

THE DISCREET CHARM OF THE NEO-CONS – KRISTOL HAILS EGYPTIAN “AWAKENING,” MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD WAITS IN WINGS

By Don Feder

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The night they drove old Hosni down -- and all the neo-cons were singing. Weekly Standard Editor Bill Kristol was the kapellmeister.

Prior to the exit of Beast Mubarak, Kristol (in yet another of his Olympian pronouncements), thundered: “The United States must support the Egyptian awakening, and has a paramount moral and strategic interest in real democracy in Egypt and freedom for the Egyptian people. The question is how the U.S. government can do its best to help the awakening turn out well.”

How do we know neo-cons aren't really conservatives? Conservatives are realists. They confront reality without ideological blinders. They do their best to perceive the world as it is, not as they wish it was.

Neo-cons think democracy is the magic elixir – good for what ails the downtrodden, regardless of their benightedness and barbarism. The neo-cons' touching faith in the universalism of democratic longings is like the liberals' faith in economic interventionism.

In the case of the Egyptian masses (better they should go back to sleep), popular sovereignty would mean lopping off the limbs of shoplifters, killing Christian converts on the spot, a Cairo-Tehran alliance (possibly with Iranian missiles in the Sinai), abrogating Egypt's 30-year-old peace treaty with Israel, the merger of mosque and state – and, please welcome the Moslem Brotherhood.

Kristol is incensed – incensed I tell you – over Glenn Beck's warning that the “Egyptian awakening” may be a milestone on the road to a caliphate.

“When Beck rants about the caliphate taking over the Middle East from Morocco to the Philippines (*Kistol's knowledge of geography is almost as keen as his understanding of history*), and lists (invents?) the connections between caliphate-promoters and the American left, he brings to mind no one so much as Robert Welch and the John Birch Society,” Kristol sneers.

An alliance between the left and radical Islam? How preposterous! Oh, Beck, you old Bircher.

Let's see, the left is anti-American, and “caliphate-promoters” are anti-American. Both hate Israel even more than they detest capitalism.

In the war on terror, both would hamstring law enforcement and intelligence agencies. Both rely on useful dupes (Bill Kristol?). But only a certified member of the lunatic fringe could conjure up a connection between militant Islam and the totalitarian left.

Jealousy may play in part in Kristol's attack, reminiscent of the cruder smears of the left. According to the latest stats, The Weekly Standard has a circulation of just over 103,000, while between 2.5 million and 3 million watch Beck's television show every weekday evening. Kristol has his thousands, Beck his millions.

Egypt isn't Kristol's first democracy binge-drinking bout.

In 1999, Kristol was gung-ho for NATO's bombing of Yugoslavia. There was Slobodan Milosevic engaged in ethnic cleansing (the brute) and Kosovo Muslims yearning for Jeffersonian democracy. Thanks to the NATO/Clinton intervention, which Kristol wildly applauded, Kosovo today is a nearly independent thug-ocracy, run by the Albanian mafia, where Serbs are ethnically cleansed.

According to a Council of Europe report, released last December, Kosovo Prime Minister Hashim Thaci runs an organ-harvesting operation. Thaci's goons execute Serb prisoners; then Albanian surgeons move in and extract kidneys. That's the way democracy goes, down Kosovo way. ("All in favor of killing this Serb for his organs, raise your hands. The eyes have it.") Free Kosovo is also a major route for drugs and women trafficked into Europe from the East.

You'd think Thaci's nickname ("The Snake") might have given Kristol a clue that when the erstwhile leader of the Kosovo Liberation Army took over, all would not be sweetness and light and constitutional democracy.

Last week, neo-nincompoops weren't the only ones giving rave reviews to the premiere of "Iran 1979; The Sequel."

In his February 4th Friday sermon, Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei declared: "The awakening of the Muslim Egyptian people is an Islamic liberation movement." Kamal al-Halbavi, a senior member of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, reciprocated, saying he hoped Egypt's democracy-in-the-making would one day achieve "a good government like the Iranian government, and a good president like Mr. Ahmadinejad, who is very brave," not to mention very committed to "wiping Israel off the map" and ruthlessly crushing internal dissent.

Gazans celebrated the glorious news with gunfire. "The resignation of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak is the beginning of the victory of the Egyptian revolution," Hamas spokesman Sami Abu Zuhri assured the Ummah. In Shiite-dominated areas of Beirut, fireworks lit the Friday-night sky. "Allahu Akabar, the Pharaoh is dead," gushed an anchor on Al-Manar TV, operated by Hezbollah.

The Pharaoh himself was more sanguine. In a phone call to former Israeli Cabinet Member Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, Mubarak warned that demonstrators, “may be talking about democracy, but they don’t know what they’re talking about and the result will be extremism and radical Islam.”

When it comes to creating the institutions of representative government, Egypt has all the makings of another Islamic republic.

According to various scientific surveys conducted over the past few years, of Egypt’s comatose masses: 60% have fundamentalist views; 85% believe Islam has a positive influence on politics (Pew polling); and 2/3rds believe clerics should play a more central role in the country’s political life (Zogby). Those who forsake the religion of peace should face the death penalty, say 84%. Cutting off the hands of thieves gets a thumbs-up from 77%. Seven in ten want the Camp David Accords, Egypt’s peace treaty with Israel, dissolved. The United States is viewed unfavorably by a whopping 85%, but 65% have a favorable view of the Muslim Brotherhood.

Jew-hatred is endemic. Posters carried by protestors depicted Mubarak with a pig snout and ears, and a giant Star of David as a backdrop.

The late Sheikh Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi, Grand Imam of Al-Azar University and the nation’s foremost religious authority, supported “martyrdom” attacks on U.S. soldiers and Israeli civilians.

In his classic “Jews in the Koran and the Traditions” (soon to be a major motion picture) Tantawi explained: “The Koran describes the Jews with their own peculiar degenerate characteristics ... refusal to distance themselves from the evil they do, and so on.” Two-thirds of Egyptians believe spiritual guides like Tantawi should play a more central role in the nation’s political life.

Besides wishful thinking, what is the basis for optimism about the prospects for Egyptian democracy? In the Middle East, democracy lives under an assumed name, in the witness protection program.

In its index of freedom in the world, Freedom House rates countries as “free,” “partly free” or “not free,” based on free and fair elections, representative government, an independent judiciary, respect for human rights, etc.

Muslim nations are either royal kleptocracies (Saudi Arabia), fanatical theocracies (Iran), authoritarian states (Libya, Syria), oil-rich sheikdoms (Kuwait, the UAE), run by one-party regimes (Gaza, the Palestinian Authority), American protectorates (Iraq, Afghanistan) and colonies under military occupation (Lebanon).

Of the 47 Muslim countries – stretching from the West Coast of Africa to Central and Southeast Asia – Freedom House rates exactly one of them “free” – Indonesia. And

that's a generous assessment, given daily persecution of the nation's Christian minority, which the government does little to stop.

Could there be something about Islam and the mentality it instills in the faithful that makes it arid soil for the propagation of democratic institutions? Democracy has flourished in the Protestant and Catholic countries of Europe and across the ocean in the Western Hemisphere, likewise in the Jewish state of Israel. It thrives in Hindu India, Buddhist Taiwan and Shintoist Japan.

But in the wide, wonderful world of Islam, democracy is as alien as religious tolerance and regular baths.

Consider the Muslim Brotherhood (doing business in the Middle East since 1928), founded by Hasan al-Banna, a school teacher and admirer of Hitler. Discover the Networks calls it "one of the oldest, largest and most influential Islamist organizations, operating in over 70 countries," including the United States.

Speaking of functional fools, President Obama welcomes MB participation in a future Egyptian government. According to James Clapper, Director of National What-Passes-For Intelligence in this administration, the Brotherhood is "a very heterogeneous group, largely secular, which has eschewed violence."

If you don't believe it, just ask them. "The Muslim Brotherhood is not seeking power... (*but*) wants to participate and help," Mohammed Morsi, a member of the organization's Cairo media office, helpfully informed us. "We reject the religious state," added Mohammed Katamy, former head of the Brotherhood's bloc in the Egyptian parliament.

What would you expect them to say at this point in time: Jihad, jihad, jihad – praise Allah and pass the scimitars?

In a CPAC speech ("The Muslim Brotherhood Inside the Conservative Movement") last week, ex-New Leftist, now conservative leader David Horowitz disclosed; "My parents were communists in the heyday of Stalin. The Party's slogan was not 'Bring on the dictatorship of the Proletariat' or 'Revolution Now.' But that is what they believed. The slogan of the Communist Party was 'Peace, Jobs and Democracy.'" – or, we're heterogeneous and we only want to participate and help.

Clapper's claptrap and the current disinformation campaign bear the same relationship to the real Muslim Brotherhood as Obama's latest budget does to fiscal austerity. Al-Banna explained Islam should be "given hegemony over all matters of life." The Brotherhood's credo? "The Koran is our Constitution, the Prophet is our leader, struggle (*jihad*) is our way, and death for the sake of God is our highest aspiration."

Yusuf al-Qaradawi, an MB spiritual leader, has written: “There is no dialogue between them (*the Jews*) and us, other than in one language – the language of the sword and force.”

In Brotherhood documents seized by the FBI in 1991, and used in terrorism-funding trials, the stated goal for infidel lands is “a kind of grand jihad in eliminating and destroying the Western Civilization from within and ‘sabotaging’ its miserable house by their hands and the hands of believers so that it is eliminated and God’s religion is made victorious over all other religions.”

Who could possibly be concerned by the prospect of such an entity taking over the most populous nation in the Arab world?

Richard Clarke – chief counterterrorism advisor to both the Clinton and Bush administrations – told a Senate Committee in 2003 that “descendants of the membership and ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood included Hamas, the Palestinian Islamic Jihad and al Qaeda.” Discover the Networks discloses, “Ali Sadreddine Bayanouni, head of the Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, has repeatedly pledged his support for the terrorism of Hamas and Hezbollah.”

Bringing to mind no one so much as Robert Welch and the John Birch Society, Harvard History Professor Niall Ferguson remarked in the course of a February 14 MSNBC interview that, “If you look carefully at the Muslim Brotherhood, you’ll see it stands for the imposition and enforcement of strict Sharia law and restoration of the Caliphate.” Funny, I thought only Glenn Beck talked like that. Ferguson continued that within the next six months, we could confront the delightful prospect of the Brotherhood’s ascension to power in Egypt, and then it would be 1979 all over again.

I almost forgot to mention that, in 1981, in a joint operation with another jihadi group, the Muslim Brotherhood assassinated Mubarak’s predecessor, Anwar al-Sadat.

It’s estimated that in the next Egyptian election, the Brotherhood would win 25% to 30% of the vote – possibly a plurality, certainly enough to shape a future government. Hitler became German Chancellor in 1933 based on winning only 230 seats out of 608 (38%) in the 1932 Reichstag elections.

Even the above estimate understates the Brotherhood’s clout – as its ideology has a powerful appeal for most Egyptians. (Recall the MB’s 65% approval rating.) The Jacobins didn’t start with a majority in the French Assembly of 1789 or the Bolsheviks in the Second International. But they were the most ruthless mutts in the pack, the best organized and believed in their destiny – like the Muslim Brotherhood.

Anyone willing to bet on the Egyptian “awakening” leading to democracy – anyone other than Kristol and the mainstream media?

There's a reason William Kristol is a popular talking-head. He's a liberal's conservative – pompous, toothless, embracing many of the left's favorite clichés and always willing to attack authentic conservatives.

Instead of neo-con, Kristol should be called a Dodo-con, as he waddles toward a well-deserved extinction.

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