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Understanding the Muslim Brothers in Egypt

Dr. Abdel Monem Said Aly

The horrific events of September 11, 2001, and the resulting confrontations between Western countries, primarily the United States, and a variety of Islamic forces have raised the following question: What should be done with the Islamists? The United States' failure in Iraq, NATO's more recent failures in Afghanistan, the impressive performance of Hezbollah during the 2006 war in Lebanon, the salience of "Sharia Courts" in Somalia, the strengthening of Islamic forces in Pakistan, and the electoral success of Hamas in Palestine and the Muslim Brothers in Egypt: All make this question especially pertinent and urgent.

Any serious attempt to answer this question would soon reveal that what are referred to as "Islamic" forces not only are highly diversified along sectarian and ideological lines and with regard to competing approaches to politics and the use of violence; they are also differentiated within each of these categories by nationality and other geopolitical variables. Faced with this mosaic of religious-political groupings, academics and policy makers in and outside the United States tend to classify Islamic political groups into "radicals" and "moderates."

While the first of these terms implies a greater willingness on the part of those so described to use violence—including terror—to achieve their political goals, moderates are viewed as restricting themselves to the use of political means to achieve their objectives. Among the latter groups, the Muslim Brothers in Egypt are often seen as most prominent. Their success in electoral politics, the success of the Justice and Development Party in Turkey, and the widely respected place gained by a similar party in Morocco have raised the possibility that Islamic countries can produce "Islamic Democrats," in much the same way that Western countries have produced "Christian Democrats" in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

On the basis of this assessment, think tanks and academics began to produce a growing body of literature proposing that Islamists be engaged within the

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political processes of these countries. A policy of “engaging Islamists” was suggested as a response on the part of the West to the problems with which it is faced in the Middle East.¹ As it is most frequently presented, the argument has two facets. The first exposes the inefficiency, incompetence, and corruption of the present Arab regimes and their practice of suppressing opposition; the second emphasizes the popularity, vitality, dynamism, and increasingly democratic convictions of “moderate” Islamic parties.

Parallel to the broader suggestions that Islamists be engaged, a more specific body of literature focuses on the Muslim Brothers in Egypt. The significance of this literature stems from Egypt’s historical and geostrategic importance as well as from the fact that the Muslim Brotherhood movement was born in Egypt in 1928 and has spread from there to the rest of the Islamic world. (Not surprisingly, the International Organization of the Muslim Brothers has always been led by Egyptians.) This literature invariably refers to political dynamics in Egypt in terms of the repressive control exercised by the Egyptian regime on the one hand, and the moderate agenda of the Muslim Brothers, and their pursuit of peaceful political participation, on the other.²

The purpose of this Brief is to question the validity of the arguments commonly made in asserting the moderation of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt, and of the evidence mobilized to support these assertions. It is also meant to ask under what conditions moderation and democratic values might *become* intrinsic parts of the Muslim Brothers’ ideology and behavior. Regarding this broader question, this Brief will argue that the Muslim Brothers are a highly diversified political movement. The movement’s positions regarding politics in general and democracy in particular differ considerably from one country to another, depending on these countries’ specific historical, cultural, intellectual, and socioeconomic conditions. Decisions as to whether or not Islamists should be engaged must therefore be based on the specific approach to politics and democracy adopted by each Muslim Brothers movement and not on some imaginary general depiction of these movements as committed to democracy.

Fortunately for analytical purposes, the Muslim Brothers in Egypt have produced massive amounts of literature: books, declarations, websites, bloggers, and statements. Their representation in the Egyptian Parliament now for a number of years allows a close examination of their policy positions. This Middle East Brief relies heavily on the political behavior of the Brothers since 2005, when they gained 20 percent of the seats in the Egyptian Parliament. Additional sources are the program they adopted that year along with three documents they produced in 2007: their response to the “government statement” in January; the position they adopted toward the elections to the Shura Council in June; and the draft program they adopted in September for their prospective political party.

Historical Background

For almost eight decades, the Society of Muslim Brothers or Muslim Brotherhood has been an integral part of the Egyptian body politic. Established by Hassan Al Bana in Ismailia in 1928 with the goal of restoring the Caliphate and implementing the Sharia law, it soon spread in Egypt and beyond, into the Islamic world at large. Throughout this period, the Muslim Brothers acted as a political movement posing a challenge to the modern Egyptian state, which was established in 1922. Whether Egypt was a kingdom (1922–53) or a republic (1953 to the present) the Brothers confronted all Egyptian regimes, leading to their periodic repression and the imprisonment of their leaders.

In the 1970s, President Sadat released the Muslim Brothers from prison. He also allowed them to enter informally—without legal status—into the process of liberalizing Egyptian politics. As a result, the Brothers began to participate in elections and, more broadly, in the country’s political life—running as independent candidates who gradually adopted a relatively new political vocabulary, invoking

concepts of democracy, civil society, human rights, equality, and citizenship. In the 2005 parliamentary elections, they gained 88 seats, almost 20 percent of the elected seats—a major increase from the 17 seats they had held since 2000. (They had won 8 seats in the 1984 elections and 36 in the 1987 elections.³) An informal legalization of the Brothers has in effect taken place, accompanied by a sharp rise in their public stature and affording them a permanent presence in the Egyptian and pan-Arab media.⁴

In their early years, the Brothers resisted the idea of creating a political party, regarding parties as tools used by the West to divide “the Islamic *umma*,” or community of believers. As their participation in public life grew, however, the Brothers began to discuss the idea of creating a political party. Their 1986 proposal to establish a “Shura Party” was their first public declaration of intent to form a party. They tried again in the early 1990s, and yet again, in 1995, under the banner of “Reform.” That effort was led by Abdel-Moneim Abul-Futuh, a member of the Brotherhood’s Politburo.

The next attempt, under the name Wasat (Center) Party, began in the mid-1990s, following the partial disaffiliation of a segment of the younger members of the Brotherhood.⁵ The most recent attempt, launched in September 2007, was accompanied by the circulation of a more detailed draft program, addressing itself to the major questions involved in the relationship between religion and the state. Brotherhood officials declared that the party would be a civil political entity with a religious *marja’iyya* (foundation or frame of reference).

The Image of Moderation

Since their resurrection in the 1970s, the Muslim Brotherhood has attempted to project itself as a moderate and democratic movement. Robert S. Leiken and Steven Brooke from the Nixon Center have written that “the Brotherhood is a collection of national groups with differing outlooks, and the various factions disagree about how best to advance its mission. But all reject global jihad while embracing elections and other features of democracy. There is also a current within the Brotherhood willing to engage with the United States. In the past several decades, this current—along with the realities of practical politics—has pushed much of the Brotherhood toward moderation.”⁶ These authors’ resulting policy recommendation calls for “[recognizing] that the Muslim Brotherhood presents a notable opportunity” in the fight against the extremism of al-Qaeda and the likes.⁷

In no small measure, the view of the Brothers as moderates results from their efforts to project themselves as such in the Egyptian parliament and in their public appearances. In Parliament, Brotherhood members have been staunchly critical of the Egyptian government, bringing up cases of corruption and consistently calling for greater transparency. Brotherhood members active in Egyptian unions and syndicates have adopted a similar line. On Egyptian, Arab, and international media, they have reiterated their adherence to the civic state and to the democratic political system,

their belief in tolerance and equality, and their opposition to the theocratic state.

A message sent not long ago to the press as well as to Egyptian intellectuals by Mohammed Mahdi Akef, the Supreme Guide, clarified the Muslim Brothers’ position on a variety of issues. Akef notes that rulers are human beings, and as such have no religious powers or authority. For him, “the legitimacy of a ruling in a society of Muslims is based on the satisfaction . . . of the people and on [the rulers’] ability to provide people with the space to express opinions and participate in public affairs.” What form this takes, he argued, would depend on when and where the principle of “shura” (consultation) is implemented. At this time, he writes, if the shura has any meaning in Islam, “it converges with the democratic system which puts matters of state in the hands of the majority, without prejudice to different minorities’ legitimate right to express and defend opinions and positions and to call for supporting these positions.”

Within this context, Islam—and, accordingly, the Muslim Brothers—are said to believe in human rights, and in the equality of man without regard to religion, creed, color, ethnicity, or nationality. Thus, Christians in Egypt are seen as equal partners in the homeland. Moreover, the position of the Muslim Brothers is that they will use only peaceful means to achieve their goals; they condemn all who use violence and terror and consider them as having committed a great sin, before God and the people alike.⁸

In another widely disseminated statement, Mahmoud Ghozlan, a member of the Muslim Brothers Guiding Office or Politburo, delivered a similar message,⁹ and the Brothers’ program for the 2005 parliamentary elections proclaimed their goal as establishing in Egypt “a democratic, constitutional, parliamentary, republican, system.” Subsequent Brothers’ programs and policy papers have emphasized, in addition, a strong commitment to the principles of freedom and the equality of man.

The Devil in the Details

A closer look at the Egyptian Muslim Brothers’ pronouncements and declarations made in and outside Parliament, however, reveals much more conservative and radical views regarding the relationship between religion and state. While borrowing extensively from the liberal lexicon of political concepts, the Brothers never fail to add important reservations, such as “within the confinement of the principles of Islam” or “without prejudice to what is known by necessity about Islamic Sharia.” These “qualifiers” place the Brothers’ positions regarding the relationship between politics and religion squarely within the framework of Islam. In this context, politics is not seen as primarily about legislating on behalf of the public interest but is regarded rather as intended to implement the “correct” interpretation of the divine and the sacrosanct; legislation is regarded as a process of discovering God’s wisdom;¹⁰ and governing is seen as nothing but the issuing of *fatwas*.

Indeed, the Brothers' understanding of politics is symbolized by their slogan, "Islam is the Solution"—whose implications reveal a very different picture of the organization and its beliefs. For example, when the Brothers express their commitment to freedom in practicing religion, this is limited to those "recognized revealed religions"—namely, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In practice, the Muslim Brothers never accepted that other faiths, such as Hinduism or Buddhism, are religions whose worshippers have an equal right to practice their faith.

Accordingly, when a group of Baha'is asked the courts in Egypt to grant them the right to register their religion on their ID cards, just as Muslims and Christians have the right to do, the Brothers objected in public and in Parliament, refusing to recognize Bahaism as a religion, or even as a creed to be respected.¹¹ Even the equality of Christians and Jews with Muslims is qualified by an interpretation the rough translation of which is that "what is for us in terms of rights is for them, and what is incumbent on us in terms of duties is incumbent on them." In practice, what this means is that Muslims will make decisions based on the Sharia and their decisions will be binding on all, except regarding personal matters and freedom of worship. In practice, even this ruling was violated by the Brothers when a number of Muslims converted to Christianity, which the Brothers considered *redda*—that is, deserving of the death penalty. (In contrast, the Brothers regard the conversion of Christians to Islam as something that should not be questioned.)

The Muslim Brothers in Action: The Four Faces of Tyranny

A closer look at the Muslim Brothers reveals a large number of inconsistencies between their general pronouncements and specific documents, between their theory and their practice, and between what they say in English and what they say in Arabic. A serious scrutiny of their documents and public positions reveals what can only be depicted as an intention to implement religious tyranny. In particular, the political project of the Egyptian Brothers seems to have four aims: creating the "faithful man"; establishing a theocratic polity; enhancing the interventionist state; and adopting confrontational foreign and national security policies.

The Faithful Man

The cornerstone of the Muslim Brothers' strategy, in Egypt and in the Islamic world at large, is the creation of a "new man" who will be devoid of sinful intentions, will have a "good" consciousness, and will be ready to fulfill and serve the word of God. Contrary to many of the Brothers' pronouncements that support freedom of speech, the holding of free elections, the right to form political parties, and the right to demonstrate, the Brothers limit freedom of choice by seeking to mold individuals in one important dimension: that of Islamic religious commitment. Thus they call for something similar to what the Spartans attempted to achieve by creating their "warriors," what Communist regimes tried to achieve by creating a "socialist man,"

and what Nasser attempted in Egypt by "rebuilding the Egyptian man." In all these cases, a process of indoctrination coupled with fear had come to dominate political life.

To achieve this end, the Brothers' project clearly calls for the establishment of a near-monopoly over all the country's means of socialization, including the mosques, the media, and the schools. Accordingly, the Brothers would not diminish the government's control over "national" radio and television broadcasting and the press. Rather, in order to spread the word of God and respond to what they consider false allegations against Islam, the Brothers would consolidate and expand the status and role of these media by adding new channels in different languages, such as English, French, German, and Spanish.¹² Furthermore, after "cleansing public institutions from all means of destruction and corruption," the Brothers intend to ensure "that it will be the place of free opinion, the good word, the sublime art, to respect the constants of the nation." The phrase "the constants of the nation" refers to the principles of the religion of Islam as the Brothers interpret them.¹³ Although the Brothers' new draft party program calls for accepting the possibility of establishing private broadcasting and television stations—which already exist under the present regime—the Brothers add that the operation of these venues will be "based on the condition of their being in harmony with the 'values and principles of Egyptian society'"—the last phrase being a euphemism for Islam.¹⁴ Likewise, cultural production, as stipulated in the Brothers' draft program, would be subject to "self-regulation"—meaning that as a result of indoctrination that will begin at a very young age, the purveyors of culture should be able to produce products that will be in harmony with the traditions of Islam.¹⁵

The goal of the creation or molding of the "faithful man" leads the Brothers to discriminate against minorities, particularly women and Copts. As will be shown below, not only are these minorities excluded from the *Wilayat al-uzma*—the high positions of president and prime minister; they are also subject to different types of laws for their socialization. In fact, some of the Brothers will not accept a single law covering all places of worship—that is, churches as well as mosques. Instead, in the case of building churches, they call for considering "the needs of the community" when it comes to granting building permits and the like. Regarding women, the Brothers not only insist that female circumcision is a "blessing for women"; they also demand that employment of women—particularly as judges—become subject to social consensus.¹⁶ And while celebrating the natural differences between men and women, in the educational realm the program calls for additional and distinct curricula for women emphasizing gender differences.¹⁷

The Theocratic State

Since their return to public life in the mid-1970s, Egypt's Muslim Brothers have repeatedly rejected the allegation that they are aiming to establish a "theocratic" religious state. They argue that "theocratic politics means the rule

of religious people—preachers and popes and the like who have no official place in Islam, [which is] a religion in which no one mediates between man and God.” Moreover, theocratic intervention is said to be a purely European medieval experience that has no parallel in the history of Islamic states, where the ruler has always been a civilian.

In practice, however, the Muslim Brothers have sought to advance the prospects of a theocratic state in a variety of ways.

First, they rely heavily on the second article of the Egyptian Constitution, which states that “Islam is the religion of the state, and the principles of the Sharia are the main source of legislation.” At the same time, they conveniently ignore other provisions of the Constitution, in particular Article 1, which states that Egypt is a democratic state based on citizenship; Article 3, which states that power is in the hands of the people; and Articles 40 and 46, which unequivocally assert the total equality of the country’s citizens.¹⁸

Second, the Brothers are bound to make *fatwa*-making—based on a religious interpretation of the holy books—part of the country’s legislative process. And once legislation is based on verses of the Quran and on hadiths, politics will have become an exclusively Muslim domain, and these same sources will be invoked by Islamists to put into place public policies detrimental to individual freedom, particularly against non-Muslim creeds (as discussed above) and against freedom of expression in art and literature.

Third, the Muslim Brothers insist on slogans and political symbols that are religious and theocratic. By proclaiming that “Islam is the Solution,”¹⁹ they actually negate the process of social and political bargaining, characteristic of a democracy, that cannot be constrained by a specific interpretation of sacred books. And of no less importance, the Brothers’ logo displays two crossing swords, between which is the Quran and below which is the verse of the Quran that calls for preparedness and the accumulation of all possible powers to fight the enemies of God and of the faithful. Given the adversarial nature of the political process, this view transforms every conflict or disagreement into a “holy war” against the “enemies of God,” thereby contradicting every democratic and civic tradition.

Fourth, the Muslim Brothers’ new party platform proposes to make the practical expressions of the theocratic state much more salient than before. The 128-page program states that “the Islamic State is by necessity a civic state,”²⁰ and the civic state is defined as one based on the principle that public functions should be performed by efficient, specialized experts; the role played by elected officials is to implement the will of the people, who are the real source of power.²¹ Yet this definition should be understood within the context of the Brothers’ declaration that the Sharia, not the Constitution, is the proper basis of legislation, and that it will be considered binding on all elected citizens:

“The Islamic Sharia should be implemented based on the vision agreed upon by the nation

through a parliamentary majority of the legislature, elected freely with integrity and real transparency. . . . *The legislature should ask for the opinion of a commission of the nation’s great religious authorities. This commission should be elected freely and directly by the ulama [religious scholars] and should be truly and totally independent from the executive power: technically, financially, and administratively.* The commission’s work will be aided by committees, experienced consultants, and efficient experts in all areas of life and science, who are well known for their honesty and neutrality. This also applies to those decisions of the President that have the power of law in the absence of the legislative power. The opinions of the commission will be based on the public interest as it relates to [each] specific subject. The legislature, in cases that are not related to definitive religious rulings based on irrefutable evidence, has the right to decide by an absolute majority. Before making its final decision, the legislature may review the case with the religious commission to determine what is closest to the public interest. The law will define the characteristics of the religious personalities who will have the right to elect the members of the commission.”²² (emphasis added)

Thus, the religious commission will have the final say, at least regarding all issues on which the Sharia provides “irrefutable evidence.” The commission will not be based on equal citizenship, since women, Copts, and non-Muslims cannot be members—thereby contradicting the Brothers’ earlier statement regarding non-Muslims, namely that “what is for us in terms of rights is for them.”²³ Politically, in all cases of differing beliefs and interpretations, the creation of the religious commission for legislation will open the gates for political and religious strife, revolving around which institution should have the upper hand in the legislative process.

Fifth, the Brothers’ draft party platform stipulates “*the state has essential religious functions*,” and that “these religious functions are embodied in the head of state or prime minister, according to the existing political system; therefore, the head of state or prime minister [will] have duties that contradict the beliefs of non-Muslims. This does not allow for asking non-Muslims to serve in such a position because the Islamic Sharia, does not commit non-Muslims to duties that may contradict their creed.”²⁴ (emphasis added)

Sixth, the religious functions of the head of state not surprisingly led the draft party platform to state, for example, that “it has to be noted that the decision [to declare] war represents a religious decision, which means that it must accord with the goals, aims, and fundamental principles of the Islamic Sharia. Depending on the political system, this will make the head of state or prime minister responsible for providing a religious justification to declare war. He has a religious duty to do that.”²⁵ As wars will thereby lose their nationalist dimension, this means that the conscription of non-Muslims will not be acceptable, opening the door to

levying a “protection tax,” or *jeziya*, on non-Muslims. (This had already been proposed by Mustafa Mashhour, the Brothers’ former Supreme Guide.²⁶)

A Heavy-Handed State

Anyone complaining about the heavy-handed nature of the current Egyptian state, with its notorious bureaucracy of more than seven million employees, would do well to consider the type of government proposed by the Muslim Brothers.²⁷ The new draft party program borrows heavily from 1960s left-leaning literature regarding Third World development, in which the state is to play a highly interventionist role in running the economy and the society. The Brothers’ program also suggests ending the process of privatizing public sector companies that is presently being undertaken in the framework of reforming the Egyptian economy.²⁸

With this in mind, the Brothers suggest that Egypt’s economy should first achieve “self-sufficiency” in the vital areas of food, medicine, and armaments and with respect to both providing for all the needs of its citizens—for clothing, housing, and transportation as well as food—and improving the environment while making it safe.²⁹ Second, they propose to increase governmental investment in the service sectors of health and education, an investment intended to improve the quality of those services and to increase employment.³⁰ Third, the Brothers propose “gigantic national projects” to develop the Sinai, the New Valley (Western Desert), the Western Coast, and the Eastern desert, as well as huge projects and programs in the nuclear, space, aviation, and bioengineering realms.³¹ Finally, the Brothers promise to make sure that the public and private sectors develop an “integrated industrial base for ‘strategic [that is, military] industries’ that will contribute inputs to civilian industries.”³²

Clearly, a state organized along such lines will exert a totalitarian reach over the entire Egyptian polity, as has been the case in the past with Third World countries, including Egypt. Such a state will control not only all aspects of the economy, from production to consumption to employment; it will also adopt a bellicose foreign policy based on the increasing militarization of the state.

Confrontational National Security and Foreign Policies³³

Various Muslim Brothers’ declarations and statements differentiate between domestic and external challenges to national security. According to these documents, the domestic threats that Egypt faces include the backwardness of the country, corruption and incompetence in the government, the despotism of the ruler, poverty, and social and economic weakness in general.³⁴ It is noteworthy, however, that in none of the Brothers’ official documents has terrorism ever been mentioned as an internal threat—or in any other context.

Egypt’s external threats are defined in terms of the “Zionist entity” (Israel), the different American projects and plans

for the Middle East, and the deployment of foreign forces in the Persian Gulf, the Red Sea, Iraq, and Lebanon. Beyond representing direct national security threats to Egypt, these challenges are viewed as threats to Arab security as well as to the security of the neighboring Islamic states (meaning Iran).³⁵

In response to such a dire threat environment, the Muslim Brothers suggest relying on increased indigenous capabilities, such as those elaborated above; on building an Islamic and Arab coalition; and on reforming the international system led by the United Nations—a system seen as having gone astray owing to American control over its decisions.³⁶ More specifically, the Brothers propose not only to end every facet of normalization with Israel but also to submit the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty to a referendum, so that Egyptians can decide whether or not they accept peace “with the Zionist entity.”

In addition, the draft party platform commits the Brothers to make every effort “to reach a fundamental solution to the Palestinian question that will guarantee the right of all Palestinians in and outside the occupied territories [by] establishing a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as its capital on all the historic land of Palestine.”³⁷ When Essam Al Erian, a prominent member of the Muslim Brothers, recently declared that if and when the movement came to power it would be prepared to recognize Israel and to respect the existing agreements between Egypt and Israel, the Brothers’ Supreme Guide, Mohammed Mahdi Akef, responded that “the Brothers are not recognizing nor are they going to recognize Israel.” He then added: “There is nothing in the dictionary of the Muslim Brothers that is called ‘Israel’ . . . What we recognize is that Zionist gangs have occupied Arab territory and kicked its people out. If [the Israelis] want to live among us, it will be in the framework of Palestine; but if they want a state [of their own], we offer nothing but resistance.”³⁸

This type of national security posturing is not new to the Middle East; it has been a principal theme of the region’s various nationalist and radical regimes over the past few decades, and it is currently the posture projected by Iran. What is unique to the Brothers’ position is the mix of national security goals with religious zeal and incitement.

When Do “Moderates” Become Really Moderates?

A careful review of Egypt’s Muslim Brothers’ positions and views, then, reveals a general predisposition and approach that is anything but “moderate.” Indeed, in both the domestic and foreign policy realms, the movement’s stances are extreme and militant. Yet this should not lead to the conclusion that Egypt’s Brothers are incapable of *becoming* moderate, or that the broader Muslim Brotherhood movement is incapable of producing moderate Muslims or Islamic Democrats.

In recent history, Muslim Brothers movements in different countries have positioned themselves variously along a continuum from extremism to moderation. While the

Muslim Brothers in Iraq, Syria, Morocco, and Turkey have adopted moderate positions regarding these countries' domestic and foreign policies, their counterparts in Egypt, Jordan, and Pakistan have not. The fault lines differentiating moderates from extremists have been issues related to the relationship between religion and state, the extent of the state's intervention in the economy, and the proposed (accommodative or confrontational) national security policy.

Two factors seem to play a role in inducing Muslim Brothers to moderate. The first is when the political system in which they operate is nationalist/totalitarian, and not only Muslim Brothers but other segments of the body politic are persecuted and the country is being led toward national catastrophe. That is the case in Iraq and Syria, where the Muslim Brothers, while themselves suffering from a tyrannical system, are forced to cooperate, interact, and form coalitions with secular opposition groups.

The second, almost opposite condition is when the state and society have developed institutionally and economically to a degree sufficient to shift the internal balance within the Brothers toward moderation. In these cases, moderation is induced by the society's experiencing serious political and economic reforms, propelling it toward democracy and a market economy. The latter is crucial not only for development but also for creating strong vested interests against the exercise of violence in an environment ruled by norms of social, political, and economic bargaining. The Turkish experience is an excellent case in point. There, the moderate Justice and Development Party (AKP), with roots in the Muslim Brothers movement, helped strengthen Turkish democracy, enhance economic growth, build closer relations with the European Union, and promote active diplomacy to achieve peace and accommodation in the Middle East.³⁹

The circumstances under which the Muslim Brothers operate in Egypt do not match either of these two sets of conditions. Despite the means of suppression used by its government, Egypt is not a totalitarian state. At the same time, the socioeconomic political reforms implemented in Egypt have yet to create the healthy society and polity that might tilt the balance within its Muslim Brothers away from militancy. Modernizers and moderates still constitute a minority within the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt—a movement that still has a long way to go before it can be equated with its counterparts in Turkey or even Morocco.

Endnotes

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