated with what is probably the most used expressions in Arab political discourse, including that of al-Jazeera, "rationality" (ʿaqlaneyya), "moderation," "reforms," "human right" and "democratization."

resort to interjecting a degree of ambiguity into their political discourses. They do that in order to minimize the liability resulting from speaking up explicitly against authoritarian regimes that mercilessly silence all opposition voices (Hussein Abdul-Raof 2006's *Arabic Rhetoric: A Pragmatic Analysis*, pp. 97-270).¹²

Thus in the context of Arab political discourse, the surface meaning of a message is hardly, if ever, the true meaning intended by the speaker. Rather, the surface meaning of a message is a manifestation of a calculated use of ambiguity as a rhetorical strategy. But the surface meaning of a message is not without value; on the contrary, as a manifestation of a calculated use of ambiguity as a rhetorical strategy, the surface meaning is quite valuable and necessary initial step for discerning the true meaning of a message, hence its potential affect and implications, by uncovering the rhetorical work of anti-establishment discourse.

Whether the topic under discussion is Arab unification, the Arab-Israeli conflict or the 2003 War on Iraq, one will certainly encounter one or more of those expressions. At face value, none of those expressions is inherently offensive, so far as the Arab audience is concerned. On the contrary, many of such expressions appeal directly to some basic hopes and aspirations of the viewers (such as “reforms,” “human rights,” and “democratization”), while others (such as rationality and moderation) appeal to the viewers’ prudence and wisdom. However, by virtue of their pervasive use, and coupled with the near absence of old expressions that have long characterized Arab political lexicon—“revolution,” “colonialism,” “armed resistance” and “national liberation,” “the Zionist entity,” in reference to Israel, the new expressions become a manifestation of a new political perspective. This perspective lowers the ceiling of expectations and aspirations, from a comprehensive revolution that entails the toppling of the existing political order as a prelude to creating a new political order to the attainment of political objectives such as reforms and human rights that resonate with the viewers’ hopes and aspirations without constituting a threat to the existing political order.

¹² see also Smith, A. R. (2008), Dialogue in agony: The problem of communication in authoritarian regimes. *Communication Theory*, 18 (1), 160-185.

Al-Jazeera's anti-establishment messages, the study has revealed, are a case in point. In a Burkean sense, the anti-establishment messages of al-Jazeera are tantamount to talking the "language" of the viewers as a means of identifying the speaker with viewers' beliefs and attitudes.¹³ For in the case of Arab politics, in which the political establishment has been systematically and persistently marginalizing its populations, anti-establishment position is an expression of more than a pathetic appeal or political stance; it is a "language," an identity catalyst. Thus in order for a presenter or a host to make his or her "cause probable,"¹⁴ he or she must speak the language of "anti-establishment." We thus find that an Islamist like Mansour, for example, in his tacit argument for the superiority of the Brotherhood's reformist Islamist perspective, never goes directly to the Qur'an or Sunna. Instead, he links his argument to the viewers' anti-establishment belief system, to their anti-U.S., anti-peace process, anti-Arab regimes values and beliefs. Even a prominent Islamic jurist, al-Qaradawi, who is an ardent enemy of Arab nationalism and all other secular ideologies, resorts initially to the viewers' set of anti-establishment beliefs and passions, such as their yearning for Arab unification, political freedoms, liberation and democratization, as opposed to going directly to the Qur'an or the Sunna, in his discourses on Iraq and the Intifada. Mansour's secular counterpart—Haddad, does the same thing; he rarely discusses liberalism on its own historical and philosophical

¹³ Burke (1974) argues in his *A rhetoric of motives* that "you persuade a man only insofar as you talk his language [...], identifying your ways with his" p. 55.

¹⁴ Cicero, in *De Inventione*, defines invention as "the discovery of valid or seemingly valid arguments that render one's cause probable."

terms. He, instead, links liberalism to the viewers' burning desire for radical political change, political freedom and democratization. Others like Rayyan and Nmoor do not anchor their tacit argument for the peace process in the inherent positive qualities of peace per se, but rather in the anti-establishment audiences' concern with and anguish over the ongoing agonies and sufferings of the Palestinian people.

Compounded with the failure of the proponents of the radicalizing- or moderating- affect theses to account for the constraining impact of the pragmatism and objectives of both the Arab audience and the Qatari establishment, their failure to take into account the implications of the common use of ambiguity as a rhetorical strategy by Arab communicators has rendered their interpretation of the anti-establishment discourse of al-Jazeera mistaken. Individually or combined, the three constraining factors that have been overlooked by the proponents of the radicalizing-moderating perspective have led them to take the network's anti-establishment discourse literally and, consequently, assess its affect and implications accordingly.

At this juncture, the views advanced by the third group of commentators gain value and credibility: the anti-establishment discourse of al-Jazeera does not manifest a substantial, liberational rhetoric that subverts the policies and political perspective of the Qatari state; the anti-establishment discourse rather manifests an effort to bolster the Qatari policies and perspective by blocking the radicalism of the viewers.

This conclusion emerges as a concomitant of three more objectives that the network's anti-establishment discourse enables its hosts and presenters to achieve: to a) subtly problematize the viewers' beliefs rendering their meanings indeterminate, which

will, in turn, b) create a need among the audience for alternative frameworks of interpreting pressing political issues and conflicts, as I will explain below.

The Anti-Establishment Discourse of Al-Jazeera: Problematizes Popular Beliefs and Creates a Need for Alternative Ones

Having analyzed the introductory remarks and comments of many of the network's presenters in relation with three central issues—Arab unification, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the situation in Iraq before and especially after the invasion and occupation of the country in 2003, I find that the discourses on these three issues are implicitly anchored in new facts, or premises, that are capable of inducing a subtle transition from one *topic* (line of reasoning or framework of acceptance) to another.¹⁵ In almost all cases, the anti-establishment discourse induces a transition from a principled argument to an argument based on fact, circumstance or consequence. The latter of the two arguments encourages the viewers to choose what is possible or achievable instead of what is noble. What is most noteworthy here is the fact that while al-Jazeera attaches what is possible or achievable to some of the viewers' passions, fears and hopes, the possible or achievable, nonetheless, dovetails nicely with the Qatari perspective on the three issues, as indicated by the implications of the network's discourses on the three subjects:

Arab Unification. Key to the subversion of the viewers' radicalism by the network is a constant effort by the presenters to destabilize the viewers' radical beliefs by

¹⁵ Burke defines a framework of acceptance as "the more or less organized system of meanings by which a thinking man gauges the historical situation and adopts a role within it" (ATH, p. 56).

detaching them from the precepts of the two radical ideologies—Arab nationalism and radical Islamism, which the Arab regimes, as Daniel Lav (2007) accurately observes, are more worried about “than they are about Israel or the West.”¹⁶ The unworthiness of both ideologies as frameworks of understanding the three political issues is a new fact, or premise, that emerges constantly out of the anti-establishment discourses of the network’s presenters. The new fact, then, creates a need for an alternative line of reasoning, hence, an alternative understanding of the question of the viewers’ pan-Arab identity and their pan-Arab aspirations. Ultimately, the anti-establishment discourse of al-Jazeera leads the Arab viewers towards the following argument: the pan-Arab identity of the Arab populations is a fact, Arab unity is a noble and a legitimate dream; but unity is a dream nonetheless that cannot be achieved and must be replaced by less ambitious and more practical objectives, such as political reforms within each individual Arab state.

Al-Qasim’s lengthy introductory remarks to issues germane to the question of Arab unity in Chapter 3 are an illustration of how anti-establishment discourse can be used to destabilize the viewers’ pan-Arabist beliefs and aspirations. Anchored in rhetorical questions, al-Qasim’s anti-establishment discourse locks him initially with the viewers’ contempt for Arab leaders who diligently safeguard the state of Arab disunity, as well as with the viewers’ belief in the oneness of the Arab nation and the legitimacy and worthiness of Arab unification as a common goal. However, al-Qasim, in a Shakespearean way, uses rhetorical questions to place some of the viewers’ passion and

¹⁶ Daniel Lav, “Rethinking ‘Resistance’: Arab Liberal Perspectives,” in *The Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI)*, February 17, 2007, Issue No. 498.

aspiration for Arab unification on a collision course with another set of their beliefs, sentiments and hopes, such as their profound passion and aspiration for political freedoms, democratization and economic progress. Key to positioning various hopes and aspirations of the viewers on a collision course is al-Qasim's emphasis on facts—real or manufactured, that link Arab unity inextricably with the oppressive Arab nationalist regimes—formerly Ba`thist Iraq and Nasserite Egypt. By linking a noble and legitimate idea with base and illegitimate regimes that oppress the Arab populations, al-Qasim induces a subtle topical shift—from judging Arab unity based on principle to judging it based on facts and circumstance. Arab unity, as a result of the topical slippage, becomes the unattainable good, an impractical, or even irrational, program of action. Consequently, al-Qasim's rhetorical questions appeal to the prudence and practical wisdom of the viewers, nudging them towards less ambitious yet more practical course of action such as the pursuance of inter-Arab cooperation, political freedoms and human rights in each individual Arab state.

Al-Qasim, as the study has revealed, is not alone in utilizing anti-establishment discourse in destabilizing the Arab nationalist sentiments of the viewers. Almost all presenters do the same, though in different ways. The presenters can be divided into two main groups, Islamist—like Mansour and al-Qaradawi, and liberal-minded secularist—like Haddad, Nmoor, Rayyan and others. As al-Qasim does, both Islamist and secular presenters also use anti-establishment discourse to initially tap the viewers' passion for a more powerful and integrated Arab world. But also in a manner so similar to al-Qasim's, other presenters connect the notion of Arab unity firmly with the policies of the unjust, unIslamic, radical, undemocratic, irrational Arab nationalist regimes that systematically

oppress their populations and deny them their natural rights. Islamists like Mansour and al-Qaradawi, for instance, position Arab unity at a point from which it appears to the Muslim audience at odds with their Islamic beliefs, since Arab unity is a lackey of a *baatel* (false, untrue) political dogma (Arab nationalism) whose secular precepts are incompatible with the viewers' own Islamic beliefs, values and sense of justice. And, as in al-Qasim's case, both Mansour and al-Qaradawi detach the argument against Arab unity from the policies and interests of the Qatari state. Not only that, but both Mansour and al-Qaradawi create a climate in which Qatar, the self-reforming, Islam-embracing state, emerges as an acceptable alternative to the unjust, totalitarian, secular, anti-Islamic Arab nationalist regimes.

Interestingly, a liberal-minded host like Haddad, who is adamantly secular and most hostile to any measure of political Islam, presents the viewers with a framework of interpreting Arab unity that is almost identical to the framework of his Islamic counterparts, Mansour and al-Qaradawi. Haddad also attaches the notion of Arab unification to undemocratic, unjust totalitarian regimes, the Nasserite regime and the Ba`thist regimes of Iraq and Syria. Thus here too an "either or" line of reasoning is at work as it elbows the viewers to choose one noble objective that is practical and attainable—pursuance of political freedoms, democratization, human rights and justice, over another noble objective that is neither practical nor attainable—Arab unification.

By dismissing Arab nationalism—the theoretical bedrock of Arab unification, as an unworthy framework of interpretation, the presenters create a need for an alternative way of understanding other political conflicts such as the Israeli occupation of Palestine and, more recently, the American occupation of Iraq:

The Arab-Israeli Conflict. From the standpoint of the Arab populations in general, historical Palestine is an Arab-Islamic country that has been usurped by Israel, which they view as an illegitimate entity that should be fought against by all means necessary in order to liberate historical Palestine. The surface meaning of the anti-establishment discourse of the network's presenters on the Arab-Israeli conflict identifies them initially with the radical beliefs of the audience. However, below the surface of the anti-establishment discourses, we find an alternative reading of the conflict based not on popular principles but rather on facts and circumstances that render the pursuance of radical objectives impractical or even harmful. The alternative reading moves the viewers towards peace negotiations as the proper means of resolving the conflict, and towards the establishment of a Palestinian state on parts of historical Palestine as an alternative to liberating historical Palestine.

For instance, from the standpoints of an Islamist like Mansour, who is adamant, and without a doubt sincere, in his belief in the illegitimacy of Israel within any borders, the most proper program of action that is capable of resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict is that of the Brotherhood (and its Palestinian offspring—Hamas). Given that this Islamic group is well known for its political pragmatism and reformist, non-confrontational attitude towards moderate Arab regimes, and its strong ties to many of them—such as Qatar, Mansour's Islamist, anti-establishment rhetoric falls short of challenging the stance and the policies of the moderate Arab regimes or undermining their authority. Mansour's Islamo-political perspective is elaborated on and defended most vehemently by one of the Islamic world most renowned scholars and the network's most famous characters—the pro-Qatar Brotherhood's representative, al-Qaradawi. Al-Qaradawi

problematizes two of the audience's strong beliefs: direct physical jihad against Israel is the duty of all Arabs and all Muslims, and that jihad against Israel must be carried out concurrently with jihad against the pro-peace process, pro-U.S. Arab regimes that stand against armed resistance, or, physical jihad, against Israel. Al-Qaradawi, instead, presents new facts limiting physical jihad against Israel to the Palestinian people living in the occupied territories only, thus exempting all other Arabs and Muslims from the duty of fighting against Israel. Moreover, al-Qaradawi argues that any physical jihadic act against moderate Arab regimes will result in a greater *baatel* (a greater haram or falsity) or *fitna* (sedition) that threatens the stability and the unity of the Arabo-Islamic societies. Ultimately, al-Qaradawi's jihadic discourse limits the audience to an interpretation of jihad against Israel that neither poses a threat to the political establishment nor does it challenge its right to adopt and work according to the unpopular premise, "peace is the only strategic option."

The liberal secular-minded hosts such as al-Qasim, Haddad, Rayyan and many others, who are no less condemnatory of the Arab regimes and the brutality of both Israel and the United States than Mansour or al-Qaradawi, also problematize the audiences' belief in "armed resistance" against Israel. In al-Qasim's case, for instance, while his rhetorical questions interlock the viewers' perception of armed resistance as the appropriate course of action against an existential, illegitimate entity—Israel, the same rhetorical questions tap the viewers' practical wisdom by emphasizing facts (such as the ruthlessness of the nation's enemy—Arab regimes, Israel and the United States, who are capable and willing of inflicting immeasurable pain on the nation) that render armed resistance and liberation of historical Palestine impractical and even harmful. Al-Qasim

thus creates a need for a less desired yet more practical means of resolving the conflict, negotiations that lead to the establishment of a Palestinian state on parts of historical Palestine. The alternative means of resolving the conflict is also manifest in Haddad's anti-establishment discourse, which he anchors in the unworthiness of all violent political actions, within any ideological framework, and whether such violent actions target the Arab masses themselves, Israel or the Arab regimes. The same line of reasoning permeates the discourses of other presenters such as Rayyan and Nmoor, who emphasize on daily basis in JP the immeasurable agonies of the Palestinian people, which becomes the most salient aspect of the Arab-Israeli conflict that overshadows other aspects, such as the existential nature of the conflict and the illegitimacy of Israel. Given the Arab viewers' full sympathy with their Palestinian brethren, Rayyan and Nmoor, along with others, attach the peace process to the audience's desire to bring an immediate end to the daily, unbearable suffering of the Palestinian people.

In light of the new implicit reading of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the study indicates that the presenters' constant denunciation of the stance of the Arab regimes, the barbarism of Israel and its patron—the United States, and the constant emphasis on the ongoing suffering of the Palestinian people do not amount to a call to the audience to rebel against these enemies. Rather, the presenters' anti-establishment rhetoric aims at using present facts and circumstances to create, as Weaver (1953) contends, “urgency” (p. 112), which requires immediate “action” aiming at achieving a common and a noble goal—to put an end to the unbearable suffering of the Palestinian people. In this context of understanding, the peace process, no matter how hated and unpopular it is, arises as *sharrun la budda minh* (necessary evil). This is a stance that is A) readily connectable

with the moderate, pragmatic stance of Qatar and other Arab regimes, and B) subversive of the radical beliefs and attitudes of the majority of the anti-Israel, anti-Arab regimes, anti-peace process, pro-armed resistance viewers.

The Iraqi Issue. Similar to the network's anti-establishment discourses on Arab unity and the Arab-Israeli conflict, the network's discourses on Iraq endorse, initially, the viewers' belief in a conspiracy against Iraq, a conspiracy perpetrated by the nation's "enemies," the government of the United States and its Arab lackeys whose interests are threatened by the Ba`thist Iraqi regime. However, below the surface of the anti-establishment discourses on Iraq, we discover a systematic effort to undermine the "conspiracy" theme, and to, in turn, advance an alternative perspective on the causes of the war. A shift in the causes of the conflict, then, requires a shift in understanding both the war and its outcome. We thus find that the discourses of both secular and Islamic presenters that have aired right before the invasion of Iraq are characterized by a fatalistic undertone; one that tacitly calls on the viewers to see the coming war as unstoppable and any efforts to resist it as vain and unnecessary. A fatalistic perspective on the war was self-evident in Haddad's discourse in the broadcast of MTOP that aired right before the war. In this broadcast, Haddad emphasizes both the unstoppable of the war and the possibility of a positive outcome—the rebuilding of Iraq, economically, politically and socially. The same fatalistic perspective on the war also manifest in al-Qaradawi's discourse in his last appearance in a pre-war broadcast of RL. In it, he tacitly depicts the war as a part of a divine scheme aiming at weakening the oppressors by pitting them against each other, Arab nationalist and secular regimes in general, including Iraq, of course, on one side and the United States on the opposite side. And because it is a divine

scheme, the viewers are budged to see God and only God, not the pro-U.S. Arab regimes like Qatar, the United States or the Arab masses, as the major actor whose will shall be fulfilled and cannot and should not be challenged. And since God is good and just, the divine scheme is also good and just, even if such a fact escapes the wisdom of the ordinary viewers. Al-Qaradawi thus indirectly attaches the coming war to the Arab masses' hope for salvation, their trust in God and in their firm belief in an ultimate victory over the oppressors—Arab or foreign, of the world. As a corollary of this line of thinking, al-Qaradawi downplays, relentlessly, the question of jihad against the United States and its Arab lackeys, relegating it to the least threatening forms—jihad by the word and jihad by the heart.

Following the same line of reasoning, al-Qaradawi, in his first post-war appearance in RL, expands on and intensifies the depiction of the war as a divine scheme. In doing that, he attaches victory, first and foremost, to God's will and actions. As an Islamic premise, this is hardly a disputable matter and is readily acceptable from the standpoint of ordinary Arab viewers. What is disputable however is how al-Qaradawi uses this premise to deprive the issue of the occupation of Iraq of any "urgency," thus, rendering any "immediate" anti-occupation acts of jihad unnecessary, as evidenced by the carefully selected anecdotal proof with which he provides the viewers. And just as he does in his discourses on the Arab-Israeli conflict, al-Qaradawi here also emphasizes one interpretation of jihad—verbal jihad and jihad with the heart (prayer), as the only course of action that a Muslim should undertake with regard to the occupation of Iraq.

With the suspension of the regular schedule of programs, al-Qaradawi's perspective on post-war Iraq was echoed and elaborated on by the discourses of several

hosts presenting daily programs such as JP. In it, secular-minded presenters stress what Haddad has stressed in the last pre-war broadcast of MTOP, the rebuilding of Iraq, as opposed to the liberation of Iraq, as the proper program of action. The post-war narrative focuses the viewers' attention on the urgent and immediate need to restore security and political order to Iraq. Subsequently, the post-war narrative, then, indirectly envisages and relentlessly emphasizes a new role for the occupying forces, the rebuilding of Iraq in a manner modeled after the rebuilding of Germany and Japan at the conclusion of WW2. In other words, the causes and the outcome of the war on Iraq have been completely re-invented by the network's presenters in a manner that nudges the audience to see the war as a historical opportunity to achieve one of the goals that they have long aspired for, the rebuilding of the Arab political regimes and the establishing of regimes that respect the will, freedoms and rights of their populations. Depicting the war as a historical opportunity renders any act of anti-occupation armed resistance not only unnecessary but even foolish; a stance that diverges most starkly from the perspective of the Arab populations at large, as it immediately converges with the Qatari and the Arab official stance in general.

In light of the network's presenters' discourses on Arab unification, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the war on Iraq, textual evidence indicates that the network's anti-establishment discourse allows the presenters to subtly loosen the fabric of popular political narratives on the three issues. By loosening the fabric of each popular narrative, the presenters expand the boundaries of the narrative creating a room for new controversial premises without compromising the general form of the popular narrative. In the context of the expanded narrative, the presenters can still preserve a space for the

viewers' radicalism. However, such radicalism is now constricted and detached from the premises of the two radical ideologies—Arab nationalism and Jihadic Islamism, and is instead tightly attached to new implicit premises that render the radicalism of the viewers unthreatening to the existing political order. Thus, in its capacity to subtly bolster the pragmatic policies of the Qatari establishment, the anti-establishment discourse of al-Jazeera becomes a manifestation of a rhetoric that ultimately subverts the radical beliefs of the viewers without causing direct injury to such beliefs.

With this ultimate manifestation of the network's anti-establishment in mind, the argument for a radicalizing effect of al-Jazeera becomes utterly groundless. This however does not by default render the argument for moderating affect automatically true, for a primary reason: the moderating argument also excludes the constraining effect of the pragmatism of the viewers who are not inherently predisposed to be affected by the network's anti-establishment discourse.

What sets the argument advanced by the third group of commentators apart from the arguments of both the radicalizing and moderating standpoints is how the moderating of the beliefs and attitudes of the Arab viewers is perceived by each group. While the proponents of the first two groups look at moderating the beliefs and attitudes of the viewers as an inevitable outcome or *effect* of the network's anti-establishment discourse, the proponents of the third standpoint look at moderating the beliefs and attitudes of the Arab viewers as a manifestation of the *motive* behind the network's anti-establishment discourse, rather than an inevitable outcome of such discourse. The study has clearly tipped the scale in favor of the third argument, as my exposition of the last implication of the network's anti-establishment will show.

Anti-Establishment Discourse: An Argument for an Alternative Political Ideology and an Alternative Arab Ruling Regime

The motive to moderate the Arab public's beliefs and attitudes is indirectly linked to the network's presenters' persistent effort to identify with, or, to borrow another Burkean concept, to show that they are "substantially one" with the nomadic viewers. But demonstrating one's consubstantiality or identification with the audience is necessary "precisely because there is division" between them (p. 22). My previous account of the network's discourse on the three central issues—Arab unification, the Arab-Israeli conflict and the war on Iraq, has illustrated how deeply divided al-Jazeera is from the beliefs and attitudes of the majority of the Arab public. Al-Jazeera, put differently, is far from being "substantially one" with the Arab viewer. On the contrary, as the textual evidence has also shown, al-Jazeera is "substantially one" with the policies and objectives of the Qatari state. Bearing this in mind, it is more accurate, in fact necessary, to describe al-Jazeera's rhetoric of identification with the viewers as a rhetoric of "deflective identification": by using anti-establishment discourse to ultimately deflect the viewers' beliefs and attitudes away from the radical precepts of the two most popular ideologies—Arab nationalism and jihadist Islam, al-Jazeera creates a need for and at once gears the viewers towards a moderate alternative for both ideologies.

Creating and satisfying a need for an alternative political ideology that is conducive to the policies and interests of the Qatari state is the primary motive of al-Jazeera's anti-establishment rhetoric of deflective identification. Although the exact identity of the alternative political ideology is rather blurred, the presenters of al-Jazeera nudge the viewers towards certain versions of moderate Islamism or Western liberalism

as the proper political ideology. The major characteristics or precepts of the alternative ideology, or ideologies, are found in the anti-establishment discourses of the network's most prominent members, al-Qasim, Mansour and al-Qaradawi, and Haddad.

In al-Qasim's case—the host who has almost single-handedly made al-Jazeera a household name, the alternative ideology is manifest in facts peculiar to OD. The program represents more than a format for freely debating various issues; it represents a general worldview: deliberation, and only deliberation, is the true basis to judge any issue, belief or ideology. Thus beliefs that are considered as staples of modern Arab political culture—such as the illegitimacy of Israel, the nobility and legitimacy of armed resistance against any foreign occupation, the baseness of Arab regimes and the baseness of Western colonialism, are not inherently true; they are rather debatable. OD, consequently, elbows the Arab audience tacitly towards an ideology that has no “absolute truths” or principles except one: there are no absolute truths or principles. This implication has not gone unnoticed by the prominent intellectuals and scholars whom I interviewed in Jordan and Egypt. Ahmad El-Sa`di, for instance, comments condemningly on al-Qasim's use of a democratic format as a means of challenging the guiding dogmatic principles that define and guide the Arab nation arguing that:

Every nation has its own set of beliefs and principles that it holds sacred and does not tolerate any deviation from, whether under the pretext of objectivity, freedom of expression, tolerance, or anything else. [...] Certain things are way more sacred than the principle of objectivity itself (personal interview, Amman, Jordan, 2002).

Concurring with El-Sa`di, Mustafa Bakri, a prominent Egyptian journalist and PM, warns that “You cannot use ‘counter opinion’ as a pretext to ridicule and raise doubt about the nation’s slogans and basic beliefs” (personal interview, Cairo, Egypt, 2002). This is what al-Qasim does exactly; using “counter opinion” in the context of a democratic format, he challenges the sanctity of long-held beliefs, and thus creates a space for an alternative set of beliefs, an alternative political ideology.

But while the alternative ideology for which al-Qasim creates a space in his anti-establishment discourse is blurred and undefined, it becomes more defined in the anti-establishment discourses of Mansour and al-Qaradawi. As the analysis of their discourses has indicated, both Mansour and al-Qaradawi limit the role of the masses to either expressing opposition, by any means, against radical Arab regimes such as Syria and Iraq, and even against a regime that has departed from the Arab political scene four decades ago, Nasser’s regime, or expressing opposition to current policies of the Qatari state and other conservative states through verbal jihad (*jihad ul-kalemah*) or prayer (*jihad ul-qalb*). Thus, the alternative Islamic ideology, despite a degree of inconvenience to the Qatari regime or to the Arab regimes in general, is nonetheless reconcilable with the existing political order and the demands of the state.

In Haddad’s case, his anti-establishment discourse represents a tacit argument for Western liberalism. But just as in the alternative ideology advanced by Haddad’s Islamist counterparts—Mansour and al-Qaradawi, Haddad’s alternative ideology also limits political action to the least harmful type—a peaceful, liberal-elite-led expression of political opposition to the state, which confines the Arab masses to the role of mere spectators. Moreover, in Haddad’s version of Western liberalism, absolutism in

government hardly arises as the or even a primary concern; rather, the irrationality, radicalism and impulsiveness of the anti-establishment Arab masses does. Haddad's version of Western liberalism, as the study has indicated, lacks the revolutionary spirit of the two Revolutions that have come to exemplify Western liberalism, American and French Revolutions, for which the use of violence against tyrannical rule is a defining characteristic. Haddad's version of liberalism, in other words, is far from manifesting a liberal discourse that challenges the political establishment; Haddad's liberalism, just as Mansour and al-Qaradawi's moderate Islamism is, is rather a constraint on liberty and liberation.

In light of both the multi-tiered motive and alternative ideology that are associated with or embedded in the anti-establishment discourse of al-Jazeera, the network is far from being an innovation in Arab mass media. However, al-Jazeera does represent an innovation in Arab political rhetoric so far as how language is currently utilized by an autocratic regime to perpetuate the established political order. The analysis of al-Jazeera's anti-establishment political discourses has shown that the calculated ambiguity of such discourses is an integral component of a new rhetorical pattern that leads to, or at least aims at, re-inventing and perpetuating the Qatari autocracy in a unique manner. In the past, Arab mass media defended the legitimacy of the host-state by depicting it as capable and by connecting it to its subjects' grand principles and high hopes and expectations. This is no longer the case with the Qatari al-Jazeera. By delving beneath the literal meaning of al-Jazeera's anti-establishment discourses, we uncover an effort to normalize the weakness and incapability of both the Arab masses and Arab autocracy. In a context of normalized incapability, it becomes possible for the network to identify

Qatar with the Arab masses by lowering their hopes and expectations. Consequently, the unpopular policies of the Qatari state—such as normalization of relations with Israel, strengthening of relations with the United States and supporting the war on Iraq and opposition to anti-occupation resistance, become a manifestation of human incapability rather than inhumane political intentions on the part of the Qatari Emir. Moreover, it becomes also possible for al-Jazeera, in a context of normalized incapacities and dwarfed hopes and expectations, to hyperbolically depict the achievements of the Emir of a marginal, tiny, defenseless Qatari state as still capable of bringing about positive political and economic changes and granting the Arab subjects an unprecedented level of free speech. The new Qatari state thus emerges ultimately as an Arab “South Korea”; a state that is capable of achieving social, political and economic progress, despite operating in a context of Arab political weakness and fragmentation, and despite its strong ties with the nation’s enemies, Israel and the United States.¹⁷ In this sense, the network’s deflective identification with the Arab masses represents an innovative way of re-inventing and perpetuating Arab authoritarianism and autocratic rule.

In conclusion, the Qatari al-Jazeera is a demonstrative example of how a radical, revolutionary-sounding vocabulary can be used as a means of containing and regulating the radicalism of the masses in the interest of the authoritarian state. Al-Jazeera, then, becomes a manifestation of the adaptability of Arab authoritarianism to new

¹⁷ On the question of liberalized or liberalizing autocracy as a new paradigm of Arab state, see Daniel Brumberg’s “Democratization versus Liberalization in the Arab World: Dilemmas and Challenges for U.S. Foreign Policy, *Strategic Studies Institute*, July 2005. (www.StrategicStudiesInstitute.army.mil). For a general account on liberalizing autocracy see also Fareed Zakaria (2004), *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*.

communication technologies that are commonly, but not necessarily correctly, seen as potentially liberational due to their ability to loosen the grip of authoritarian regimes on their subjects. Aided by a new communication technology—such as satellite TV, an Arab authoritarian state can now stabilize itself not by excluding and marginalizing the masses, but rather by lowering their hopes and expectations and then by identifying itself with such hopes and expectations. Giving the masses an al-Jazeera, a state-initiated vocal Intifada, is a manifestation of the state’s affordable identification with viewers’ normalized incapability, lowered hopes and dwarfed expectations.

Recommendations for Future Research

In preparation for my research on al-Jazeera, I was surprised by the rarity of scholarly work on Arab rhetoric and Arab culture of communication, which had led me to conduct field research in three Arab countries—Jordan, Egypt and Qatar. Given the centrality and volatility of the Arab world, and the susceptibility of world order at large to any changes in Arab politics, more research on various aspects of the Arab culture of communication is needed.¹⁸

¹⁸ Scholarly works such as W. Smyth 1992’s “Rhetoric and *Ilm Al-Balagha*: Christianity and Islam” (*The Muslim World*, LXXXII (3-4), 242-255), and Hussein Abdul-Raof 2006’s *Arabic Rhetoric: A Pragmatic Analysis*, serve as good examples for a line of inquiry that future researchers can add to and expand on in order to develop a better understanding of various aspects of the tradition of Arab Rhetoric, Arab mass communication and Arab culture at large.

I was also surprised to find that much of the limited Western scholarly work on Arab mass media was foreign policy driven, American foreign policy, to be more specific.¹⁹ Although important, policy-driven research has the tendency to frame Arab mass media in a manner that is compatible with Western political objectives and interests. Consequently, this line of inquiry tends to say more about the culture of the researcher than the researched culture. For instance, from the standpoint of American policy makers, political stability of the Arab world is very important to the United States.²⁰ Therefore, stabilizing the Arab world becomes a principal political objective, even if this means the preservation of a culture of Arab autocracy. Within this framing of the Arab culture of mass communication, the Arab public to which political stability of the Arab world means the perpetuation of tyrannical political regimes, is stereotyped by a majority of American policy makers and researchers as inherently anti-Western, irrational and radical. Phrased differently, the Arab masses, not the tyrannical, undemocratic oppressive Arab regimes, are pathologized by the policy driven line of research. To overcome this

¹⁹ Works such as Jon B. Alterman's *New Media, New Politics? From Satellite Television to the Internet in the Arab World*, Dale F. Eickelman and Jon W. Anderson's *New Media in the Muslim World: The Emerging Public Sphere*, and Nora Bensahel, Daniel L. Byman, and Negeen Begahi's *The Future Environment in the Middle East: Conflict, Stability and Political Change* epitomize this breed of scholarship.

²⁰ "When the United States has had to choose between democracy and regional stability, it has almost invariably chosen stability," as Bensahel, Byman and others have correctly noted (p. 300-3001)

massive shortcoming, an alternative line of research that looks at Arab mass media in its own cultural terms is most needed.²¹

Four more areas of research are also worthy of scholarly investigation. The first area has emerged out of al-Jazeera's advancing and framing of Western liberalism as an alternative to both Arab nationalism and radical Islamism. As evidenced by the discourses of Haddad in particular, al-Jazeera has almost turned Western liberalism upside down. Thus al-Jazeera's discourse on liberalism is conducive to re-inventing Arab tyranny not challenging it. Having been closely watching other pan-Arab TV's that have mushroomed in the 1990's, I propose that the inverting of Western liberalism is far from being an act peculiar to al-Jazeera; it is rather a common practice in the new atmosphere of global mass media. To determine how common this practice is and what its entailments and implications are, I propose that extensive analysis of the political discourses of other pan-Arab TV's is needed.

In my last visit to my family in Jordan, in late 2004, I observed a new pattern of television viewing; downstairs, where my mother lives, the television was always tuned to Iqra' Channel—a channel devoted entirely to religious programming; upstairs, where my brother's family stays, the television set was customarily tuned to entertainment

²¹ Deborah Wheeler 1998's "Global Culture or Culture Clash: New information technologies in the Islamic world—a view from Kuwait" (*Communication Research*, 25(4), 359-376), as well as her 2000's "New media, globalization and Kuwaiti national identity" (*Middle East Journal*, 54(3), 432-444), Andrew R. Smith's 2008 article "Dialogue in agony: The problem of communication in authoritarian regimes," along with the numerous and most valuable studies by Naomi Sakr, to which I have frequently referred throughout this study, are examples of the alternative line of research.

channels (MBC, Future, ART, LBC, Nile TV, among many other channels). From time to time, my brother would ask one of his children to turn momentarily to al-Jazeera for the latest news. So far as the new pattern of television viewing is concerned, my household was not an exception. I observed the same pattern in almost all other households that I visited frequently. Something was drastically different about the new pattern. In my past visits, television sets were habitually tuned to al-Jazeera and people would only sporadically turn to other channels. My brother, as well as many others, who used to go here and there only to watch al-Qasim's OD, seemed to have lost interest in it and hardly talk about the "rowdy" host anymore. The pattern should not be taken as an indicator of a significant decline in the popularity of al-Jazeera. After all, the channel, so far as the news is concerned, is still the most watched pan-Arab news channel in the Arab world.²² However, the changing viewing pattern makes it necessary to conduct more research on al-Jazeera and the Arab viewers' attitudes towards it. Does the exodus from al-Jazeera to other television stations signify disillusionment on the part of the nomadic viewers with al-Jazeera and their readiness to embark on another virtual journey seeking another alternative?

²² Ranking al-Jazeera TV as the most watched news channel in the Arab world is an uncontested fact among media scholars. See the 2008 Annual Arab public Opinion Poll by the Zogby International. According to the poll, the viewership of al-Hurra is 2 % compared to 9 % to al-Arabiyya and 54 % to al-Jazeera. See also reports by Allied Media Corporation, such as its 2007's "Who watches al-Jazeera" as well as a study by Auter, Arafa and Al-Jaber , "Who is al-Jazeera's Audience" (TBS, No.12, Spring-Summer 2004), among several other studies estimate the al-Jazeera's audience between 40 and 50 million viewers.

Closely linked with the previous point is the possible impact of a new technology—the Internet.²³ Within the context of Arab politics, the Internet offers a new site, the study of which promises to bolster our understanding of al-Jazeera by deepening our understanding of how any new communications technology is used by the Arab public as a channel of resistance, and by the Arab regimes as a means of self-preservation. To this effect, there are numerous questions that are worthy of investigation; questions such as: what attracts the Arab internet users the most? What does that which attracts them say about the ideological inclinations of the Arab public? From a rhetorical standpoint, these two questions can be readily answered by an analysis of a flow of Internet texts that are authored by Arab users themselves in their commentaries on various political issues. Beside the two previous questions, other questions germane to how Arab autocracy is adapting to the Internet and neutralizing the challenge it poses to its hegemony over the flow of information.

The Internet is important in a different way still, so far as al-Jazeera is concerned. More often than not, a connection is made by numerous communication researchers between the fact that the Internet is a pulpit utilized by dissenting voices in various

²³ For a brief yet highly informative account on the uses of the Internet in the Arab world and the possible effect of the Internet on both the Arab public and the Arab regimes, see Brian Whitaker 2009's "What's really wrong with the Middle East." London, England: Saqi Books. See also, Jonathan Zittrain and John Palfryn 2008's article "'Internet filtering: The politics and mechanism of control. In D. Roanld, et al (Eds.) (2008), *Access denied: The practice and policy of global internet filtering* (pp. 29-56). Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press. Another informative work on the same subject is Jon B. Alterman's "The information revolution in the Middle East," in Nora Bensahel, Daniel L. Byman, and Negeen Begahi (Eds.) (2004), *The future environment in the Middle East: Conflict, stability and political change* (pp. 227-251). Santa Monica, CA: Rand.

countries and the democratizing affect of the new technology. However, the Internet, like al-Jazeera, is as valuable and available a means for representatives or proxies of established political powers as it is for political opposition. This is evidenced by al-Jazeera's utilization of the Internet in disseminating a rhetoric that subverts the Arab masse's radicalism to a wider audience, as attested to by the seventeen million hits aday to the network's website.²⁴ The merger between the two important technologies—the Internet and TV, was also most obvious in the CNN's overwhelming use of the Internet (Twitter, to be more specific) in its continued coverage of the latest Iranian 2009 election. Thus, taking into consideration the intermarriage between the Internet and various technologies of communication, a study of the Internet uses in the Arab world would shed more light on the widely circulated presumption of the democratizing effect of new technologies of mass media, and on the relationship between available information and social and political transformation within an authoritarian culture.

A final area that deserves further research has to do with the new rhetorical pattern that al-Jazeera has ushered in the Arab world. In commenting briefly on this pattern in Chapters 1 and 2, I proposed that this pattern manifests a rhetorical innovation, a turning point in Arab political discourse, so far as uncovering how language is used in re-inventing and perpetuating Arab autocracy. I have further proposed that the pattern is characterized by the common use of “deflective identification” as a means of initially engaging the viewers' radical beliefs and attitudes in order to direct them towards

²⁴ See http://allied-media.com/aljazeera/jazeera_advertising.html

channels of perception that benefit the established order. My study has only scratched the surface of both the innovative rhetorical pattern and the idea of “deflective identification.” Several matters germane to the innovative rhetorical pattern deserve closer attention. One of such matters pertains to the connection between rhetorical ambiguity and political continuity of the established political order. In watching other pan-Arab TV stations, I have noticed that the new pattern is now widely duplicated, which raises the following questions: what are the limitations and, or, strengths of the new pattern? Is the new pattern sustainable? At a broader level, what does the connection between rhetorical ambiguity and political continuity tell us about the larger connection between persuasion and identification in the context of an autocratic culture? My study of al-Jazeera has introduced another variable that could shed light on the persuasion-identification connection—“normalization.” I am intuitively inclined to believe that in a non-democratic culture in which fatalism is a stable value, the immediate end of rhetoric is not necessarily to create public consent by persuasion but rather by constantly normalizing, through repetition, a set of beliefs and values that are A) linkable to the audience’s fatalistic tendencies and B) conducive to the perpetuity of the established order. Closely linked with the process of normalization, I contend, is “deflective identification” as an initial step that aims at eliminating or at least weakening of any set of beliefs and values that competes against the new set of beliefs and values. Further examination of this thesis is a necessary step in developing a more comprehensive understanding of Arab mass media and, at a broader level, the norms of Arab political rhetoric.

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