Islamic advocates in politics have often proclaimed that ‘the Muslim’s nationality is his faith’. Many such Muslims have denounced nationalism for dividing the Muslim community, the umma, into fragmentary units, contributing to its weakness in the face of its religious and civilizational opponents. Sayid Qutb, the founding ideologue of modern radical Islam, responded to the Prosecutor’s questioning of his patriotism in the trial that culminated in his execution in 1966:

I believe that the bonds of ideology and belief are more sturdy than those of patriotism based upon region and that this false distinction among Muslims on a regional basis is but one consequence of crusading and Zionist imperialism which must be eradicated. (quoted in Mortimer 1982: 271)

Such proclamations reinforced the view of some Western commentators, including Ernest Gellner, that the Islamic idea of the community as the political unit is incompatible with the territorial nation state. Nationalists, on the other side, have exalted the nation as a cultural and territorial unit as the ultimate basis for unity and solidarity. Few nationalists were actually hostile to religion as a faith and cement of social solidarity. Faced, however, with religious divisions within territorial nations, many secular nationalists have advocated a separation between religious faith and national solidarity, exemplified in the slogan of the early Egyptian nationalist leader Sa’d Zaghloul (1857-1927), ‘religion is for God, and the fatherland is for all its members’. Arab nationalists have often considered Islam as a most valuable part of the heritage, turath, of the Arab nation, alongside language. In some contexts this assertion has the effect of devaluing its specifically religious content and its claims to be a basis of the political unit as Islamic government.

We may discern three overlapping bases of conceiving the political unit in the Middle East: 1. The territorial nation-state, such as Egypt or Iraq or Turkey; 2. Pan-Arab nationalism (for the Arabs); and 3. Islam. In practice, nationalist, as well as Islamic
discourses have moved between and combined these principles in relation to the problems and situations in hand. Few Islamists have followed the logic of Islamic community as against the nation, and few nationalists have not accorded religion a place of honour in the attributes of the nation. Let us consider modes of articulation between these principles in historical contexts.

**Islam as nationalism**

Nationalist sentiments often originated in the confrontation with the European powers in the nineteenth century and subsequently. These confrontations were conceived by many in the Ottoman, Persian and Indian worlds as one between religious communities: Islam vs. Christendom. The problematic of decline, weakness and backwardness in relation to Europe generated discourses of remedies and responses. The conservatives asserted that it was the departure of Muslims from strict observance of their religion and the application of their law which detracted from their solidarity and resolve, not to mention God’s blessing, which led to their weakness vis-à-vis the infidels. The enemies of Islam were seen as holding on to their religious solidarity: witness the support of the European powers for the local Christian communities, contributing to their security and prosperity. Witness, too, the support of Europeans to the independence movements and secessions from the Ottoman state of the Christian nations of the Balkans. Politics was thus reduced to religious communitarianism.

Whenever Egyptians see European statesmen acting in concert against Egyptian interests or sentiments and agreeing on measures which postpone the day of their independence, they tend to contrast their fortune with that of the Balkan domains of the Ottoman Empire. They conclude that these dependencies won their independence through European intervention, because their inhabitants are Christians. The impression is thereby gained that there is a certain kind of unity among the Christians in Europe, and consequently they wish for unity among the Muslims capable of protecting their interests. As Christian unity saved the Balkan countries from the yoke of Muslim Ottomans, Muslim unity would save Egyptians from European hegemony. This, we believe, is a naïve idea engendered by a
faulty understanding of European politics in the East. (Lutfi al-Sayid, quoted in Ahmad 1960: 61)

Religious communalism, for long the basis of local solidarities and conflicts, comes to be generalized as a model of international relations, and of the politics of confrontation between a Christian Europe and the Muslim domains.

Reformists, on the other hand, sought to strengthen the lands of Islam against European ascendancy by adopting European models of social, political and military organization. The Muslim reformers amongst them, such as Afgani (1837-1897) and Abduh (1849-1905), argued that such reforms were not incompatible with Islam, but indeed, original to Islam. The original Islamic community of the Prophet and his companions embodied all the virtues of the European models of constitutionalism, democracy, rationality, love of science and knowledge, social justice and so on. So progress and authenticity could be united. It was the intervening centuries of tyranny and corruption (often blamed by Arabs on Turks, by Persians on Arabs and of Turks on both) that led to the decline and backwardness of Muslims and the distortion of religion. This distortion was identified with the common beliefs and practices of popular Islam, as well as the ignorance and obscurantism of the traditional ulama. The reform of Al-Azhar (the foremost university of Sunni Islam, in Cairo) was one of the main projects of Abduh’s life, and one in which he largely failed. Reform was aimed at the perceived corruption and superstition of popular Sufism (Islamic mysticism), the worship of saints and visitations to tombs. The reformed religion would be rational, based on scriptures and a modern interpretation and formulation of the sources and the law. In this stance the religious reformers coincided on the one side with the secular nationalists, including Ataturk, and on the other with the radical fundamentalists and Salafists. They all shared an antagonism to the common people and their religion in the name of progress and religious or national purity/authenticity and righteousness. ‘The people’ are the raison d’être of nationalism, for they are the nation and the bearers of its cultural essence. Yet they are recalcitrant, refusing to exhibit this essence as defined by the ideologies of nationalism. They have to be awakened (Gellner’s ‘sleeping beauty’). The metaphor of awakening is common to nationalists and religious ideologues from Ataturk to Khomeini.
Islam as nationalism then does not pertain to territory or state, but is often raised in the context of particular countries and their politics. Its logic is pan-Islamic, but its reality is often particular. The early pan-Islamists, notably Afghani, had their primary focus on resisting the colonial powers, especially Britain. He was a cosmopolitan activist who stirred ideas and movements in India, Afghanistan, Iran, Egypt and Turkey, and as such a rare example in the history of Islamic reform. As against European powers he postulated indeterminate entities, such as ‘the East’ (anticipating the much later Third Worldist entity of ‘the South’). The qualities of Islam and the East then pertained to all the countries in question, each waging its own struggles. Afghani’s ideal was for a unification of effort between the acknowledgedly distinct countries, but a political unity of all Muslims in one state was not on the agenda.

Islam and Arabism

The ideology and political movements of pan-Arabism developed in the process and aftermath of Ottoman collapse. It developed alongside notions of pan-Islamism and a renewed caliphate, preferably an Arab caliphate, as well as regional nationalisms. Many Arab nationalists, and many Arab Islamists have argued that there is no contradiction between Arabism and Islam, but have put various constructions on the inter-relations between the two. Secular Arab nationalists, notably Ba’th ideologues have lauded Islam as the peculiar genius of the Arab nation and the crowning glory of its history. This was the creed of Michel Aflaq (1910-1989), one of the founders of the Ba’th Party and a Syrian Christian. For him Islam was the national culture of the Arabs. It was ‘a veritable image and a perfect and eternal symbol of the nature of the Arab self. Muhammad was ‘all the Arabs’¹. This construction, however, does not find favour with Islamists, especially coming from Christian theoreticians. For Arab Islamists religion is not merely a historical heritage of the Arabs but a living system of politics and law to be applied in contemporary societies. They also point out that Arab prominence in history was only accomplished through Islam and its conquests. Islam also assigned a place of honour to the Arabic language as the medium of holy scriptures and Prophetic tradition. Language played a central role for both Arabists and Islamists. Both strenuously resisted ideas of language reform, modernization, the incorporation of regional colloquial dialects into the
written language, as bordering on blasphemy, against religion and the unity of the nation.

As a rule, Muslim reformists and even militants in the early decades of the twentieth century did not see a contradiction between Arab nationalism and an Islamic programme. Perhaps the most important figure in this respect was Rashid Rida (d. 1935), a Syrian who lived and worked in Egypt, disciple and biographer of Muhammad Abduh, the main figure of the reforms, but one who veered more towards the ‘fundamentalist’ directions. Rida wrote at a time when there was much resentment in many Arab quarters of Ottomans and Turks, with the increasingly nationalist directions of the Young Turks, and the persecution of Arabist elements, especially in Syria in the years leading up and during World War I. In Egypt the Turkish ruling and military elite was much resented, which was one of the causes of the Urabi revolt in 1882 which culminated in the British occupation of the country. Rida declared that as a Muslim he was a brother to all Muslims, and as an Arab a brother to all Arabs, and saw no contradiction between the two. Nevertheless he, like his mentor Abduh, and many others, blamed the Turks for the decline and weakness of Islam, and thought of the Arabs as its champions and defenders. Comparing the conquests of the Turks to those of the Arabs, Rida argued that the Arab conquests established Islam in the world, while those of the Turks (in Europe and elsewhere) brought a burden on Islam:

[…] the greatest glory in the Muslim conquests goes to the Arabs, and that religion grew and became great through them; their foundation is the strongest, their light the brightest, and they are indeed the best umma brought forth to the world [a Quranic reference]. … a little knowledge of past and present history shows that most of the countries where Islam was established were conquered by the Arabs… (Haim 1962: 22-3)

Rida was also sympathetic to the restoration of the Arab Caliphate as against the Ottoman claims.

What, then, of the unity of the Muslim umma? While keen on uniting the will and the solidarity of Muslims and on Islam as the basis for social and political organization, Rida was realistic about the chances of political union. His advocacy of a revived caliphate to unite Muslims did not conceive of a unitary state for all Muslims, but of a
caliph who would assume the functions of a supreme mujtahid (learned scholar and interpreter), who would hold authority over spiritual matters for Muslims who otherwise live under different political authorities and national arrangements. The caliph is conceived as a pope-like figure, presiding over diverse nation-states. Islamic unity would not supersede national identity.

Subsequent Islamic ideologues in the first half of the twentieth century would not disagree. Abduh and Rida were the giants of reform, but remained theoreticians and publicists. The following generation, that of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB), founded in Egypt in 1928, were activists and organizers of mass mobilization. They were competing on the political arena with varieties of nationalists: liberals as well as fascists. They also faced struggles with the Left. What all these groups had in common was an anti-colonialist stance calling for an end to British occupation and control, later extending to anti-Zionism and support for the Palestinians. The MB conceived all these in Islamic terms and saw no contradiction between Arabism and Islam. Hassan al-Banna, founder of the MB, reiterated sentiments similar to Rida:

The Arabs are mainstay of Islam and its guardians … and it is a duty of every Muslim to work for the revival and support for Arab unity. (Bishry 1998, 52)

These pronouncements of Banna are quoted in a more recent work by Tariq al-Bishry entitled ‘Between Arabism and Islam’ (Bishry 1998), written in the course of the 1980s. Tariq al-Bishry is a distinguished historian and lawyer. Like many Egyptian intellectuals, he started his political career as a Marxist, then veered to pan-Arab nationalism of the left (fitted in with Nasirism), and ultimately after the Iranian revolution, to Islamism. As such he speaks with a good perspective/retrospective on Egyptian and Arab political life and culture. Bishri quotes the twentieth century Islamists on the consistency between nationalism and Islam with approval. He adds that the antagonism between the two is only generated as a result of the secularist thrust of so many nationalists. Islamists, he argues, objected to the subordination of Islam to Arabism in the ideologies of Ba’thists and Nasirists who glorified Islam only as the heritage of the Arab people, then abandoned it as a social and political system and the source of all legislation.
Bishri offers insights into why Sayid Qutb and the radicals who followed him rejected nationalism in favour of Islam. While the Islamists of the earlier decades of the twentieth century shared with the nationalists the objective of ending colonial domination, the Islamists under Nasir were firmly repressed and persecuted by a nationalist regime, after the British had been ejected. Qutb conceived of the Nasirist regime as a *jahiliya*, an age of barbarism and ignorance, to be confronted by true Muslims fortified by faith and following in the footsteps of the first Islamic vanguard of Muhammad and his followers. Faith in this scenario replaces nation as a basis of solidarity and struggle, to establish the sovereignty of God as against that of the nationalist tyrant. Bishri traces this rejection of the nation primarily to Indian Islamic thought, notably Abu al-A’la Mawdudi. Indian Muslims, argued Bishri, wanted to create a Muslim community as distinct from the Indian nation, and thus rejected nationalism (as well, he could have added, a nationalism based on Muslim identity but not on the Islamic *Shari’a, a la Jinah*). Mawdudi had considerable influence over the more militant Islamists of the Arab world including Qutb.

The Qutbic strand of Islamic anti-nationalism persists, however, and is widespread amongst many radical Muslims. Contrary to Bishry’s pronouncements, they insist on the firm link of nationalism to secularism, and both to an intrinsic hostility to Muslim unity and faith. Emmanuel Sivan studied the pronouncements on Arabism in the taped sermons of a variety of radical Islamic preachers at the height of the Islamic resurgence in the 1970s and 80s. A Palestinian-Jordanian preacher, Abdallah Azzam, proclaimed, ‘Arab nationalism was conceived in sin and born in corruption and dissolution’ (Sivan 1997: 211). Common themes is that Arab nationalism is a Western import, encouraged by orientalists and colonialists to divide and weaken the Islamic umma, to separate Arab from Turk and demolish the caliphate. And who were its Arab agents and ideologues, it is asked: Answer: Christians, in league with their Western co-religionists, people like Jirji Zaydan, George Antonius, to be followed in subsequent generations by Michel Aflaq, the primary progenitor of Ba’th ideology, then George Habbash of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP). This theme of denouncing Arab Christians as agents and conspirators feeds into the question of equality of all faiths in common citizenship, so central to nationalist aspirations. Much as the
reformists, such as Bishry, cling on to this principle and give it an Islamic garb, the radicals delight in denouncing such equality. Islam tolerates infidel dhimmis (‘people of the Book’), they argue, providing they pay the poll tax and keep to their place as protected and subordinate communities. Radical preachers like Shaykh Kishk in 1970s Egypt denounced Copts for departing from this role and assuming positions and stances of prominence and equality. A particular bete noire of the Islamists is Butrus Butrus Ghali, the Egyptian former Secretary General of the UN, attributing his international prominence to being a Christian, and ‘one of them’. Preachers also denounced Arab hypocrisy: the claims to unity and solidarity belied by the selfish conduct of so many Arabs, especially the rich of Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, spending lavishly on forbidden pleasures while the majority of their fellow Arabs and Muslims lived in poverty and want. Kishk told stories of the drinking, gambling and whoring of these Arabs in Cairo’s Pyramid Street (Sivan 1997: 226-228).

The idea of nationalism and the nation state as forms of idolatry, worshipping a reified nation as a substitute for God, is a common theme not only among radical Islamist, but in some sophisticated intellectual constructions, notably in the Turkish theorists of the Umma, such as Ali Bulac. This latter attributes many of the ills of the modern world to nationalism and blames Hegel for deifying the nation and its state. Nationalism, he argues, is the path to ethnic cleansing and genocide. Witness the largely peaceful coexistence between religions and ethnicities under the Ottomans, followed by the massacres and atrocities of the twentieth century, all in the name of nationalism. His solution, a kind of liberal communalism, a multiplicity of ‘law communities’ coexisting under a minimal state. 

The Territorial Nation

Pan-arabism and pan-Islamism have been dreams and aspirations, while the territorial nation-state is the only concrete political reality, as nation and as state. But there are many forms of articulation between this territorial nationalisms with Islam. An important element in most nation states has been the existence of non-Muslim groups, primarily Christians, as citizens of many nation-states in the region. Where this is the case, such as Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Palestine and Iraq, it became an issue between nationalism and Islam, as we saw. There are countries, however, in which Islam coincided with
citizenship to a large extent: this is the case in the Maghreb (North African) countries and in Turkey.

Country Nationalism: Turkey

Turkey is perhaps the most interesting in this respect. The Turkish Republic was proclaimed ‘secular’ in its foundational period. Kemalism proclaimed the European identity of Turkey and celebrated the ancient history of the pre-Islamic Turks. Even before Kemalism, Zia Gokalp argued that the Turkish people have a distinctive culture, the product of their long history from before Islam, their language, territory and stock (much along the German theories of the nation, so popular with Arab nationalists, too)\(^8\). This culture was historically linked to Muslim civilization, which was now (early 20\(^{th}\) C) in a state of decline and decadence. At that historical juncture, Turkish culture was to be re-oriented towards European civilization. Islam, then, remained as one element in the Turkish cultural heritage, a kind of cement of social solidarity (a la Durkheim). Kemalist secularism, in line with these ideas, firmly subordinated religion to Turkish nationalism. Yet, the Turkish Republic emerged with a primarily Muslim population. Non-Muslims at the beginning of the twentieth century were also non-Turks (unlike the Arab Christians and Jews). They were Armenians and Greeks for the most part, largely ethnically cleansed in the massacres and the exchange of populations in the early decades of the twentieth century. These episodes of conflict and violence reinforced the identification of Turkish identity with Islam. Though there remains non-Muslim citizens of the Republic, it is difficult to classify them as ‘Turks’. Sunni Islam (of the Hanafi school) is implicitly a criterion of true Turkish citizenship\(^9\). Kurds are Sunnis but of the Shafi’I school, and Alevi, mostly peasant communities in Eastern Anatolia, constitute a sect considered heretical by orthodox Muslims. This fact has facilitated the coexistence of Turkish nationalism and Islamist ideology in much of the Turkish Islamic revival, as well as in ultra-right activism.

The thrust of Gokalp’s theories and of Kemalism, however, was to separate Turkish Islam from that of its neighbours and the historical association with them: it was precisely the Arab and Persian heritage that was seen as a burden of backwardness and corruption of the pure Turkish heritage. Turkish Islamism, though opposed to this secular nationalism and often declaring the unity of Islam, nevertheless took specifically Turkish
forms. Much of Turkish Islamism depended organizationally and ideologically on the revivals and continuities with older Sufi orders, mainly branches of the Naqshbandi. As such there was little organizational link with the Arab world, and certainly not Shi’I Iran. In effect, Turkish Islamism is national, and often nationalist (Zubaida 1996).

The question of membership of the EU is interesting. In the 1990s the Islamic party, including its present leaders, Erdogan and Gul, opposed Europe as a Christian club, and proposed instead closer links with the Muslim world. This all changed in recent years, with that party amongst the foremost advocates of Europe. It may be argued that they have an ulterior motive: EU membership will weaken the military grip on Turkish government and society, and usher in greater democracy from which the Islamists will benefit. Yet, the shift shows the pragmatic orientation to national politics and issues, to the extent of orienting policy to the supposedly Christian Europe, as against (unrealistic) Islamic links.

In the Maghreb countries Islam largely coincided with Arab and national identity. It was also the link of a national unity between Arab and Berber. There were no native Christians, and the thriving Jewish communities of old identified firmly with French colonial presence, and were as such counted out of the national sphere. Ben Badis and other Algerian ulama in the first half of the twentieth century resisted the colonial thrust to making Algeria French with the slogan, ‘Islam is my religion, Arabic my language, Algeria my fatherland’. Islam was an important component of the independence movements, unencumbered with the Mashriqi (eastern Arab world) problem of multiple communities of faith. Islam played different roles in the distinctive polities and histories of the three countries of the Maghreb, which would be too complex to encompass in the present lecture.

**Country Nationalism: Egypt**

Egypt is the country with the most firmly established territorial and historical identity, buttressed by a long history of centralized and effective government. It is also the Arab country with the longest history of modernity and direct European dominance, starting with the Napoleonic invasion at the end of the 18th C, continuing with the modernizing dynasty of Muhammad Ali, ultimately with European domination and British occupation in 1882. All the political trends of the region surfaced in Egypt, Ottomanism,
constitutionalism, different brands of Islamism, then the leftist trends. The sense of Egypt as politically Arab and the leader of the Arab world was late to surface (after the Nasirist revolution in mid-1950s), and was thrust upon bewildered Egyptians, who happily acquiesced in the lionization of Nasir and his leadership of the Arab and Third Worlds. For much of its modern history, however, it has been Egyptian nationalism which was (is) in the ascendancy\(^\text{10}\).

A modernist, liberal Egyptian nationalism was proclaimed by many intellectuals in the earlier decades of the twentieth century, the most prominent being Taha Hussein, writer, academic and educationalist, at one point minister of education. His book, The Future of Culture in Egypt, published in 1937, raised a storm of controversy, attacked by traditionalists and Islamists (Hussein 1937, Hourani 1983, 324-340). In it Hussein attaches Egypt and its history to the Mediterranean and Hellenic world. Its Islam, he argued, was no hindrance in this identification. Europe, from its early centuries, married Hellenism to Christianity, thus making Christianity rational and forward looking. Muslims, too, looked to the Greeks for logic and order and led the Medieval world in discovering and translating Aristotle. The march towards rationality and progress in Islam, however, was halted by the Turkish invasions and Ottoman rule. Egypt shared with Europe common cultures until the 15\(^{\text{th}}\) C, when the Europeans started on the path of modernity, but Egyptians were prevented from sharing in this progress by the burden of Ottoman rule, only to resume the march in the 19\(^{\text{th}}\) C. Nothing should now stop Egyptians from pursuing this path of modernity and progress. It is not clear from Hussein’s discourse whether this prognosis applies to all Arabs and Muslims or specifically to Egypt. The emphasis on the Mediterranean and the Hellenic would indicate the latter.

Few Egyptians would subscribe to this vision at the present time, with that country swept by a wave of narrow religious moralism and chauvinistic paranoia. Yet, one would suspect that underlying all that is still a bedrock of Egyptian nationalism. Various strands of anti-imperialism and preoccupation with the Palestine/Israel problems disposes most political pronouncements to be solidaristic with Arabs and Muslims, yet the focus of all political maneuvering is the nation and its state.

**The Islamic Republic and Iranian Nationalism**
Iranian nationalism in the modern period separated Iranian history from that of the Arabs. It celebrated the pre-Islamic past, and insisted on the continuity of Iranian culture despite Islam and the Arab conquest. Indeed, it celebrated the penetration of that culture into Islamic civilization, shaping it with its themes and motifs. Iranian Islam, too, was seen as distinct, and its Shi’ism a continuity with pre-Islamic spiritual themes. The Pahlavi regime played on these themes and celebrated the antiquity of Iranian or Arian monarchy. These themes were overtly secular, and accompanied by derision towards the clerical establishment and its backwardness and reaction, and that establishment reciprocated with equal hostility and accusations of alien affiliations to the West and its decadence and hostility to Islam and Muslims. Khomeini was particularly virulent in his condemnation of secularism and the Pahlavi pretensions. Despite the distinctness of Shi’I Islam and the historical antipathy with its Sunni counterpart, Khomeini and his supporters emphasised the unity of the Muslim world and its common mission.11

The ideology of the Islamic Republic, then, was overtly internationalist. It proclaimed the project of liberation and solidarity for the whole Islamic world, and it openly attempted to export the Revolution. As such it was seen as subversive by the Arab regimes, and much celebrated by the Islamists everywhere as a demonstration of the revolutionary powers of Islam and its appeal to the masses, as against the ‘imported’ secular ideologies. Here was a popular revolution, not an Arab style military coup, and the masses were mobilized in the name of Islam, their authentic creed. It swayed not only Islamists but many nationalists and leftists in the Arab world.

Yet the politics of the Islamic Republic operated in many registers, some with distinctly nationalist flavour. While at one level proclaiming Islamic universalism there was never any doubt about the Shi’I identity of Iran. The Constitution of the Islamic Republic specified that Iranian nationality to be a condition for citizenship of the Republic. Article 15 specified that the President must be Iranian both by origin and citizenship, and have a ‘convinced belief in the … official school of thought in the country’, that is to say, he must be Shi’i. Jalolddin Farsi, a long time disciple of Khomeini, was prevented from standing in the presidential election of 1980 because his mother was Afghan. At the same time, Iranian Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians are accorded citizenship rights, short of assuming positions of political leadership (Zubaida...
The war with Iraq sharpened the sense of national identity of the revolution as Iranian and Shi’I, against a hostile Arab predominantly Sunni world. Khomeini and the other leaders spoke frequently of the Muslim nation of Iran. The Iranian nation, in their discourse, was the vanguard of the Islamic revolution in the world. The direction of revolutionary propaganda and subversion to other parts of the region, notably Syria and Lebanon, followed the logic of Iranian national interest. The analogy drawn by many observers is that of Russia and communism: internationalist rhetoric and nationalist foreign policy, the logic of ‘socialism in one country’. In Iran, too, the failure of the rest of the Muslim world to follow in the path of revolution (on Iranian terms) and the hostilities of enemies leads to a retrenchment of the Islamic Republic as a national project, which fits in with the older forms of Iranian nationalism. Predictably, with the waning of the initial revolutionary flush and rhetoric, the Islamic Republic is routinized into a national state like the others, with a distinct Iranian identity in religion, culture and politics.

**The Globalization of Islam and the Resurgence of Islamic Nationalism**

The closing decades of the twentieth century saw the emergence of Islamic ideas and movements outside the frame of the Muslim majority nation states, its locations Afghanistan and the West. Saudi claims of hegemony over the Islamic movements were seriously dented by the Iranian Revolution and its populist appeal throughout the Islamic world. Saudi credibility as defender of Islam were to some degree revived with the Afghani jihad, organizing and financing the diverse elements that went into the anti-Soviet armies in coordination with the Americans. These forces were ultimately to rebound on the Saudis after the second Gulf war of 1990/91 and the alliance with America as well as stationing American forces on ‘sacred’ Arabian soil. This was the casus belli of the jihadist forces under Bin Laden. The ‘Afghani’ forces of various nationalities were stranded in that country and Pakistan after the establishment of the Taliban peace. Some returned to their home countries, often clandestinely, where they engaged in violent opposition during the 1990s. In Egypt, for instance, they attempted to assassinate the President, massacred tourists and engaged in battles with security forces until they were defeated by intense repression and counter-violence, leading to official surrender by the mostly imprisoned leadership. Their off-shoot in Afghanistan, however,
in the form of Ayman al-Zawahiri one time leader of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad, later Bin Ladin’s deputy, and lesser elements, remained committed to the Jihad but on the global arena of al-Qaeda. The Algerian Afghans had a much longer and successful span of Jihad in the civil war which they fought in the 1990s, but many of their elements, too, carried their Jihad to the international stage, in cells in Paris, Frankfurt and London.

Global Islam, however, is not confined to the militant jihadists from Afghanistan, but includes a wide range of pacific and cultural manifestations in the exile and immigrant communities, mostly in the West. The liberties and communication facilities of the West have provided a fertile medium for the development and spread of ideas and movements, ranging from Sufi mysticism to Islamic feminism to exclusivist communalism, many active in associational life, and, crucially, with their own web-sites. Studies of Muslims in Europe largely concur in finding that a majority (about 70%) are secular or cultural Muslims. Many of the remainder engage in private or communal pities and observances with little political interest, or with communalist orientations to the politics of the host countries, aimed at obtaining concessions on, for instance, education and housing. Crucially, most Muslims in the West see themselves in terms of nationality of origin and are often distant or even contemptuous of other nationalities. Iranians have definite views on Arabs, and Egyptian and Levantine Arabs see themselves as culturally superior to their Gulfi brethren, and all consider themselves distinct from Pakistanis and Bangladeshis, who, in turn, have little time for one another. Only a small minority are engaged in Islamist political association and activity. These, however, like the frequently publicized al-Muhajiroun or the colourful Abu Hamza in this country, get the lion’s share of media attention, giving the impression that they represent a common Muslim opinion.

Many sectors of Muslim opinion of the uninvolved majority, however, may share the sentiments of a global Islamic nationalism. The basic tenet of such nationalism is a totalized view of Islam as forming a universal community under attack from an equally totalized hostile West. Palestine, Iraq, Kashmir and Chechenia are seen as examples of this hostility. The aftermath of 9/11 in the US and to a lesser extent in Europe have heightened this sense of hostility and threat. Moreover, at least in the US, the common security measures against aliens from particular countries have brought Iranians, Arabs
and Africans into the common lines waiting for the compulsory vetting and registration, which may have softened their feelings of distinction and superiority towards other Muslims, in a sense of a common identity under threat.

It would also be relevant to note that the conspiracy theories about the West, Israel and 9/11 are widely shared outside Muslim circles. The common tenor in the Arab press after 9/11 was that the Jews did it, coupled with barely hidden delight that America had been hit (even if the Jews did it!). We find, however, that these views and sentiments were widely shared in many parts of Latin America, Greece, Italy and Spain. Anti-Americanism and conspiracy theories are clearly not confined to Muslim nationalists or militants.

The Current Situation

- **Pan-Arab Nationalism**: survives as sentiments and rhetoric easily available for diverse ideological constructions by governments and oppositions. As a political project it is long dead.

- **Islamic nationalism**: also sets of sentiments and rhetoric for many within nation-states. Mostly revived and proclaimed in hostilities towards western powers and Israel conceived in terms of religious solidarities. However, brands of Islamic nationalism flourish within the context of a globalized Islam, divorced from anchorage in nation-states, its locations in fringe polities such as Afghanistan, but primarily in the liberties and facilities of the West, identified as its antagonist.

- **The Nation-state and country nationalism**: this is the only concrete political reality. Borders may have been drawn in the sand by colonial powers, but the nations set up within these borders have taken root, as a nation and a state. Kuwait, perceived as the most artificial of these states, astonished us all in the sense of national unity and purpose under Iraqi occupation. The Iraqi regime could not even find enough people to form a puppet government, its only collaborators Palestinians and stateless Bedouins. In their war, both Iraq and Iran came forward as national states, the Iraqi Shi’a amongst the foremost defenders of the homeland against Shi’I Iran, and the Iranians sporting their Shi’ism as a mark of national identity and distinctiveness. The Iraqi and Syrian Ba’th grew into deadly antagonists, each claiming the mantle of pan-Arab unity for itself, but entrenched within their respective nation-states. Turks,
Muslims and secularists, respond equally to the call of the Turkish nation whether through its Kemalist symbols or distinctive Islam. Saudi Arabia may propagate pan-Islamic solidarity abroad, but state and people are jealous in guarding their borders and privileged citizenship against the diverse foreign Muslims occupying the jobs that Saudis don’t want. The coveted Saudi citizenship must be one of the hardest to acquire.

- The rivals of the nation-state for solidarities and sentiments are not the universalist entities of Arabism and Islam, but more likely particularistic and factional solidarities of community and region.
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1 On Abduh and the reform movement, see Hourani 1983: 130-160
2 *Salafi* designates those who adhere to the principles and examples of *al-salaf al-salih*, the righteous ancestors. In the initial age of reform in the nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries, this term applied to reformers who, ostensibly, revived the principles of the early and original Islam. More recently it has come to designate conservative fundamentalists such as the Saudi ulama and Jihadist activists.
3 On Afghani, see Hourani 1983, 103-129, and Keddie 1983
4 Quotes from Hourani 1983: 357.
5 On the debates on language, nation and religion, see Suleiman 2003.
6 Sayid Qutb’s ideas on these issue are expressed in Qutb 1980. See also Kepel 1993, Moussalli 1992 and Zubaida 1993: 51-55.
7 On Ali Bulac, see Meeker 1991 and Zubaida 1996.
8 On Gokalp, see Davison 1995.
9 Hanafi and Shafi‘I are two of the four Orthodox Sunni Schools of law, mutually accepting each other as different but equally valid.
10 For a general history of modern Egypt, see Sayyid Marsot 1985.
11 On some of these themes in the history of modern Iran, see Abrahamian 1982, Keddie 1981, and Mottahedeh 1987.
12 On Muslims in Europe, see Vertovec and Peach 1997, and Zubaida 2003.