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The Draft Party Platform of the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood:

Foray Into Political Integration or Retreat Into Old Positions?

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In the late summer 2007, amid great anticipation from Egypt's ruling elite and opposition movements, the Muslim Brotherhood distributed the first draft of a party platform to a group of intellectuals and analysts. The platform was not to serve as a document for an existing political party or even one about to be founded: the Brotherhood remains without legal recognition in Egypt and Egypt's rulers and the laws they have enacted make the prospect of legal recognition for a Brotherhood-founded party seem distant. But the Brotherhood's leadership clearly wished to signal what sort of party they would found if allowed to do so.

With the circulation of the draft document, the movement opened its doors to discussion and even contentious debate about the main ideas of the platform, the likely course of the Brotherhood's political role, and the future of its relationship with other political forces in the country.[1]

In this paper, we seek to answer four questions concerning the Brotherhood's party platform:

1. What are the specific controversies and divisions generated by the platform?

2. Why and how has the platform proved so divisive?

3. Given the divisions it caused as well as the inauspicious political environment, why was a platform drafted at this time?

4. How will these controversies likely be resolved?

We also offer some observations about the Brotherhood's experience with drafting a party platform and demonstrate how its goals have only been partly met. Ultimately, the integration of the Muslim Brotherhood as a normal political actor will depend not only on the movement's words but also on the deeds of a regime that seems increasingly hostile to the Brotherhood's political role.

The Platform Debate: Resolving Ambiguities and Sparking Controversies

The Muslim Brotherhood's draft party platform sends mixed signals about the movement's political views and positions. The platform's detailed treatment of political, social, and economic issues marks a significant departure from its previous announced positions and electoral platforms. The current draft is impressive in both length and level of detail. This shift addresses one of the most important criticisms of the Brotherhood, namely its championing of vague ideological and religious slogans and inability to come up with specific policy prescriptions.

But for all its specificity, the draft does not answer every question. Most notably, the drafters chose not to address the future relationship between the party they wish to build at some point and the broader Muslim Brotherhood movement. In avoiding the issue they have deliberately ignored important ideas recently discussed within the movement, especially among members of the parliamentary bloc. Inspired by the experiences of Islamist parties in Morocco, Jordan, and Yemen, these members advocate a functional separation between a political party and a broader social and religious movement, with the former focused mainly on political participation and the latter on religious activism. In addition to its superficial treatment of the nature of the party and its internal organization, the platform includes no clear statement on opening party membership to all Egyptians regardless of their religion, one of the requirements for establishing a political party according to the Egyptian constitution.

Regardless of such gaps, few observers doubt that the platform represents a substantial effort to address all the questions put to the movement by its supporters and critics in recent years. Nonetheless, answering such questions has sparked a new set of controversies. Much of the debate inside Egypt has focused on two issues: the creation of a body of senior religious scholars and the exclusion of all but Muslim males for the most senior positions in the Egyptian state. On both issues, the Brotherhood attempted to specify its position in greater detail. And, as will be seen, it paid a cost for doing so and has partially reacted by retreating back into some ambiguity.

Shari'a and the 'Ulama Council

Perhaps the greatest domestic controversy focuses on a mere few sentences in the draft program. For all the brevity of the controversial section, there are few better illustrations of the promises and pitfalls of a detailed program. The Brotherhood has been pressed again and again on how it envisions translating its stress on implementation of the Islamic shari'a into a practical political and legal program. And its leaders have given a variety of signals, both on what they wish to see implemented and how it might be done. Thus, specifying its position on shari'a could go a long way toward assuring skeptics and resolving internal debates. But it could also divide leaders and trap the movement in the gap between its enthusiastic supporters (who expect a strong stand on Islamic issues) and a broader, less ideological audience.

Some stress on shari'a is to be expected for several reasons. First, it is central to the movement's sense of its mission and political involvement: Those in the Brotherhood's leadership are deeply committed to increasing the role of Islam in Egyptian public life. Second, putting shari'a forward as a symbol of an authentic, just, and moral legal order has widespread popular appeal, however much many may recoil at some of the practical implications of specific interpretations of the shari'a. Third, the Brotherhood's grassroots supporters expect the movement to place shari'a at the center of its political agenda. Finally, the

emphasis on shariʿa allows the Brotherhood to position itself as a defender of the Egyptian constitution rather than its subverter. Article 2 of the Egyptian constitution, as amended in 1980, proclaims that "Islam is the religion of the state and the principles of the Islamic shariʿa are the main source of legislation." Last year, a series of constitutional amendments were passed that aimed in part at undercutting the Brotherhood, but stressing article 2 and its Islamic reference provides continuing constitutional refuge for the Brotherhood's program.

But the movement's stress on shariʿa has also exposed it to criticism in the past: It has often been accused of trying to impose its own particular interpretation of the Islamic legal heritage on the entire Egyptian population in a manner that subverts the democratic process. In drafting the platform, the Brotherhood leadership was thus forced to choose between a vague and general emphasis on Islamic shariʿa—designed to appeal to multiple constituencies but also allowing differences within the movement to fester and doubts about the movement to grow among external critics—and a far more specific approach that answers such internal and external questions but risks exacerbating differences among leaders and dividing the movement's various constituencies. Its response leaned more toward the latter, more restrictive approach.

This choice surprised observers because over the past decade, the movement had generally opted for vaguer formulas seeking to downplay differences. The Brotherhood spoke increasingly of an Islamic frame of reference (*marjaʿiyya*) and less of the implementation of shariʿa law. When devising platforms for specific elections in recent years, the Brotherhood would generally include an Islamic element but tended to give far greater stress to the standard list of political reforms demanded by a broad spectrum of Egyptian political society. When pressed for details on how these vague formulas could be accommodated by the Egyptian constitutional order, some Brotherhood leaders have been able to portray their aims as innocuous and mainstream not only by pointing to article 2 as legitimating their position but also to the jurisprudence of the country's Supreme Constitutional Court. The court has ruled repeatedly that article 2 would invalidate legislation that contradicts unambiguous shariʿa rules and principles.[2] Reference to the Court shows some political savvy because it appears to endorse the Brotherhood's position on the Islamic shariʿa while still deferring to the existing constitutional order (the parliament, which passes legislation, and the Court itself, which has effectively assumed some authority over determining compliance with shariʿa).

Yet this approach also risked papering over differences within the movement concerning how much respect to pay to existing constitutional structures, how much the Islamic shariʿa should be interpreted through the democratic process, and how much deference should be accorded to religious scholars (and especially the state-supported religious establishment that many Brotherhood leaders feel has been corrupted and co-opted at its highest levels by the existing regime).

Much of the platform seems to carry forward with this evolving strategy of reassurance—the platform shows respect for the country's Supreme Constitutional Court and shows some comfort with the idea that the people's elected representatives in parliament are generally the ultimate arbiter of which Islamic teachings must be treated as authoritative.

But in a brief passage, the platform seemed to take a potentially far-reaching step in a very different direction: It called for the creation of a council of religious scholars—a new body that would be elected by the full complement of religious scholars in the country and serve to advise the legislative and executive branches in matters of religious law. The passage on the council also suggested that the new body might have the authority to comment on a wide variety of legislative and executive acts and that its word would be binding—and not merely advisory—in matters in which it felt the shari'a rule at stake was definitive and not subject to divergent interpretations.

The provision for the council seemed to catch some Brotherhood leaders by surprise. On the one hand, the proposed council did answer apparent pressure from the movement's ideologically committed foot soldiers not to abandon shari'a behind anodyne formulas as well as the commitment of some senior leaders to make shari'a-based rules a viable restriction on rulers. And it also offered to diminish the role of those positions (like the mufti and the shaykh of al-Azhar) that are seen as co-opted, in favor of the entire body of religious scholars, many of whom are sympathetic with the Brotherhood and its program.

On the other hand, by inserting these sentences, the Brotherhood alienated many others both inside and outside the movement. Some within the movement criticized the language on both substantive and procedural grounds, claiming that the proposed body of religious scholars was based on an illegitimate privileging of some interpretations of shari'a over others and that it was not based on any established Brotherhood position (and indeed had been included in a set of last-minute and ill-considered modifications). The heat of the debate within the movement was exceeded by the firestorm of external criticism. Even intellectuals who had called for acceptance of the Brotherhood as a normal political actor lambasted what they viewed as the movement's lurch in a theocratic direction.

Not only did the platform force the Brotherhood to pay internal and external costs for its foray into specificity, but it also made a retreat back into generalities more difficult. While it would be possible to drop the passage entirely from the program or rob it of much of its content—and indeed, as will be seen, that seems a likely course—there is no obscuring the fact that some within the leadership have a conception of shari'a that strikes many Egyptians as undemocratic. It is likely that however much the Brotherhood seeks to paper over the differences opened with the platform's language on this topic, it will be dealing with the repercussions of the controversy for some time.

Other Controversies and Noncontroversies

The draft platform also forced the Brotherhood to pay the price of specificity on one other notable issue: the clear decision to exclude women and non-Muslims from senior positions in the state. The argument for doing so was itself based on a traditional current in Islamic legal and political thought that focused on determining the requirements for a ruler (or, in the terms of the Brotherhood's religiously-based discourse, the major positions of governing). Because a ruler in an Islamic society undertakes some religious functions, most premodern Muslim legal and political authorities held that the ruler himself must be a Muslim; it was also common to insist on the requirement that the ruler be male as well because of the public nature of the role.

For some within the Brotherhood, this was precisely the sort of clearly established shari'a rule that should not be transgressed. Others rejected what they saw as outmoded and unnecessary legal reasoning, viewing the entire matter as a politically damaging distraction. They argued that premodern writings conceptualized a state based on a patrimonial ruler, not the complex set of institutions that currently exists (or should exist). With a very different kind of state authority, they argued that it no longer makes sense in a modern context to apply older understandings mechanistically. The religion and gender of a ruler matter far less if he (or she) is merely temporarily staffing a high state office in accordance with clear procedures and legal limitations. Further, they argued, there was little benefit to be gained by constitutionally barring non-Muslims from office: In a deeply religious society with an overwhelming majority of Muslims, it was unlikely a non-Muslim would be elected in the first place. (Some went so far as to say that they were fully comfortable with the implications of their more liberal position by stating that they would prefer a qualified and righteous Christian or woman over many members of Egypt's current corrupt and autocratic governing elite.)

This dispute was particularly bitter within the movement, with some charging the more liberal camp with violating clear shari'a-based principles in the quest for momentary political advantage. And it also exposed the leadership to public criticism—vindicating, in this sense, the fear of more liberal members that the entire issue would prove a political distraction. Not only did the controversy put the Brotherhood on the defensive, it also edged out any substantial public debate over the vast majority of the platform that seemed to have been designed to demonstrate that the Brotherhood had developed a comprehensive alternative political vision for Egypt, covering all issues of public concern.

Indeed, perhaps the most notable feature of the platform debate was the way that the vast majority of the document completely escaped public scrutiny. The platform devotes far more attention to social and economic issues than to the role of the 'Ulama Council or the gender of the head of state. And in this regard, the Brotherhood reveals a preference for a strongly interventionist state that would mitigate the effects of free trade. By contrast, the platform's

provisions regarding political reform and democratic change focus on a more limited role for the state and a greater role for civil society and nongovernmental organizations. Calling for a state that systematically intervenes in social and economic spheres while at the same time advocating limiting its political role seems contradictory. Yet the Brotherhood largely escaped any criticism or calls for explication on the tension between a liberal and an interventionist state, largely because of the other controversies.

The Struggle Within the Muslim Brotherhood: Resolving or Aggravating Divisions?

The draft platform thus set off a discussion outside of the Brotherhood, but it also sparked an unusual dispute within the Brotherhood. Of course, the movement's leaders have differed over strategy and tactics before, but they have brought this current debate to the public media, airing their differences in the press, satellite and local broadcasting, and various Internet forums to an unprecedented degree. The more public nature of the debate has fueled public discussion and speculation about tensions within the Brotherhood. Visible differences have emerged among members of the Brotherhood's top leadership, the Guidance Bureau, and other differences have spilled outside to the broader movement.

As the internal disputes have escalated, certain tendencies and wings have crystallized. An ideological division pitted a conservative or reactionary wing against a reformist wing, and a generational struggle pitted an old guard against a new guard. These divisions have fueled speculation about a public schism or even collapse of the organization. And although such speculation is clearly based on a substantial degree of exaggeration, the tone of debates among members is striking and unprecedented. Since the movement was founded in 1928, it has preserved a remarkable ability to speak to the public in a single voice and contain the different tendencies without division. Indeed, the movement has suffered only one schism: In the 1990s a group of members led by a rising member, Abu al-'Ila Madi, left to form an independent political party (al-Wasat or Center Party).[3] Bitterness about that dispute still manifests itself. Even a decade later, the Center Party has yet to gain legal recognition. In view of that experience—and the seeming futility of attempts to gain legal recognition—the Brotherhood might be expected to be especially averse to allowing a dispute over a party that could once again rend the movement.

But despite such disincentives, the movement has not succeeded in containing debate to quiet internal dialogue. The Brotherhood is currently speaking with several different voices, providing an unusual opportunity for observers and analysts to understand the different positions and orientations within the movement and even some of its mechanisms for making authoritative decisions. At least for the moment, the Muslim Brotherhood is not speaking through the

oracular statements of its General Guide but rather through a host of media and spokespersons.

In September 2007, in the immediate aftermath of the release of the draft platform, two contrasting visions of the platform's content, as well as the method of writing behind it, emerged. The first vision was associated with First Deputy Guide Muhammad Habib, who defended the controversial elements in the draft platform. These controversial elements included the aforementioned proposals to create an elected council of religious scholars to review legislation and the disqualification of women and Christians from the state presidency and premiership.

The competing vision of the platform, led by Guidance Bureau member 'Abd al-Mun'im Abu al-Futuh, criticized these controversial elements, claiming that they did not represent the consensus of the movement. Indeed, members of the second camp went so far as to imply that these elements had been introduced in an inappropriate manner, without the process of consultation and consensus building about which the Brotherhood normally boasts. As the dispute continued, the Habib and Abu al-Futuh camps gathered followers from the various levels of the Brotherhood around their contrasting visions of both the content of the platform and the procedure by which it had been drafted, leading to an unprecedented public debate.

For his part, Habib (along with other leading members of the movement, including Secretary-General Mahmud 'Izzat, Guidance Bureau members Muhammad Mursi and Mahmud Ghuzlan) insisted that the draft platform was drafted in a consultative and transparent manner. They claimed that the process began after the movement's General Guide, Muhammad Mahdi 'Akif, charged a committee to develop a first draft for submission to the Guidance Bureau. The bureau received the draft and directed the drafting committee to make some changes, after which the committee submitted the document to the bureau a second time. The Guidance Bureau then decided to circulate the draft to the various branches of the Brotherhood throughout the country. Having been informed through wide consultation within the movement, the Brotherhood was then ready to solicit outside opinion, turning first to a select group of leading intellectuals.[4]

In contrast to the account offered by the Habib group that stressed consultation within the Brotherhood, the second group has put forward an account that denies that the draft represents the movement consensus and describes the drafting process as being monopolized by a small group that did not consider the diversity of views within the Brotherhood. Besides Abu al-Futuh, this group includes Gamal Hishmat, a widely respected former member of the parliament, and 'Isam al-'Iryan, one of the most prominent members of the middle generation of Brotherhood leaders and the official in charge of the movement's political office. This group viewed the Supreme Constitutional Court as the most appropriate body to determine the extent to which legislation is consistent

with the requirements of the Islamic shari'a under article 2 and insists that the Brotherhood must honor those clauses in the Egyptian constitution mandating political equality regardless of religion and gender (and that no exception is justified for the presidency and premiership).

Abu al-Futuh claimed that the draft circulated to intellectuals was the work of only a small group of Brotherhood members.[5] Hishmat was similarly harsh when he said that the platform's provisions on women, Christians, and the council of religious scholars did not reflect any consensus within the Brotherhood and that the movement's branches did not view the draft before it was released:

> These [controversial points] were not raised in the preliminary discussions and dialogues during the consideration of the document that would be announced as the movement's draft platform. In no way does it represent the opinion of the entire Brotherhood or its branches which were deprived of the opportunity to see the program or comment on what was in it. I had earlier expressed my objection to the Brotherhood, but that opinion was not accepted.[6]

Al-'Iryan added that he and others had suggested that the draft platform be silent on those issues that were still matters of disagreement within the Brotherhood until a consensus view had been developed.[7]

Notably, the differences between the two camps over the platform spilled outside of the boundaries of the Guidance Bureau beyond just Hishmat and al-'Iryan. Other leaders began voicing dissatisfaction, such as Sa'd al-Katatni, the mild-mannered head of the Brotherhood's parliamentary bloc, who claimed that the opinion of the movement's parliamentarians had not been considered.[8] Some young activists spoke out on websites (sometimes in English) and blogs, complaining that the platform did not express their views and had been drafted in an undemocratic manner.[9]

The problems among members of the movement over matters of procedure and content led to changes in both the language and the media chosen to express differences. The debate quickly moved from small group discussion in deferential language to open and sometimes sharp public debate. Traditionally, members of the Brotherhood are extremely reticent about expressing their internal differences. The senior leadership, reflecting on the movement's long experience, strongly resists airing what it feels is its dirty laundry in public. But as this dispute entered the public forum, leaders spoke far more openly and in stronger tones than they had done before. For instance, Mahmud 'Izzat claimed that those who objected to the content of the platform about Christians, women, and the council of religious scholars did not have any support in shari'a law; Mahmud Ghuzlan accused the movement's reformist youth of falling under the influence of liberal ideas and away from the Brotherhood's roots.[10] In return, Gamal Hishmat went so far as to compare the monopolization of the drafting process with the wider atmosphere of oppression in Egypt; he also spoke of the killing of the wasatiyya (centrist trend) within the Brotherhood.[11]

The struggle over the draft platform within the Brotherhood went into new arenas, including what can be referred to as a "fatwa war." Those who fell on either side rushed to obtain fatwas from religious authorities supporting their positions on women, Christians, and the council of religious scholars. And they used these fatwas against each other not merely in quiet internal discussions but also in public debates. Habib and his supporters mentioned on more than one occasion that the Guidance Bureau had consulted with a number of religious authorities when it had worked on the draft and that these authorities had opined against the suitability of women and Christians for the presidency and for ministerial positions.[12] Abu al-Futuh was even more specific when he stated in a media interview that Shaykh Yusif al-Qaradawi, one of the most prominent religious authorities alive today, and Muhammad Salim al-'Awa, a very influential Egyptian scholar, had advised that such positions are not covered by the traditional shari'a-based prohibitions and that women and Christians are not barred from holding them. Abu al-Futuh also relied on al-Qaradawi in his view that the Supreme Constitutional Court may be charged with determining the suitability of legislation under article 2, dispensing with the need for the council of religious scholars.[13]

As the dispute within the Brotherhood became public and moved onto several different levels, it became a contest pitting different prominent factions against one another, the grassroots against the leadership, and the younger generation against the older one. General Guide 'Akif notably refrained from entering these debates and strove instead to preserve a modicum of discipline, finally forming a committee headed by Habib to review the draft and decide on the controversial points.[14] But this did not end the public debate or the battling through public statements and interviews, which did not begin to ease until late October 2007. Instead of producing an image of a vital and democratic movement deliberating over its positions, the series of spats over the platform made the Brotherhood seem confused, divided, devoid of a strategic calculus, and unable to decide on a course of action or clear set of beliefs at a critical juncture in its history.

Why did the Brotherhood put itself through such an experience? Why was a platform issued in the first place? What were the factors that led the Brotherhood to undertake the unprecedented step of issuing a platform for a political party that does not exist and has no immediate prospect of gaining legal recognition?

Why a Platform Now? Benefits and Costs

To be sure, the Brotherhood has issued programmatic statements many times in the past and has even published detailed programs for specific elections (most recently for the Consultative Assembly elections in 2006). But this new platform was qualitatively and quantitatively different from the movement's

past pronouncements. In qualitative terms, the document was a step toward forming a political party rather than contesting an individual election. And for all its involvement in Egyptian politics, the Brotherhood has hesitated about (and been forcibly blocked from) forming a party. In quantitative terms, the draft ran 128 pages, an unusual length even for the loquacious Brotherhood. The decision to issue a platform carried real risks, as will be seen, for its relationship with the government, reputation, relations with other political forces, and internal coherence.

Discussions inside the Brotherhood on the formation of a political party are not new. In the 1980s and 1990s, members debated the importance and utility of a party resulting in some initiatives in that direction. The most significant were proposals to found a "Consultation Party" in 1986 and a "Reform Party" in the early 1990s. Both were coordinated with leading Brotherhood figures.[15] But these initiatives did not progress as far as the announcement of a party platform, and the efforts faded quickly, partly because of the expectation that any attempt to gain legal recognition would be futile. The Brotherhood has participated in the 1970s in student association elections as well as those in professional associations (such as the Bar Association and the medical, engineering, and journalism syndicates).[16] It ran candidates as well in the 1984 and 1987 parliamentary elections through an alliance with other parties (the Wafd Party in 1984 and the Labor Party in 1987). These experiences provoked Brotherhood members to think seriously about the possibility of forming their own party as a way of pursuing political participation in official channels. But a consensus on the matter never developed among Brotherhood leaders, partly because of fears of the resulting obstacles (and a possibly harsh official reaction) and partly because of disagreement about the proper relationship between political activity and other parts of the Brotherhood mission.

So why has the current effort—in circumstances seemingly less propitious than those prevailing in earlier periods—progressed to the point of a draft platform? Indeed, the initiative comes at an unusually difficult moment. The Brotherhood's success in the 2005 parliamentary elections—even in the face of governmental violations of the integrity of the electoral process and of judicial supervision of the elections, it still managed to obtain close to one-fifth of the seats—demonstrated the movement's political weight and indeed its effective status as the most important opposition actor in Egypt. Since that time, the regime of President Husni Mubarak has taken a confrontational stance with the Brotherhood, using a two-pronged strategy to restrict the movement's freedom of maneuver.

The first strategy consists of security pressure through periodic arrests and harassment, culminating in the prosecution of a number of Brotherhood leaders—including the second deputy General Guide Khayrat al-Shatir and some prominent businessmen close to the movement—in military trials. Using the wheels of military justice to grind the Brotherhood into submission is a

technique that hearkens back to darker days in the mid-1990s and even the Nasserist period.

The regime's second strategy against the Brotherhood uses a host of legal measures to transform the political atmosphere that allowed the movement to score impressive gains in recent years. These legal countermeasures began with the constitutional amendments that the regime pushed through in the spring of 2007, making use of its parliamentary majority as well as its ability to obtain landslide victories in ritualistic referendums. The most important constitutional amendment affecting the Brotherhood forbids "conducting any political activity or founding any political parties based on any religious reference or religious basis" (article 5). Since, as discussed above, article 2 of the 1971 constitution established that the "principles of the Islamic shari'a shall be a main source of legislation," and since a 1980 amendment elevated shari'a principles to "*the* main source of legislation," the Brotherhood had been able to position itself as a protector of the constitutionally mandated order. But the amended article 5 makes that posture more difficult, especially as the Brotherhood solidifies in its determination to form a political party. The amendments also remove the constitutional basis for some earlier decisions by the Supreme Constitutional Court to allow individuals not associated with a political party to gain access to the ballot.[17] This set of court rulings had made it possible for the Brotherhood to run its most popular candidates as independents. Bereft of legal status, Brotherhood candidates will have considerably greater difficulty gaining access to the ballot in the future.

Thus the Brotherhood has moved toward writing and publicizing a platform at a time when its leaders and members know just as well as external observers that official permission to form a party is a pipe dream. There are two primary and two secondary factors that worked to impel the Brotherhood to undertake these steps despite the constricted political environment.

First, the confrontation with the regime after the 2005 elections deprived the movement of its ability to take the initiative as it had done in the period before the election. In 2004, the Brotherhood had issued a comprehensive reform program after which it had formed alliances with civil society organizations, dissident judges, independents, and opposition groups in an effort to press the regime to engage in authentic democratic reform. But the steady blows the government directed against the movement after the parliamentary elections forced it on the defensive and into a reactive mode. In this respect, it seems that the Brotherhood pursued its platform as a way to seize the initiative once again. The platform was built in part on the prospect of moving public discussion back to the Brotherhood's potential contribution to Egyptian politics and society and away from the negative aspects of its role.[18] The Brotherhood was thrown on the defensive in particular after the arrest of some of its supporters at al-Azhar University. Some Brotherhood students had organized a public demonstration of their martial-arts skills—an event that sparked fears of the

revival of paramilitary activities by the Brotherhood (particularly because the participants wore masks).[19] Leading opponents of the organization were able to revive the charge—endorsed by President Mubarak himself—that the group represents "a threat to the security of Egypt because of its religious basis."[20]

Second, the Brotherhood sought not merely to regain the initiative but also to reassure the broader public about its program and intentions. Many Brotherhood leaders strove during the period of political dynamism in 2004 and 2005 to suggest that the organization, while legally unrecognized at present, wished to transform itself into a civil political party with a fully legal status. Some even hinted that its leadership was contemplating dissolving the Muslim Brotherhood as a movement in favor of the party if the latter obtained legal recognition. Even if it did not go that far, founding a party would make a division between the Brotherhood as a movement (devoted to social, educational, charitable, and missionary activity) and the Brotherhood as a party, devoting its efforts solely to the political realm.[21] These suggestions provoked a mixture of anticipation and hope among a broad spectrum of Egyptian public opinion that the Brotherhood was preparing to act as a normal and responsible political force and that it was making good on its claim to be a reformist rather than revolutionary actor.

Besides these two major factors, two subsidiary motives led the Brotherhood to present a platform to the broader public. First, the Brotherhood has felt pressure to clarify some of the vagueness in its political and social vision. Through a series of statements in recent years, most notably its 2004 reform initiative and its 2005 electoral platform, the movement had worked to make clear its commitment to gradual democratization in Egypt and to the civil basis of political life. But there remained a number of "gray zones" and even contradictory positions about a few critical issues that led the Brotherhood to face increasing calls for clarification.[22] For instance, does the Brotherhood favor complete equality in political rights for all Egyptian citizens regardless of religion or gender? What specific reform steps does it support? How will its general support for the Islamic shariʿa be translated into political practice? The platform provided an opportunity for the Brotherhood to clarify and define its positions both to external audiences and within its own ranks.[23] Indeed, it was seen as a means of resolving differences within the movement over these questions.

A second subsidiary motive was to emulate the experiments of a number of sister movements in other Arab states that participate more confidently in the political process. Movements such as Islah in Yemen, Unity and Reform in Morocco, and Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan and Kuwait have all seized opportunities to participate in the official political process by establishing political parties (with a civil basis) distinct from the broader religious movements. In all these cases—the Party of Justice and Development in Morocco, the Islamic Action Front in Jordan, and the Islamic Constitutional Movement in Kuwait—the movement and the party remain linked and the relationship is sometimes

controversial, but the separation does allow the political leadership some autonomy in making decisions. In addition, the move signals to the broader society that the movement can recognize that politics has its boundaries. The Muslim Brotherhood, both through choice and by force of law (and worse), has not followed this path. Writing a platform was a means for some within the movement to suggest that they were interested in taking advantage of the benefits such a separation would bring. Some Brotherhood leaders were explicit on the need to study the experiences of other movements (an unusual attitude for the Egyptian group, accustomed as it is to viewing itself as the "mother movement" that exports rather than imports expertise). In an interview with an Islamist Yemeni weekly, Abu al-Futuh invited Islamists outside Egypt to present their views on the matter of forming a party:

> There is a dialogue now within the institutions of the Brotherhood about this question. We have not yet decided. We are interested in the experiences of the Islamist movements in Yemen, Jordan, Morocco, and Algeria to learn from them in planning the future political work for the movement in Egypt. For instance, the Movement for Peaceful Society, Hamas [in Algeria] is an umbrella for political work and missionary work at the same time. In Morocco the situation is different. There is the PJD alongside the Unity movement and they are administratively and organizationally separate. In Jordan there is the Islamic Action Movement [sic], its political wing...and there is the experience in Yemen. We are summoning all these experiences to benefit from them. The matter with us is still not decided.[24]

Similarly, in a commentary on the recent Moroccan parliamentary elections, 'Isam al-'Iryan argued:

> As Islamic parties and movements strive to integrate themselves into Arab political systems, it becomes important [for them] to follow closely the experiences of Islamic movements and parties everywhere. If Egypt used to be a pioneer in exporting its experience, today we are in the position of benefiting from the experiences of others.[25]

There were many motivations, then, for the Brotherhood to move in the direction of its sister movements—or at least suggest that it was capable of moving—by working on a draft platform. And it did so not by parachuting in a fully formed program but by developing one through a process of internal and external consultation (indeed, the Brotherhood, like many of its sister movements, deeply resents its reputation for hierarchical decision making and instead prides itself on its slow, deliberative, and consultative procedures). The reform program and the electoral platforms were useful starting points, but this new document was to be longer, more comprehensive, and fully responsive to the long-term needs of Egyptian society. And drafts were not only circulated within the movement's leadership and to the rank and file; they were also sent to leading intellectuals and activists outside the movement, sparking an intensive public debate.

While the Brotherhood leadership thus regained center stage, it also discovered that the platform carried very real risks. Indeed, the movement has already paid a political price for the platform. The costs associated with the platform are mirror images of the benefits it sought to gain. Its long decades as an opposition movement have brought painful repression and exclusion, but they have also excused the movement from any practical responsibility for governing. Opposition movements by definition do not govern, and they are therefore able to exploit official mistakes and attack unpopular decisions without having to specify detailed alternatives. Vagueness and indeterminacy are some of the few perquisites of political opposition.

Thus, by issuing a platform designed to answer all questions—as they have been pressed to do (to some extent even by the authors of this paper)—the leaders have seized the initiative, moved to reassure the public, answered some of its critics about its history of vagueness, and followed its sister movements. But they have also renounced some of the few luxuries of opposition by spelling out their positions in great detail.

One practical effect has been the tension it has brought between its rank-and-file membership and its much broader public audience. It is not unusual—especially in ideological movements—for activists to hold stronger beliefs than the broad constituency. The Brotherhood has been able to do well in elections and capture broad public attention despite an inhospitable political environment by posing as the voice of authenticity, moral values, and integrity. Yet it appeals to its activists not only for these broad general reasons but also for its unswerving dedication to enhancing the role of Islam in public life. For instance, while the shariʿa may be a popular cause in Egyptian society, many different groups have fears that the Brotherhood will pursue rigid, draconian, or intolerant interpretations of what the shariʿa requires. Thus, as discussed above, to reassure the broader public (and especially leading intellectuals and public figures hopeful for political reform but nervous about the Brotherhood's long-term goals), the movement had gradually shifted its stress from "implementation of the shariʿa" to "shariʿa as an Islamic frame of reference (*marjaʿiyya*)." Leaders were signaling that their movement was no different from a European Christian democratic party in that it was merely using its religious understanding to guide its policy choices. But the movement's base was hardly pressing for any dilution of its commitment to the Islamic shariʿa which Brotherhood loyalists often understand not only as a set of general moral injunctions but also as a specific set of legal imperatives. As long as the Brotherhood could participate in the debate on a general level, it could use phraseology that would appeal both to its base and the broader public. But when the composition of the platform forced the movement to leave the realm of generalities for the more demanding terrain of specific proposals, it had to make choices—and its choices sparked the controversies discussed above.

A second cost has been the movement's loss of control over the terms of debate. The Brotherhood has, as it sought, regained the initiative and garnered tremendous attention. But by placing its draft before the public eye, the movement has also supplied its critics with ammunition. This is true, for instance, with regard to its position on the role of women in Egyptian politics and society. The movement seeks to position itself not as the oppressor of women but as the protector of the Egyptian family and the true interests of all of its members. In its general discourse, it can pose as the defender of morality and family values, and indeed the draft platform allows it to do exactly that. Yet when the movement felt compelled to move beyond such general language it felt obliged to answer questions that critics had pressed, departing from its preferred script. This led directly to the controversy over the qualifications of women for high state positions—an issue many in the Brotherhood would probably have wished to avoid. As described above, it cornered the leadership into a series of internal debates and subjected it to biting external criticism. Thus, while the Brotherhood would prefer to wax eloquent on the need to meet the distinctive needs of women in Egyptian society—a theme that has popular resonance—it has instead been forced to address deep internal fissures while defending itself against the charge that it harbors outdated attitudes on gender roles.

And indeed, the third cost of the platform has been to divide the leadership or to widen and expose divisions that had been largely latent. The platform has been an opportunity to resolve internal debates, to be sure, but not all debates can be resolved easily. Without the platform, the movement could avoid divisive matters or allow leaders to emphasize their own individual preferences on how the movement's broad positions should be interpreted and applied. In a sense, there was no need for the movement to respond in detail to questions that were only hypothetical as long as it remained excluded from political power. Indeed, the Brotherhood was probably aware of the internal costs of specificity because it has seen its sister movements show great strain in the effort to define positions. For example, Jordan's Islamic Action Front was divided into hostile camps as a result of debates about how to respond to the opportunities posed by the recent parliamentary elections and the threats posed by an increasingly suspicious government. Kuwait's Islamic Constitutional Movement was divided over the issue of women's suffrage. Morocco's Party of Justice and Development debated how far to go to reassure critics that it was a moderate opposition (and even potentially governing party) by deemphasizing religious themes. And most dramatically, Hamas has found that electoral triumph has exposed the movement to enormous internal and external pressures. The decision to participate in the political process exposes movements around the region to a variety of strains and pressures, and by moving forward with a party platform of its own, Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood has invited a similar set of problems.

Putting the Pieces Back Together: The Emerging Consensus Party Platform

The Brotherhood is currently in the midst of repairing the rifts opened by the platform debate. The eventual platform—reflecting an attempt to express a set of consensus positions—is already taking shape.

First, the Brotherhood will likely renounce any implication that the council of religious scholars will have any binding authority and will stress that the council's task is solely advisory and connected to existing institutions (including al-Azhar and the Supreme Constitutional Court) rather than supplanting them or assuming their roles. The final platform is likely to defer to existing institutions, especially in determining the constitutionality of legislation. In this respect, the faction of Abu al-Futuh, al-'Iryan, and Hishmat is emerging victorious over the Habib faction. The Brotherhood is likely to work to disavow any indication that it is—as its critics have charged—interested in importing an Iranian-style theocracy to the country. In an interview with an independent Egyptian daily, General Guide Mahdi 'Akif made this clear:

> We want to construct a body of elected religious scholars that will choose the Shaykh of al-Azhar [one of the two most important religious officials in the country] but it will only be an advisory body. Whoever in public life wishes to consult it may do so. But the final decision is for the parliament—which must, as required by the constitution, accord with the Islamic shari'a. If there is a difference, it is for the Constitutional Court to judge among disputants.[26]

This position has now become a general one, expressed by various Brotherhood leaders (including Habib himself along with Abu al-Futuh and Mahmud 'Izzat) in a string of interviews and statements.[27] It is gradually becoming clear that the Brotherhood is seeking a face-saving retreat from the more ambitious plans for the council of religious scholars as well as avoiding burning all bridges with al-Azhar. Withdrawing language about the 'Ulama Council would also end the attempt by some Brotherhood leaders to use the new body as a tool to undermine the executive branch's control of al-Azhar.[28] The movement will be forced to fall back on its more general traditional—and less incendiary—focus on reform of al-Azhar.

However, current indications from the Brotherhood suggest that the controversial sections of the draft platform on Christians and women will be maintained, albeit with the important modification that the position represents the Brotherhood's interpretation of Islamic law—a formula that actually represents a slight retreat from the draft platform. The General Guide (followed by other leaders) has begun to deliver a consistent message on this matter:

> There are two points—women and Copts—on which the Brotherhood has taken a decision. This is not a matter for us but it is in the shari'a and religion. Experts in Islamic jurisprudence say that the Islamic state cannot have anyone at its head

except a Muslim. It cannot have a woman at its head. This is a legal interpretation, but there are other legal interpretations. It is for us, as members of the Brotherhood, to choose [the legal interpretation] but we do not bind others. We bind only the Muslim Brotherhood and not all Egyptians on what they are to believe. The ballot boxes will decide.[29]

In short, the view of the Habib–'Izzat–Mursi group has largely prevailed and the war of fatwas ended with a victory for those who viewed non-Muslims and women as unsuitable for the presidency of a Muslim state. It is clear that many in the leadership are convinced that this position is correct on religious grounds. But in addition to principle there may be an element of political calculation as well: These leaders do not wish to lose the distinctive Islamic character of their party platform for fear of alienating their popular base as well as being seen as too pliable and quick to retreat on matters of core principle in the face of pressure or even a whiff of criticism.

But even on this issue, the hard line had been softened and influenced by the critics. For instance, the recent statements are restricted to the presidency and no longer make explicit mention of the premiership. And by insisting that this is a position for the movement only and leaving final decisions on the matter to majority rule, the Brotherhood seems to suggest that it is willing to accept the democratic process fully on the question. In other words, it is claiming that its position as a movement is firm and no longer subject to internal debate, but it is willing to be outvoted by other Egyptians. The recent statements imply (though they fail to directly declare) that no legal or constitutional bar to women and Christians is called for, and that those who disagree with the movement's positions are still operating within the boundaries of legitimate interpretations of Islamic law. The leadership has also taken pains to insist that it is perfectly respectful of women and Christians even as it has adopted positions that have prompted some doubts that it has come to terms with full civic equality.[30]

Finally, there has been a concerted effort to change the image of a divided movement and to reconcile conflicting positions that emerged so publicly in the first weeks of debate over the platform. The spats cost the Brotherhood dearly at the level of public opinion and also with its popular base, leading the organization to attempt to recover its previous reputation as a disciplined movement that speaks with a single voice. The strongest statements in this regard came from Habib and 'Izzat themselves—critical participants in the earlier public disputes. Habib recently stated that there is no "ultimate opposition inside the Guidance Council over the final opinion issued rejecting the qualification of women and Copts."[31] 'Izzat stressed that the Brotherhood has decided the matter with regard to the platform, and there is no longer room for internal disagreement or contradictory statements.[32] Abu al-Futuh, al-'Iryan, and others who criticized the platform have been forced to stay within the bounds of the platform as agreed upon and have thus returned to their traditional general refrain that the existence of a plurality of views in the movement is a sign of

vitality and healthy internal dialogue, not division between hawks and doves or moderates and extremists.[33]

In its drafting of a consensus program, the Brotherhood has striven to find a balance between the supporters and the opponents of the earlier draft, take public opinion into account, satisfy the demands of its popular base that the internal divisions be ended, and limit the harm caused by circulation of the controversial program. Nevertheless, questions raised by the earlier draft platform and the subsequent debate remain—there are still doubts about the controversial elements of the draft as well as the movement's unity among the movement's leaders, generations, and base.

Conclusion

It is difficult to view the Brotherhood's draft party platform as anything better than a mixed blessing for the movement's political integration. The first goal of the leadership in drafting the platform—regaining the initiative—has been partially met, as the Brotherhood's platform initiative placed it at the center of Egyptian political debates for a period of a few months. But in the process the movement lost control of the terms of that debate and found itself very much on the defensive concerning brief passages in the platform.

The second purpose, reassuring critics, has simply not been met. Indeed, elements of the draft platform seemed to worry not only the Brotherhood's implacable adversaries but also independent intellectuals who look to the movement as a possible counterweight to an autocratic regime. The public debates within the Brotherhood communicated internal disarray rather than democracy. Indications from Brotherhood leaders now are that some—but not all—of the external criticisms will be answered by amendments in the final draft.

The third purpose, clarifying the "grey zones" of the Brotherhood's ideology to its own members and the broader public has been partly met. The platform's exhaustive details on almost every issue in public life in Egypt today are impressive. But clarification has costs for an opposition movement, and the Brotherhood has paid some of them by exposing divisions among senior leaders and between generations; it has also been caught between the expectations of its members and its broader (but less loyal) sympathizers. And it has reacted to the resulting dilemmas partly by clarifying its positions still further but more deeply by retreating back into some more comfortable grey zones.

Finally, the Brotherhood's effort to draw from the experience of its sister movements in establishing a political party has been stymied—not by anything in the platform's contents but by a regime that becomes less bashful each month with showing its repressive face toward the Islamist opposition movement.

Indeed, Brotherhood leaders were aware from the beginning of the limits of what a platform could accomplish. At most it could show Egyptians what a Brotherhood party would look like, but the regime, the law, and now the constitution seem to be far more serious obstacles than public opinion to a Muslim

Brotherhood party. The platform shows that the movement is still very much struggling with how to handle the demands of its ambition to be a normal political actor. But no amount of internal debate is likely to reassure a regime that seems unable to accept any serious political actor as a legitimate partner in Egyptian political life.

Notes

1   During the last week of August 2007, the Muslim Brotherhood circulated a draft of a political party platform among nearly forty intellectuals, analysts, and journalists in and out of Egypt and asked for feedback and comments (or advice as the Muslim Brothers put it). The majority of those who received the draft preferred to write about it in articles published in newspapers or comment on it in public. This reality forced a number of the Brotherhood's leading figures to comment about the document in a manner that was characterized by contradictions on core issues among their positions.

2   The court's jurisprudence on article 2 has attracted widespread scholarly attention. One of the authors of this piece, writing with Clark Lombardi of the University of Washington, has contributed to the scholarly writings on the subject with a translation and a general analysis. See Clark Lombardi and Nathan J. Brown, "Do Constitutions Requiring Adherence to Shari'a Threaten Human Rights? How Egypt's Constitutional Court Reconciles Islamic Law with the Liberal Rule of Law," *21 American University International Law Review* 379-435 (2006); and Clark Lombardi and Nathan J. Brown, "The Supreme Constitutional Court of Egypt on Islamic Law, Veiling and Civil Rights: An Annotated Translation of Supreme Constitutional Court of Egypt Case No. 8 of Judicial Year 17 (May 18, 1996)," *21 American University International Law Review* 437 (2006).

3   Worth mentioning here is the dispute between the founder of al-Wasat party Abu al-'Ila Madi and the Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood Muhammad Mahdi 'Akif about the start of the initiative. Whereas Madi emphasizes that he is the one behind the idea, and that it was mainly a maneuver to get out of the Muslim Brotherhood's cover following some disagreements, 'Akif suggests that he encouraged Madi to establish the party in the mid-nineties when the members of the Brotherhood's consultation council were imprisoned. To review the two narratives see: Abu al-'Ila Madi, My Story with the Brothers: the Story of al-Wasat (Arabic), available at: www.almesryoon.com, January 4, 2006; and Muhammad Mahdi 'Akif, interview, *Akhir Sa'ah*, July 20, 2005.

4   Muhammad Habib, interview, the English portal of the Muslim Brotherhood's website, www.ikhwanweb.com, November 11, 2007; Mahmud 'Izzat, interview, www.ikhwanonline.com, October 23, 2007; Mahmud Ghuzlan, interview, www.ikhwanonline.com, November 1, 2007.

5   'Abd al-Mun'im Abu al-Futuh, interview, *Ahram Weekly*, October 25, 2007.

6   Gamal Hishmat, interview, www.islamonline.net, October 6, 2007.

7   'Isam al-'Iryan, interview, *al-'Alam* (Iran), November 4, 2007; see also, 'Isam al-'Iryan, *al-Hayat Daily*, October 13, 2007.

8   Sa'd al-Katatni, interview, www.ikhwanonline.com, November 8, 2007.

9   To review some of the Brotherhood's deliberations, visit http://ihoudaiby.blogspot.com and http://ana-ikhwan.blogspot.com. For an analysis of the role of bloggers within the Brotherhood, see Marc Lynch, "Young Brothers in Cyberspace," *Middle East Report*, Winter 2007, http://merip.org/mer/mer245/lynch.html.

10   'Izzat, interview, www.ikhwanonline.com, October 23, 2007; Ghuzlan, interview, www.ikhwanonline.com, November 1, 2007. In addition, rumors circulated that the Supreme Guide suspended al-'Iryan from any discussions about the party plat- form following some controversial statements he made regarding the Brotherhood's future position on the peace agreements with Israel. 'Isam al-'Iryan and first deputy Muhammad Habib denied this news in public.

11   Gamal Hishmat, interview, www.islamonline.com, October 6, 2007.

12   Muhammad Mursi, statements, www.ikhwanonline.com, November 25, 2007.

13   'Abd al-Mun'im Abu al-Futuh, interview, www.ikhwanweb.com, October 29, 2007.

14   Muhammad Mahdi 'Akif, *al-Hayat Daily*, October 18, 2007; also 'Isam al-'Iryan, *al-Misri al-Yawm*, November 14, 2007.

15   The consultation and reform political party initiatives were welcomed by the Brotherhood's leadership at the time. This was different from two subsequent initia- tives. The first of these—al-Amal party initiative in 1995—was an individual effort. The second—al-Wasat party initiative in 1996—was associated with the emergence of internal divisions that were unprecedented in the movement throughout the previous three decades.

16   On the experience of earlier generations of Islamist activists in student and professional association elections, see Carrie Wickham, *Mobilizing Islam* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

17   Nathan J. Brown, Michele Dunne, and Amr Hamzawy, Egypt's Constitutional Amendments, Web Commentary (Washington DC, Carnegie Endowment, March 23, 2007).

18   An interview with Mahmud 'Izzat, the General Secretary of the Muslim Brotherhood, *Nafizat Misr*: www.egyptwindow.net, November 6, 2007.

19   In December 2006 some Muslim Brotherhood students protested in al-Azhar University against what they considered a manipulation of the student council election results and the penalties that some of their colleagues received from the University's administration. However, the students wore black masks and created a scene that re- minded people of the military parades of Hizbollah and Hamas. These demonstrations were covered extensively by government-backed newspapers and other independent publications around the country. The Egyptian security services used this event as a pretext to accuse the Brotherhood of maintaining a paramilitary wing within the orga- nization. A large number of al-Azhar students were arrested (they were released in the following months), and one of the leaders arrested at the time was Khayrat al-Shatir, the second deputy to the movement's Supreme Guide. All were tried in military courts.

20   President Husni Mubarak, interview, *al-Usbu'*, January 11, 2007.

21   In an interview with *al-'Arabi* newspaper on November 30, 2006, 'Abd al-Mun'im Abu al-Futuh—member of the Brotherhood's consultative council—stated in response to a question about the prospects of dissolving the movement if it received an official license to establish a political party: "There are two opinions in the Brotherhood: the first sees that the movement should completely transform and become a political party, and the second suggests a separation between the social organizational work of

the Brotherhood and the political work by registering the movement as a social association and simultaneously establishing a political party."

In contrast, in an interview with *al-Karamah* newspaper on January 17, Muhammad Habib—the first deputy of the Supreme Guide—emphasized that "a significant number of the elites accused us that we did not wish to establish a political party, and that we want to remain an illegal organization. We want to send this message: we are ready to establish a political party." In response to a question about whether the party would replace the movement, he stated: "this issue is still being deliberated, but surely the party will not be an alternative to the movement."

'Isam al-'Iryan, who is in charge of the political portfolio and one of the most recognized public relations figures in the movement, articulated a reconciliatory position by suggesting that "the Brotherhood is in favor of separating political and social activism if an environment that is conducive to liberty and that would allow such separation materializes." See 'Isam al-'Iryan, www.almesryoon.com and www.islamonline.net, December 25, 2005.

22 The authors of this paper, along with our Carnegie Endowment colleague, Marina Ottaway, have written of these ambiguities earlier. In this sense, we acknowledge having been among those pressing the Brotherhood to clarify its positions. See Nathan J. Brown, Amr Hamzawy, and Marina S. Ottaway, "Islamist Movements and the Political Process: Exploring the Grey Zones," Carnegie Paper no. 67 (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment, March 2006); and Amr Hamzawy, Marina S. Ottaway, and Nathan J. Brown, "What Islamists Need to Be Clear About: The Case of the Brotherhood," Policy Outlook no. 35 (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment, February 2007). The second paper was specifically written as part of a dialogue with Muslim Brotherhood leaders as they prepared to launch the platform drafting effort.

23 'Isam al-'Iryan, interview, *al-Sa'ah* (Egypt), October 28, 2007; see also Mahmud 'Izzat, Secretary General of the Brotherhood, interview, *Nafizat Misr*: www.egyptwindow.net, November 6, 2007.

24 'Abd al-Mun'im Abu al-Futuh, interview, *al-Sahwah*, December 1, 2006.

25 'Isam al-'Iryan, *Moroccan Elections – Events, Implications, and Options* (in Arabic), available on the Arabic portal of the Muslim Brotherhood's website: www.ikhwanonline.com, October 30, 2007. Worth mentioning also is that the positive reading of the Muslim Brotherhood of the political experiences of Islamist groups outside Egypt is also matched by a careful examination common within the ranks of the movement. This careful reading sees in the official political participation of these groups in other Arab countries a forfeit of some fundamental values and principles. For more on this, see Muhammad Mursi, *The Muslim Brotherhood and Contemporary Islamist Parties* (in Arabic), www.egyptwindow.net, August 6, 2007.

26 Muhammad Mahdi 'Akif, interview, *al-Misri al-Yawm*, November 24, 2007.

27 Muhammad Habib, interview, English portal of the Brotherhood's website: www.ikhwanweb.com, November 11, 2007; Mahmud 'Izzat, interview, *Nafizat Misr*: www.egyptwindow.net, November 6, 2007; 'Abd al-Mun'im Abu al-Futuh, www.islamonline.net, November 7, 2007.

28 Mahmud 'Izzat, interview, *Nafizat Dimyat*: www.domiatwindow.com, November 2007 (No specified date).

29 Muhammad Mahdi 'Akif, interview, *al-Misri al-Yawm*, November 24, 2007.

30 Muhammad Habib, *al-Sharq al-Awsat*, November 8, 2007.

31 Muhammad Habib, www.islamonline.net, November 7, 2007.

32 Mahmud 'Izzat, interview, *Nafizat Dimyat*: www.domiatwindow.net, November 2007.

33 Abd al-Mun'im Abu al-Futuh, www.islamonline.net, November 7, 2007; 'Isam al-'Iryan, interview, www.islamonline.net, October 27, 2007.

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