

A Comparative Review: 2010 Middle East Books

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***Abstract:** Books in 2010 by Stephen Kinzer, Andrew C. McCarthy, and Robert R. Reilly, major writers on the Middle East and Islam, have clearly articulated the crisis facing both critical areas of the Middle East and Islam, especially as they affect the international relations of such countries as the United States. Kinzer traces the development of Turkey toward a modernizing secular democracy and Iran toward a traditional Islamic Republic. He proposes a series of initiatives for the United States to utilize to make them allies, as well as to help solve the crisis between Israel and Palestine. Sensationalizing “the Iran threat” to America and other Western countries, the very conservative McCarthy claims that Islam’s “Grand Jihad” is directed not only toward other Western countries but particularly against the United States. He equates Islam as aligned with “the Left” and calls the Obama administration a major part of a socialistic “Left” which enables Islam to defeat American Christian values and heritage from inside. Reilly claims that Islam chose irrationality over rationality in its domestic and foreign affairs over a millennium ago, leading to a very illusive peace in the Middle East, an area where scientific exploration is nearly dead, translating fewer books in the last thousand years than Spain in a*

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single year, and why Muslims see natural disasters as Allah's direct retribution for non-Islamic, and thus impure behavior toward Allah.

Key Words: *Iran; Islamic Crisis; Islamic Fundamentalism; Jihad; "Shar'ia"; "Umma"*

I. Introduction

Samuel P. Huntington(1996) shocked the West in his book, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of the World Order*, identifying this "clash" as representing mostly the Judeo-Christian West versus the Islamic Middle East/ Northern Africa and the Hindu/Confucian/Taoist/ Buddhist Asia. Jacques Martin's book *When China Rules the World: the End of the Western World and the Birth of a New Global Order* (2009) argues that modernity for Asia has an entirely different meaning than the concept of Western modernity. Martin offers rather little importance to Asian religions, but clearly they are of great significance in terms of Asian (and Middle Eastern) modernization. The three books being reviewed in this article all place special importance on religion, particularly Islam, as a major force in shaping the current Middle East.

Edward W. Said, in his book, *Orientalism* (1978), called academically for "a dialogue among nations," as did the Ayatollah Ali Khamenei when he was elected President of Iran in 1997. However, neither President Clinton nor Khamenei at that time was brave enough to make an effort worthy of restructuring the difficult and tense relations between the US and Iran. "Iran and the United States remained frozen in hostility, awaiting some lightning bolt that would change everything. It came on September 11, 2001.... The September 11 attacks gave reconciliation between Washington and Tehran an urgent political logic... Iran and the United States found themselves facing a common foe [The Taliban and al Qaeda]." Unfortunately, President Bush's 2002 State of the Union address linking Iran, Iraq, and North Korea as "the axis of evil" again froze the potential cooperation between the Iranian and American governments (Kinzer, 125).

In Yong Yu and Peng Fan's article, "Five Keys to the Middle East Issue: A Review of Middle East Politics and Society" by Lian Wang (2009) they provide multiple sources relating to the modern issues relating to the Middle East. In the Prologue to the book, Weilie Zhu notes: "In order to apprehend the labyrinthic situation in the Middle East, we must be aware of three keys, i.e., desert culture, Islam and oil resources" (Zhu, 2009). The five keys by Wang to the Middle East issue identified by Yu and Fan include: the concept of the Middle East in 24 countries; Muslims and Arabs in the Middle East; conflicts, revolution and the greater Middle East; and the interrelation between the Middle East and oil (75-80).

Among books about the Middle East and Islam in 2010, three have considerable potential significance: Stephen Kinzer's *Reset*; Andrew C. McCarthy's *The Grand Jihad*; and Robert R. Reilly's *The Closing of the Muslim Mind*. Kinzer is the author of *Overthrow: America's Century of Regime Change from Hawaii to Iraq*; *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror*, and *Crescent and Star: Turkey between Two Worlds*. McCarthy is the author of *Willful Blindness: A Memoir of the Jihad*. Reilly was a former director of the US Voice of America.

A) High praise for *Reset* has been offered by such well-known and objective Middle East experts as Andrew J. Bacevich, author of *The Limits of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism*; Thomas K. Pickering, former US Ambassador to the United Nations; Karl S. Meyer. Coauthor of *Tournament of Shadows and Kingmakers: The Invention of the Modern Middle East*; and Juan Cole, author of *Napoleon's Egypt and Engaging the Muslim World*. Meyer calls *Reset* "fluent, timely and provocative" and Pickering complements Kinzer on his "deep knowledge of the Middle East" with "his historical perspective and trenchant analysis" (back flyleaf).

B) Conservative writers William J. Bennett, and Mark R. Levin, author of *Liberty and Tyranny* both give strong recommendations for McCarthy's *The Grand Jihad*. Both the title of McCarthy's book and quotes by such very conservative media stars in the US as Rush

Limbaugh, indicate the highly conservative, sensational and alarmist “Iran threat” direction of the book. Limbaugh has stated: “Our freedom is under assault as never before. For years, we’ve known about the Left’s campaign to undermine our constitutional liberties and about radical Islam’s campaign to destroy our way of life. What we now see, thanks to Andy McCarthy’s piercing eye and gripping narrative, is that these campaigns work together, seamlessly.” (endorsement in the book).

C) Reilly’s *The Closing of the Muslim Mind* has received strong endorsements from a variety of liberal and conservative Middle East experts, including Roger Scruton, author of *The West and the Rest*; Vice Admiral John M. Poindexter; Patrick Sookhdeo, the Director of the Institute for the Study of Islam and Christianity; Paul Eidelberg, President of the Foundation for Constitutional Democracy (in Jerusalem); and Tawfik Hamid, Chair for the Study of Islamic Radicalism at the Potomac Institute for Policy Studies. Poindexter’s endorsement is illustrative, “This meticulously researched book provides the historical context that has given rise to violent Islamism, and explains why the ethos of multiculturalism in the West is a largely misguided response to this violence.” (back flyleaf). The conservative Michael Novak writes in his endorsement: “For some fourteen hundred years, Islam has been both intent on making the West Islamic and also in deep turmoil about its own identity and incapacity to govern itself. Reilly offers an intelligent person’s guide to both of these longtime struggles” (back flyleaf).

II. Overview of the Three Books

A) Stephen Kinzer’s *Reset*

Historically oriented, Kinzer skillfully and analytically counter balances the movement of Turkey toward a secular democracy and Iran toward an Islamic republic, and their effects on such countries in the Middle East as Iraq, Israel, and Saudi Arabia as well as their impact on relations with the United States. With eight chapters (274

pages), 20 pages of notes, and a generously cited bibliography, Kinzer's four parts concludes in which he offers new proposals for easing the Middle East crisis.

Reset's first five chapters compare and contrast Turkey's modernizing progress with Iran's systematic retreat from modernism. He features three major Turkish figures: Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, although the father of modern Turkey, he helped set the stage for its movement toward a secular democracy, but he did not by himself establish the modern Turkish emphasis on secular democracy (See Mango, 2002); Turgut Özal, Prime Minister from 1983 to 1989 and President from 1989 to 1993, who actually did move a very traditional and conservative state toward modernization and Westernization, as well as potential European Union membership; and Istanbul Mayor Recep Tayyip Erdoğan was convicted, accused of promoting an Islamic state over a secular one, and jailed because of his recital of an ancient poem. After his release from prison, he established a new political party, Justice and Development, a genuine grassroots movement, which swept to power. Kinzer notes "That such a dramatic victory could be won through the ballot box showed the strength of Turkish democracy. Immediately after taking office, Erdoğan set off a whirlwind of reform unlike any the Turks had seen since Özal" (134). Erdoğan vigorously sought European Union membership, which Özal had initiated in 1987, but during the 1990's both Turkish and EU sentiments toward Turkey's membership in the EU had faded. Still, at the 1999 Helsinki summit, EU leaders indicated their intention to move Turkey toward membership [but it remains today in an ambiguous status] (135). Although the military feared the creation of an Islamic fundamentalist state under Erdoğan's leadership, he called new elections and again won a sweeping landslide victory. Kinzer remarks: "For the first time in modern history, a country was led toward democracy by a political party with roots in Islam... The success of Erdoğan and his AKP [Justice and Development Party] does not represent the triumph of Islamist politics in Turkey, but precisely

the opposite: its death. Democracy has become Turkey's only alternative" (137-138).

In the same first five chapters, Kinzer compares and contrasts Turkey's clear movement toward democracy with Iran's process in becoming a fundamentalist Islamic republic. Kinzer asks: "In the years after 1980, both the Turks and the Iranians became disillusioned with their authoritarian regimes. They sought a way back to democracy. The Turks found one; the Iranians did not. Why?" (138). Answering his own rhetorical question, Kinzer responds: "[Turkey] has been able to change with the times.... In Iran, the opposite happened. [The Shah, Reza] Pahlavi absolutism suffocated the natural development of democracy... Reza became obsessed with family power... In Iran, the democratic hero Mohammad Mossadegh was elected Prime Minister... What threw Iran off track was foreign intervention. The Iranians, like the Turks, grasp the essence of democracy.... Their spontaneous uprising after the disputed 2009 election was proof of their democratic passion.... Turkey and Iran are then the only Muslim countries in the Middle East where democracy is deeply rooted" (139-141). Major figures in Iran's development, identified by Kinzer, have been the Shah Reza Pahlavi, and after he was forced to flee, Iran became the setting for the establishment of an extremist fundamentalist Islamic Revolution under the leadership of the formerly exiled Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and the hostage-seizure of 52 American diplomats by a student mob in 1978. Since that time, the tensions have been very great between US governments and Iran, with periods where tensions seemed eased, and then intensified, particularly under the current leadership of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Kinzer indicates that President Obama's outreach to the Middle East, especially to Turkey, and in a more constrained manner with Iran, has proven unsuccessful as late as 2009. With the UN Security Council's 2010 resolution to tighten sanctions on Iran because of its nuclear technology development, which is assumed to be directed toward the creation of nuclear weapons, further

American-Iranian steps toward reconciliation seem to be less of an option.

Kinzer's Chapters Six and Seven are directed both toward the US-Saudia Arabian partnership, initiated secretly by President Franklyn D. Roosevelt, a month before his death in April 1945, with King Abul-Aziz ibn Abd al-Rahman, based on the US need for a close Middle Eastern partnership and its increasing need for Middle Eastern oil, on one hand, coupled with the King's claim that compared to the European powers, America was "so very far away"; and the pressure placed on Roosevelt's successor after his death, President Harry S Truman, on the other hand, for the creation and protection of the State of Israel. In the former case, the US accepted a monarchial, dictatorial and highly conservative fundamentalist Islamic regime as its major partner in the Middle East. In the latter case, both Jews from Europe and the US, through Truman's best friend, Eddie Jacobson, and a whole host of Jewish mob figures, pushed Truman to accept a Jewish state in Palestine, causing several Middle East wars, in which Israel was increasingly victorious, but more and more isolated in tandem with successive US presidents. Kinzer argues that the continuing lack of peace between Israel and Palestine can be solved only in the following ways: "It is the essential precondition to security in the world's most explosive region; Although it seems very far away, even unachievable, in fact the opposite is true; it is within reach; It will not be reached if the warring parties are left to shape it themselves" (186). Still, Kinzer recognizes all of the problems that a peace imposed from outside the region, such as a bold American president might impose, but with both positive and negative results in the region externally.

B) Andrew C. McCarthy's *The Grand Jihad*

Written in rather casual, newsy, folksy, often non-scholarly language, with multiple metaphorical clichés, alarmist views toward "the Iran threat," very conservative and sensationalistic, his 18 chapters (435 pages) nonetheless appear to be carefully researched and have very helpful extensive notes (pages 377-436), but surprisingly no specific bibliography or references. Already a best-seller with his

earlier "Iran threat" book *Willful Blindness, The Grand Jihad* has the potential of also being a best seller for fearful Americans, intrigued by "the Iran threat" as exemplified by the front flyleaf endorsement by Steven Emerson, bestselling author of *Jihad: The Terrorists Living among Us*: "Once I opened the first page, I could not put it down. McCarthy has produced an unparalleled masterpiece that every American must read." (See also Cordesman & Kleiber, 2007; Hitchcock, 2006; Jafarzade, 2008; Kiesbye, 2010) or the same sort of Americans who are immersed in "China threat" best-selling books (See Agarwala, 2002; Burman, 2009; Elwell, Labonte, & Morrison, 2008; Geertz, 2002; Menges, 2005; Peerenboom, 2008; Storey, 2009; Timberlake & Triplett, W.C., 2002; Yee and Storey, 2004; Yee, 2010). McCarthy's early chapters, "With Willing Submission," "Islamism: A Triumph of Hope over Experience," "Jihad Is Our Way," "Eliminating and Destroying the Western Civilization from Within," "We Will Conquer America through Dawa" all build up the Islamist threat toward America. McCarthy defines dawa as "the Islamists primary method of undermining Western values and American constitutional society" (43).

McCarthy exhibits a continuing very strong distain for socialism, "the Left," ("Islam is lined up with the Left," 185) and Barack Obama and his Kenyan communist-leaning father, Barak Obama. McCarthy consistently equates "the Left" with Islam and socialism/communism, and President Obama, as a highly successful but untruthful politician with "the Left" as well as Islam, and therefore also leaning toward the Marxist and radical training of Sol Alinsky, and his own Kenyan father's explicit following of communism. Through a close reading of *The Grand Jihad*, it seems obvious to McCarthy, and other conservative writers, that since the Muslims believe that Islam is the "only true religion" which follows Allah's guidance in the Qur'an, Mohammed the Prophet, the early caliphs, and more recent wise political/religious leaders, their goal always has been, and must continue to be, to convert others to Islam, in order to make the perfect umma, or perfect society. Therefore, they are also required morally to conduct a Jihad

against all nonbelievers, and moving when possible to the shar'ia or Islamic law over democratic constitutional law.

McCarthy begins and ends his book with rather sarcastic assaults on President Obama, first discussing the indeed somewhat curious public and reverential deep bow to Abdullah bin Abdul Azziz, King of Saudia Arabia, at the Buckingham Palace 2009 G 20 Summit, while being almost hostile and inappropriately impolite to Prime Minister Gordon Brown of the United Kingdom, America's closest ally, in the same celebratory gathering. Denouncing the "Obamamedia,'s" 2007-2008 election coverage of Obama, particularly the very gingerly but generally positive treatment given him in a long feature essay by the *Boston Globe* during the 2008 presidential campaign, McCarthy spends several chapters "exposing" Obama's bias toward Islam, his general untruthfulness, and constant shifting of his story. In the final chapters, Chapter 23 "Isolated Extremists" and "Epilogue," McCarthy returns to his subtheme of demonstrating Obama's leftist/socialistic leanings in the context of US Army Major Nidal Malic Hasan's rampage in which he murdered 13 Americans, including 12 US troops, and wounded another 38 at Fort Hood, Texas on November 5, 2009. McCarthy argues that despite Obama's pious platitudes about religion and Islam specifically being peaceful, he has been an enabler for such Islamicist diatribes and violence against the American public and constitution. In "Epilogue," McCarthy not only castigates Obama's weakness toward Islam, but also President Clinton's Justice Department creation of an "infamous" wall in pretending that terrorists should be treated as citizens with full transparent and fair privileges in a US criminal court. In the case of Obama's chief advisor on homeland security and counterterrorism John Brennan, he assured Islamic law students at New York University that "Obama was 'determined to put America on a strong course'—meaning a course that would correct the Bush administration's approach to counterterrorism that had been so 'over the top' and 'excessive' (373-374). McCarthy concludes his book: "If you didn't know better, you'd think Islamists had developed 'a kind of Grand Jihad in

eliminating and destroying the Western civilization from within and 'sabotaging' its miserable house. Why, it's almost as if they now had a government that was helping them do it (376). The Grand Jihad does have much serious thinking about the development of Islam, Islamists, and the role of extremists in creating modern obstacles to the development of other religions and political thought and action. However, because of its right-wing conservative bias against the modern media, political leaders such as Presidents Clinton and Obama, one has to consider the potential bias of the strongly conservative, anti-Left positions which McCarthy and other "Iran-threat" authors espouse. Essentially, based on our reading of his book, McCarthy appears to be anti Left, anti Islam, anti Obama, and anti main stream media's Obama election campaign coverage in 2008. It is reasonable to say that while *The Grand Jihad* seems to offer a comprehensive and well-researched view of its subject in terms of his quoted resources in his notes, extremist writers on the Left or Right with a polemical agenda have the potential of creating justified suspicion about their total objectivity.

C) Robert R. Reilly's *The Closing of the Muslim Mind*

In a very philosophical, politically, historically-oriented and objective scholarly book of 9 chapters (244 pages), with ample reference notes (pages 207-227) and brief "Further Reading" (pages 229-231), Reilly makes extensive comparisons between Greek Hellenistic thought about the nature of logic and reason, Christian theological perspectives about the First Cause, reason, and natural morality, including in the treatises of Thomas Aquinas, and the early medieval opening of Muslim philosophical thought with references to ancient Greek philosophy's approach to reason. Through the Islamic discovery of the Greek Hellenistic arguments by Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle through their contributions to the understanding and appreciation of logos (logic—reason) we note ("Chapter 1: The Opening: Islam Discovers Hellenic Thought," then the partial acceptance by the Mu'tazilites of this logic, almost sensing a dual nature of Allah. However, the Mu'tazilites suffered increasingly very

hostile attacks on them by the Ash'arists and by the seminal and most revered Islamic thinker after Mohammed, al-Ghazali, with his eventual mystical experience with Allah, after overcoming his flirtation with Hellenic thought. Reilly claims that by incorporating their denunciation by these Islamists, later the closing of the Muslim mind by the acceptance of their wide-spread condemnatory-view toward the value of the human will in favor of a Divine will by Allah that is not only the First Cause, but the only cause of all actions occurred: (Chapter 2: "The Overthrow of the Mu'tazilites: The Closing Commences," Chapter 3: "The Metaphysics of the Will," Chapter 4: "The Triumph of Ash'arim," Chapter 5: "The Unfortunate Victory of al-Ghazali and the Dehellenization of Islam," and Chapter 6: Decline and Consequences." Writing in the Foreword, Roger Scruton ponders the disappearance of the logical Western "cause-effect" in Muslim society:

Why is it that this [Islamic] civilization, which sprang up with such an abundance of energy in the seventh century of our era, and which spread across North Africa and the Middle East to produce cities, universities, libraries, and a flourishing courtly culture which has left a permanent mark on the world, is now in so many places mute, violent, and resentful? Why does Islam today seem not merely to tolerate the violence of its fiercest advocates, but to condone and preach it? (ix-x).

Reilly describes the moral and intellectual crisis of Islam in the ninth to eleventh centuries of Islam "when it turned its back on philosophy and took refuge in dogma" especially in the rise of the Ash'arite sect in the eleventh century. Al Ghazali, who died in 1111 (CE), was their most powerful voice, proclaiming that reason was the enemy of Islam, particularly through his well known treatise *The Incoherence of the Philosophers*. Despite the efforts of Averroes (Ibn Rushd) in his treatise, *The Incoherence of Incoherence*, to refute al

Ghazali's arguments, the Ash'arites sent him into exile, ending any support for the concept of human reason in human actions, and thus continuing until today as a widespread understanding among many Muslims, including Muslim intellectuals, that the issue of reason versus the sometimes contradictory will of Allah is a closed issue (Scruton, x-xi).

Reilly indicates that the mind of many Muslims throughout the world frequently has not closed intellectually and suicidally, which seems to be a different more nuanced perspective than that offered by McCarthy, but that too many of the two billion current Muslims accept the flawed concept that only what Allah wills or does not will incomprehensibly has any authority in all matters of human existence. A key question for Reilly is how so many current intelligent Muslims blindly can accept these earlier arguments over the nature of Allah that since Allah only wills or does not will, nothing that humans do can occur except in obedience or defiance of Allah's will (3). Reilly states that terrorism, or support for it, by Islamic extremists and fundamentalists, is not the only problem for modern Islam, but that it includes the loss of even basic Islamic science and philosophy, as well as indigenously developed democratic constitutional governments, in favor of Islamic law, *shar'ia*, over democratic legislative law: "the Arab world stands near the bottom of every measure of human development... How much of this is Islam and how much is Islamism? Is Islamism a deformation of Islam?"(6). McCarthy would certainly agree with Reilly in his own denunciation of Islamism.

Reilly compares "The First Struggle: Qadar (Man's Power to Act) versus Jabr (Fate/Compulsion)"; "The Second Struggle: 'Aql'(Reason) versus Naql (Traditional Faith). He highlights the primacy of reason and reflection; the objectivity of morality: knowing the good; the goodness and justice of God; and the unity of God as Hellenic and Christian philosophical orientations. He argues that the created Qur'an contrasts Islamic differing beliefs in whether it was created in time and thus subject to further interpretation, leading to free will, or as coequal with God, and thus unchangeable with an emphasis on

jurisprudence rather than the questioning that is normally a part of philosophy and theology. Thus, the demotion of reason in Islamic intellectual thought became the standard for much Islamic thought that has been a major force in Islam today (15-33, 48). In the earlier and later manifestations of Ash'arite views, "because "God is unknowable, if God is pure will, then He is incomprehensible.... Nothing is like Him.... If the world cannot be understood by reason, how possibly could its Creator?" (54). As the Christian view of God is that he created man (woman) in his own likeness, and that the Gospel of John begins "In the beginning was the Word (Logos-reason), and the Word was with God and the Word was God" ; thus in this way, Christianity believes that God's creation has ordered and logical consistency and Islam says that since God is unknowable, as pure will, he can say "Be," or "Not Be (without logical consistency). Thus, in this way the two religions are incompatible (56-58). Reilly claims that from this belief, Islam has lost causality, any sense of epistemology, an objective morality, a sense of justice, and even a loss of individual freewill, leaving only jurisprudence and potentially despotism, without a relation to justice or precise morality (60-90).

In Chapters 6: "Decline and Consequences," 7:

"The Wreckage: Muslim Testimonials," 8: "The Sources of Islamism," and 9: "The Crisis," Reilly provides numerous examples from Islamic media (See also Said, 1981) and Islamic leaders who denounce the logic of the Western world, modernity, freedom, and democracy. He offers the question: "The great crisis that has seized the Islamic world poses the question to Muslims: 'Can we enter the modern world and also retain our faith?'.... One answer to the question above has been provided by the Islamists and Osama bin Laden. His answer is no; we cannot retain our faith in the modern world. Therefore, we must destroy modernity" (197).... The answer of Islamism is grounded in a spiritual pathology based upon a theological deformation that has produced a dysfunctional culture" (197). Reilly concludes: "As was seen in the blood-soaked history of the twentieth century, the 'priority of the irrational' – even if embraced

only by the radical few – can inexorably lead to limitless violence, because of primacy of the will, whether in God or man, knows no bounds. The recovery of reason, grounded in Logos, is the only sentinel of sanity. This is imperative for the East as well as the West” (205).

III. Major Conclusions and Contributions by the Three Authors

A) Kinzer’s focuses his comments about Turkey and Iran and their importance to the United States, as well as to other Middle East countries, such as Iraq, Israel, and Saudia Arabia. In his last concluding chapter “Part Four: The Door is So Wide Open,” Kinzer offers the following conclusions and proposals. When Nobel Peace Laureate President Shimon Peres spoke in 2007 to the Turkish Grand National Assembly, he proposed “Turkey instills trust” (195). Kinzer emphasizes that “instilling trust has become Turkey’s global mission... Turkey has been a political and military ally of the United States for more than half a century... Turkey has taken on the role of mediator, conciliator, and arbitrator.... Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu’ grand concept, which he calls ‘strategic debth,’ envisions Turkey as a hyperactive peacemaker” (195-197). Turkey has remained a close ally of both the Persian, Arabic and Israeli nations, though this relationship with Israel was seriously strained during the 2008-09 Gaza crisis (See Prosser, 2009: September). Kinzer’s book had not yet been published when in April 2010 the Israeli Navy and Air Force intercepted the humanitarian aid flotilla seeking to break the Gaza water blockade, where nine Turkish citizens were killed by the Israeli military. This event caused a great outrage by Prime Minister Erdogan and the near breaking of Israeli-Turkish relations.

Kinzer argues that just as the Middle East needs Turkey as a model nation in the region, it would be foolish for Turkey to reject Israeli-Turkish relations and to further isolate Israel with only its American ally. At the same time, he insists that the US must also maintain its friendly and cooperative relations with Turkey.

Additionally, Turkey must continue to support its possible accession to the European Union and to maintain friendly relations with Europe: "Not only Arabs but Muslims everywhere place great hope in the Turkey-EU relationship." Because of the cooling of interest in the European Union for Turkish admission, Kinzer believes that this could cause Turkey to look elsewhere—with more relations with the Middle East to the detriment of the EU and US.

Offering concluding arguments about Iran, Kinzer notes that "Iran is the big country in the Middle East" (205; See also Fuller, 2007; Morris, (2006). Thus, Kinzer argues that in this case the US should shape its policy not by emotional past insults by Iran, or by a cool calculation of self-interest.... The tragedy if America's long estrangement from Iran is that it has undermined America's own interest" (206). Kinzer lists ten realistic objectives that the US should seek to improve its relationship with Iran (208). To achieve these goals, he proposes that the US should have to recognize Iran as an important power with legitimate security interests while remembering that a nuclear armed Iran would cause a major security threat to the entire Middle Eastern region (208). Ideally, then a far reaching accord is needed between the US and Iran: "Iran is the only Muslim country in the world where most people are reliably pro American. This pro-American sentiment in Iran is a priceless strategic asset for the United States" (212). Kinzer concludes by noting that the 1972 Shanghai Communique was not itself an accord between China and the US, but set the stage for later significant cooperation and accords between the two countries. He believes that this Communique might serve as a model for later agreements between the US and Iran.

B) McCarthy makes a number of major assumptions about how the Grand Jihad sabotages the US. Beyond a "wake-up" call to his readers to accept that Islam, Islamists, and many Muslims have as their goal to undermine and sabotage American values and constitutional freedoms, as he claims has happened in several European countries, and indeed in many potentially more moderate Muslim countries, he is strongly focused as well on the crisis dangers

that the Left Socialistic leaders have created for American freedom and constitutionality, including the current administration of President Obama. The book's promotion argues: "The real threat to the United States is not terrorism. The real threat is the sophisticated forces of Islamism, which have collaborated with the American Left not only to undermine U.S. national security, but also to shred the fabric of American constitutional democracy—freedom and individual liberty.... and how it has found the ideal partner in President Barack Obama, whose Islamist sympathies run deep" (front flyleaf). Unlike Kinzer's *Reset*, McCarthy does not offer a precise way to solve what he states as a serious and significant threat, but instead, calls the readers' attention to the problem itself for America and its future, in a well-researched, but strongly biased and polemical fashion.

Nonetheless, because of its potential sensationalism, it is likely to attract a very large American readership of individuals fearful about the future of America, either because of what such authors provide as "the Iran" or "the China threat," especially since his earlier, *Willful Blindness*, was very quickly a best seller after its publication.

C) Reilly, in his thoughtfully philosophical, historical, and political book, believes that many Middle Easterners and intelligent Muslims have created the modern Islamic crisis, because a millennium ago, the Muslim mind became closed, without the ability of future generations to reopen it in order for modernizing trends to reemerge. Both McCarthy and Reilly spend considerable effort in discussing the sometimes dualistic Muslim view of the nature of God, and the highly negative role of the Islamists, McCarthy writing in a sensational, alarmist narrative, and Reilly as a more thoughtful scholar of Islam.

Among the three books, all of them make important contributions to an understanding of the Middle East, Kinzer in relation especially to Turkey and Iran; McCarthy in his overview of the Islamists' emphasis on Jihad against America and the enabling feature of the Left and the Obama presidency; and Reilly's historical, philosophical, and political analysis of the opening and later closing of the Muslim mind by its rejection of reason versus dogma. Each, in its own way

provides a valuable perspective on the current Middle East and its relationship to other Middle Eastern states, as well as to the United States, and each stresses the importance of Islamic theological tenets on their potential for modernization on its own terms.

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