



Islamists Gain Power, Control Egyptian Parliament

While Americans are being murdered in Afghanistan after the accidental burning of the Koran and an Iranian general is advocating the destruction of the White House, similar Islamist extremists have gained control of the Egyptian parliament (pictured at left). The Islamist Muslim Brotherhood's Freedom and Justice Party took 58 percent of the available seats in the upper house of Egypt's parliament, while the even more extremist Salafist Al-Nour party took a quarter of the seats. In all, more than 80 percent of the contended seats in Egypt's upper parliament are now in the hands of Muslim extremists. Last year's "Arab Spring" is now more fully manifesting its true character: the transformation of Egypt into a more stridently Islamist regime.



The victory of the Muslim Brotherhood and the Salafists in the upper house of Egypt's parliament follows their victory in the lower house, the so-called "People's Assembly." An article for AhrarOnline ("[What went wrong? Egypt's secular parties assess Islamists' parliamentary triumph](#)") evaluates the substantial political victories won by Islamists in the aftermath of the overthrow of the Mubarak government:

Egypt's first post-Mubarak elections were largely defined by the Islamist-secularist divide. While no Egyptian party overtly claims to be secular — a term with negative connotations in Egyptian popular discourse — Islamist parties have been accused by their critics of polarising voters by playing the religion card.

The Islamist electoral victory, however, can hardly be explained solely by Islamist parties' resort to religion, with members of non-Islamist parties citing a number of additional factors.

The Wafd's Sherif Taher, for one, says his own party's electoral performance had been affected by both "internal and external factors."

"The polarisation that first emerged during the [March constitutional] referendum had an impact," Taher said. "But this wasn't a religious polarisation, as some claim, as it did not pit Muslim against Christian. Rather, it was Islamist parties versus liberal parties. We were aware of this polarisation and should have dealt with it better."

The polarization manifested in the Egyptians election was between Muslim extremists and those favoring a more secular approach to governance, and the electorate overwhelmingly rejected the secularist approach. As noted in [a recent article for the Jerusalem Post](#), the Muslim Brotherhood won 38 percent of the seats in the "People's Assembly," and Al-Nour took 27 percent — a decisive majority. Following the Islamist victory in the upper house, the *Washington Post* reported:



Written by [James Heiser](#) on February 28, 2012

Liberal and secular activists who spearheaded the mass demonstrations that toppled Mubarak last February fared poorly in the election for the Shura Council, repeating their failure in voting for the People's Assembly.

As was the case when the People's Assembly held its first session, Salafi members of the Shura Council improvised when taking their oath of office on Tuesday. The oath ends with a pledge to respect the constitution and the law, but several of them added "God's law" or said "as long as there are no contradictions with God's law."

The widespread shock witnessed in the American media at the failure of secularists to win popular support — or their sudden transformation into Islamists when it comes time for an election — strikes some critics as reminiscent of the days of the Cold War, when "[agrarian reformers](#)" suddenly transformed into Communist hardliners.

An [article for The New American last December](#) highlighted the growing Islamist influence in the aftermath of the "Arab Spring," and the involvement of the Obama administration in pressing for 'democratic' reforms which inevitably led to the Salafists and Muslim Brotherhood gaining power:

The shibboleth of the inherent virtue of democracy — long a defining characteristic of State Department rhetoric — often has been invoked with a marked disinterest in whether what the fifty-one percent of a given population desires is actually desirable. If the ostensible role of the State Department is to defend the interests of these United States, such a role would not involve an ideological commitment inculcating "democracy," regardless of the implications for the best interests of our nation. Now, the nation will reap what it has sown, as the very forces which were encouraged by the Obama administration to assume power in Egypt seem likely to move that nation in a direction which is inimical to the interests of the United States.

What is the future of Egypt? Critics of the current administration's policy could easily point to other Muslim nations where the United States has engaged in "nation building."

While Egypt's Islamists have been solidifying their hold on their nation, much of the press attention on the Islamic world has focused on the influence of Islamist ideology elsewhere. In the past week, the bloody aftermath of the accidental burning of the Koran in Afghanistan has led to the [murder of two Americans](#) inside Afghanistan's Interior Ministry. Meanwhile, Iranian Brigadier General Mohammad Reza Naqd [called for more bloodshed](#) in response to the accidental burning, and declared that the destruction of the President's residence in Washington, D.C. should be part of the Islamists' retribution:

"Nothing but burning the White House can relieve the wound of us, the Muslims, caused by the Burning of Quran in the US," he said, adding: "Their apology can be accepted only by hanging their commanders; hanging their commanders means an apology," he was quoted by the semi-official Fars news agency as saying.

However, little attention was paid to the deliberate destruction of Bibles in Afghanistan several years ago. At that time, the Defense Department defended the decision to willfully destroy copies of the Christian Scriptures because it was feared military personnel might use the Bibles in an attempt to convert Muslims to Christianity. [As CNN reported in May 2009](#):

The unsolicited Bibles sent by a church in the United States were confiscated about a year ago at Bagram Air Base in Afghanistan because military rules forbid troops of any religion from proselytizing while deployed there, Lt. Col. Mark Wright said.



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Such religious outreach can endanger American troops and civilians in the devoutly Muslim nation, Wright said.

“The decision was made that it was a ‘force protection’ measure to throw them away, because, if they did get out, it could be perceived by Afghans that the U.S. government or the U.S. military was trying to convert Muslims,” Wright told CNN on Tuesday.

Troops at posts in war zones are required to burn their trash, Wright said.

The Bibles were written in the languages Pashto and Dari.

While leftwing American politicians bemoan the influence of the “religious right” on the political process in the United States, their political allies in the current administration continue policies which exacerbate the radicalization of Muslims. The Holy Bible can be deliberately burned by American soldiers without fear that Christians would engage in any act of violent retribution — and rightly so; Christians take seriously the words of Jesus to “turn the other cheek” (Matthew 5:39). [Islam has very different teaching](#) given by Mohammed:

“And slay them wherever ye find them, and drive them out of the places whence they drove you out, for persecution [of Muslims] is worse than slaughter [of non-believers]... but if they desist, then lo! Allah is forgiving and merciful. And fight them until persecution is no more, and religion is for Allah.” (2:191-193)



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