ISLAMISTS IN POWER:
VIEWS FROM WITHIN

BUILDING NEW REGIMES AFTER THE UPRISING

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WASHINGTON, D.C.

WELCOME:
Jessica Matthews
President
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

SPEAKERS:
Mustafa Elkhalifi
Minister of Communications
Kingdom of Morocco

Dr. Abdul Mawgoud Rageh Dardery
Freedom and Justice Party—Luxor (Egypt)

Nabil Alkohafi
Head of International Relations
Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic Action Front Party (Jordan)

Sahbi Atig
National Constituent Assembly of Tunisia; Ennahda Party

MODERATOR:
Marwan Muasher
Vice President for Studies
Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Transcript by Federal News Service
Washington, D.C.
JESSICA MATHEWS: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I’m Jessica Mathews. I’m president of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and it’s my very great pleasure to welcome you all to what I think is going to be a really important and wonderful day.

We have the great, good fortune to bring together a dozen — (inaudible) — specialists from five countries — (inaudible) — as you can see, hundreds of — (inaudible) — Washington policy community for some — (inaudible) — of understanding and questions that really haven’t — (inaudible) — before.

Sixteen months ago, a gathering of this sort would have been unthinkable. Ben Ali, Mubarak, Qadhafi and Saleh were all still in power, and Islamist parties in many cases were banned. Today many Arab countries are in transition, and Islamist parties are an important part of this historic process of change.

In Tunisia, Morocco and Egypt, Islamist parties have won substantial victories at the ballot box, and now or will soon occupy key government posts. Similar results are widely expected in Libya and in Jordan later this year.

The rise of Islamist parties is a political reality, and the decisions that they make will powerfully shake the region’s future for years – and for the years to come.

We convened this conference because in spite of their growing power, Islamist parties remain – (inaudible) – understood in Washington and in other key capitals outside the region. Many leaders of – many Islamist leaders have never served in government and have had only limited contact with the West, and their rise to power has provoked a great deal of uncertainty, even trepidation, among policymakers. They replace autocrats who, while often brutally repressive, were at least known quantities.

And so we felt it would be enormously valuable to bring together both sides of this new equation for an overdue conversation.

Our hope for today is for candor and a pointed exchange of views. We invite everyone to listen carefully and to ask tough questions.

The Arab world, after all, faces major challenges. After decades of repression and stagnation, with Islamist parties poised to enter power for the first time, we have questions. How strong a role will religion play in governing? Will individual freedoms be protected? Will Islamist parties respect the outcome of future elections, no matter who wins?

On the economic front, what do Islamist parties plan to do to reduce unemployment and to spur growth? What sort of business environment do they play to create?
Our panelists today are designed to address all of these questions and more. They are meant to provide emerging leaders from the region a chance to share their views with an expert audience on how they intend to govern, and at the same time they’re meant to provide Washington – Western policymakers a chance to listen and also to ask probing questions.

We are at Carnegie both proud and I think – to be able to host this event and uniquely equipped to have done so. And we operate one of the Arab world’s leading think tanks, the Carnegie Middle East Center in Beirut, with scholars and staff from across the region. We operate and publish all our work in both Arabic and English, and we focus our analysis and research on issues of political reform, economic reform, democratization.

When we launched the Carnegie Global Vision five, six years ago to create the world’s first global think tank, we did so with an ambition to connect a global audience with local expertise, local voices from the world’s most critical regions, and that is precisely what we’re doing here today.

I want just to thank a few people and individuals who made the day possible: Marwan Muasher, Rena Ottoway, and Mai El-Sadany from Carnegie staff, who have worked for untold hours to pull this audience together, and the Swiss government, the Open Society Institute, and the Heinrich Böll Stiftung, who have made today’s conference possible through their generous financial support. I – the Carnegie Endowment is deeply grateful to all of them.

And most importantly, I want to thank all of you for joining us. A day like this obviously depends on the – on those who have traveled in some cases great distances to join us, and we are particularly grateful to them. And we are delighted to have all of you here for what I think will be an important day from which we will all leave the wiser.

So with that said, it’s my pleasure to turn the floor over to the head of our Middle East program, Marwan Muasher, who is moderating this first panel.

Welcome, and enjoy your day. (Applause.)

MARWAN MUASHER: Thank you very much, Jessica.

Before we start, let me just take care of some administrative logistical issues. I want to remind everybody, please, if they can have their cellphones off. And to use your translation machines you have to turn to “6” for English and “8” for Arabic. That should be easy.

OK, we’re starting the first session with “Building New Regimes after the Uprising,” and to do that we have with us representatives from four Arab countries, two of which have undergone transitions – Egypt and Tunisia – and two others who are trying to put in place a
process of reform from above in order to avoid transitions such as what happened in Tunisia and Egypt and put in place a reform process – Morocco and Jordan.

And we’re going to hear from all of them. Their CVs are included with you, but let me just briefly introduce Mr. Mustafa Elkhalfi, minister of communications in the new Moroccan government; to my immediate right, Dr. Nabil Alkohafi, head of the international relations of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan; to my immediate left is Dr. Abdul Mawgoud Dardery, member of parliament from the Freedom and Justice Party in Egypt; and to my far left is Mr. Sahbi Atig, a member of the Constituent Assembly in Tunis, from the Ennahda Party.

Many questions, of course, are on everybody’s mind as we go through these transitions – the question of pluralism and the peaceful rotation of power, rights of women and minorities, personal rights. The constitution-writing process, of course – is it a process that will be done by consensus or by majority? Is what is being built a civil or a religious state, and how would either look? What are the economic programs of the Islamist parties that are coming up? What are these programs – what do they look like? What does an Islamic state look like? What does upholding Islamic principles in government mean? Will Sharia be the only source of legislation? And would Sharia laws be imposed on all citizens? And if an Islamic state, as Jessica says – as Jessica said, is – (inaudible) – are citizens allowed to change their minds and vote Islamists out, or would it be a one-way street?

[00:08:59]

These questions and more I think are on everybody’s minds. The Islamists are being held to a high standard as they appear to be winning in all Arab countries. I think that these questions also need to be asked from secular parties as well as Islamist parties. The commitment to pluralism is something that it is hoped would be a trait of all parties in the Arab world, working for pluralism, and not just expected of Islamist parties.

So what I thought we would do is start with the countries that have gone under – undergone transitions. We start with Tunisia, because it was the first. We move to Egypt and see what experience the Egyptians had. And then we talk about Morocco and Jordan as two countries, two monarchies that have not undergone transitions and are trying to put in a process from above.

And I thought what we would do is I would ask questions of you, but please feel free to add anything you want. And limit your interventions to no more than 10 to 15 minutes. You have a large number of people in the room. I’m sure all of them are interested in hearing your views and in asking questions, so I hope we can limit the initial remarks to about 10 minutes each.

[00:10:23]

And I’ll start with Mr. Sahbi Atig and ask about the transition process in Tunisia today. How is it – do you feel confident that a pluralistic society is put in place? How would you characterize the transition that is going on in Tunisia so far?
SAHBI ATIG: (Through translator.) In the name of God most merciful, most beneficent, I thank the Carnegie Endowment Institute for this invitation and for their efforts in conducting this dialogue.

And now the Islamic tide is rising in the Arab world. We are discussing the Islamic performance in the field of individual freedoms and woman pluralism. The freedom of belief, expression – these are a number of fundamental and basic issues that had to be clarified to everybody so that we are able to draft or to establish a true democratic system that will guarantee these freedoms and to find a society that is deep-rooted in freedom. These Islamic Arab parties know the relationship between the Islamic values and modernity values is an issue.

I say that we have fought a peaceful revolution in Tunisia. The revolution was not violent. The first thing that was dropped was the transformation by violence. They also dropped the concept of fear from a dictatorship, and also the methods of change by violence.

In addition to this peaceful and civilized methods by this revolution, we were quickly able to organize free elections that were transparent and fair for the first time in the Arab world. When I say the Arab world, I mean that it’s the first time elections were held to express the will of the people through the ballot boxes without any forgery of the will of the people.

It was a peaceful, civil revolution, free, democratic, transparent elections, and in a short period of time we were able to build a regime, or a system, that is the beginning of constitutionality. And the Constituent Assembly now includes all parties in the society, political parties – Islamist, liberals, leftist, nationalist. There is pluralism in the Constituent Assembly which is real, that reflects the reality of the Tunisian society and reality of the parties – political parties of Tunis.

Also, in a short period of time we were able to draft a small constitution and then an interim regulation to govern Tunisia for three years so that we can build a democratic system that will be based on freedom and democracy.

Within this system we have elected the chairman of the Constituent Assembly and then the president, and then we formed a government. Most importantly about this government is that it’s a national coalition that combined Ennahda movement and a grouping party – which is also the republican party, which is a liberal party. This combination combined Islamists and leftists and liberals and nationalists in one government. This perhaps is what I considered an element of strength, meaning that we have – we have ended the rule of one party as we ended dictatorship.

And now we are – we also started drafting a constitution – a new constitution. Now, we have formed six constituent committees: The committee for freedoms and rights, and
the committee for the relationship between legislative and executive branches, and a committee to start thinking about the regional governance. We work all within the constitutional framework.

We work on reconciliation, national agreement. We seek that this constitution represents all Tunisians and all the people with the goals of the revolution in Tunis, Tunisia.

The method in which we will draft this constitution is by consensus and to be – to care for expanding the consensus among the people by all parties, particularly from another movement. We have the majority. It is a proportionate representation in accordance with the size of the different party represented. So in the committees, the parties are represented (greatly ?) so we were careful to build on very basic things in the constitution, and that is the Islamic nature of the state in Tunisia. This meets the agreement of all parties. So Islam and Arabism will be the main foundations.

[00:16:56]

And the main thing also is to guarantee individual freedoms. And there’s discussion about the type of the regime, whether it will be a republican system or a different system. There should be a constitutional court that will monitor application of all laws enacted and there should be – we are careful to have a higher committee that will oversee all elections. It will not be related to the Ministry of Interior or any other, but there will be another committee that will oversee also the information sector, so there also be the watchdog to maintain neutrality of the judicial system. So we'll have also an independent commission that will organize the information and the media in Tunisia so that there will be a guarantee that a dictatorship will never return back to Tunisia. So this is a great gain in Tunisia.

So there is a commission for personal status, in which the woman in Tunisia had gained a lot. So the revolution in Tunis, as we know, was built on the shoulders of young people and women – so Jamaat Zeitouna is Islamic again, so in Ennahda we adopt a civil state, a republican regime, a democratic system. And our vision is a fundamental thing Americanism to conduct a dialog in the state and in society.

So we envision this as a democratic method, which is not different from Ashura, but it would be a measure to employ – adopt, So there is no difference between democracy and Islam. Perhaps we can deep-root democracy within Islam in a very sound manner.

[00:19:33]

We consider that there is no contradiction between Islam and democracy and no contradiction between the values of Islam and humanitarian gains and what was gained by the human mind in the modern societies that had emanated from outside the Arab-Islamic domain.

So there is agreement between Islam and all these points; we – Ennahda respects them within the Islam, to respect the rights of minorities. The Christians and Jewish minorities are small, but they are accepted within the society. We don't have any sectarian strife between the different religions. Other minority religious groups enjoy their rights as
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everybody else. We are careful in Ennahda movement to respect the individual freedoms and public freedoms, to respect the freedoms of women and the freedom – rights of minorities. And all the parties agree on the values of citizenship, on the – based on the – founded on the Arabism and Islam. This meets consensus in Europe.

So recently, we have presented the idea of building the constitution based on Sharia. So the legal reference for the constitution would be the Islamic Sharia.

There is another project that talks about Tunisia, Tunis to be independent, free country – its religion, Islam, and Arabic its main language. Ennahda movement considered that this is a political divisions, and there is no need to – so there was a great discussion in the Tunisian, and there were debates and discussions and demands to include Sharia in the constitution, but there are other movements that consider that this will divide and split society, and the Sharia law is kind of confusing and not understood.

But Sharia upholds justice and freedom, and the main ideas of religion is to maintain the religion and to have all the main points of religion. There are lots of scholars who talk about this freedom and justice as fundamental pillars of Islam. So Al-Tahir Ibn Ashur is one scholar who wrote about Sharia law, and he had stated that Sharia and democracy are fundamental things. And we have confusing points about Sharia, that it is – it calls for polygamy and – but there – and it’s looked upon as unjust in – so, in another – that we decided to postpone the issue of Sharia in the first phases. That was accepted by all the parties, and we have bypassed this debate. And the constitution we will be sufficed in the first chapter of the constitution by excluding the Sharia as a fundamental issue that the constitution should be based on.

So we are also careful to combine all the Tunisian society on common denominators. And as I said, they are many, particularly the republican system, whether it’s presidential or the relationship between the executive and legislative branches and the civil societies for – that guarantees the woman’s rights. We adopt these things and accept them. Also the freedom of the press and the media are all – these are a group that the Ennahda movement sees how they can build the constitution in a way that will build a new republican system that will be based on the neutrality of the administration and the freedom of belief and expression. And coercion should be not employed, not necessarily in – especially in religion – no coercion, also, in the choice of individuals for their way of living.

These are fundamental issues. There are also other challenges which the governing triumvirate now faces. We are – we have – we want to expand the governing base to – so now, the government had submitted a huge program that includes the social, political and security aspects. These are the main priorities in the society.

And of course, employment is a top priority so that we will have to work on supporting and enhancing domestic and foreign investments. Of course, the despotic previous regime had created a schism between – a chasm between the different parts of the
society. So 80 percent of growth was on the coastal lines, and in the interior there was minimal. So now the new government has changed this equation by being more equitable. Provincial development is now balanced, and now security and safety will be enhanced, also.

These are – the transitional justice now is a big challenge. How can we carry on reconciliation and accountability? So we have in this period we will adopt a law that will discuss the transitional justice, where we talk about a number of issues such as national reconciliation and many other things that will be all employed within the context of law. Nobody should be above the law.

[00:27:26]

This is a number of challenges that we face economically. And of course in the political arena, how can we manage this period by consensus and through dialog in Tunis? And how can we combine all the different parties? We believe what had happened in Tunisia has been good so far, and we – the army in Tunisia had played a positive role in the earlier days of the revolution. The army could have taken charge of the country, but they supported the revolution and protected the people from the security forces of Ben Ali, and also worked on protecting and safeguarding the elections to be free of fraud.

So there is dialog now with the commanders and leadership of the army and the government. We believe that the army played positively and not usurped authority.

There is cooperation with the military establishment. We want to build a civil society state that will not be kind of sacred. I mean, a ruler would not be getting his sanctity from an unseen power but rather will be from the people for taking care of the people’s interests. So it will not be a theocratic or military-governed state. It will be a civil society.

This is a number of issues that I had tried to briefly mention to you. I would welcome any questions to present you any clarifications about the situation in Tunisia and about Ennahda’s position. Thank you. (Applause.)

[00:29:54]

MR. MUASHER: Thank you very much for this presentation of what is going on in Tunis.

Dr. Dardery, Mr. Atig talked about some key concepts, I think, that many people would like to hear in this audience and beyond. He talked about a pluralistic constituent assembly, a coalition government, a consensus – writing the constitution through a consensus process rather than by the majority; a civil state, Sharia not being the only source of legislation; individual rights, women rights. All these are of course very important concepts as we build a new state in Tunisia.

How do we compare this to what is going on in Egypt? Egypt is facing some difficulty even forming a constituent group to write the constitution. Yesterday, the Muslim Brotherhood’s presidential candidate declared that implementing the Sharia remains his
number one objective. How do you match that against what we heard from Tunisia and what your own programs states in Egypt?

ABDUL MAWGOUH RAGEH DARDERY: (Through translator.) In the name of God the merciful, I would like –

(Audio break.)

MR. DARDERY: Before I talk about the revolution and the implications of the revolution that took place in Egypt, to make it clearer for my American audience and others, the story of Egypt did not really start on January 25th. It started almost 200 years ago when the French lost a battle in Pennsylvania and they wanted to punish the British so they had to occupy Egypt – (laughter) – so that we came to suffer because of a European conflict on the American soil. So that is very much interconnected with what we’re talking about today.

When the Europeans came, they came with a European understanding of the state of the relationship between different powers in the state, and then all of a sudden they found a totally different country. They didn’t know really what to do. Here you go. We have the colonies in front of us – what do we do with them? Do we colonize their minds or we colonize their bodies? Unfortunately, the decision of the British Colonial Committee decided to do both of them. And when they did that, they created more confusion not only in the minds of the Egyptian but also in the culture of Egypt.

So the struggle really goes back – oh, and from that time there were three directions. One direction that was supported and developed by the European colonial power, is the only way for modernity is to look like Europeans, act like Europeans, even speak the European language. And that was the only option offered by those who believed in the European model. That was a very important direction in the history of Egypt’s development towards democracy.

The second was almost the other extreme, and these directions took place during the colonial era and still until today – these different directions of trying to come to a common understanding.

So the first direction was, go European, look like them. The second on the other extreme, that we have nothing to do with Europe. Let us close Egypt to the Egyptians and we’ll do everything Egyptian.

The third alternative, which I personally represent and Freedom and Justice Party represented from the time the Muslim Brotherhood came into existence, now – we do other tradition, needs to be respected. But at the same time, we cannot ignore the European development, because Europe came out of the Dark Ages through Islamic Renaissance in Spain. And Europeans learned a lot from the Muslim experience in Spain. Why can’t
Egyptians or Arabs or Muslims in this regard learn from the Europeans, take from the Europeans what we need and leave what we don’t? And since then the struggle went on.

Nasser came to power; the struggle went on. The problem was not settled. Sadat came; the problem was not settled. Mubarak, the same thing. Until January 25th. Egyptians went – millions in the streets of every city in Egypt, and they decided – they said it in one word – (speaks Arabic) – “We’re not leaving. He has to leave.” And “him” was not just a person. It was more of a system.

Thank God the system collapsed. But I think of the problem in Egypt is not the problem of the pharaoh, of the dictator. It is the problem of culture of dictatorship, culture of oppression. So Egyptians had to struggle not only with the downfall of the system but the ideas that kept the system going.

After the system collapsed, there was a referendum on March 19th deciding a roadmap. What do we do? There were lots of discussions. Do we go for the constitution first and then the presidency? Do we make a presidency council? Do we do the election first? Lots of ideas.

A committee was formed, came with a set of understandings, presented them in a public referendum for the Egyptian people. Egyptians decided to go with the roadmap as follows: It’s to have election for the People’s Assembly, election for the Shura Council second, writing the constitution, and electing a president. Once you have the state, as – (inaudible) – stated, then the journey towards changing the culture of oppression into culture of democracy starts, until today.

Unfortunately – and I say unfortunately and I mean it – it took us longer than expected. We could have done this process in a really shorter time. But for those who would like to think of why did it take so long in Egypt, there was an understanding – and that was part of dictatorial understanding – that Egyptians have a short memory. So if we give them long time, maybe they will forget that they made the revolution. (Laughter.) And then they can come back and control us again. They forgot that this is not going to be the case anymore. Egyptians are determined to live in a free, democratic rule of law.

Honestly speaking, we suffered a lot. I was a university teacher. My lectures were recorded by some of my students and sent to the police apparatus to be analyzed. They had one problem with my English. They went and complained to the president of my university. They said, Dr. Dardery is problematic for us; we don’t know how we file him. Is he an American liberal or he is from – (speaks Arabic). (Laughter.) Then the president asked of them: But why do you think he’s from the Muslim Brotherhood? He said, when he speaks in English, he says we would like – to the students, we would like do this homework next week, insha’Allah. So he puts insha’Allah in the middle of the English language. (Laughter.)
So you can imagine the sufferings of the Egyptians. And Egyptians are determined, all of them. I agree with so many Egyptians and with the Tunisian experience that winning big – putting bread on the table takes the top priority. But many Egyptians tell me, we would like to live free even if we become hungry. And tell us, as the Freedom and Justice Party, move forward; do what you have to do. We will wait for the reforms, but we’re happy that we’re living in free society.

Living in a free society after years of oppression is very problematic indeed. I didn’t think it would be that difficult as a member of the parliament because everywhere you go people question you – why did you do that – and we were not used to this in the past. And that requires a lot of preparation – psychological preparation, intellectual preparation and the rest of it.

[00:39:40]

Now, the roadmap went as follows. The free election – free and fair election that produced about – more than 20 different parties in the Egyptian Parliament – first of its time. Although Freedom and Justice Party got 40 percent of the votes, but we refused to control all the committees, the same as you do here in the Congress. Fifty-one percent gives you the chance to control all committees in the Egyptian experience because it is new democracy. We really wanted the participation of each and every one – not each and every party but each and every Egyptian. We really were inclusive in the formation of each committee. We wanted representatives from each party, and we came and we had meetings with the different parties of how to form the different committees.

After the parliament came the Shura Council election. Many different parties contested the Freedom and Justice Party got more than 50 percent of the votes, but we didn’t think of it as majority versus minority. We’re still thinking of it as an Egyptian project.

Coming out of oppression requires the ideas, the help of each and every one. We’re very much interested in creating this balance that I spoke about at the beginning of my presentation. This balance between honoring our own culture at the same time interacting with the European and American alternatives, creating that unique alternative that I like to call the Egyptian alternative.

[00:41:34]

So we’re moving now into the third milestone, writing the constitution. We thought from the very beginning that this constitution does not belong to the majority, because it does not. It cannot. It’s not fair. It’s un-Islamic to have just the majority write the constitution. The majority controls the parliament – that’s fine – forms the government – that’s fine – because it can leave the government after a few years, next election. But constitution goes longer than that. It protects the future generations of Egypt.

I was there when the formation of the committee – the referendum that we voted on, on March 19th, gave the People’s Assembly and the Shura Council the right to elect hundred representatives of the Egyptian society. There were many options. It’s to make the
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hundred from the People’s Assembly and the Shura Council. From outside of both of them, of any compilation, it was open for us. So we listened to everyone. We had certain parties that said 100 percent from the People’s Assembly. We had other party that said 100 percent out of the People’s Assembly. We came, through discussion, because we would like to keep this pluralistic alternative that we have in Egypt, with a 50-50 arrangement – 50 percent from within, 50 percent from without. And we made this. And it was great moment in the Egyptian history.

I remember I was there when I spoke, and I said this is a historic moment in Egypt that we agree together as the representatives of Egypt, freely elected by all Egyptians. Over 65 percent of Egyptians participated in the election, so it was a historical moment.

[00:43:36]

To my surprise, some liberals did not even wait for the first meeting of the constitution committee so that they can put their own alternative on the table. Less than 24 hours, some of them decided to withdraw. We were shocked. All of Egypt asked the question, why did you then accept being part of the election process? The people has (sic) simply elected you to represent them in writing the constitution. That created a lot of confusion. The details – I will be happy to discuss them with you.

After the election, we thought that the military council in Egypt is going to give the majority party the right to form the government because the only representative body in Egypt is the People’s Assembly. The council, the – (speaks Arabic) – the military council, is just protecting and helping the democratic process to move forward.

To our surprise, services to the people of Egypt deteriorated to a warning level. Populace, people in Egypt, our constituencies keep bombarding us by questions – we elected you, nothing changed. Where do we go from there? We demanded a vote of no confidence for the transitional government so that the majority parties can come together and form a government that can serve the needs of the people. To the surprise of everyone, for the majority of Egyptians the military council refused to give the majority parties the right to form the government.

[00:45:22]

And then we heard the stories that parliament may be dissolved because it was based on illegal procedures. That has scared lots of Egyptians. That made lots of Egyptians ask: Is the revolution still going on?

Then the presidential committee became immune from being questioned after declaring the results of the election. That really scared all – most of people working for democracy in Egypt, and that is one reason why Freedom and Justice Party is begging – (speaks Arabic) – as an alternative to protect the democratic role until it yields fruitful results to the Egyptian people.

Then finally comes the presidency. We expect in the coming months major changes to happen in Egypt. We’re determined to have the Egyptian society – because it is pluralistic, and
we would like to reflect this pluralism not only in writing the constitution but also in all
other affairs. For in Egypt we don’t have minorities. We don’t look as – to Copts as
minority because they’re not. Yes, they’re less in number, but they’re part of the Egyptian
society. They’re full citizens. They have the same rights as Muslims. In fact, we like to call
them all Egyptian, all Masriyeen, that is the Egyptian way of looking at it.

We – on behalf of the Freedom and Justice Party, we prefer a parliamentarian
alternative or a balanced way of creating – and that requires a lot of discussion with other
parties – a balanced alternative between a parliamentarian system and a presidential system.
We’re not interested in bringing another pharaoh back. That’s why we’d like the parliament
that is elected by the people to be able to form a government that represents the people.

[00:47:24]

Does an Islamist government mean an eternal government, a government of God to
rule over the people? That’s a strange idea for Islam. It was never that. We never thought
of our leaders as divine or holy. That was a European experience, and imposing it on Egypt
is very much unfair.

We believe in a civil state. A civil state. We also believe in an Islamic – (inaudible) –
reference behind. We’re a little bit different from the Tunisian experience in this regard
because we’re not discussing whether Sharia is there or not. We’re discussing another level
of discourse – whether we put Islamic principles or Islamic rulings. Putting Islamic rulings,
as some parties in Egypt insist, will make it very difficult for Egyptian people, will make their
life really difficult. And we’re not interested in this. We would like to put Islamic principles
or just leave it Islamic Sharia there as the main source.

What does Islamic Sharia for us mean? We look at what we call the – (speaks
Arabic) – of the Sharia, the objectives of the Sharia, the – what do they lead to – the
implication of the Sharia rather than the specific dictates. And that means democracy, that
means that freedom, that means the rule of law. That means the basic universal principle
that humanity is yearning for everywhere in the corner of this earth.

[00:48:58]

How much more time do I –

MR. MUASHER: One minute.

MR. DARDERY: Great. Thank you. It is good that I can ask. (Laughter.) I still
have one minute.

Other challenges – there are many challenges. The military council is a challenge.
Everywhere in the world – almost everywhere in the world now the military is getting away
from politics. We would like to avoid the military-industrial complex phenomenon. We
would like the civilians to be able to control their lives the way they want. Having a military
is like having a theocracy but in a secular form, and we’re against both theocracy as well as
military ruling of the Egyptian lives.
Then once we’re settled with the parliament, the Shura Council, the presidency, the government and writing the constitution, we have the huge test. The problem has not started yet because we need to be able to change the culture from the culture of oppression into culture of freedom where all of us can meet, agree and disagree. We need to be able to honor our human dignity, respect our differences, because we believe that these two principles – honoring our human dignity and respecting our differences – are indispensable conditions for Egyptian peace, for national peace, and for world peace.

Thank you. (Applause.)

MR. MUASHER: Thank you very much, Dr. Dardery.

[00:50:28]

OK. We move to the two monarchies that are trying, as I said, to put in place a reform process from above. Yesterday, I was talking to Minister Elkhalfi and he said: We represent a third way – not the status quo of the Arab world and not the revolutions that are going on. We represent a third way where we have a monarchy – we would like to keep the monarchy, but within the monarchy we are trying to put in place a serious and a sustained reform process.

And to hear about the Moroccan experience and the third way, we’d like to hear from Minister Elkhalfi, what is your end game? What is the future of Morocco? Do you think that the reform from above can work in the Arab world or elsewhere? What is your thinking on this?

MUSTAFA ELKHALFI: Let me first of all thank you for this invitation.

And I think that it’s working in Morocco. We are succeeding in implementing what we call the third path, between revolution and what you call the old system of political control, ignoring the democratic demand that now is emerging in the Arab world and in Morocco. Nobody could ignore this demand, but we can anticipate this demand and develop what we called reforming without losing our stability.

[00:52:14]

Taking into account the rule – the crucial rule of the monarchy in leading the country toward many reforms that happened in the – in the past decade: reforming the family code, the recognition of the Amazigh culture, dealing with the past human rights abuses and establishing a reconciliation committee, integrating moderate Islamic movements within the political and social process. All this happened during the last decade, and the rule of the monarchy was so crucial.

But now we are moving toward a second generation of political reforms – gradual democratic, genuine reforms. How we did it?
At the beginning, Morocco, like all countries in the region – we knew the emergence of the youth movements – we call 20 February – February 20 Movement – and this movement succeeded in mobilizing several parts of the civil society, parts of the political parties. And they went to the street, asking for fighting corruption and fighting authoritarianism.

The king – the monarchy decide to react positively. And there was the March 9 speech, when the king decided to open the gate for a constitutional reform, organizing the new elections, and providing new policies that deal with critical issues like Moroccan identity, like the issue of good governance and linking accountability with responsibility, dealing with the issue of having real elected government.

[00:54:19]

At the beginning, there was some skeptical views. Skeptical views said this would be limited reforms, this would be superficial reforms; we are not going to see real changes in the ground. But what happened after – we established a constitutional commission, and in July 1st, Moroccan people approved the new constitution. This was the first test of the March 9 speech, and we succeeded in recognizing that our identity is survivors: Arabs, Muslims, Amazighs, Jews, Sahrawi. And we succeeded in drafting a bill of rights – 20 first articles about all major rights that humanity developed during almost two or three centuries. And we succeeded in defining the main element and measures related to what we called good governance, transparency, integrity, respect, the rule of law – you know, a whole chapter in the new constitution.

The second test was the election – November 25. And everybody was waiting to see, are we going to succeed in implementing the constitution or not? Are we going to escape from the challenges of the democratic reforms or not? Are we going to succeed in giving the voice to the people to make the change and to see the results of these changes? And this is what happened.

And for this reason I prefer to describe the third path as the path of the revolution of the ballot box, not the revolution of the streets.

[00:56:35]

November 25 elections gave to the Justice and Development Party the vast majority in terms of voice – more than 1 million of the voters’ votes has voted for the PJD – 107 seats in the parliament. But we shouldn’t ignore that only 45 percent of the Moroccan society went to vote. And this reflects that we should work in implementing the constitution and widening the trust, the confidence of the public on the political process.

After this election, the king decided to nominate the chief of the government from the party that won the election. In the constitution, it’s not clear that the chief of the government should be the secretary – the – (inaudible) – secretary of the party. The king decided to interpret democratically the constitution and to nominate the general secretary of the party, Mr. Abdelilah Benkirane. And may circles – secular, liberal, leftist, nationalist,
Islamist – they saw in this move a good thing, positive thing, and positive signal that Morocco is moving toward reforming gradually, establishing a real democratic system.

After we succeeded in establishing a coalition that bring together the leftist party, the nationalist party, the secular party and also a political party with a cultural Amazigh background – nationalist also – with the PJD, a coalition that until now is working, 100 days past – after the nomination of the new government in January 3rd, 2012. What happened during this process from February 20, 2011 until now? It was a long process that Morocco is moving toward a genuine democracy.

What’s the elements of this Moroccan exception? I think three factors explain what we call the Moroccan exception – neither revolution, neither the status quo.

[00:59:38]

The first factor is, as I mentioned earlier, the role of the monarchy. Historically, monarchy played a role as an axle that unified the country – has religious legitimacy that gave him the ability to make the necessary reform in the development, moderate interpretation of Islam, and linking modernity with our Islamic references.

But beside this, two things -- unifying the country, leading new interpretations of religion to meet the challenges of modernity -- beside those two things. Modernity played a crucial role in preserving political pluralism after independence; and even after the collapse of the Soviet Union, has played the role in accelerating the process of the emergence of what we called in 1997, 1998, the democratic transition with the government of -- (inaudible.) And now the monarchy is playing a third role in leading the country towards more democratic reforms.

[01:01:14]

The second factor is the existence of a very dynamic, active civil society. Almost 50,000 of the associations are working in Morocco -- feminist groups, human rights groups, youth association, religious association, development association are working in this society. And they succeeded in creating a mediation between the state and the society, and embracing the ideas of political reforms and spreading a culture of citizenship, a culture of human rights within the society. The civil society has played a great role since the beginning of the ’70s in Morocco and pushing the country toward many political and social reforms, and as now they are playing a great role in the process of the implementation of the new constitution.

And the civil society has been accompanied by the emergence of the youth movements. Moroccan society is so young, and many problems -- related to the employments, literacy, poverty, related to political opportunities, related to corruption and bad governance -- youth is the victim of all these illnesses, and this is the problem. And the youth movement, when they emerged as the driving force during the Arab Spring of the reform, they found an existing civil society that provides for them a platform.

The third factor is the existence of a minimum of political pluralism that has been strength(ened) by the integration of moderate political parties that they have -- that they
claim the Islamic reference, and may lead the PGD. But there's not only the PGD. There is the -- (inaudible) -- Party and others, in parallel to -- (inaudible), but mainly the idea that, since the middle of the '90s, Morocco decide to integrate parts of the Islamic movements -- not like what happened in Tunisia, when the regime decide to eradicate the Islamic movement; or in Egypt, when decide to maintain them in their control, and to limit them, to marginalize them.

In the case of Morocco -- no. And I think that Morocco, with the Arab Spring, took advantages from this policy -- the policy of integration. And not only toward the Islamic -- moderate Islamic groups and movements, also toward the -- (inaudible) -- groups, toward the leftist groups. And I think now one of the elements that helped us in Morocco in accelerating the process of the implementation of the new constitution is this character of integration. Why? Because this culture succeeded in developing a culture of working together between all different components of the political spectrum, the culture that helped us in establishing a strong governmental coalition.

[01:05:31]

What are the main challenges of the future now? How much we still have?

MR. MUASHER: We have five minutes.

MR. EL KHALFI: OK.

We have four main challenges, and the first is the implementation of the new constitution. Yes, we succeeded in escaping from the risks or the challenges of the Arab Spring that lead to, in some countries, to the collapse of the regimes. But the road map that's helped us in doing so is the new constitution. And the new constitution is not only some text that we use it for public diplomacy or we use it for public relation -- no. The new constitution is leading the ingredients, the elements of reshaping the relationship between executive branch, legislative branch, the judiciary branch. Reshaping our system of governance is the outcome of the implementation of the constitution, and we have only five years.

The new constitution clearly said that we should adopt several organic laws that will implement the new constitution. For example, freedom of press and freedom of expression: New constitution, the Article 28, is clear -- that we should provide all guarantees for the freedom of expression. So we should change the press code that the government should encourage the emergence of an independent, democratic council that will organize the journalists. So we should do so. We should stop intervening in all matters related to the organization of the media, and having a real independent and democratic and professional and responsible media in our country. And this is one of the goals and objectives of the new constitution.

Like this, in the legal level -- in the judiciary level, there was many changes that the constitution is calling for it, and we are working to do so. Recently, our government decided to adopt the international agreement against kidnapping; and we are moving to embrace what the international community has developed, in terms of the recognition of the basic
human rights. We are moving toward this direction, but it's not only changing the text, but also establishing new councils and institutions that the -- that the new constitution has -- (inaudible). One of them is strengthening the rule of the integrity institution.

[01:08:55]

One is fighting corruption. One of the biggest problems that we suffer from it is the spread of corruption. The new constitution clearly recognized this problem and said that Morocco should have a body independent, very effective, credible -- to lead the Moroccan policies against corruption. Our rank last year was 85 in the international transparency index. In 2002, we were in 52. It's a big problem for us and we can't escape from this reality. The only way is to recognize it and to present real, credible, effective policies to deal with this.

And not only this institution to fight corruption, another institution related to enhancing the political participation, and social participation, economic participation of the women toward real parity in our society and in our political system. One of the problems that we are facing is that we have very limited political participation of the women and only are using a system of affirmative action to enhance the political participation of the women. Now we are working to develop new policies on this limit.

[01:10:44]

So the first challenge is the implementation of the new constitution.

The second challenge is working to have a real system of regionalization and decentralization. In the past we have regions, but with limited power in the administrative level. Now we are working to develop political, economic, social, cultural, administrative regionalization. And this will be a period of transition towards resolving, first, the Moroccan Sahara conflict, and allowing people in the region to manage their affairs and to develop economically and socially.

The third challenge that we are facing is providing genuine, real answers to the economic and social problems. The people, when they went to the street asking for democracy, because they understand the link between the lack of democracy and the social and economic problems -- employments are the first; health problem; social -- housing problem; educational problem, all these problems. The new government succeeded in developing programs -- ambitious programs dealing with these critical issues. And since two weeks we are debating in the parliament the development of new national fund related to providing the necessary financial sources to the poor people for health and education. And this is one of the biggest challenge -- poverty, illiteracy, employment, health services, housing services, and we are working on -- (background noise).

And the fourth challenge -- the last, is taking advantages from the new political environment that is emerging in the region, to develop real regional cooperation between all these countries. We think that is -- that this thing is so crucial for us and we should -- we should work on this level, because we can't deal with economic problem, energy problem only by using the old policies. Also, we should take into account that Europe is suffering
from a deep economic crisis. Tourism, exportation, money transfer -- all of them, in the past, was connected with what is happening in Europe. Now we should develop regional cooperation with all countries in order to succeed in resolving the economic and social problems.

Thank you so much. (Applause.)

[01:13:51]

MR. MUASHER: I'm going to hear from the last speaker, Dr. Nabil al-Kofahi from Jordan, and then open the floor to questions for about half an hour.

Mr. Nabil, we heard from Minister El Khalifi about what is going on in Morocco. Jordan has been also attempting a reform process from above but perhaps at a slower pace. There have been constitutional amendments, but the country does not have an election law yet. Elections have not for taken place. This is no prospects of, sort of, an elected government coming up, even after the elections. How do you compare the processes in Morocco and Jordan?

A lot of people also think that the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan have not been perhaps as categorical, as clear as its counterpart in Tunisia, or in Morocco or in Egypt about the commitment to diversity or pluralism, and the commitment to sort of a peaceful rotation of power. So perhaps you can shed some light on the Muslim Brotherhood's program in the country, and how do you see the reform process going forward in Jordan?

[01:15:05]

NABIL AL-KOFAHI: (Through interpreter.) Thank you.

With respect to the three experiences that we -- our speakers just shared with us, I think there's one common factor, which is that the Arab peoples have suffered from the same problems. These peoples decided -- alone, and without any assistance -- not from the West, in particular -- to stand up and exercise its will and not to remain on the margins of human civilizations. The Arabs decided to be partners for the West in human civilization.

The situation in Jordan is very similar to what's happening in Morocco, but a little unique on its own. And the common factor is that both monarchies did not -- do not have blood on their hands, and this is the main common factor. And this is why both regimes decided to institute reform. And in Jordan, in particular, there's the problem of corruption which exceeds GNP. And Jordan has high levels of education which are very similar to Western nations, but we have a budget deficit that exceeds 65 percent of total GNP. And there's also unemployment and poverty, which exceeds 20 percent of the labor force and the population.

Certainly there are positive aspects in favor of the regime in Jordan, but over the last 10 years, several of these achievements were destroyed. And the reform in Jordan started not just with the Arab Spring, but there were previous years in which the Muslim Brotherhood took part in the political process. And it had also very difficult experiences, the
first and foremost of which is the fraudulent elections in 2007 -- which is why we decided to boycott the 2010 elections -- which produced a parliament that doesn't represent the people, not in terms of the political frameworks or the people that could possibly shoulder its responsibilities towards the people.

Unfortunately, I would like to say that the regime in Jordan -- even though we're still hoisting the slogan of reforming the regime -- the king, and the government, and parliament and institutions, they're still stalling when it comes to reform. And that's why the regime in Jordan is attempting -- In spite of the lack of loud voices, protests until now are continuing in Jordan even to this date. And next to Syria, Jordan is the second Arab country in which protests are still active, and calls for reforms are reflected in marches and demonstrations to attain the rights that were robbed, because the constitution stipulates that the people are the source of legislation.

[01:19:08]

But articles 25 to 40 of that constitution limit all the popular authorities in the hands of the king; and ministers are also the ministers of the king, and so are the forces -- the military forces. And the king has the right to dissolve parliament, and also to sack ministers, and to take decisions to go to war separately. Therefore, the reform Egypt is an attempt to reform the constitution, to return -- to restore to the people its rights, as the constitution has undergone 39 amendments between '52 and the present time, and the people are no longer the source of legislation.

We would say that we are before two main problems: The main -- the first dilemma, it's a dilemma that relates to the political system, and the fact that the regime itself does not - - is not serious about reform. But they respond to -- partially, to some of the pressure out on the streets, and also responding to the general state of unrest in the region. That's why there is a continuous attempt to absorb the reform movement and overpower it.

[01:20:48]

For example, the king brought a government whose head was involved in the biggest fraud -- election fraud in 1997. In 2007, he was involved in a scandal, and yet this prime minister was brought back to lead the reform movement. But the people has -- people refused this government and the reforms that it's proposed, and another government was brought to power. And also this government was robbed of any powers, even though it has -- it's led by an international judge, a well-respected judge, and he promised to reform the election law, which is the axis for reform in Jordan. But the government continues to isolate parliament and refuse to recognize its powers to institute any real reform in Jordan, or that would lead to any political competition that would put an end to corruption in the state.

Therefore, this is a very important issue for us in Jordan. And we hope that the Jordanian people will continue to pressure the political system, so that it can institute real changes; so that the king would also be a direct source of power, but also would shoulder his responsibilities towards the people, and would be the head of government and also a source of unity for all forces and patterns and ideologies. But we insist that the king should be part
of the efforts to solve the problem in Jordan. But some insist that he's part of the problem in Jordan, and many of them try to even circumvent these reforms.

[01:23:13]

But we in Jordan are not very different from other Arab countries, in that we would like to have a constitution; and political pluralism; and god almighty, who sent this religion to us, as the Islamic world. And Jordan did not witness anything in its history, over 1,400 years, that is called religious oppression. Our Christian brothers continue to live among us in peace and social harmony, and we don't refer -- we don't say this is -- this person is Christian and this person is Muslim.

The Islamic movement has also had its own experience in supporting -- in getting the support of the Christians in Jordan. And the Islamic movement has, on several occasions, also elected the Christian representatives. And we also have witnessed, over 20 years -- since the formation of parties in 1990, we've seen several coalitions that have overcome the religious and ideological differences among the parties.

And we also -- the Islamic Brothers have also stood by all laws that call for freedoms and pluralism. But unfortunately some of these issues have not been dealt with. For example, political reforms have not been dealt with so far, including some very important procedural changes. For example, it's not -- for example, in the constitution, in the 21st century, to have a military tribunal that would put people to trial on the -- on the accusation of harming the reputation of the state. But this is being done by the state security court even to this date. And these accusations are still commonplace; and there is intervention and control by the intelligence apparatus, in particular. The army is very peaceful, as far as the political aspect is concerned, but unfortunately the general intelligence service is still authoritarian and continues to play this role, in terms of the strangulation and oppression against people.

[01:26:15]

And Jordan continues to suffer from targeting. For example, even a person like myself, when I travel to such a place, I am being subjected to interrogation. What we would like to seek to achieve in Jordan is to achieve stability in the country; and restore the powers of the people; and also find -- or establish an electoral law that guarantees all the rights of Jordanians. If some of you are not aware of the characteristics of Jordanian society, some Jordanians come from the west of the River Jordan and they came to Jordan after the Israeli occupation. And these constitute half the population, and they are being used as a way to threaten all Jordanians. But we believe that all Jordanians of various origins have overcome this problem.

And another issue that is being used to threaten people is also to raise the specter of the Islamic movement. But we have to stress that this movement has made major contributions to the history of Jordan, and also in other countries, and has made several sacrifices. What we seek to achieve, in particular, is to hold elections in the near future, according to a fair law that encourages political participation in Jordan and the peaceful transition of power.
And the Islamic movement is the only party in Jordan that has this peaceful transition of leadership. Even women in the Islamic Brotherhood is being elected to leadership positions. And this is not a language we use in Jordan -- we don't hear about the problem of women's participation in Jordan. Therefore, it's not appropriate for Jordanians to pay the price for -- Jordanians feel shame that the heads of the intelligence services -- that were appointed by the king, and, I would say, who is the highest authority in Jordan -- to be tried on fraud charges. This is a major problem and challenge, and also harms the integrity of the governance.

[01:29:17]

And also, with respect to the Jordanian economy, it suffers from structural imbalance and we have a trade deficit. And this is equally dangerous and serious because it shakes the foundations of the values, and the way in which the government supports its own citizens, and forces people to be loyal to the government in return for the subsidies that the government provides to people. And this is also a challenge that we, the Muslim Brotherhood, would like to address. And we know that if there were free elections and fair elections, this would be an issue that will be addressed. And we also believe that if such free elections were held, we, as the Muslim Brotherhood, will get -- make the same gains that our brothers in neighboring countries have made. And we believe that this is a right that will be realized no matter what, and if the elections were to be held according to fair -- to a fair system. We are not seeking a law that favors us, but we would like to see a fair and -- a fair election law.

And one last problem I'd like to point to, which is the Arab-Israeli conflict and its use in the internal politics of Jordan, because it's being used as one of the reasons and justifications for the regime to stall in instituting the reforms. And usually the reform fight has always been deferred until such time that the Arab-Israeli conflict is solved, in light of its importance to the Arab people and also the Jordanians. But it's not justification for the deferral of reform in Jordan, and we would like to say that these calls find ears also among decision makers in the West, and it's not the case.

[01:31:56]

And thank you. (Applause.)

MR. MUASHER: Thank you very much, Dr. Alkofahi.

Let's open it up. I'll take three or four questions at a time, because I'm sure there are lots of them. And then we will -- please make it a very short question, because we really don't have time; and address it to one of the participants, if possible, please.

Can you wait for the microphone?

Q: My name is -- (inaudible). I'm from Morocco, and I work with the World Bank. My question is to -- (inaudible) -- Mustapha El Khalifi.
As we see in the United States, the economy plays a major role in the elections, whether in past elections and probably in this one as well. Do you think the performance of the PGD will be determined mostly on the progress that you will be able to accomplish in the economy, regardless of all the other reforms?

[01:33:01]

MR. MUASHER: Thank you very much. Trudy?

Q: Do you want identification?

MR. MUASHER: Please.

Q: Trudy Rubin from the Philadelphia Inquirer. I'd like to address my question to Mr. Dardery.

You put forward a very moderate position for the Muslim -- the Freedom and Justice Party in Egypt. But some of your leaders, including Mr. Shater, have said things that sound much less moderate than what you put forward. Mr. Muasher referred to one of them, when Mr. Shater said implementing Sharia remains the number-one objective. He has also talked about, in the past, jihad against the Zionists. And also your leadership has called, in the past -- in 2007, for a sort of guardian council that would oversee all parliamentary laws and make sure that they were in alignment with Sharia. I know that they have still dropped that, but what I want to know is, now that they are -- now that Freedom and Justice is the leading party, do they stand by what you said, or are they closer to --

MR. : (Chuckles.)

MS. RUBIN: -- what your presidential candidate says?

MR. MUASHER: In the back -- (inaudible). Yes, please.

Q: Thank you. My name is Anwar Hadami (sp) from Algeria.

One of those were -- I mean, elected in the election in back in 1991, after the Algeria Spring, and unfortunately which was, you know, stopped by the military and security. That was my -- my question, actually, to the brother from Tunisia and the one from Egypt: How you see the future relation between the civil society -- the civilians and the military relationship? Based on this, are you -- are there any red line that the civilian and civilian political system will have not to cross in order to continue this democratic process?

[01:35:17]

The same question go with the monarchies. (CMR ?), but not the same (end ?). With the monarchy and military, how would you see, because really particularly in Morocco the king was really courageous in engaging in such reform. But how far do you see the
situation going? (Inaudible) -- because based on the experience that we had in Algeria, where really it was a peaceful change, an attempt to a peaceful change, which was stopped by military-security establishment and their allies, and -- or what followed, with manipulation, and violence, et cetera, et cetera.

So how would you see the future about -- because it's really wonderful experiment, but --

MR. MUASHER: Thank you, yes.

Q: -- we are still worried about the future, really. Thank you.

MR. MUASHER: One more question maybe?

Yes, please.

Q: Radwan Masmoudi. I'm with the Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy. I want to thank the Carnegie Endowment. This is a wonderful event, and it's an amazing day to have all of you here in Washington, but also to witness what's going on in the Arab world finally. My two questions, very quickly, is to Dr. Dardery from Egypt.

[01:36:37]

The big question now is will -- (inaudible) -- align with An Nour party -- the Salafist party, or with the secular parties? The -- (inaudible) -- have 50 percent. Clearly, they need to have more allies in the government. And that's, I think, the big question: Who would they align with? This would really determine the future of the action of Egypt and the transition in Egypt.

And my question to Mr. El Khalfi from Morocco: We've heard a lot of abuses of the new constitution recently, and there are lawyers who are trying to have a legal case against the king himself for abusing the new constitution. Do you have any comments about that? Is it true? And what is the government doing about this? Thank you.

MR. MUASHER: All right, let's start. Who wants to take the first shot?

Mustapha?

MR. EL-KHALFI: Economically, I think that's -- this is the most important challenge of the government, because we can't afford answers to the youth problems -- mainly, resolving employment issues and health and housing -- without having real economic prosperity or real economic development. And for this reason, the governments has puts this issue as the second goal -- after good governance, fighting corruption. Because the main problem of economic development in our country is the lack of good governance.

[01:38:21]
We presented almost 25 measures related to enhancing the climate of investment in the country. And we succeeded three weeks ago, in development of partnership between private sector and the governments, to launch huge reforms in investment environment; in the financial, and legislative, institutional aid of the governments towards private sector in finding new markets, exporting your products, and working with other companies in the international level; and also starting work to revive many free trade agreements that we have it with many countries, like United States, and to launch real investments on this level.

Beside this, we are working with small business companies in the country, because we think that the leading -- or the driving force of fighting poverty and fighting unemployment is to invest in small business, companies, enterprises in our country. We developed projects on this level, based on providing fiscal and tax measures. Working with them reforming the educational system, in order to create (some complementary ?) between the market of jobs with the education system. So we have a program on this, and we are working on it in close partnership with the private sector.

Concerning the second question, I think one of the things that's creates some specificity to the Moroccan case is that we drafted the constitution before the election -- before going to the election, we drafted the constitution. And the constitution has determined clearly powers -- relationship between different centers of power; and has established -- and this is, it's very important -- the climate and the institutional tools of cooperation between monarchy and the government.

After election, we succeeded in implementing this, and we have a successful cooperation since almost four months. And this cooperation is based on the constitution. And also is based on an environment of confidence, of mutual trust, that we succeeded in developing it since the '90s, when we started working in the political arena and participating in election. And for this reason, as political party we decided, in 1997 election and also in 2002 election, to limited our participation. And the goal is, we should enhance the confidence between us and political elites. Otherwise, we are going to repeat bad experiences that other countries see it; and we should be so careful in building this confidence, because it's the essence of the implementation of the new constitution.

The third question --

MR. MUASHER: But, please quickly. We really don't have time.

MR. EL KHALFI: Quickly.

We are suffering --

MR. MUASHER: I'm going to ask everybody to ask one question only, and limit the answers to one question, because we really don't have --
MR. ELKHALFI: We are suffering from the old laws that has been developed in the new constitution era. And now we are working to implement the new constitution. Many new laws has been drafted -- for example, the establishment of an independence, democratic council for press. We agree with the major editors and the journalists unions about new law on this level.

So this is why I said that the first democratic challenge for Morocco is the implementation of the constitution. And we should do it quickly -- this year -- the major laws that will implement not only the text and the articles, but also the spirit of the new constitution. Thank you.

MR. MUASHER: Dr. Dardery?

ABDUL DARDERY: Thank you, Trudy, for asking this question. And thank you for the statement you made at the end of your question. And sometimes I think of it, I was invited to California a few years ago to speak about Islam in America, and my host introduced me as, "We're really happy today to have a 'moderate Muslim.'" (Chuckles.) And then after the presentation I asked, why did you call me a moderate Muslim? She said, because people here don't believe that Muslims can be moderate.

Let me state very clearly. I'm really honored and proud of being a student of the Muslim Brotherhood. What I told you today is what I learned from the Muslim Brotherhood educational circles, educational books. I am the product of the movement. And I am not telling you something that I don't -- That is the platform I ran for election for. That's what we study in our educational materials, and this is how our understanding of Islam. But very important, the two issues that you mentioned: The guardian council, it is already, not really talk, because, you see, we are still moving -- we're trying to move from being an opposition -- I mean, jailed on opposition, into people in power.

[01:44:43]

So when you are in jail, you have a jail mentality. When you are out there, you have a different mentality. Why should we have a guardian council? Why don't we have constitutional courts? Why don't we have been a court that can decide for these matters?

But the two important issues you raised are the Sharia and jihad. And I strongly encourage a dialogue around these, because very important, and I would like to encourage the Muslims among you is to engage in a dialogue with their non-Muslim friends within the American society, so that we can come to understanding of Sharia. Sharia is the word that is not even said in English, because once it is translated into English, it stops its ambiguities. Sharia means legal law.

[01:45:27]

So we're ruled by a law. We have to have a law -- you call it Islamic, you call it secular, you call it this, you call it that. So it is a different law. I emphasize that it is different, and it has been there for 1,400 years ago. It was tried. Sometimes it succeeded -- produced a great civilization. Sometimes it failed -- the people failed to utilize it to produce
a great civilization. It's a human experience of understanding a divine text. It can produce the best alternatives; sometimes it does not produce the best alternatives.

Concerning jihad, the same thing. Jihad, what does jihad mean? Just take it out of the Arabic word; give it the English translation. "Jihad," I am doing jihad sitting here under this pressure under the question. This is an intellectual jihad. (Laughter.) So jihad means exerting an effort. If you study, you're doing jihad. If you eat, you're doing -- but don't eat too much -- (laughter) -- you're doing jihad too. So jihad is really a whole concept that identifies a Muslim's journey towards the universe -- towards other people.

And -- (inaudible) -- the other --

Q: Masmoudi.

MR. DARDERY: Masmoudi, I'm sorry. Concerning the -- (inaudible) -- versus -- and Salafian or the liberals. We look at it differently. We don't look at it "this versus this," or it is not a black and white thing. I think we work with whomever. We have an Egyptian agenda, and the Egyptian agenda has priorities. Whoever agrees with this agenda, we will work with them. We will work with the liberals. And if we can agree on some items with the Nour party, we will work with them. We're really trying to create a consensus. Thank you.

[01:47:20]

MR. MUASHER: (Inaudible.)

MR. AL-KOFAHI: (Through interpreter.)

The question from the brother from Algeria, with respect to the military society and civil society: In Tunisia, the military plays a national role in defending democracy and taking part in development, and also preserving the territorial integrity of Tunisia. Therefore, the military has no role to play in politics, so the military and security forces don't even take part in elections. They cannot field -- be candidates in elections and cannot even vote. And like all civil societies, we have a ministry of defense, but they do not play any role. I mean, their role is limited to the security aspect and they cannot run for elections, they cannot vote.

And this is what happens in civil societies in the free world. Of course, you've suffered from a military coup, for example, in what happened in Algeria, and the military is a big problem. And I believe even in Egypt the military institution is a problem; and if the military council continue to exist, then there will be no revolution in Egypt. Because if it continues to be as powerful, then the revolution would not have succeeded.

[01:49:12]

As for the red lines, for us in Tunis -- in Tunisia, a red line for us is no to violence, and any organization or any party that engages in violence is red lined, and the law is above everyone. And also torture; for example, the physical rights and integrity of the human being is important. We received reports after the revolution that there were -- there was --
there were instances of physical abuse, and the government opened an investigation in this matter. And this is -- the results will be implemented strictly on all involved parties. And the head of government was very clear that any person who engages in torture in Tunis will be held accountable. There's also respect for human rights. And also there is no -- there will be no return to oppression and corruption.

And there are several issues, and every revolution is followed by a period of security uncertainty and chaos, but we continue to try to return to normal life, and to solve problems and protests. And also there is improvement in this aspect, but it will need time. And the program of the new government -- that will be introduced this week -- will also contribute to peace and security, and also to encourage investment and return to normalcy in Tunis. Thank you.

MR. MUASHER: Is that -- I can see? Is that David, or no?

I don't see any women -- (laughter) --

Q: My name is Joseph E. Law (sp).

And if I look at history of the Middle East and North Africa, I see very little democracy. And as an American I'm a bit confused of what is the meaning of Sharia, so I ask you, can you please provide a vivid example where Sharia law promotes democracy? Thank you.

MR. MUASHER: Please.

Q: And my question is to you, Mr. Atig.

It seems like you, out of all of -- you've all experienced political repressions. And you've served -- it seems like, what, 16 years in prison? You were in a prison for a long time. So my question is, how did that -- what did that provide for you -- that time, personally and as a political figure?

[01:52:22]

And how does that shape -- I'm sure there are many people like you coming from that -- how does that shape the political landscape? And what does that -- what kind of struggle do you personally go through, as well as how does that shape your political -- you, as a politician? Thank you.

MR. MUASHER: The woman in red over there. Yes, you.

Q: My name is Hannan Meki (sp). I'm from Egypt. And I have a question for the Jordanian representative.

[01:52:55]
I know that Jordan does not have sectarian issues that sometimes lead to sectarian violence, as in Egypt. But I know that there is other -- another set of issue -- ideological, or, you know, Palestinian versus Jordanian. And how does that then impact the agenda of the Muslim Brotherhood and just garnishing (sic) their supports? Thank you.

MR. MUASHER: Raither (sp) over there.

Q: Thank you. Raither al-Mudi (sp) from the American Task Force on Palestine. My question is to Dr. Kofalhi.

You mentioned the issue of Arab-Israeli relations, and as you rightly said, this is a matter for concern here in Washington, based on the Islamic -- the Muslim Brotherhood's position vis-à-vis the peace treaty between Jordan and Israel.

So my question to you is, if you were in government, how would you deal with the peace treaty with Israel, the general Jordanian-Israeli relations?

And how will you interact with an American-led peace process in the region? Do we have -- do we have a reason to be concerned, or will we see a more pragmatic Muslim Brotherhood in that case? Thank you.

MR. MUASHER: Let's start with Dr. Nabil, please.

MR. ALKOFAHI: (Through interpreter.) Thank you.

I will start with Hannan's (sp) question. As Muslims, we believe that religious or ethnic diversity is a source -- is of enrichment for society, and perhaps it's one of the most distinctive characteristics of American society.

We believe that the problem -- or, the Jordanian-Palestinian problem in Jordan is just an illusion to hinder the reform process, and it's not a real problem. The Islamic movement is the biggest component -- socially and political, that strikes a balance between the Palestinians and Jordanians in Jordan. And perhaps most other political parties are kind of polarized towards one particular group.

There are parties in which there's a Jordanian majority or a Palestinian majority. We believe that this is a very important distinctive characteristic of the Islamic movement, and it usually fielded -- for example, in areas that are predominantly Jordanian, it fielded candidates who are of Palestinian origin. And I believe this is a plus and not a con.

Also, as with respect to the other question, as a Muslim movement, we do not have a problem with Israel. Our problem with Israel is political and it relates to the occupation of Palestine. I mean, the Jews lived in all Arab countries -- and continue to live in Yemen, for example, and in Iraq; and even in Bahrain -- that small country, there are still Jews living
there. Therefore, depicting the problem of the Arab-Israeli conflict as a conflict between Muslims and non-Muslims is completely wrong.

And if some of you don't know, an attack by a Muslim against a Muslim is considered to be an individual attack; but an attack by a Muslim against a Christian or Jew is an attack on the Prophet and it's not considered an individual problem. And we believe that this issue will be asked one day, and we would say, once we're in government, we'll have very clear answers. We are advocates for peace and advocates for rights for the Palestinian people. Their rights have been usurped, and they are being denied -- of all people in the world -- to establish a state that reflects its own Palestinian identity. And this will be a decision to be taken by the Jordanian people through its own -- its election of its own representatives, and a government that will engage in foreign policy. This is the general framework of our policy.

With respect to the private framework, before we talk about the -- before anything, we talk about ending the aggression, Israeli aggression against the Palestinian people; and also the return of all the rights of -- usurped rights of the Palestinian people; and also the return of the displaced and the refugees, based on your own Resolution 194, and also to restore all the rights of the Palestinian refugees. And this is a very clear position that we, as the Muslim Brotherhood, adopt and all Jordanians adopted. And therefore ending the aggression is a precondition for any further action.

MR. : (Through interpreter.) To answer Mr. -- (inaudible), regarding the relationship of Sharia, our democracy, we say that democracy as a vehicle -- as a mechanism, regardless of -- it's a mechanism like Greek philosophy, because of that broad democracy. And these are many, such as judicial independence, and the peaceful exchange of authorities, and also the freedom of expression, political pluralism. All these mechanisms, in our vision, does not contradict Islam at all. But if we go to the writings of -- (inaudible). We find in these writings this new modern, centrist line, which calls for benefitting from Western thought in a way that would not contradict the Islamic thought.

So there is an elite group in the centrist movement here that represent the main pivot for the Muslim movements, for the Brotherhood and -- (inaudible) -- and Hamas and the justice and development in Morocco. The reference for all those scholars, and -- (inaudible) -- this centrist -- the question is that democracy is a mechanism to adopt the principle of (a shura ?) under Islam. This, therefore, means that democracy does not contradict with Islam.

[02:00:42]

The second point that was mentioned by the lady is a personal matter. I spent 16 years in prison, six of them in isolation. I left my daughter 2 years old; and when I came out of prison, she was -- she had already taken a baccalaureate degree. We have spent so many years under the dictatorship where there was really torture for political -- against political prisoners. So literally, confinement is really a harsh discipline for prisoners. This is not alluded to -- our only comfort was the Holy Quran and, thanks to god, I came out of prison memorizing all the Quran.

[02:01:48]
We were even deprived of personal visitations. For 10 years, I haven't had any communication through even a glass window with my family. So we don't want a society with terrorism or with repression of -- or suppression of freedoms. We are victims of torture. The traces of torture are still with me in my body. We'll never repeat this experience to violate the physical -- bodily, cause bodily injury against human beings. Our law -- we were -- we suffered because we opposed the (Ben Ali ?) regime and the -- (inaudible) -- regime.

We represent the Islamic (reference ?) in Tunisia. Our project is against oppression. We ourselves were -- who suffered under oppression, and therefore we will never build anything by a project that is built on the freedom of individuals and human -- respect of human rights. So the question of freedoms and -- this is guaranteed in our platform. Thank you. (Applause.)

[02:03:22]

MR. MUASHER: (Off mic) -- for the many, many hands that are raised, but we really are out of time.

I want to encourage you all to mingle with the guests and, you know, talk to them in the intermission and during the day.

We're going to have, let's say, 25 minute break until 11:30, and then reconvene to talk about the constitution writing process. Thank you very much.

(END)