

The Closing of the Arab Mind

I believe that the living conditions prevailing in the Arab world today and the current US Middle East policy are causing the Arab mind to be gradually closed. The Arab mind is being closed due primarily to actions taken by five major forces:

First, a traditional educational system that lacks dynamism and creativity, labors hard to reinforce outdated ways of thinking and rigid beliefs, and emphasize old values that suffocate students' imagination;

Second, a largely repressive political system that tolerates neither criticism nor dissent, opposes democracy and political participation, limits freedom of speech, and fails to respect human rights; and thus creates slaves rather than leaders;

Third, a voluntary mass movement toward Islamic fundamentalism that aims to transform the Arab society along a fading yet revered image of a past that may have never existed as imagined; a society that may have been good for its times but can never meet the challenges of our times;

Fourth, a rather weak but pervasive movement toward cultural particularism led by the conservative religious forces that raise the slogan, Islam is the solution, and the diehard Arab nationalist forces that call for a culture of resistance and oppose western values and globalization. These forces claim that the Arab-Islamic culture has what it takes to lead the Arab masses toward political unity, socioeconomic change, scientific progress, and military strength and;

Fifth, a misguided American policy that gives added ammunition to all of the above-mentioned forces by backing corrupt and corrupting Arab regimes and autocrats, and protecting the criminal Israeli state from international sanctions and laws, while denying the liberal Arab forces the opportunity to be heard and challenge the dominant forces of oppression. But as the

Arab mind gets less creative and innovative and free, the Arab regimes and the foreign forces that back them will collapse under the weight of their own ignorance and inhumanity.

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