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At the Crossroads: Saudi Arabia's Dilemmas

by
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Abstract

In the course of the last decade it has become clear that events have gone wrong in Saudi Arabia. A deep intra-societal struggle cuts across all formative institutions of the country and the house of Al Saud is at pains to address its profound crisis of legitimacy and performance, the overwhelming crisis of identity associated with modernity, the internal and external pressures for socio-economic reforms, and the complex and multi-faceted phenomenon of religious extremism. This article examines the formidable challenge of addressing frustrated popular expectations, and reforming the state's religious institutions and rigid politico-ideological agenda without alienating the substantial conservative constituency on which the monarchy's legitimacy depends. It also traces the historical and the ideological roots of international and local jihadism as well as the evolution of Wahhabism from a retrograde but status quo-*oriented philosophy into a radical ideology prone to violence and terrorism.*

INTRODUCTION

In the course of last decade it has become clear that events have gone wrong in Saudi Arabia. A deep intra-societal struggle cuts across all formative institutions of the country and the house of Al Saud is at pains to address its profound crisis of legitimacy and performance, the overwhelming crisis of identity associated with modernity, the internal and external pressures for socio-economic reforms, and the complex and multi-faceted phenomenon of religious extremism. There is a growing vacuum in religious authority, and the Saudi monarchy is walking a tightrope in its effort to navigate between the forces of reform and the conservative religious and cultural forces on which its legitimacy depends. Saudi society remains deeply conservative and the house of Al Saud seems to recognize the formidable challenge of addressing frustrated popular expectation, and reforming the state's religious institutions and its rigid politico-ideological agenda without alienating the conservative constituency. How far and how fast the monarchy can integrate concepts of dialogue, tolerance, and pluralism in a

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political reality built upon a narrow, rigid, and inflexible heritage is not clear.

The dramatic terrorist events in Saudi Arabia, reported divisions in the royal family, and intensified turmoil in the region have spawned alarmist speculations about the nation reaching the boiling point. The jihadists have proved adept at manipulating slogans, mobilizing themes, and appropriating them for their own revolutionary purposes. Through networks of schools, storefront mosques, and other institutions they consolidated their ability to disseminate their ideas and operate in the kingdom. But contrary to popular images, the jihadists have not been successful in garnering much popular support and they stand little chance of destabilizing the monarchy within the next decade. The bulk of the populace, particularly the religious establishment, are hostile to them, fearing that their tactics will lead to *fitnah*, or chaos. Beyond that, however, Saudi's future is uncertain. There is a real possibility that if socio-economic distress deepens and popular resentment of the house of Saud intensifies radical groups might emerge as an independent political force.

A CULTURE UNDER FIRE

The kingdom's domestic and international troubles are largely of its own making. It was the state's support for the ideological and motivational sources of Islamic radicalism that laid the groundwork for the surge of modern global terrorism. The state provided the radicals with overall political and strategic guidance, equipment, and training for their activities. The Saudis funded mosques, Islamic study centers, universities across the globe, and madrassas to propagate their own rigid and intolerant version of Islam. To preserve its enormous privileges and perpetuate its hold on power the monarchy bought off its ardent critics at home, gratifying their wishes and financing their proselytizing missions abroad. Those that refused the generous offers were crushed, marginalized, or shipped overseas. This policy of repression and cooptation was entrenched after the dangerous challenges of the late 1970's. Afraid of suffering the same fate as the Pahlavi monarchy in Iran, the royal family empowered the religious establishment, granting it further financial incentives, significant concessions in social and religious matters, and a mandate to propagate Wahhabi ideology abroad. Excessive powers were given to the *mutawaun* (volunteers), the agents of the Committee for the Propagation of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, whose main job is to patrol the streets and public settings to ensure compliance with Wahhabi prescriptions. Violators of the dress code and gender segregation rules were taken into custody as were those who did not close their shops during prayer times.

This new era in Saudi life was marked by more stringent social measures where the Wahhabi clerics enjoyed censorship power over the media. They successfully lobbied for more religious education in the schools and universities, and effectively barred women from TV, prohibited music in any media, and mar-

ginalized Shiites and other minorities. Some of the Muslim institution's Saudi oil money was used for material and ideological support for jihadists. This development was the unintended result of lax oversight by the kingdom.

After the horrific events of 11 September 2001, when 15 out of the 19 hijackers were Saudis, Saudi Arabia came into the spotlight. In the United States, a torrent of articles, books, television shows, documentaries, and congressional speeches vilified the kingdom's religious beliefs, social mores, cultural traditions, and every other conceivable aspect of Saudi life to the point that some commentators wondered why Saudi Arabia was not included in George Bush's "axis of evil."[1] Stephen Schwartz, a new adherent to Sufism and a vociferous critic of Wahhabism, made Saudi Arabia the incarnation of evil.[2] "Claiming that his study 'constitutes a secret history comparable to the hidden archival record of Soviet Communism,' Schwartz manages to find the fingerprints of Riyadh at crime scenes that no Saudi ever visited," wrote Princeton professor Michael Doran.[3] A number of self-proclaimed experts claim that there lies the source of Islamic terrorism, and then laments the US reluctance to go after Wahhabism and its Saudi sponsors, for in their view crushing Wahhabism would probably rid the world of jihadism. Some do so without engaging in a critical analysis of the policies and beliefs of Saudi Arabia, while others base their conclusions on "unsourced or suspect data."[4] Critics like Stephen Schwartz have "provided activists with a valuable prop: a text to clutch when they stand before the microphone and exclaim, 'I have in my hands proof of Saudi evildoing'."[5] Schwartz's testimonies before Congress, like those of Dore Gold, former Israeli representative to the United Nations, and others, became authoritative references to lawmakers. In a *Washington Post* opinion piece, Senators Kyl and Schumer delivered a strong indictment of Wahhabism and the House of Al Saud on the sole basis of what they heard in congressional hearings.[6]

There is no question that criticism of, and concern about, the monarchy's funding and ideological legitimation of Sunni Muslim extremism is absolutely legitimate but some uninformed and dubious claims about the kingdom were over the top. It is not helpful when in a briefing to the Pentagon's Defense Policy Advisory Board, former RAND Corporation senior analyst, Laurent Murawiec, described the Saudi regime as "the kernel of evil, the prime mover, the most dangerous opponent" of the United States in the Middle East and recommended that the United States seize Saudi oil fields and freeze its assets.[7] In Washington and elsewhere in the United States it became fashionable to defile anything that is Saudi. "To say anything kind about Saudi Arabia is to invite a reprimand. To say anything unkind about it is to win points," noted Chas Freeman, the US Ambassador in Riyadh from 1989 to 1992.[8] Cognizant of how a majority of Americans have become deeply suspicious and even derisive of Saudi Arabia,[9] then-presidential candidate John Kerry used every opportunity to score political points against his opponent, President Bush whom he depicted as unable and unwilling to stand up to the Saudi regime.

It is important to recognize that, though puritanical, contemptuous of modernity, and amenable to producing terrorists like bin Laden, Wahhabism is not terroristic in and of itself. Depicting Wahhabism alone as the godfather of the new global terrorism is false and does not help much in tracing the deep roots of bin Ladenism. Calling *Hezbollah* and the Taliban "Wahhabized fringe groups," as Schwartz does, is wrong. *Hezbollah* is a Shiite movement, and the Taliban is affiliated with the Deobandi sect. Wahhabism is one form of *Salafi* interpretation and there are many *Salafi* movements in the Islamic world with few ties to Wahhabism. As Anthony Cordesman put it, "Blaming Saudi beliefs, or Wahhabism, for the views and actions of most of today's *Salafi* extremists is a little like blaming Calvin for today's Christian extremists or Elijah for today's Jewish extremists."[10] There is a subtler picture than the belief that where Wahhabism is the official creed there must be a terrorist state. The ideational and ideological underpinnings of modern global terrorism, best exemplified by bin Laden, issue from a much more complicated set of intellectual, political, and ideological trends than what Stephen Schwartz refers to as the "fatalistic Wahhabi cult that resides in the heart of the Saudi establishment."[11]

DEADLY FUSION: WAHHABI MILITANCY AND QUTB-STYLE JIHADISM

The phenomenon of bin Ladenism can be traced back to a deadly mixture of the early Saudi tradition of aggressive Wahhabi militancy and the movement of political Islam which had emerged in Egypt in the late 1920s and was transformed into a revolutionary political trend by Egyptian scholar, Sayid Qutb. The deadly fusion of Wahhabism and Qutb-style jihadism started in the 1950s and 1960s when Saudi Arabia became home to elements of the radical Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt, Sudan, Jordan, and Syria. Seeking to shore up its Islamic credentials, the Saudi monarchy championed Islamic causes worldwide without seeming to appreciate that such a stance risked diluting its monopoly on Islamic interpretation. Far too often, the Saudis paid little attention to the radical brand of Islam advanced by legions of teachers coming from Egypt. Fleeing political persecution at home, Muslim Brotherhood members found refuge in the Saudi educational system and large Saudi charities, like the Muslim World League, where they built strength, laying the groundwork for the development of a new hybrid, best exemplified by Muhammad Qutb. He fled to Saudi Arabia and along with Abdullah Azzam, one of the heads of the Muslim Brotherhood from Jordan, taught at King Abdul Aziz University in Jiddah, where Osama bin Laden was their student at the time. For regional geopolitical reasons, Saudi Arabia welcomed theses Islamic scholars to foster religious education and help offset the ideological assaults of Arab nationalism, communism, socialism, and leftism.[12]

Islam has always constituted the sole bedrock of Saudi legitimacy. Whenever challenges emerged that threatened that legitimacy, the monarchy was quick to counteract them by advocating pan-Islamism. The Saudis depicted Arab

nationalism as the great enemy of Islam. In the late 1970s, however, the challenge to Saudi Islamic credibility was of a different kind to that posed by *Baa'thist* and Nasserist Arab nationalism, and once again the Saudi monarchy reacted, perhaps unwittingly, by accelerating radical religious and Islamic awakening. Saudi policies helped spur a boom in a new generation of sheikhs, professors, and students influenced by Egyptian Muslim Brothers, ideology to counter the menace of shiism coming from neighboring Iran where the Islamic revolution posed a direct challenge to the house of Al Saud. Ayatollah Khomeini challenged the Islamic credentials of the Saudi monarchy, accusing it of being an agent for the enemies of Islam and stirring the Shiite minority to rebel against the regime. The most shocking challenge to the house of Al Saud's Islamic legitimacy came with the armed seizure of the Grand Mosque in 1979 by a group led by Juhayman bin Saif al-Utaibi. As has been the case since the founding of the modern Saudi state in 1932, the regime has rebuffed threats to its stability by proving itself to be more Islamic than its detractors, but in the process it helped produce, though unintentionally, a radical, non-official, Saudi Islam even while making efforts to suppress it.

A NEW MENTALITY OF *JIHAD*: THE RISE OF QAEDISM

This marriage between the Muslim Brotherhood's ideology and Wahhabi doctrine, better known as Salafist, entered a new stage with the *jihad* against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the 1980s, when the regime sought to deflect its homegrown militants from domestic agitation by sending them off to fight the Soviets. It is there that Osama bin Laden became well versed with the Qutbist and Mawdudist ideology that would transform the concept of *jihad* in the modern world. In Afghanistan bin Laden and other Saudi *mujahidin* fought alongside jihadists inspired by the ideologies of Maududi, Qutb, and their intellectual heirs, Palestinian scholar, Abdullah Azzam, Dr. Ayman al-Zawahiri, and the blind sheikh, Omar Abdul Rahman. Abdullah Azzam, dubbed the "gatekeeper of the *Jihad*" and the "Emir of *Jihad*" had a PhD in *fiqh* (Islamic jurisprudence) and was credited with being a masterful guerrilla organizer.[13] He recruited Arab *mujahidin* and built the international network that Osama bin Laden, the late Mohammad Atef, and Ayman Zawahiri would turn into *al-Qaeda*.

This joint venture between bin Laden, Abdullah Azzam, and other ideologues from the Egyptian Islamic Jihad movement and Pakistan's *Jamiat-ul-Jamaat-e-Islami* created a "mentality of *jihad*" that had a profound impact on Saudi *mujahidin* once the fighting was over and it was time to go back to Saudi Arabia. Some veterans got on with their lives, but others returned home brainwashed by a militaristic ideology steeped in an international *jihadist* culture that is hostile to Western-influenced Arab governments. Unlike their Egyptian and Syrian counterparts who had their religious or political awakening grafted from inside their countries long before they landed in Afghanistan, most Saudi veterans had their formative years in Afghanistan where their political, social, and

religious views were molded. These foreign-born views stood in sharp contrast to the ones promoted by the retrograde but non-political Wahhabi religious school.

THE GULF WAR: THE CATALYST OF SAUDI RADICALISM

The 1990-91 Gulf War, which brought American and other Coalition troops to stand guard over Islam's holiest sites, was a cataclysmic event for a number of Saudis who were shocked by the kingdom's inability to protect itself after having spent billions of dollars on arms. The Jihad Movement epitomized by the Afghan veterans and "the Islamic Awakening" (*al-Sahwa al-Islamiyya*) faction led by Salman al-Awda and Safar al-Hawali saw the presence of American troops in Saudi Arabia as sacrilegious and part of a pernicious Western design to control Arab and Muslim lands.[14] For both groups the Gulf War laid bare the incompetence of a corrupt regime that was subservient to the United States. But while the Afghan veterans called for armed struggle against the monarchy and its security forces, the *al-Sahwa* leaders never openly advocated the overthrow of the Saudi regime, nor were they linked to such terrorist actions as the bombing of the National Guard facilities in Riyadh in 1995, or the more deadly attack in Dhahran, better known as Khobar Towers, the following year. Their main goal was to persuade Saudi leaders to repent, and rectify its corrupt and worldly policies in line with pure Islam. To accomplish their task they skillfully used their writings, sermons, and cassette tapes to mobilize and expand their base and pressure the regime to engage in a frank debate about the dire state of the kingdom.

In an unprecedented move in Saudi history the two sheikhs al-Awdah and al-Hawali played a major role in formulating a 12-point "Letter of Demands" that was signed by hundreds of prominent religious scholars, judges, and intellectuals and was presented to the king in April 1991 through the late Sheikh Abdul Aziz Bin Baz, the kingdom's grand mufti. Contrary to the established norm in the kingdom, where all criticism of the monarchy should remain private, the letter was made public, and as a result many of the signatories of the letter were questioned and threatened while others landed in jail. This extraordinary manifesto of radical change called for a broad reform program, including the reform of religious institutions, the formation of a consultative council, the creation of an independent judiciary, and the enforcement of accountability rules for all officials. In July 1992, the *al-Sahwa* leaders and 107 of their followers drafted an even bolder and comprehensive 46-page "Memorandum of Advice." Unbowed by the regime's threats and the consequences of their defiant act, the petitioners called for freedom of expression for independent clerics, right of access to official radio and television to preach their views, an overhaul of domestic and foreign policy, the eradication of corruption, an end to abuse by authorities, and the application of real Islamic law. The official clerical establishment and the national media were quick to denounce the memorandum and those who refused to do so were dismissed.

As was always the case, the regime relied heavily on its tested approach of repressing, dividing, and co-opting its enemies. But dire economic conditions, widespread public anger over the presence of US troops in the country, and the regime's inability to deal with outside threats made the challenge of the 1990s different. The non-official clergy appeared to be gaining ground and confidence at the expense of the official clergy. The state-appointed clergy and their non-official counterpart had often been in conflict, denouncing each other and constantly seeking to increase their influence with the public. But in the wake of the Gulf War the alternative clergy gained new momentum and credibility due to their articulateness and ability to take advantage of the monarchy's crisis of legitimacy and incompetence. They issued *fatwas* that drew wider public support and discredited the ones written by state-appointed clerics. The latter lost their authority and standing due to the widespread perception that they were sycophants to a corrupt, arbitrary, and heavy-handed regime.

The Gulf War was indeed a catalyst for radical Islamic anger and politicization. The Islamists became more organized than ever before, and their demands became bolder and more far-reaching.[15] King Fahd's hesitant, conciliatory gestures did not help quell the mounting challenge to the regime. The formation of an appointed non-legislative consultative council and the delegation of more power to provincial governments only intensified the Islamists' drive for radical change. In May 1993, a small group of academics, lawyers, and clerics founded the Committee for the Defense of Legitimate Rights (CDLR) to enhance peaceful reform, human rights, and defend the rights prescribed by the *Shari'a*. The regime lashed out against this movement, using senior establishment religious figures to undermine the group's claims and substantiate the monarchy's stance that the kingdom's rule was based on the rights prescribed by the *Shari'a*. CDLR's founding members were harassed, laid off, or imprisoned. Hundreds of their supporters suffered the same fate. Sheikhs al-Awda and al-Hawali did not escape the wrath of the regime and in September 1994 they were jailed. The detention of these popular and influential preachers was not without risk and as was feared it triggered large demonstrations, especially in Burayda, al-Awda's home city in Qassim province.[16]

The government crackdown continued unabated. The authorities targeted dissenting forces, utilizing a policy of divide and rule along with inducements to groups willing to repent and cooperate. This assault on rebel religionists, coupled with selective harassment of political opponents, became the order of the day, creating further political instability and a huge potential for mischief. The attacks on *Sahwa* leaders pushed radical freelance sheikhs and their terrorist networks underground and to develop operational links with the jihadists' movement, gain new recruits, and launch a campaign of terror to destabilize the regime. With all the major *sahwist* leaders behind bars or in exile in Great Britain, the debate over the politics of compromise shifted dramatically toward the extreme fringe. By the mid 1990s, the radicals seemed poised to impose their

militaristic platform and revolutionary, *takfiri* ideology. A number of *Sahwa* leaders and followers joined the trend of Salafist *Jihad* though many others did not.

JIHADISM'S CROSSROADS: DOMESTIC VERSUS INTERNATIONAL AGENDAS

The new converts to the jihadists' ideology joined the battle set by Osama bin Laden. Many went to Afghanistan, the Balkans, Central Asia, and Chechnya to join a *jihadi* contingent recruited by *al-Qaeda*-aligned operatives in Jordan, Syria, Egypt, and other countries in the Middle East and beyond. In these battleground territories Saudi veterans of the Afghan war perfected the skills they had developed at the expense of the Soviets, while new recruits underwent training courses in *jihad* and were indoctrinated for martyrdom. The new Saudi *mujahidin* acquired combat experience, and the ideological tools to fight the apostate Saudi regime and its official scholar backers once back in the country. While in voluntary exile, other Saudi jihadists sympathetic to *al-Qaeda* remained at home devising their own set of goals that linked broadly with the supreme military and political goal of the wider multinational network of jihadists. As a homegrown terror network, they drew inspiration from the global ideology of hatred, and that is where the connection probably ends between international and local jihadists. The latter's support comes mainly from a variety of local sources brainwashed by the ideology of militant Islam and/or disenchanted with the regime's failure to deliver economic opportunity or political freedom.

This domestic-based terror network, known as *al-Qaeda* on the Arabian Peninsula (QAP), is less cohesive in membership, consisting of cells of terrorists and operating with subtle, decentralized links to groups that provide funding, publicity, shelter, and recruiting facilities. Its loose structure means that it does not use a single method of operating issued from a central command authority. Bin Laden is perceived as a symbol of defiance, ideological inspiration, and policy guidance, inspiring attacks rather than plotting them. His emirs in Saudi Arabia are top Afghan veterans and are the ones who outline objectives and major strategy issues. They approve *fatwas*, organize religious affairs, authorize major terrorist operations, and manage publicity and media strategy.[17]

Their effective management of the media is one of QAP's key survival tools. Internet technologies such as web mail, instant messenger, email lists, and message boards are skillfully used to spread their propaganda campaign, advance the group's training and operational purposes, and produce the maximum psychological effect. They also use these technologies to recruit followers, raise funds, and engage in psychological warfare tactics. This sophisticated use of the Internet to carry messages, plan attacks, project a false view of events, and launch a campaign of fear through intimidation, propaganda, and psychological warfare has made it difficult for Saudi authorities and its Western allies to defeat

a versatile enemy that masters the art of deception and electronic warfare.

Despite the arrest of high-profile QAP operatives, the organization continually puts out two fortnightly magazines, which run from 30 to 50 pages each. *Sawt al-Jihad* (the Voice of *Jihad*) is devoted to political and ideological matters. Its primary goal is to cement the ideological basis of *jihad*, promote theological justifications for martyrdom, and boost fighters' morale. The second online magazine, *Mu'askar al-Battar* ('Al-Battar Training Camp), covers military training. With the US robbing *al-Qaeda* of their training facilities, the need arose for the terrorists to find a substitute for this loss. Although new training centers were set in several places, including Saudi Arabia and Iraq, they could never replace the vast safe havens destroyed in Afghanistan. QAP had to find other practical venues capable of absorbing and training the growing number of its recruits. It is in this context that the architects behind QAP explored the Internet as a means to expanding their training operations and launched the monthly magazine, *Al Battar.*

In page after page the reader is introduced to the art of guerrilla warfare and survival tactics, the skills of kidnapping, negotiating, and taping executions, the importance of maintaining operational security, and the value of sports, just to name a few.[18] The regimen of terror lessons is comprehensive. Senior members of *al-Qaeda* also contribute to the magazine, the most prominent of which was the Egyptian, Saif al-Adel, the security chief for Osama bin Laden.

QAP also launched a new magazine publication on the Internet aimed exclusively at women, advising them on how to reconcile the apparent contradiction of fighting *jihad* while maintaining family life, how to support their husbands in their conflict with the authorities, and how to bring up their children in the path of *jihad*. Named after a female Arab poet belonging to the early Islamic era and published by the "Women's Information Office in the Arabian Peninsula," the *al-Khansaa* magazine is the first of its kind to reach out to women for terrorist operational support missions.[19] The wife-mother is strongly urged to be in top physical condition, "not overindulge in eating and drinking,"[20] and to "ask personal permission neither from her husband nor from her guardian, because she is obligated and none need to ask permission in order to carry out a commandment that everyone must carry out."[21] This is a striking development given the draconian constraints that most jihadists impose or want imposed on women. But this change of heart is driven by cruel though pragmatic reasoning. The effectiveness of female suicide bombers from the occupied territories in Palestine to Chechnya has convinced male jihadists, who could care less about women's rights or equality with men, to elevate women's status in the war against what they perceive as the enemies of Islam.

The shocking suicide operations conducted by the Palestinian Wafa Idris, the first Palestinian woman to successfully penetrate Israeli defenses and blow herself up killing scores of innocent Israelis in the process, or Reem Raiyshi, the

first Palestinian mother of young children to become a suicide bomber, seemed to impress male jihadists enough to engage in a debate about the proper role of women in *jihad*.[22] Proponents of an active role of women in *jihad* back their stand with historical examples where women played a tremendous supportive role in the cause of *jihad*. The stories of those legendary females who joined men in battle in the early days of Islam and celebrated the sacrifices of their sons and husbands for the sake of *jihad* are recounted endlessly and posted on several extremists' websites. What is also novel in this approach is that the champions of women's rights to participate in *jihad* are no longer concentrated on opportunistic male extremists. The articles and editorials in *al-Khansa* magazine are seemingly written by women, though it is not clear if they actually are. This new strategy of incorporating women into QAP ranks has the ultimate goal of using a hitherto untapped asset as a vehicle for indoctrinating the coming generation into a jihadist mindset. Women can play a major role in altering the social order of society and rebuilding it in conformity with revolutionary *jihad*. They can contribute to the ideological training of their children, indoctrinating them for martyrdom and *takfiri* thinking. By instilling *takfiri* indoctrination in children at a younger stage, they can grow up to be "good" *jihadis*.

QAP also markets training films detailing targets and tactics. Role-playing and scenario type of assassinations, kidnappings, bombings, attack technique at security posts, and small unit raids on various types of targets are shown in fairly good quality produced films. The production of these films demonstrates the sophisticated infrastructure put in place by the jihadists' media production wing, the Sahab Institute for Media Production. Despite the massive onslaught of the authorities, this video production arm of *al-Qaeda* published a number of relatively sophisticated videos from "Nineteen Martyrs" (the story of the 9/11 hijackers) to clips showing preparations for potential terrorist attacks and testimonials by militants reading their last wills, to live recordings of terrorist operations, like the ones carried out against the al-Muhaya housing compound in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on 8 November 2003, in which 18 people were killed and 120 injured. Cutting, sharp editing, and the professional and time-consuming process of producing and distributing lengthy video productions reflect the growing sophistication of *al-Qaeda*'s video production house.

This deft use of the media accounts for QAP's continued longevity, despite the major setbacks and heavy losses inflicted upon it by the regime's forces. That the online magazines have not been interrupted by the death of QAP mastermind, Sheikh Yousef al-Ayyiri, known also as *al-Battar* ("The Cutting Edge"), and such other leaders as Abdel Aziz al Muqrin, once the nation's most-wanted militant, Rakan Muhsin Mohammed Alsaykhan, Nasir Al-Rashid, and Faysal Al-Dakhil, who worked closely and immediately under al-Muqrin, is a sign of the resilience of the organization. Eliminating the movement's commanders has proven to be less damaging than purging its most important ideologues. Military commanders are much easier to replace than prominent theorizers who provide

the ideological support necessary for recruitment, propaganda, and indoctrination. QAP realizes how crucial preserving its communications structures are to its survival. Its online journals and printed pamphlets are the movement's Achilles Heel and they have been instrumental in safeguarding its ideological core.

DILEMMAS OF CONSERVATISM

The Saudi regime's obvious means of attack revolve around aggressive law enforcement, deterrence, and antiterrorism operations. Many of those suspected of being involved were arrested or killed in clashes with Saudi police and security forces. But the continuous scope and audacity of terror networks in the kingdom demonstrated that a campaign that relies solely on the police, intelligence agencies, and other nonmilitary bureaucracies, while sparing QAP ideologues and propagandists, was not enough to subjugate the enemy. "War means war," said Prince Bandar Bin Sultan, Saudi Arabia's former ambassador to Washington, in an unprecedented public statement. "It does not mean a boy scout camp. War does not mean softness, but brutality . . . it is a war against terrorists and aggressors, with whom there can be no compromise."[23] Critical of the way the regime had conducted itself in the face of an existential threat, Bandar warned against the dangers of indulging in a state of denial about the deep roots of Saudi terrorism. "We should stop blaming others. What ails us lies within our own ranks. Enough of demagoguery and confusion at this critical stage in our history."[24] Bandar urged a robust, unyielding, and comprehensive assault on the jihadists accompanied by a reassessment of the identity of the enemy. "If we confront it with hesitancy, thinking of the deviants wishfully as misled young Muslims, and that the solution is to call upon them to return to the path of righteousness, hoping they will come to their senses, then we will lose this war."[25] The prince's message was clearly aimed at members of the monarchy who were unwilling to confront religious zealotry, fearing that a crackdown on the main indoctrinators of *takfiri* thinking would lead to widespread chaos.[26]

There are certainly differences of opinion within the monarchy about how far the offensive on terror should go, and whether it should include members of the clergy who, however uninvolved in violence they may be, still contribute and fuel the propagation of radical ideas.[27] Interior Minister, Prince Naif, and his five brothers (Crown Prince Sultan, Riyadh Governor Prince Salman, business leader Prince Abdul Rahman, Prince Ahmad, and Prince Turki) are suspected in the United States of being involved in sponsoring the preachers of hate, exporting Wahhabism, and abetting the actions of terrorist organizations through their network of charities. They are also notorious for forming a counterweight to their half-brother, King Abdullah, and his desire for change. The "Sudayri Seven" know that the regime must change in some way, and they are understandably cautious that large-scale systemic reform might spin out of control and lead to

the breakdown of the system, but so is the crown prince.[28] Abdullah is not naive to believe that full-scale democratization holds the key to the stability in the kingdom or potential marginalization of the religious establishment serves the regime's interests. What he also seems to understand is that expanding political participation, implementing economic reforms, and taking on the takfirists and their way of thought without alienating the country's substantial conservative constituency are crucial to the monarchy's survival.[29]

But herein lies the central paradox of change. Any democratizing of the system entails openings to Sufis and Shiites, and this risks upsetting the delicate balance between the regime, the religious establishment, the unofficial clerics, and significant numbers of socially conservative people. What to do with women and how to lift their status in society is another explosive issue that probably surpasses anything else in gravity. A number of conservative Saudis see attempts to reform the status of women and minorities as driven by pernicious forces supported from the outside. The sensitivity and difficulty of tackling social issues explains the hesitancy of even reform-minded princes to push as hard as they did with purging the educational system of hate and discriminatory material. The regime status as the promulgator, protector, and enforcer of conservative Islam sharply limits its options for reforming the country's socio-cultural system. The ruling princes have their own constituencies to report to, and, however ironic that might be in a country known for its closed system and the arbitrariness of its rulers, the House of Al Saud has to pay careful attention to the concerns of its large religious base. It is within this context that King Abdullah's dithering can be understood.[30]

Abdullah understands the urgency of reforms, but he is mindful of the regime's religious base and the hardliners within the monarchy who are more adverse to change. Prince Naif and his supporters seem to favor a militaristic solution to the jihadist problem. They see political and social reforms as too risky to implement at this stage of national mobilization as they might antagonize their conservative power base and detract from the main priority of the regime - defeating the terrorists. There is some truth to this viewpoint and its advocates might feel vindicated by their relative successes on the battlefield and the support they drew from unofficial but popular religious critics. There is also some truth to the fact that an opening of the system might most benefit the radical Islamists. After all, there is considerable support for bin Laden's ideas, though not for his methods or designs, throughout the kingdom. Yet, while there is disagreement on how far to go with change within the socio-cultural realm, there is an emerging consensus among a wide spectrum of society, including the religious conservatives, on the necessity of moving quickly and aggressively to reform governance issues.

The last few years witnessed the emergence of a potentially transformative force in Saudi Arabia. The rise of a broadly shared political consciousness

between a number of progressive *salafis*, liberals, and Shiites was a novel and striking development. This new trend of networking between previous enemies gave birth to a unified political rhetoric, and demands for new structures of authority and a new vision for the future development of the country.[31] It also gave a new potency to the movement for change by granting an unprecedented opportunity for reformist intellectuals to reconstruct their image and transform themselves into a popular movement. The moderate *Sahwa* leaders stood to benefit from this alliance as well. Their embrace of liberals and Shiites was intended to show their moderation and willingness to search for common ground through shared values, such as justice and peace. After the shocking terrorist attacks against the kingdom, the *Sahwa* leaders strove to distance themselves from the jihadists and prove that their Islam is one of *wasatiyya* (the middle way).

It is too early to say whether this coalition for change can stand together and successfully paper over significant ideological differences. There is hope for progress in areas that remain uncontroversial from a religious standpoint. The liberals signaled their willingness to moderate their demands for social and religious reforms in exchange for the popular legitimacy their alliance with moderate conservatives confer on them. "For *sahwists*, too, there would be potential benefit, allowing them to resume political activism while moderating their image — a goal very much on their minds since the 11 September attacks."[32] The Shiites are keen on proving their loyalty to the country and the wise among them know they have everything to gain from associating themselves with this emerging trend for change.

The terrorist attacks promoted a sense of national unity and it would be unwise of the monarchy to resist calls for cleaning its house. The absolute, corrupt, and kinship-based system of governance has certainly run its course and there is a growing frustration in Saudi society with the government's indecision and slow response to economic and social adversity. The regime's contradictory and ambivalent actions invite domestic and international doubt about its commitments to change. There is widespread speculation about the inability of the king or his reluctance to push forward and follow-through on the reform agenda that he has embraced. Some of Abdullah's critics claim that the king devised a carefully staged policy of double-talk, aimed at appeasing domestic and international critics. There is a growing concern that all the talk of reform was merely rhetorical, designed to seize the initiative back from the US, which was determined more than ever before to push countries of the Middle East to reform their economic, political, social, and educational systems. The Saudis were openly troubled by this Middle East Partnership Initiative,[33] as they were concerned about dramatic developments in Iraq and beyond, feeling compelled to come up with their own initiative to undercut American designs on the country.

But no matter what the skeptics think about Abdullah's intentions, the king

and the moderates in the House of Al Saud recognize that some hard decisions are needed to rescue the state.[34] Abdullah's attempt to embrace the people the monarchy has long discriminated against is a step that shocked some Saudis in the kingdom but reflected the new, inescapable reality that unless the regime opens up gradually and cautiously, it risks further antagonizing a significant portion of its constituency and possibly driving them a step closer to the jihadists.[35] A few years ago it would have been inconceivable for the then-crown prince to chair three national dialogues with secularists, Sufis, liberals, and, especially, Shiites (whom most Saudis regard as heretics) to discuss their grievances, expectations, and proposals.[36] The fact that one entire dialogue dealt exclusively with the "Rights and Duties of Women," is a first in the Kingdom regardless of the regime's true intentions. The dialogue generated exceptional coverage of women's issues on television, radio, and newspapers across the country, an achievement in and of itself. For the first time in Saudi history, women and men debated the thorniest of social issues: women driving, divorce laws, desegregated workplaces, and women's unemployment. The recent hiring of a female as a pilot is a meaningful step forward in what is to be a long, difficult road toward the emancipation of women. "I see the hiring of this female pilot to work on Kingdom Holding's fleet of private jets as a historic move for Saudi ladies," Prince Alwaleed ibn Talal said in reference to the recruitment of Hanadi Zakariya Hindi by his company.[37]

Notwithstanding their differences of view and approach, most if not all senior members of the royalty, agree on the need to implement some reforms and most of all eliminate zealous jihadists in the same fashion that the country's founder, King Abdul-Aziz, battled the zealous warrior Al-Ikhwan and crushed their rebellion in 1929.[38] Now, as then, the state has to enforce its will and break the forces of extremism. Battling Islamic militants has, of course, never been an easy matter in a country where the religious establishment has considerable sway over religious matters. The monarchy's classic approach was to try to play its favorite balance game with religious militants, accommodating them at times and crushing them when they turned into deadly enemies. The terrorist attacks that rocked the kingdom proved the limits of that approach. Even Prince Naif and his group came to recognize that the country has a major terrorism problem. The question that remains unclear, however, is whether the regime is prepared to take on the perpetrators of terror and those who inspire them, unlike any other time in the kingdom's history, or pursue the same self-defeating and ultimately self-destructive policies of confronting the aggressors and appeasing the hidden forces of extremism. Judging from the rhetoric of the senior princes, including Naif, the tide seems to be tilting slightly toward fighting terror and the ideas behind it. The crackdown on intellectuals notorious for exercising *takfir* and providing the jihadists with ideological support was an encouraging start. The suspension of over 1,000 clerics for "re-education" and the removal of objectionable material from the school curriculum was also promising.[39]

THE RELIGIOUS ESTABLISHMENT

The monarchy understands that to lead effectively it needs to bring harmony and balance to the diverse voices and needs of the kingdom's natural constituencies. The majority of Saudis remain attached to conservative religious values and the Saudi regime realizes that any opening of the system entails marginalizing radical, violent forces without simultaneously alienating the broader conservative constituency. There is a general awareness of the role the religious establishment can play as a veritable bulwark against jihadism and the forces supporting it. In times of crisis the country's religious establishment rose to the challenge and bolstered the regime's response to radical threats to the kingdom's stability. Time and again, the regime was adept at rallying religious leaders and its former Islamist critics to its cause.[40] This was clearly noticeable after the horrendous events of 11 September when the Saudi leadership successfully mobilized religious critics of the regime to denounce religious extremism and undermine deviant understanding of Islam. Sheik Salman al-Awda, al-Hawali, and Sheikh 'Ayd al-Qarni are good examples of three salafi dissidents and fiery critics of the regime who came together to add their voices to the chorus of disenchanted Saudis with bin Laden and his terrorist sympathizers.

This resort to assistance from dozens of unofficial clerics in the conduct of a campaign of ideological warfare against the evil scourge of terrorism stemmed from the realization that only credible preachers with substantial popular following can help get the job done. The regime knew full well that it was necessary to reach out to Islamists known for their reactionary social views and open animosity to the liberal camp of Islamist progressives. In return for concessions on social issues, the regime launched a massive public relations campaign targeting jihadists, using official appearances by al-Hawali and al-Awda, and extensive media interviews with dozens of alternate clerics to portray the jihadists groups as outside the mainstream. In a dramatic appearance on television Sheikh 'Ayd al-Qarni got three jihadists (Nasir al-Fahd, Ali al-Khudair and Ahmad al-Khalidi) to repent their deeds and renounce their radical fatwas inciting disobedience and support for the Saudi militants.[41] "Several of our *fatwas* (religious edicts) and our declarations enacted hatred and contained other issues about which we were deceived . . .. That is why I renounce several of these fatwas," said al-Fahd in an interview on state television.[42] "Put down your weapons and forsake your extreme and destructive ideas" declared al-Khalidi, a radical extremist who said he had used his time in jail for soul-searching and was convinced his old *fatwas* and ideology were wrong.[43] Sheikh al-Khudair said the militants carried out the explosions because of their ignorance of Islamic teachings. "The life and property of non-Muslims in the Kingdom are under state protection and must not be attacked," he added.[44] All three extremists declared how shocked by terrorism they were and how suicide bombers were not martyrs and killing innocent people was not *jihad*.

This dramatic renunciation of terror by leading figures in the radical camp was hugely welcomed by different sections of the society as a blow to the takfirists who pronounced other Muslims as heretics or infidels. But it was the alternate clerics who stood to gain from their assault on jihadists. In return for their cooperation with the regime the house of Al Saud had to accommodate their agenda of reforms sometimes at the expense of liberal thinkers or progressive Islamists. Al-Hawali and other unofficial clerics have made no secret of their contempt for the social reformers and have vociferously lobbied the monarchy not to succumb to domestic and outside pressures for change that is incongruent with their understanding of *Shari'a*. But despite their hostility to social reforms, the *Sahwa* position on other reform issues is not monolithic. There are a number of *Sahwa* leaders who signaled their desire to join forces with a broad coalition that includes Shiites and liberals. The January 2003 petition to Prince Abdullah is a good example of Sunni Islamists, liberals, Shiites, and nationalists coming together on a number of demands, most notably for more institutional constraints on the power of the ruling family and more openness in government.[45] The "constitutional monarchy" petition of December 2003 is another good example where Islamists, liberals, and Shiites came together to call for political reforms and institutional constraints on the power of the house of Al Saud.[46]

CONCLUSION

This article has explored both the historical and the ideological roots of international and local jihadism as well as the evolution of Wahhabism from a retrograde but *status quo*-oriented philosophy into a radical ideology prone to violence and terrorism. Much has been said about Saudi Arabia's faith, crisis of confidence, legitimacy, and modernity but not much was written about its intellectual impasse, existential dilemmas, and competing views over sacred authority. Contemporary Saudi Arabia is grappling with fundamental issues of religion and modernity, development and dependency, political oppression and cultural turmoil, social frustration and institution building. There is a battle under way in Saudi Arabia — a battle for social, political, and religious reforms. Whether the country can come together to reconcile the principles of tradition with modernity is still difficult to tell but the failure to develop stable religious and political institutions capable of dealing with the challenges of development and economic changes can be fatal.

Speculations about the collapse of the regime or potential rift within the monarchy are unduly alarmist. On the battlefield the house of Al Saud has fared well in its war against the jihadists, probably better than many want to give it credit for. The conflict has served as a unifying force for the regime, allowing it to create new bonds and associations with liberals, Islamists, modernizers, and traditionalists, and reaffirm a shared interest in delegitimizing and defeating a common enemy. The mobilization of populist preachers and influential non-official clerics to condemn jihadist acts and thinking coupled with the turning of the

terrorists' own ideologues against them was a clever survival strategy. The regime has also proved adept at manipulating the power of images when they displayed gruesome pictures of victims of terrorist acts in television. This last tactic was so successful that even top QAP operatives in the kingdom acknowledged its powerful effects on Saudis. More generally, the regime has taken initial steps to curb extremist influence, for example, by purging textbooks of lessons inculcating hostility toward Christians and Jews and initiating poverty-reduction plans.

Like any other society under attack and heavy domestic and international pressure to reform, the regime is at pains to advance social and political reforms without undermining domestic stability. As it is engaged in a fight against a violent, radical Islamic movement that accuses it of deviation from the path of Islam, the regime is loathe to threaten its relations with religious forces that both oppose violence and enjoy popular legitimacy. The challenge, therefore, would appear to be to marginalize the more radical, violent forces without simultaneously alienating the broader conservative constituency.

The road to reforms is fraught with dangers. The house of Al Saud has waited so long to initiate the most basic of reforms that any path they take entails risks. The rulers' advanced age certainly complicates succession matters and they must find it extremely difficult to break with their life long inertia and engage in necessary but radical reforms. Bolstered by the current high oil prices and budget surpluses, the regime might decide to pursue a ruthless offensive on jihadists while clinging to the *status quo* in which it enjoys enormous privileges.

ENDNOTES

1. See Dore Gold, *Hatred's Kingdom: How Saudi Arabia Supports the New Global Terrorism* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2003); Robert Baer, *Sleeping with the Devil: How Washington Sold Our Soul for Saudi Crude* (New York: Crown, 2003); Stephen Schwartz, *The Two Faces of Islam: The House of Saud from Tradition to Terror* (New York: Doubleday, 2002); Michael Moore's documentary, *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2004).
2. See Stephen Schwartz, "Liberation, Not Containment: How to win the war on Wahhabism," *The National Review*, 30 November 2001.
3. Michael Scott Doran, review of "The Two Faces of Islam: The House of Sa'ud From Tradition to Terror," *Washington Post*, 22 December 2002.
4. Anthony H. Cordesman, "Saudi Government Counterterrorism-Counter Extremism Actions," *Saudi-US Relations Information Service*, 4 August 2003, at http://www.saudi-us-relations.org/newsletter/saudi-relations-interest-8-4.html (Last accessed 5 July 2005).
5. Doran, review of "The Two Faces of Islam: The House of Sa'ud From Tradition to Terror."
6. Jon Kyl and Charles Schumer, "Saudi Arabia's Teachers of Terror," *Washington Post*, 18 August 2003.
7. Thomas E. Ricks, "Briefing Depicted Saudis as Enemies," *Washington Post*, 6 August 2002.
8. Quoted in Ahmad Faruqui, "Scapegoating Saudi Arabia for 9/11," *Saudi-American Forum*, 17 December 2003, at http://www.saudi-american-forum.org/Newsletters/SAF_Item_Of_Interest_2003_12_17.htm (Last accessed 5 January 2006).

9. See "Saudis Seen As Supporting Terror, Poll Shows," *Washington Post*, 26 February 2002.
10. Anthony H. Cordesman, "Saudi Arabia: Opposition, Islamic Extremism, and Terrorism," *Saudi-US Relations Information Service*, at http://www.saudi-us-relations.org/defense/islamic-extremism-terrorism.html (Last accessed 5 July 2005).
11. Schwartz, *The Two Faces of Islam*, p. xiii.
12. See "Saudi Arabia Backgrounder: Who are the Islamists?" *ICG Middle East Report* no. 31, 21 September 2004; Alain Gresh, "Saudi Arabia: Radical Islam or reform?" trans. Barry Smerin, *Le Monde Diplomatique*, June 2003, at http://mondediplo.com/2003/06/03gresh (Last accessed 5 January 2006).
13. See Lawrence Wright, "The Man Behind Bin Laden," *The New Yorker*, 16 September 2002, at http://www.newyorker.com/printables/fact/020916fa_fact2 (Last accessed 5 January 2006).
14. For a thorough description of Salman al-Awda and Safar al-Hawali, see Mamoun Fandy, *Saudi Arabia and the Politics of Dissent* (New York: St. Martin's, 1999). For an in-depth study of the *Sahwa*, see Gwenn Okruhlik, "Networks of Dissent: Islamism and Reform in Saudi Arabia," *Current History* 101, no. 651 (2002), pp. 22-28.
15. But despite record-high mobilization and organization, the Islamists were far from being a cohesive and coherent entity. Their failure to constitute a single entity and their inability to articulate a monolithic discourse impacted on their effectiveness.
16. The International Crisis Group reported that this incident is "often referred to as the *intifadat Burayda* or Burayda uprising. Calling it an uprising may be an overstatement since only a few hundred people took to the streets but the country had witnessed nothing like it since the 1960s." "Saudi Arabia Backgrounder," p. 5.
17. International Crisis Group reported that "various militants have been identified as leaders, though how much command and control over the rest of the network they truly exercise is far from clear. There is some evidence that QAP has specialised committees or sub-groups responsible for instruction/training, media strategy/production, and religious affairs." Ibid, p. 14.
18. Issues 1 through 24 of *Mu'askar al-Battar* are available online at http://www.e-prism.org/pages/5/index.htm.
19. Al-Khansaa, a convert to Islam and companion of the Prophet, is remembered for her eulogies, particularly the one written for her brother, Sakhr, who died in a tribal feud. She is considered "the mother of the Shahids" because when her four sons died in the battle of Al-Qadasiyya (637), she did not mourn, but thanked Allah who had "honored her with their deaths."
20. *Al-Khansa*, no. 1 (20 August 2004), at http://www.e-prism.org/images/kh01.pdf (Last accessed 14 July 2004).
21. Ibid.
22. For the general debate over suicide attacks, see Haim Malka, "Must Innocents Die? The Islamic Debate over Suicide Attacks," *The Middle East Quarterly* X, no.2 (2003), at http://www.brook.edu/fp/saban/analysis/malka20030501.htm (Last accessed 5 February 2006).
23. Prince Bandar bin Sultan bin Abdulaziz Al-Saud, "A Diplomat's Call for War," *Washington Post*, 6 June 2004, at http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A17405-2004Jun5.html.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid.
26. See Toney Karon, "Qaeda Demons Haunt Saudis," *Time Online Edition*, 18 June 2004, at http://www.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,653621,00.html (Last accessed 20 August 2004).
27. For speculations about divisions within the royal family, see Toby Jones, "Seeking a 'Social Contract' for Saudi Arabia," *Middle East Report* 228 (2003), at http://www.merip.org/mer/mer228/228_jones.html (Last accessed 10 August 2004). See also Michael Scott Doran, "The Saudi Paradox," *Foreign Affairs* 83, no. 1 (2004), pp. 35-51.

28. See Joseph Kechician, "Testing the Saudi 'Will to Power': Challenges Confronting Prince Abdallah," *Middle East Policy Council Journal* 10, no. 4 (2003), at http://www.mepc.org/public_asp/journal_vol10/0312_kechichian.asp (Last accessed 5 July 2005).
29. See Afshin Molavi, "Abdullah emerges as a reformist"; and Adel al-Toraifi, "The virtuous king," Bitterlemons-International.org, vol. 4, no. 2 (19 January 2006), at http://www.bitterlemons-international.org/previous.php?opt=1&id=116#472 (Last accessed 5 February 2006).
30. See "Can Saudi Arabia Reform Itself?" *ICG Middle East Report* no. 31, 21 September 2004, pp. 22-26.
31. See Stéphane Lacroix, "Between Islamists and Liberals: Saudi Arabia's New 'Islamo-Liberal' Reformists," *Middle East Journal* 58, no.3 (2004), pp. 345-65.
32. "Saudi Arabia Backgrounder," p. 11.
33. See President George Bush's speech to the National Endowment of Democracy, 6 November 2003.
34. See Kechician, "Testing the Saudi 'Will to Power,'"; Khalid al-Dakhil, "2003: Saudi Arabia's Year of Reform," *The Arab Reform Bulletin* 2, no. 3 (2004).
35. See Mai Yamani, " A Saudi Survival Strategy," *Daily Times*, 9 June 2003, at http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=story_9-6-2003_pg3_3 (Last accessed 5 January 2005).
36. See "Can Saudi Arabia Reform Itself?," pp. 17-19.
37. *Arab News*, 24 November 2004. Prince Alwaleed ibn Talal is the son of Prince Talal bin Abdul-Aziz who is a brother of the late King Fahd. The father is a staunch democrat who is known for his opposition to the royal family's monopoly of power. In a country where few dare criticize the king and the Islamic establishment Prince Talal calls for a constitutional monarchy, an elected parliament, and a sharp reduction in the clergy's powers. "Political Reform Essential for Saudi Arabia, Says Prince Talal," *Gulf News*, 13 September 2003, at http://www.gulfnews.com/Articles/news.asp?ArticleID=97433 (Last accessed 20 August 2004).
38. See F. Gregory Gause, III, "Saudi Arabia at a Crossroads? Notes from a Recent Visit," *Strategic Insights* III, Issue 2 (February 2004), at http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2004/feb/gauseFeb04.asp (Last accessed 5 January 2006).
39. Riyadh suspended many preachers for allegedly promoting hatred and intolerance. See Press Release, "Statement by Adel Al-Jubeir, Foreign Affairs Advisor to the Crown Prince," Washington, DC: Embassy of Saudi Arabia, 12 June 2003.
40. See Mustafa Shihab, "Al Shaykh Yadu ila Muharabat al-Ghilu Bikul Ashkaliha", *Al Hayat*, no. 14777, 8 September 2003, p. 4.
41. See *Al Sharq Al Awsat*, 18 November 2003.
42. "Saudi Dissident Rejects al-Qaida," Aljazeera.net, 23 November 2003.
43. *Arab News*, 15 December 2003.
44. *Ain-Al-Yaqeen*, 5 December 2003.
45. For a full discussion of the petition, see Richard Dekmejian, "The Liberal Impulse in Saudi Arabia", *Middle East Journal* 57, no. 3 (Summer 2003), pp. 400-13; see also "Can Saudi Arabia Reform Itself?," p. 13; *al-Quds al-'Arabi*, 30 January 2003.
46. See Gause, "Saudi Arabia at a Crossroads?"