Jihad discourse in Egypt under Muhammmad Mursi

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Jihad has occupied a prominent position in the worldview, political strategy and foreign policy of the Muslim Brotherhood, which enjoyed a brief taste of power from 2012-13. Muhammad Mursi was Egypt's first freely elected, and first Islamist, president. He was removed from power on 3 July 2013 by a military coup backed by large sections of Egyptian society. Mursi and the Brotherhood had many enemies and detractors at home and abroad. For some, the Brotherhood was an irredeemably radical Islamist group that used elections to seize control of the state, but which would use this power to enforce its ideological vision on Egyptian society and declare a jihad against Israel and the West.¹ Others saw the Brotherhood as having sold out to a US-Israeli agenda in the Middle East. Al-Qa'ida, for example, accused Mursi of having 'abandoned' jihad.²

Each of these interpretations fundamentally misrepresents the way the Muslim Brotherhood has conceptualised jihad throughout its history. Jihad, as Rudolph Peters has observed, 'is a concept with a wide semantic spectrum, and its actual meaning differs from organization to organization'.³ Often translated in the Western media as 'holy war', jihad has connotations inclusive of, but broader than, violence. In the case of the Muslim Brotherhood, this chapter aims to show that the organisation's understanding of jihad has remained relatively consistent over time; where it has engaged with jihad discourse, it has done so to serve its overall purpose of establishing and consolidating a mass movement in Egypt oriented towards the gradual Islamic reform of state and society. This chapter also demonstrates that, contrary to common perceptions, jihad discourse can constitute a means for Islamist social and political actors to legitimise, rather than overturn, the status quo. This broader perspective evolves from a general examination of the Brotherhood's approach to jihad in the decades prior to the election of Muhammad Mursi before focusing more closely on the Mursi and immediate post-Mursi periods.

The Muslim Brotherhood's Jihad before Mursi

An appreciation of the modern historical context is essential to understanding the meaning and salience of jihad for the Muslim Brotherhood in the twenty-first century. The Muslim Brotherhood has interpreted jihad, primarily, as the process of striving toward the Islamisation of society and the establishment of an Islamic state governed by shariah. Jihad, in this iteration, is a mechanism for advancing social and political reform. The Brotherhood has also advocated military jihad in support of Muslim struggles against occupation or invasion, foremost of which has been the Palestine cause. But, as Yusuf al-Qaradawi, one of the Brotherhood's key intellectual allies, notes: '[I]n our era only the armed forces have the authority over jihad of action (jihad bi-l-yad), and these are in the hands of governments.'⁴ Military jihad, for the Brotherhood, must be sanctioned by a legitimate Muslim ruler.⁵ The Brotherhood's direct experiences with military jihad—against the Zionist forces in Palestine prior to the establishment of the State of Israel, against British colonialism in Palestine and providing logistical support to jihadists fighting the USSR in Afghanistan—formally took
place under the aegis of the Egyptian state. As such they can be considered 'orthodox' interpretations and manifestations of jihad, as opposed to more radical versions that direct violence against, or without the sanction of, the state.

Having fought alongside the Egyptian army in Palestine in 1948, the Brotherhood was suppressed by Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1954. A minority trend of the Brotherhood came to identify the Egyptian regime as a legitimate target of jihad. For Hossam Tammam, this represented a continuation of the so-called 'Secret Apparatus' that had targeted the colonial presence in the pre-1952 period. Violence directed against the monarchy during this phase of the Brotherhood's history was disowned by Hasan al-Banna, the group's founder and Supreme Guide. An alleged plot against Nasser was uncovered and in 1966 Sayyid Qutb, the chief theoretician of jihad as insurrectionary violence, was executed. In the 1970s, while jihadist groups sought to put Qutb's ideas into practice, the Brotherhood followed the more accommodationist, or 'moderate', line of Supreme Guide Hasan al-Hudaybi and sought reform within the existing system. Since the 1970s, and arguably since its inception, the Brotherhood has constituted a societal bulwark for the Egyptian regime by absorbing more radical opposition. Despite being formally proscribed, it has not overtly challenged the legitimacy of the regime and has 'played by the rules' of quasi-democratic politics. It has avoided radical forms of political action, such as strikes and demonstrations criticising the regime, and presented itself as a 'moderate' Islamist alternative that can draw support away from militant jihadist groups.

Although adopting a 'moderate' stance toward domestic political change, the Brotherhood, in line with the overall political consensus in Egypt up until the 1970s, remained 'radical' in its foreign policy positions. It has opposed US influence in the Middle East and supported Palestinian liberation from Israeli occupation. During the 1970s, the Brotherhood's newspaper, al-Da'wa, promoted Palestine, and particularly Jerusalem, as Islamic causes and called for the liberation of Palestine via jihad. Following President Anwar Sadat's address before the Knesset in November 1977, calling for war with Israel became an oppositional and, from the regime's perspective, impermissible, stance. Militant jihadist groups viewed the peace process and resultant treaty between Egypt and Israel as symptoms of the unbelief of the Egyptian regime and proof that the only way to liberate Palestine was first to overthrow the 'near enemy'. The road to Jerusalem, for the militant jihadists, passed through Cairo.

The Brotherhood, in contrast, campaigned for jihad under the auspices of the existing regime. Supreme Guide Umar al-Tilmisani was elected leader of the newly-formed Permanent Islamic Congress for the Propagation of Islam, which organised public meetings and rallies in opposition to the Camp David accords and 'called for the recovery of Jerusalem by the Muslims'. Sadat responded to this, and many other forms of supposedly threatening activity, with harsh repression. Not distinguishing between this criticism of Egyptian foreign policy, and more fundamental rejections of the regime's legitimacy, Sadat failed to realise that pro-Palestine rallies organised by the Brotherhood were 'an attempt by the Brotherhood to absorb the extremist danger to the regime'. Reflecting its broader goal of consolidating its societal
presence through reconciliation with the regime, the Brotherhood tempered its criticism of Camp David from this point onwards.

Downplaying the Israel-Palestine issue to avoid provoking the regime did not mean the Muslim Brotherhood had 'abandoned' jihad. The signing of the Egypt-Israel peace agreement in 1979 coincided conveniently with the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in the same year. In what became a key turning point in the Cold War, the USA and its allies embarked upon a decade-long campaign of military, financial and logistical support for the Afghan mujahidin against the Soviet Union. Sadat saw Afghanistan as an ideal opportunity to prove that Egypt was a worthy ally for the USA. The regime facilitated – or at least permitted – the emigration of Egyptian jihadists to fight in Afghanistan, provided bases for the US military and supplied Soviet-made weaponry to the mujahidin. In this way, Egypt became a key regional partner – alongside Israel and Saudi Arabia – of the USA. Although demanding jihad in Palestine became riskier, the Brotherhood could throw its weight wholeheartedly behind the jihad against the Soviet Union. On this issue the Muslim Brotherhood was moving in lockstep with a regime keen to establish its role as a useful partner of the USA in the war against communism. The Brotherhood was thus able to use the idea of jihad not only as a way of bolstering the status quo in Egypt but a means of aiding the consolidation of the West's post-Cold War security arrangement in the Middle East.

In the context of growing anti-Israeli sentiment and the outbreak of the Palestinian Intifada in 1987, the Brotherhood revived its calls for military jihad against Israel. As with its rallies in the early 1980s, the jihad the Brotherhood had in mind was 'orthodox' in the sense that it was contingent upon authorisation by the Mubarak regime. For the Brotherhood, the strategy of calling for jihad against Israel represented an opportunity to raise its public profile and establish its Islamic and patriotic credentials, rather than a genuine desire to mobilise fighters for war against Israel. It also represented an implicit confirmation of the regime's legitimacy and a diversion of 'jihadist' sentiments away from the 'near enemy' (the Mubarak regime) toward the 'far enemy' (Israel). Whereas the militant jihadist groups seized upon the Egyptian regime's failure to act against Israel to justify their strategy of violent regime change, the Brotherhood was urging the regime to allow Egyptians to fight the Jews in Israel. The Brotherhood was again playing the role of helping to absorb anti-regime sentiments and bolster the status quo.

Popular mobilisation in support of the Palestinians resumed during the Second, or 'Al-Aqsa', Intifada, which began in 2000. This time, demonstrations were mainly coordinated by leftist groups, with the Brotherhood taking a back seat. As Carrie Rosefsky Wickham observes, 'the Brotherhood was quick to denounce Israel's actions and to express solidarity with the Palestinian people. Yet it was small, grassroots networks on the left … and not the Brotherhood—that "broke the sacred red lines" and called protestors into the streets.' Islamist activists, including those connected to the Brotherhood, became more involved in these protests as time went on, but although some called for jihad against Israel, the process of coordination with leftist groups had the effect of reducing the prevalence of specifically Islamist discourse. As Maha Abdelrahman notes, 'the famous slogan of the Islamists: "Khaibar Khaibar, Oh Jews, Mohammed's army will be back" … [was] discarded by the
organizers at every demonstration’, as was support for Palestinian suicide operations.\textsuperscript{17} Despite the participation of Brotherhood members in the protests, moreover, the Brotherhood leadership balked at endorsing domestic demands. Solidarity protests quickly became indictments of the Mubarak regime, which constituted a ‘red line’ for the Brotherhood, one not to be crossed lightly if at all. As then Supreme Guide Ma'mun al-Hudaybi explained:

We shouldn't fight over secondary issues and leave the major causes. We shouldn't break our ranks. Instead, we have to unite the front against the external aggression. We are careful that the popular support for the intifada would never be directed toward confronting the regime. No one benefits from that but the enemy.\textsuperscript{18}

To summarise the foregoing historical discussion, before the fall of Mubarak, jihad for the Muslim Brotherhood had two primary dimensions. On the one hand, jihad encompassed the entirety of the Brotherhood's domestic struggle to establish an Islamic state and society, including by raising awareness about Islamic causes overseas. On the other hand, the Brotherhood supported military action against enemies of Islam in Palestine and elsewhere, and supported the active participation of Egyptian Muslims in such external jihads under the umbrella of the Egyptian state. The Brotherhood's own involvement in the Afghan jihad took place on this basis, and its calls for jihad in Palestine were addressed to the regime as the body authorised to judge on matters relating to war and peace. In this sense the Brotherhood's jihad has been 'orthodox', in contradistinction to that of the more militant jihadists that sought the overthrow of the regime as a precondition to liberating Palestine and other occupied parts of the \textit{umma} (Islamic community).

\textbf{Jihad discourse under Mursi}

As James Piscatori has argued, while Islam plays a contextual role in the formulation of foreign policy in Muslim states, Islamic ideals and solidarities are trumped by pragmatism and \textit{raison d'état}.\textsuperscript{19} This is the case for Muslim regimes (whether or not they are 'Islamist'), and arguably it is also the case for Islamist social movements that seek to thrive under the auspices of those regimes. Islamism in principle aspires to re-draw the map of the Muslim world, liberating those parts occupied by infidels and unifying the \textit{umma} in a caliphate governed according to shariah. Muhammad Mursi, a leader from within the Muslim Brotherhood, conducted his presidential campaign on an explicitly Islamist ticket. In speeches he repeated well-known Brotherhood slogans, such as 'the Qur'an is our constitution' and 'jihad is our path' (\textit{al-jihadu sabilu-na}).\textsuperscript{20} Following Mursi's election, many Egyptians and others expected to see a qualitative foreign policy change, particularly where Israel was concerned, as the Brotherhood put its principles into practice.\textsuperscript{21}

It is important to bear in mind that the Brotherhood was never in control of the Egyptian state. It is thus not possible to draw conclusions about the behaviour of an Islamist group 'in power' based on Mursi's time in office. The 25 January 2011 'revolution' had by no means dislodged the incumbent regime. The security forces, large parts of the bureaucracy, judiciary and media, and of course the military all remained in place and influential. In many ways the Brotherhood continued to behave like a loyal opposition movement despite having won both
parliamentary and presidential elections. The engagement of the Brotherhood, as well as that of other newly prominent parts of the Islamist spectrum, with the issue of jihad, reflects this structural continuity. The discussion that follows focuses on the issue of jihad in political discourse in relation to three key issues: first, Egypt's policy towards Israel; second, the civil strife in Syria and third, the military coup directed against Mursi in July 2013.

Under Mursi, the Brotherhood's position vis-à-vis Israel was broadly continuous with its previous stance, with one important exception. In the past, it will be recalled, the Brotherhood had called upon Sadat and Mubarak to 'open the door of jihad' against Israel. From 2012, however, the Brotherhood's position vis-à-vis the state shifted due to Mursi's position as president and it naturally refrained from undermining Mursi's diplomatic approach. In an official statement following Israel's bombardment of Gaza in November 2012, the Brotherhood called on 'Arab and Muslim leaders and rulers as well as all official diplomatic institutions [to] do their duty, to champion the cause of their nation and apply all pressure to stop the shedding of Palestinian blood, and put an end to Israeli arrogance'.

Mu'adh 'Abd al-Karim, a young Brotherhood activist, described Mursi's diplomatic approach at this time (the latter had demanded an emergency session of the security council and lodged a protest with the Israeli ambassador) as 'relatively positive and good' compared with that of Mubarak. 'Abd al-Karim noted that although Mursi should also act on the humanitarian front, by opening the Rafah crossing and accepting refugees, diplomatic activity was the best the president could do at this stage.

To the extent that jihad constituted an element of foreign policy toward Israel, it was conceptualised as moral and political effort in support of the Palestine cause, on the one hand, and support for the Palestinians' right to armed resistance on the other. As such, the Brotherhood called upon all national political forces [to] consider all ways and procedures to support our Palestinian brothers, such as economic boycott, popular rejection, increasing public awareness of the truth about the Palestinian issue, and supporting the resistance alternative and the right of return of all Palestinian refugees.

Mursi insisted that the state and the people would act together, 'al-sha'b wa-l-qiyyada', in solidarity with the people of Gaza, but the Brotherhood nevertheless retained the conception that state and society had different roles to play in relation to Israel. The following remarks by Mahmud Husayn, General Secretary of the Muslim Brotherhood, are particularly revealing about the extent to which the Brotherhood continued to focus on social and public relations activism rather than on changing Egyptian foreign policy. Husayn commented after revelations that Mursi had sent a standard diplomatic, but nevertheless warm, letter to Israeli president Shimon Peres:

The relations that we have and the attitude we adopt towards Israel are well known and will remain unchanged. We consider Israel to be an enemy to Egypt and we want to see Palestine liberated from occupation. The Hamas movement is considered part of the Muslim Brotherhood organization. We have no connection with the position
taken by the Egyptian state in this regard, even if the president of the republic is a member of the Muslim Brotherhood. The state is sometimes governed by considerations that do not concern us.\footnote{25}

The Brotherhood's new role within the state, and organic connection to the office of the president, militated against publicly demanding that Mursi authorise jihad. But other parts of the Islamist movement were not bound by such ties and called instead for jihad and martyrdom. Thus the imam of the Umar Makram mosque in Cairo, Mazhar Shahin, promised that no less than one million Egyptian youth and women would volunteer to liberate Jerusalem: '[If] Israel has a nuclear bomb, then we have a creed stronger than a million nuclear bombs.' Similar sentiments were voiced by demonstrators from the Gama'a Islamiyya during a march to Tahrir: 'ya hukkam al-biland, iftahu bab al-jihad!' ('oh leaders throughout the land, open the door of jihad!').\footnote{26} The Brotherhood, and intellectuals sympathetic to it, were able to channel such demands into their broader conception of jihad, which centred on the need to Islamise Egyptian state and society. Yusuf al-Qaradawi, for example, used the Gaza episode as an opportunity to emphasise once again the necessity of implementing shariah in Egypt, 'which would enable us to confront the West and defeat it'.\footnote{27} Chants during a march following al-Qaradawi's sermon at al-Azhar also called for implementing shariah as a way of defeating the West and 'liberating all Islamic lands'.\footnote{28}

The demand that Mursi 'open the door of jihad' and call up volunteers should be seen in a similar light to the Brotherhood's own calls for jihad against Israel prior to the January 2011 Revolution. Salafis and other non-Brotherhood Islamists played a legitimising role for Mursi comparable to the one the Muslim Brotherhood played for Sadat and Mubarak. The clamour of other parts of the Islamist movement for jihad affirmed the legitimacy of the president and his right to decide on matters of war and peace. It also demonstrated a reservoir of respect for Mursi's authority via rallies and demonstrations, and undermined more fundamental opposition to his rule. Those calling for jihad were not serving Mursi with an ultimatum to authorise jihad or else stand down, and Mursi's refusal to 'open the doors' was not interpreted, except perhaps in the most extremist of circles, as evidence of non-belief or illegitimate rule. Whereas the most prominent rejectionists under Sadat and Mubarak were militant jihadists, those who sought to delegitimise and unseat Mursi were the broadly secular (liberal, leftist) opposition and elements of the old regime.

The second issue that arose during Mursi's presidency to bring the issue of jihad to the fore was the civil war in Syria. The Syrian imbroglio was increasingly being cast in sectarian terms. The manipulation of sectarian sentiments was certainly not a new phenomenon, as Sami Zubaida discussed in Chapter 7. In the Egyptian context Hosni Mubarak was certainly not innocent of stoking Sunni fears of what Jordanian King Abdullah, in 2004, had termed an emerging 'Shi'ite crescent' in the Middle East.\footnote{30} Although sectarian discourse predated Mursi's election as president, the open involvement of Hizbullah in the Syrian conflict in 2013 marked a palpable escalation in Sunni-Shi'ite sectarianism. On 31 May 2013 Yusuf al-Qaradawi used his Friday sermon in Doha to call on all Muslims able to do so to travel to Syria and fight jihad in support of the rebels. Al-Qaradawi chose his words carefully, and left
some scope for interpretation, but his speech was broadly interpreted as a call for sectarian jihad:

Tens of thousands of people came from Iran, and came from Iraq, and came from Lebanon and came from the lands of the Shi'a everywhere to fight the Sunnis and those that are with them: Christians, Kurds and others. I do not accuse the Shi'a as a whole. There are good Shi'a including many friends of mine, in Iran, Iraq and Lebanon that refuse this dreadful iniquity. We don't condemn them, just everyone that stands with Hizbullah and supports this party.31

Al-Qaradawi was not alone in calling on Muslims to fight jihad in Syria. His stance was endorsed by the Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, Sheikh 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn 'Abd Allah al-Shaykh.32 Muhammad al-Arif, a leading Saudi cleric, called for jihad 'in every way possible' during a sermon in a Cairo mosque.33 And in Egypt, an aide to President Mursi, while not endorsing Egyptian participation in the Syrian jihad and stressing the need for a political solution, remarked that Egyptians were free to travel as they pleased.34

But the Saudis, as well as rulers of other Arab states, were nevertheless concerned that the kind of 'blowback' produced by the jihad in Afghanistan might be repeated in Syria. Before al-Qaradawi made his speech in Qatar (a rival of Saudi Arabia), a member of the official Saudi religious establishment had issued a fatwa stating that any jihad would have to take place 'under the authority of the guardian' (i.e. responsible authorities) and in accord with a nation's foreign policy: 'Everything is linked to a system and to the country's policies and no person should be allowed to disobey the guardian and call for jihad.'35 Prince Turki al-Faisal, the Saudi intelligence minister, later remarked: 'No Saudis will be trained to fight in Syria. In fact, we don't want any Saudis there at all.'36 Jordan, similarly, was uneasy about the prospect of its citizens travelling to fight in Syria and had arrested and jailed three for attempting to join the jihadist Nusra Front in June 2013.37 Mursi's position was arguably also less permissive than the reported comments of his aide suggested. When asked, during a conference of ulama held in Cairo on 14 June 2013, if the Brotherhood supported the idea of jihad in Syria, Brotherhood spokesman Ahmad Arif simply indicated that they would support the outcome of the conference, which, as we shall see, did not endorse foreign participation in the jihad.

The conference brought together almost 500 ulama from over 70 Islamic associations, including the Sheikh of al-Azhar, Ahmad al-Tayyib, and Yusuf al-Qaradawi. It must be assumed, given the conference's location, participants and the extreme sensitivity of the issue, that the Brotherhood would have been aware of, and perhaps helped to shape, the conference declaration in advance. The statement echoed al-Qaradawi's call for jihad in support of the Syrian people, calling for a boycott of Iranian goods and 'financial, moral, and military jihad (bi-l-nafs wa-l-mal wa-l-silah) and all kinds of jihad and support in order to rescue the Syrian people'. The enemies, according to the statement, were the 'sectarian' regime in Syria, with its allies in Iran, Iraq, Hizbullah 'and others among the rawafid and batiniya.' Rawafid, literally 'those who refuse', is a derogatory term for Shi'ites, while batiniya refers to Isma'ilis and other 'mystical' sects associated with Bashar al-Asad's supposedly 'Alawite' regime. It
stopped short, however, of calling on able-bodied Muslims to travel to Syria in order to fight jihad. Al-Qaradawi's own statement at this conference was more explicitly sectarian than his Doha sermon. He insisted: '[T]his war is not [a] civil [one]. It is rather a war against Islam and Sunnis. My call to all the Muslims in the world is to protect their brothers.' But this time al-Qaradawi also refrained from demanding that Muslims travel to Syria to fight jihad.

It is perhaps a reflection of growing fears of 'blowback' across the region and in the USA (as well the potential diminution of Qatar's regional aspirations and influence) that calls for arming and dispatching jihadists from other Arab countries were absent from official discourse, even if the sectarian dimensions of the jihad discourse grew increasingly pronounced. The day after the conference, Mursi attended and spoke at a rally in support of the Syrian uprising. Among the speakers at the televised rally, before a capacity crowd in Cairo Stadium, was the well-known Salafi preacher Muhammad Hasan. Hasan called on Mursi to implement the recommendations of the conference of ulama that had taken place in Cairo and also urged him 'not to open Egypt's door to rafida (Shi'ites). Mursi's attendance at this rally has been singled out as a step too far for an Egyptian military nervous of Islamic radicalism and foreign policy adventures. But Hasan's discourse was consistent with the regional trend identified above, which was to keep the Syria issue sectarian but to minimise the export of jihadists from other Arab countries. Like the ulama statement, to which he was a party, Hasan did not call for Muslims outside of Syria to travel there to fight; nor did he call on Mursi to 'open the doors of jihad'. Hasan chose his words carefully:

Jihad is a duty of the soul, of money and arms, everyone according to his abilities. Defensive jihad (jihad al-daf') now, against the suffering and bloodshed, is an individual obligation (wajib 'ayni) for the Syrian people. And it is a collective duty (wajib kifa') for Muslims throughout the world.

Expressed in this way, it is clear that while providing military, financial or moral support is an obligation for Muslims, it is 'collective', meaning it is not obligatory for everyone. The intent seems to be to affirm, in line with the Saudi fatwa cited above, that it is the 'guardian' (wali) who decides on whether and how jihad is to be pursued. Hasan was careful to emphasise that any support offered to the Syrian people under the rubric of jihad would depend on authorisation from the president:

Excellency Mr. President: The recommendations and decisions of these conferences will never be implemented other than under your authority. We call on you—you and your brothers among the rulers, kings and presidents of Arab and Islamic states—to lose no time … in implementing these recommendations. We call on you to implement the recommendations and these conferences [sic] to apply pressure to the rulers of the Western world to supply weapons to the sons of those now being slaughtered in Syria.

Not only does Hasan imply that any jihad activity outside of the president's authority would be illegal, but he specifies that the jihad he would like to see Mursi take forward should focus on pressuring the West to adequately arm the rebels. Hasan's speech, in the presence of
President Mursi, was seized upon by much of the media and non-Islamist actors in Egypt as evidence that Mursi was pandering to dangerous jihadists. But Hasan's stance was fully in accordance with the USA's own decision to arm the opposition in Syria as well as the stance of the Arab League as announced at its summit in Doha in March 2013. Although virulently sectarian, the Salafi cleric was participating in a much broader regional discourse of demonisation toward Shi'ites that was being stoked by Western-aligned Sunni Arab states.

Mursi, in his own speech at this rally, avoided any mention of the word 'jihad'. Instead, he declared that 'Egypt supports the struggle of the Syrian people materially and morally (madiyy-an wa-ma'nawiyy-an)' and that the 'Egyptian leadership, people and army (Misr qiyyadat-an, sha'b-an, wa-jaysh-an) would not leave the Syrian people until they gain their rights, dignity and sovereignty in its unified territory'. Despite the fact that both Mursi's speech and that of Muhammad Hasan were clearly calibrated to chime with Saudi and Western positions on Syria, the rally was portrayed as evidence of the Brotherhood's radicalism. One report notes that 'clerics at the rally urged Mursi to back their calls for jihad to support rebels' and quotes Brotherhood specialist Khalil al-Anani opining: 'Mursi's endorsement of jihad in Syria was a strategic mistake that will create a new Afghanistan in the Middle East.' Such readings misinterpret the dynamics at play. Neither Hasan, nor the conference of ulama whose recommendations Hasan called on Mursi to implement, demanded the participation of non-Syrian Muslims in military jihad. Mursi's reference to the military as a supporter of the Syrian people may best be interpreted not, as in some quarters, as evidence of an intention to dispatch the Egyptian army to Syria, but as a reassurance that it was the army, and not private jihadists, that had the responsibility for waging war.

The third instance in which jihad acquired political salience for the Muslim Brotherhood was the reaction to Mursi's removal from power by the military under the command of General 'Abd al-Fatah al-Sisi. The coup was carried out following large-scale popular demonstrations organised by the Tamarrud (Rebel) campaign. The Brotherhood and other supporters of the ousted president staged counterdemonstrations in cities throughout the country. In the months following the coup, until the time of writing in early November 2013, some 1,300 protesters were killed and much of the Brotherhood's leadership arrested and imprisoned. Although violence against police and military targets was perpetrated in the name of restoring Mursi to power, most intensely by jihadist groups in the Sinai, the Brotherhood and other key Islamist formations called for civil resistance and other forms of non-violent protest.

That the Brotherhood has termed its campaign of non-violent resistance 'jihad' is consistent with the movement's historical understanding of jihad as integral to the Islamisation and reform of state and society. Thus the writer Fajr Atif Sahsah, in an article posted on the website of the Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party, seeks to outline the various forms of civil disobedience and creative resistance people can pursue in order to 'break the coup'. For Sahsah all such strategies, which begin with purifying the self, constitute jihad: 'Jihad is not a singular duty that leads to an end. It is a path that passes through many other stations and includes other forms of jihad. It includes reforming the self and bowing at the alter of prayer and obedience.' A similar perspective is shared by the Salafi preacher Muhammad 'Abd al-Maqsud, who announced in an address broadcast on his YouTube channel on 15 September
2013 that demonstrating against the military coup was a jihad that should be pursued until victory. He insists that the 'leaders of the coup bear responsibility for the blood and suffering of Muslims in Sinai' and that they have dealt with the people of Sinai in a more brutal fashion than did the Israelis. It is significant that although Maqsud is describing the act of demonstrating as a 'jihad' he is not pronouncing *takfir* (excommunication) on General al-Sisi or the military leadership, which would legitimise a violent insurrection against them.

The Brotherhood's jihad following the ousting of Mursi is thus not a military one against al-Sisi, something which would require the generals to be labelled as *kuffar* (non-believers) and thus legitimate targets of violence. That the Brotherhood and its supporters have not, until now, pursued this 'Qutbist' line tells us much about the overall strategy of the Muslim Brotherhood, which has remained consistently 'moderate' over time. This may be due, as Hossam Tammam argues in Chapter 9, to the fact that militant jihadism is not compatible with the Brotherhood's strategy of building a mass movement with broad support across the classes. The Brotherhood leadership's moderation contrasts sharply with the 'radical' discourse of the Egyptian military leadership and many of its supporters in civil society and the media. Since the ousting of Mursi in July 2013, the coup leaders and their supporters have framed their vendetta against the Brotherhood in the language of the West's 'War on Terror'.

This has constituted a form of secular nationalist *takfir*, in which Brotherhood members and Mursi supporters have been categorised as 'non-Egyptians' and terrorists with the transparent purpose of legitimising violence against them. As one Egypt observer remarked about the evolution of this discourse following the coup:

> The pro-Morsi [sic] protesters were no longer just a bunch of skin-disease ridden, cult supporting lunatics, but also terrorists. Again, this happened almost seamlessly. Television presenters indulged themselves in the vilest xenophobia against Palestinians and Syrians, who they claimed were camped out in pro-Morsi sit-ins and meddling in Egyptian affairs. ... The aim, of course, was two-fold: firstly, to support the claim that the Brotherhood has links with Hamas and other foreign groups involved in acts of insurgency in Sinai; and secondly, to isolate the Brotherhood even further, turn it into a 'them' separate from the rest of the population.

Brotherhood spokespersons, for their part, have made a concerted effort to debunk the myth that all supporters of Mursi are jihadist terrorists, which has included the use of democratic, rather than Islamic, language in promoting their cause. Demonstrations and other forms of non-violent resistance against a military coup are fully compatible with the Brotherhood's long-standing understanding of jihad as a process of striving for justice and reform. And Brotherhood and others have, as in the examples above, described these strategies as part of their jihad. But in general, the Brotherhood has preferred instead to use a concept that resonates in a far more favourable way among the public. In exhorting Egyptians to participate in an 'intifada' ('uprising'), rather than a jihad, against the coup the Brotherhood avoids the terroristic connotations of the word 'jihad' while also linking its cause to that of the Palestinians and the original uprising of 25 January 2011.
Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the Muslim Brotherhood's conception of jihad has remained consistent over time. It has approached jihad as a mechanism for domestic reform, and as military action conducted under the authority of the state. This conception has related to the Brotherhood's historical desire to build a mass movement for Islamic reform without provoking state repression and has thus also functioned to absorb more radical opposition to the Egyptian regime. Under Mursi, the Brotherhood and its allies in the Salafi movement continued to behave like a loyal opposition in light of the fact that they did not manage to achieve control over the state. This helps account for the continuity in Islamist discourse on jihad in the post-Mubarak era.

The Brotherhood's discourse on jihad has also reflected the influence of regional and international factors and the group's desire to remain within the US-led security arrangement in the Middle East. Syria became, though not in the military sense, Mursi's Afghanistan. President Sadat was able to use support for the jihad in Afghanistan as a way both of pleasing his key international sponsors (mainly the USA and Saudi Arabia) and of appeasing the Islamist movement at home. In a distinctly less radical way Mursi could use the jihad against the Asad regime in Syria as a way of aligning Egypt with the West and other Arab states, while also mobilising support among his Islamist base at a time when his position was under intense pressure from domestic opponents. It is instructive to draw a further parallel between other parts of the Islamist movement, particularly Salafis, during Mursi's tenure, and the role the Muslim Brotherhood played under Sadat and Mubarak. The Brotherhood from the late 1970s had helped to divert domestic jihadism by supporting the jihad in Afghanistan and staging pro-Palestine rallies. Some Salafis, by affirming Mursi's legitimacy as ruler and participating in a regionally resonant sectarian discourse on Syria, sought—unsuccessfully it turned out—to demonstrate a depth of support for Islamist rule and thereby strengthen Mursi's position vis-à-vis the secular opposition that sought his removal.

It is finally worth stressing that Tamarrud and the secular opposition in 2013 came to play a role similar to, but infinitely more effective than, that played by the militant jihadist groups in earlier years. Rejcting the legitimacy of Mursi's leadership, this popular movement was able to mobilise the kind of groundswell of opposition of which jihadist movements could only have dreamed. This success may at least in part have been due to the fact that Tamarrud did not take aim at – indeed, it came to draw support from – the Egyptian military, which remained the primary focus of Egyptian nationalism. Since Mursi's ouster large parts of the 'army and the people' have waged a kind of sectarian jihad against the Brotherhood and its supporters, a jihad waged by 'secularists' in which violence against parts of Egyptian society deemed to be outside the fold has been accepted as legitimate. The vendetta against the Muslim Brotherhood provides a stark reminder of the need to think twice before attributing violence and radicalism in the Muslim world to the Islamic concept of jihad.

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