THE LESSER-EVILS PARADIGM FOR IMAGINING ISLAM:

U.S. EXECUTIVE BRANCH (RE)FRAMING OF ISLAM IN THE EARLY COLD WAR ERA

OF RACIALIZED EMPIRE-BUILDING

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Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the

Kenneth P. Dietrich School of Arts & Sciences in partial fulfillment

of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy in Rhetoric & Communication

University of Pittsburgh

2018

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH

KENNETH P. DIETRICH SCHOOL OF ARTS & SCIENCES

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October 27, 2017

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Rhetorical criticism of declassified United States executive branch intelligence documents produced by the Truman and Eisenhower administrations (1945-1961) illuminates how US agents (re)imagined Islam in this crucial yet understudied era of racialized empire-building. Two case studies help unravel characteristics of this dominant discourse: The Federal Bureau of Investigation's attempt to delegitimize the Nation of Islam by characterizing its leadership and doctrine as violent, racist, and unorthodox; and the Central Intelligence Agency and State Department's simultaneous effort to validate Islam and Islamism in the Middle East by positing them as ideological forces against communism and Arab Nationalism. Interactional and interdisciplinary consideration of archived rhetorical artifacts uncovers how motives to expand US empire, quell anti-imperial and anti-racist resistance, and advance early Cold War objectives encouraged executive agents to reframe Islam. Tropic analysis reveals how the discourse of US intelligence deviated from Orientalism, a dominant discourse used to legitimize European colonialism, and originally deconstructed by Edward Said. By establishing identifications between Islam and the West, US agents rejected the discursive construction of a transcendental racial hierarchy between the Orient and the Occident. And by differentiating "good Muslims" from "bad Muslims," agents ceased exclusively invoking the image of a monolithic and

unchanging Islam. Designated the lesser-evils paradigm for imagining Islam, this post-Orientalist reconceptualization of Islam permitted US executive agents to form alliances with some (lesser-evil) Muslims, like Saudi Arabia and the Muslim Brotherhood, while mobilizing forces against other (greater-evil) Muslims, like Elijah Muhammad and Gamal Abdul Nasser, and ultimately against the (greatest-evil) Soviet Union. Rooted in the logics of utilitarianism and governmentality, this paradigm helped US agents manipulate geopolitical identities to sustain a notion of Euro-American (white) geopolitical superiority, even as it began abandoning appeals to scientific racism which had undergirded European colonialism. Deconstructive criticism enhances scholarly understanding of the co-constitutive relationship between rhetoric and Western imperialism in the post-colonial era of US hegemony. Attunement to the US intelligence apparatus presents an opportunity to consider how domestic and foreign policy cohere into one "intermestic" imperial agenda, which is legitimated by, and which helps legitimate, the interacting constructions of anti-black racism and Islamophobia.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION: AN IMPETUS TO (RE)IMAGINE ISLAM

Since the United States began its rise to geopolitical prominence after World War II, it has increasingly played the role of global police officer. With military bases and diplomatic posts on every continent, the US executive branch secures and maintains "American interests" through a combination of capital investments, militarism, and intelligence or "psychological warfare." In this regard, the US government has taken the place of European colonial administrations like England and France. Every post- World War II executive administration has remained highly involved in monitoring and intervening in the politics of the formerly-colonized "Third World," and especially in the Muslim-majority Middle East. Many scholars have taken interest in the discourse(s) that justify and sustain Western imperialism, in both eras of European colonialism and US hegemony. Most prominent among them is Edward Said, whose groundbreaking genealogy in *Orientalism* exposes "the Orient" as a construct of the Western discursive imagination, fashioned by imperial agents to establish Western superiority and validate Euro-American domination over "Oriental" populations.[1] While Said primarily analyzes the discourse of colonial France and Great Britain, wherefrom Orientalism emerged, he observes, "Orientalism has been successfully accommodated to the new imperialism."[2]

Said has a simple explanation for the endurance of Orientalism in the era of US empire: "From the beginning of the nineteenth century until the end of World War II France and Britain

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[1] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, [1979] 2004).

[2] Said, *Orientalism*, 322.

dominated the Orient and Orientalism; since World War II America has dominated the Orient, and approaches it as France and Great Britain once did."[3] But if this were accurate, America would have formally colonized the Middle East after WWII! Historians mark the downfall of colonial France and Great Britain as the end of a geopolitical era, wherein the normative mode of Western domination transitioned from "colonialism" to "post-colonialism." While some colonies remained (and still remain) formally colonized, a majority were granted independence and recognized as nation-states, in a surge of nationalism and decolonization that coincided with the presidential terms of Harry S. Truman and Dwight D. Eisenhower (1945-1961).[4] Precisely because Truman and Eisenhower sought to preserve and extend Western dominance over "the Orient" in this geopolitical atmosphere, US executive agents perceived a need to approach the region *differently* than France and Great Britain once did. Correspondingly, agents revisited the Orientalist tropes that had theretofore shaped the dominant Western imagination of Islam.[5]

Orientalism naturalizes a racial distinction between the Orient and the West.[6] Said explains that in the nineteenth century, "Orientals were viewed in a framework constructed out of biological determinism and moral-political admonishment."[7] A rhetoric of science facilitated colonial domination by constructing "the Oriental" as undeveloped, backward, silently indifferent, and intellectually inferior in comparison to the white race. "Since the Oriental was member of a subject race, he had to be subjected."[8] Africa and Asia were depicted as wanting

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[3] Said, *Orientalism*, 4.

[4] Thomas Borstelmann, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 46. In the two decades after WWII, almost every colony gained independence.

[5] Kumar, Islamophobia, 35.

[6] Said, *Orientalism,* 300. See also: Deepa Kumar, *Islamophobia and the Politics of Empire* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2012), 30.

[7] Said, *Orientalism*, 207.

[8] Said, *Orientalism*, 206.

and waiting for European penetration and occupation.[9] But as the legitimacy of European colonialism declined, so did the notion of a naturally-determined racial hierarchy. And especially in the aftermath of the Nazi Holocaust, agents recognized that America's image was tarnished by its reputation for systemic racial segregation, discrimination, and violence. In this context, the US executive branch could not approach anti-imperial resistance movements in the same manner that European colonial powers had. In the face of the Nation of Islam, for example, US agents could not discount the organization's demands for racial justice and national autonomy by relying on tropes of Muslims or Africans as unable to exert political agency. In the post-colonial geopolitical environment, the US executive branch would have to justify white supremacy and Western domination through different means.[10]

In addition to constructing a naturalized racial hierarchy, Orientalism frames "the Orient" as uniform and unchanging.[11] Said notes that "Orientals were [considered] almost everywhere nearly the same," or a "Platonic essence."[12] And while early Cold War executive agents borrowed this monolithic conceptualization when useful, they contradictorily exploited differences between sub-groups of the Orient, and emphasized great potential for the US government to catalyze change in the region.[13] The US needed Islam to be capable of division and change: it needed Muslim allies and "proxies," to secure its access to resources and its military presence, and to compete with Muslim enemies who were agents of Soviet Communism or Arab Nationalism, considered the largest threats to American interests in the Middle East and

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[9] Said, *Orientalism,* 179.

[10] Borstelmann, *Cold War*, 45-47.

[11] Kumar, *Islamophobia,* 42.

[12] Said, *Orientalism,* 38.

[13] Matthew F. Jacobs, *Imagining the Middle East: The Building of an American Foreign Policy, 1918 – 1967* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 77; Kumar, *Islamophobia,* 64.

beyond. The radical expansion of the executive branch made possible the building and securing of these alliances, as well as the dissemination of propaganda portraying America's respect for Islam and Muslim peoples.

This conundrum of shifting political and geopolitical dynamics presented a "rhetorical situation," defined by Lloyd Bitzer as "a complex of persons, events, and relations presenting an actual or potential exigence which can be completely or partially removed if discourse, introduced into the situation, can so constrain human decision or action as to bring about the significant modification of the exigence."[14] In this case, shifting geopolitical frameworks that rendered scientific racism and colonialism illegitimate, combined with resistance to US imperialism from Muslims both at home and abroad, represented the exigence which called US discourse into action.[15] The US executive branch faced a delicate balancing act: while agents aimed to bolster the legitimacy of (some) Muslims and Islamists abroad, they had to take caution not to embolden the Nation of Islam in the process. In pursuit of its imperial and nascent Cold War agenda, this sticky rhetorical situation generated an impetus for the US executive branch to (re)imagine Islam.

This dissertation takes, as its object of analysis, the Truman and Eisenhower administrations' (re)imagination of Islam in the service of US empire. Two central research questions ground this study:

1. *How did the US executive branch (re)imagine Islam?*

2. *Was this (re)imagination consistent with, or did it diverge from, the defining features of Orientalism?*

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[14] Lloyd Bitzer, "The Rhetorical Situation," *Philosophy and Rhetoric* 1, no. 1 (1968), 6.
[15] Bitzer, "Rhetorical Situation," 2.

To answer to these questions, this study uncovers and analyzes discursive tropes found in declassified US executive branch documents. The theories drawn from this tropic analysis bring nuance and precision to scholarly understandings of (post-) Orientalism and the discursive tactics which sustain Western imperialism.

This chapter consists of three sections. Section 1.1 outlines and justifies the critical methodology enacted by this study: rhetorical criticism of declassified executive branch documents, with an emphasis on the interactions between rhetoric and the power dynamics which create and constrain the rhetorical situation. Section 1.2 reviews the literature surrounding the discursive imagination of Islam in dominant US discourse. In outlining the studies conducted about representations of Islam, the Nation of Islam, and "American Orientalism," this section calls attention to important work done by scholars that deconstruct Western imaginations of Islam to show how these imaginations enable imperialism. But this section also highlights some gaps in the literature that this dissertation attempts to fill. Finally, Section 1.3 previews the chapters that lie ahead.

1.1   CRITICAL METHODOLOGY

The research questions that prompt this study are approached via the practice of rhetorical criticism. Rhetorical criticism takes as its object *persuasive discourse*, or discourse that aims to influence human thought and action, and it rests upon the basic premise that there will be a correspondence among the intentions of a rhetor, the characteristics of the rhetor's discourse, and the reactions of the audience(s) to that discourse.[16] Rather than simply describing or classifying,

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[16] Edwin Black, *Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), 14-16.

rhetorical criticism functions by *explaining* discursive artifacts. According to Wayne Brockriede,

"the critic who explains is primarily trying to account for how an aspect of the rhetorical

experience worked by relating it to something more general than itself."[17] Accounting for *how*

rhetoric works involves evaluation and judgment, which means that rhetorical criticism requires

scholars to advance argument. By inviting interpretation and potential confrontation, these

arguments should enhance an understanding of the rhetorical experience, and/or contribute to a

better theorization of rhetoric.[18] The criticism enacted by this dissertation aims to do both.

This study explains the Truman and Eisenhower administrations' (re)imagination of

Islam, which represents one component of the broader rhetorical experience of *the Western*

imagination of Islam. The image of Islam is distinct from Islam itself; the former is a reaction to

the latter, a counter-interpretation guided by political motives.[19] In *Covering Islam: How the*

Media and Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World, Said reveals how, in treating

the image of Islam as a commodity to be exchanged in a network of capitalistic and imperial

ambitions, producers of dominant knowledge in the West actually cover up more about Islam

than they uncover.[20] In centering scholarship on the Western imagination of Islam, more is

therefore illuminated about the West than about Islam itself.[21] Deconstructive critics have shown

how the Western imagination of Islam constrains thought and directs (imperial) action.[22]

Conceptualizing the image of Islam as a discursive construct enables studies like this one to

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[17] Wayne Brockriede, "Rhetorical Criticism as Argument," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 60, no. 2 (1974), 170.

[18] Brockriede, "Rhetorical Criticism," 167-168.

[19] Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World* (New York: Vintage Books, [1981] 1997), 4.

[20] Said, *Covering Islam*, 170. See section 1.2.

[21] Said, *Orientalism*, 12.

[22] Said, *Orientalism,* 42.

explain *how it has been used* by Western leaders to foster perceptions that aid desired political outcomes.

To effectively understand how the Truman and Eisenhower administrations used images of Islam, this dissertation turns to declassified executive branch documents issued between 1945-1961. A key source for primary documents analyzed here is the National Security Archive, a non-profit organization founded in 1985 and housed at George Washington University in Washington, D.C.[23] The Archive has been called the "house that FOIA built," filing roughly 2,000 Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests and collecting about 75,000 documents annually, "many dealing with the most important events of the last [70] years."[24] One of the Archive's "Electronic Briefing Books," entitled *Documentation on Early Cold War U.S. Propaganda Activities in the Middle East*, contains open source, digital copies of recently-declassified reports and memos, issued predominantly by the National Security Council and Department of State.[25] In addition to these resources, this dissertation takes advantage of *The Vault,* the Federal Bureau of Investigation's FOIA Library which contains over 6,700 of its own reports and memos, including three compiled documents on Cold War investigations of the Nation of Islam.[26]

What scholars and the public know about US national security strategy is limited by the covert nature of "intelligence" operations. "A system of secrecy first devised in the crucible of the Second World War was not diminished after the troops came home," observes archivist Kate

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[23] National Security Archive, "About the National Security Archive," http://nsarchive.gwu.edu/about

[24] Peter Carlson, "Eyes Only: [Redacted]," *Washington Post,* May 8, 2008, p. C4.

[25] *Documentation on Early Cold War U.S. Propaganda Activities in the Middle East,* ed. Joyce Battle, National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book no. 78 (2002), http://nsarchive2.gwu.edu//NSAEBB/NSAEBB78/docs.htm.

[26] *FBI Records: The Vault*, https://vault.fbi.gov; "Nation of Islam," *The Vault,* https://vault.fbi.gov/Nation%20of%20Islam.

Doyle. As more executive agencies began classifying thousands of documents during the early

Cold War, secrecy "spread its shadow over the crafting of foreign policy, the building of

weapons, the birth of entire government agencies, the spending of federal funds, and, inevitably,

the play of public debate."[27] This veil of secrecy made it challenging for citizens to participate in

discussions about US policy. For example, NSC-68, the so-called "blueprint for the Cold War,"

was secret for 25 years before its declassification in 1975.[28] US citizens would not learn about

their government's role in the 1953 coup that overthrew democratically elected Iranian President

Mohammed Mossadeq for decades, long after the operation had become a template for similar

covert actions in Guatemala, Chile, and elsewhere.[29]

These cases illustrate how document declassification provides opportunities to

understand previously-hidden dimensions of important political events and processes.[30] Shawn J.

Parry-Giles highlights two reasons to scrutinize declassified executive branch documents: first,

these artifacts "provide greater insight into the discourse that was produced by presidents and

their staffs, including the processes involved in drafting important public texts," and second,

"such records provide additional evidence for the assessment of rhetorical motives and

strategies."[31] If the Western imagination of Islam is a discursive construction, then rhetorical

criticism of primary Western documents can act as a tool of deconstruction. The approach taken

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[27] Kate Doyle, "The End of Secrecy," *World Policy Journal* (Spring 1999), 34.

[28] Robert P. Newman, "NSC (National Insecurity) 68: Nitze's Second Hallucination," in Martin J. Medhurst and H.W. Brands, ed., *Critical Reflections on the Cold War: Linking Rhetoric and History* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M Press, 2000), 55.

[29] Steven Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror* (New York: Wiley, 2003).

[30] Emily Gilbert, "From Declassified Documents to Redacted Files: Tracing Military Compensation," in *The Routledge Companion to Military Research Methods,* ed. Alison J. Williams, K. Neil Jenkings, Matthew F. Rech, and Rachel Woodward (London: Routledge, 2016), 30-43.

[31] Shawn J. Parry-Giles, "Archival Research and the American Presidency: The Political and Rhetorical Complexities of Presidential Records," in Shawn J. Parry-Giles and J. Michael Hogan, ed., *The Handbook of Rhetoric and Public Address* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell), 165.

by this study is influenced by Edward Said's suggestion that archival research should evince "a simultaneous awareness both of the metropolitan history and of those other histories against which (and together with which) the dominating discourse acts."[32] While this dissertation focuses on the US imagination of Islam, it situates that rhetoric within a broader network of socio-political and geopolitical contexts that gave it meaning. This involves reflecting upon the motives and perspectives of executive agents, of course, but also of Arab and African Nationalists, and members of the Nation of Islam.

Deconstruction reveals how discourse shapes political realities, but equally important, how political realities shape discourse. Michel Foucault's theory and practice of genealogy reveals "it is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together."[33] He illuminates: if any phenomenon is "constituted as an area of investigation," this is "only because relations of power… established it as a possible object."[34] Situational power dynamics create the conditions of possibility for political subjectivity and identity formation. Bitzer describes the rhetorical situation as a "context of persons, events, objects, relations, and exigence" that "calls the discourse into existence."[35] While the situation compels discourse, it also constrains the fittingness of the response.[36] To understand any contingent discourse, rhetorical critics must consider the *interacting* systems of power that produce and are produced by it.[37] In the context of

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[32] Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1993), 51.

[33] Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, [1978] 1990), 100.

[34] Foucault, *History,* 98. Foucault had written "sexuality" where I substituted "any phenomenon," but this sentence represents his philosophy on discourse in a broader theoretical sense.

[35] Bitzer, "Rhetorical Situation," 2-5.

[36] Bitzer, "Rhetorical Situation," 11.

[37] Shanara Rose Reid-Brinkley, "Ghetto Kids Gone Good: Race, Representation, and Authority in Scripting of Inner-City Youths in the Urban Debate League," *Argumentation and Advocacy* 49 (Fall 2012): 85.

this dissertation, that means analyzing systems like racism, imperialism, militarism, and paternalism, and their interactions with Western imaginations of Islam.

While the methodology that grounds this study is clearly suited to enhance an understanding of the multidimensional rhetorical experience, it can also contribute to a better theorization of rhetoric itself. In coming to terms with a definition of Orientalism, Chapter Four argues that a discourse should be demarcated by its constitutive tropes, instead of its subject matter or its effects. This theory heightens the importance of rhetorical theory and criticism—necessary tools in tropic analysis.[38] While historians and area specialists can contribute to a mapping of the spatial and temporal trajectory of Orientalism, rhetoricians are best suited to document the particularities of its discursive devices. Moreover, rhetoricians should chart the movements of dominant Western imaginations of Islam in a post-Orientalist context. If Orientalism is defined by its tropes, then a post-Orientalist framework must be limited by its tropes as well. Chapter Five's discussion of "the lesser-evils paradigm for imagining Islam" is one attempt to conceptualize a post-Orientalist discourse.

The tropic dimension of discourse may be particularly salient here, given the dynamic relationship between tropes and discursive imagination in the rhetorical tradition. Writing about Giambattista Vico's *Science of the Imagination*, Donald Philip Verene explains, "Through the tropes and other rhetorical and poetic devices the imaginative universal is expanded into the language of mythological consciousness."[39] Myths are dominant discursive constructions, normalized via the *repetition of tropes*, especially by powerful agents.[40] Kumar describes

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[38] Kenneth Burke, "Four Master Tropes," Appendix D in *A Grammar of Motives* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1945), 503-517.

[39] Donald Phillip Verene, *Vico's Science of Imagination* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991): 78.

[40] Said, *Orientalism,* 12-21.

Western myths about Islam as "distorted or selective interpretation[s] of the past"—not objective reflections of history or reality.[41] Although Said invokes multiple definitions of Orientalism, his assessment of "the principal dogmas of Orientalism" suggests that this dominant Western discourse is limited not only by its subject, "the Orient," but by its particular constitutive tropes.[42] A rhetorically-attuned reading of early Cold War executive branch tropes regarding Islam thus holds potential to shed further light on the key relationship between tropes and imagination.

The critical methodology enacted by this study can be summarized as follows: through a rhetorical criticism of declassified US executive branch documents, this dissertation uncovers the tropes that define the US executive branch (re)imagination of Islam between 1945 and 1961, distinguishing those tropes from the tropes of Orientalism; through a deconstructive lens of interactionality, it explains how the US (re)imagination influenced, and was influenced by, systems of power such as racism and Western imperialism. The theories forwarded by this dissertation are ultimately arguments, which invite scholars of discourse to evaluate, assess, and potentially dispute their conclusions. Now that the scope of the study has been defined, a review of existing scholarship surrounding the dominant discursive imaginations of Islam in the post-WWII era of US empire is in order.

1.2   LITERATURE REVIEW

Many scholars within the field of rhetoric and communication have contributed to an understanding of dominant discursive constructions of Islam and Muslims in the Western

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[41] Kumar, *Islamophobia,* 42.
[42] Said, *Orientalism,* 284 & 300. Emphasis mine.

imaginary—their characteristics and their uses. Because the scope of this study is narrowed to the imagination of Islam in the context of US empire (post-colonial US hegemony), a review of the literature already written about this topic is necessary. This section surveys studies pertaining to three distinct but interacting subtopics. Section 1.2.1 reviews the literature regarding dominant discursive imaginations of Islam and their uses in America. Section 1.2.2 details scholarship about dominant representations of the Nation of Islam and their uses in America. And finally, section 1.2.3 explores analyses of Orientalism in the American context. The limited quantity of studies centered around these topics, the limited scope of rhetorical theorization, and the relative lack of attention to the early Cold War period all demonstrate a necessity for the research done by this dissertation.

1.2.1   American Imaginations of Islam

Significant studies in rhetoric and communication have taken as their artifact the Western imagination of Islam. Many scholars have followed the lead of Said in *Orientalism* and conceptualized the Western imagination of Islam as a trans-Atlantic project. These scholars discuss American imaginations of Islam within the broader context of Western imperial discourses. In *Islamophobia and the Politics of Empire*, Deepa Kumar demonstrates how anti-Muslim prejudice has been rhetorically constructed and deployed by the ruling elite of empires throughout particular times in history.[43] She examines five persistent Orientalist myths about Islam in mainstream US discourse: Islam is a monolithic religion, Islam is a uniquely sexist religion, Muslims are incapable of reason and rationality, Islam is inherently violent, and

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[43] Kumar, *Islamophobia*, 3.

Muslims are incapable of democracy.[44] Kumar has dedicated much of her research to contemporary US government and media constructions of Islam, and how they serve to legitimate imperial warfare and unwarranted domestic surveillance.[45] She powerfully contends that anti-Muslim racism, or Islamophobia, has served as the "handmaiden of empire."[46]

In *Covering Islam,* Said offers a comprehensive explanation of the US government's influence on knowledge production about Islam, showing how "interest" in the subject of Islam emerges not on its own or purely, but instead derives from need: executive agencies produce a demand for the construction of images which make warfare, sustained militarism, and economic exploitation of Muslim populations more palatable to Western publics; academic departments and news corporations benefit career-wise and financially by supplying those images.[47] Kumar explains that in the US, a systemic approach to studying and researching the Middle East did not emerge until after World War II, when the Cold War and the development of national liberation movements generated a need for more reliable knowledge to further US imperial interests.[48] In *Imagining the Middle East: The Building of an American Foreign Policy, 1918-1967,* Matthew F. Jacobs details how the US executive branch spearheaded the development of an "informal transnational network of analysts, commentators, experts, observers, and specialists… concerned with interpreting the region for American audiences."[49] Said, Kumar, and Jacobs uncover how

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[44] Kumar, *Islamophobia*, 41-60. For an analysis of the trope of Muslims as monsters in the Western imagination, see: Sophia Rose Arjana, *Muslims in the Western Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015).

[45] Deepa Kumar, "Media, War, and Propaganda: Strategies of Information Management During the 2003 Iraq War," *Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies* 3, no. 1 (2006): 48-69; Deepa Kumar, "Islam and Islamophobia," *International Socialist Review* 52 (March-April 2007).

[46] Kumar, *Islamophobia*, 2.

[47] Said, *Covering Islam*, 16-35.

[48] Kumar, *Islamophobia,* 35.

[49] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 6.

this public-blurred-private intelligence network used expertise, diplomacy, and propaganda to enable and sustain US hegemony in the Middle East.

Jacobs contends that during and after WWII, the US intelligence network shifted away from the Orientalist framework for imagining Islam, as its reliance on foundational texts and doctrines of early Islam to explain contemporary circumstances limited the framework under which the US could effectively operate. In order to manipulate political circumstances in a post-colonial context, the US would need to take advantage of *divisions* within the peoples of the region once homogenized as "the Orient."[50] US agents "needed a reformulated Islam to help moderate other forces in the region," most notably communism and Arab Nationalism.[51] Kumar examines US policymakers' attempt to promote the King of Saudi Arabia as an "Islamic Pope," or an Islamic pole of attraction which could counter Nasser and his political vision.[52] In *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror*, Mamdani also examines the American tendency to divide Muslims into enemies and allies. He traces this phenomenon to the late Cold War era, when the US supported terrorists as "freedom fighters" in proxy wars, and most significantly promoted Islamism and "jihad" in Afghanistan. And despite the reversal in the War on Terror from that of appraisal to demonization of Islamism, Mamdani finds commonality in the way that the "good Muslim, bad Muslim" template has been employed to legitimate a sustained imperial presence in the Middle East since the Cold War.[53]

In *Islamophobia: The Ideological Campaign against Muslims,* Stephen Sheehi surveys the rise of anti-Muslim rhetoric and policies since the conclusion of the Cold War. He isolates

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[50] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 57-65.

[51] Jacobs, *Imagining*, 91; Kumar, *Islamophobia,* 36 & 64.

[52] Kumar, *Islamophobia,* 63. See also: Deepa Kumar, "The Right Kind of 'Islam,'" *Journalism Studies* (2015), 5-10.

[53] Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror* (New York: Three Leave Press, 2004).

Operation Desert Storm as a watershed moment in the manufacture of Islamophobia.[54] But the bulk of studies in the context of the post-Cold War era pertain to the War on Terror. Arun Kundnani examines how the post-9/11 revival of Cold War countersubversion practices allowed US agents to target "Muslim extremism," justifying discriminatory surveillance practices and feeding a pro-war agenda.[55] Other scholars have charted the particular tropes which circulated in the mass media to justify the War on Terror. For example, Kimberly A. Powell notes the repetitive image of Muslims and Arabs working together in organized cells against American Christians. She contrasts the representation of international terrorism with that of domestic (non-Islamic) terrorism, which is usually cast as a minor and isolated threat.[56] Samuel P. Winch examines mainstream news representations of Osama bin Laden, unveiling his portrayal as "an evil genius archetype with near mythic abilities, knowledge, and power."[57] Winch speculates that the media was motivated by the desire to construct an adversary worthy for a superpower. Rita Zahara and Hao Xiaoming criticize a media campaign launched by the Bush administration in 2002 that consisted of four sets of videos, intended to improve the US image and shore up support for US foreign policy, especially amongst Muslims.[58]

Several scholars have paid special attention to the trope of Islam as an inherently sexist religion, and the mobilization of that trope to justify warfare in the twenty first century.[59] Dana

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[54] Stephen Sheehi, *Islamophobia: The Ideological Campaign against Muslims* (Atlanta: Clarity Press, 2011).

[55] Arun Kundnani, *The Muslims are Coming! Islamophobia, Extremism, and the Domestic War on Terror* (London: Verso, 2014), 10-15, 64-66.

[56] Kimberly A. Powell, "Framing Islam: An Analysis of U.S. Media Coverage of Terrorism since 9/11," *Communication Studies* 62, no. 1 (2011): 90-112.

[57] Samuel P. Winch, "Constructing an 'Evil Genius': News Uses of Mythic Archetypes to Make Sense of bin Laden," *Journalism Studies* 6, no. 3 (2005): 285-299.

[58] Rita Zahara and Hao Xiaoming, "US Propaganda to the Muslim World: Exploring the Impact of 'Shared Values' Videos" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, New York City, 2009).

[59] Carol A. Stabile and Deepa Kumar, "Unveiling Imperialism: Media, Gender and the War on Afghanistan," Media, Culture & Society 27, no. 5 (2005): 765-782.

Cloud argues that representations of oppressed and unliberated Afghani women constitute a

verbal and visual ideograph linked to the idea of the white man's burden, evoking a paternalistic

stance toward Afghanistan in order to justify the invasion in 2001.[60] As the war progressed and

its success became increasingly difficult to determine, Faiza Hirji explains how politicians began

to frame the war not only as retaliation against the Taliban and bin Laden, but also as a mission

to restore human rights to Afghan women.[61] Elisabeth Klaus and Susanne Kassel analyze the

prominent narrative of the veiling and unveiling of women in news reports on the war in

Afghanistan: the veil symbolizes the violence of Islam and the Taliban in particular, whereas the

unveiling symbolizes American liberty and liberation.[62] Jasbir Puar explains how representations

of Muslims as homophobic also serve to promote a form of gendered exceptionalism which

validates paternalism and military intervention.[63] These scholars agree that American image of

an anti-liberal or anti-progressive Islam facilitates imperial meddling in the affairs of Muslim-

majority nations.

This section demonstrates that there are a relatively limited number of communication

studies conducted about the discursive imagination of Islam in the context of US empire. Most

scholars have narrowed their chronological scope to the era of US empire, the Cold War era, or

the War on Terror. And while several historians have noted specific strategies for constructing

Islam in scholarly considerations of early Cold War propaganda campaigns in the Third World,

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[60] Dana L. Cloud, "To Veil the Threat of Terror": Afghan Women and the <Clash of Civilizations> in the Imagery of the U.S. War on Terrorism," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90, no. 3 (2004): 285-306.

[61] Faiza Hirji, "The War for Women's Freedom: Orientalist Imaginaries of Rescue in Afghanistan" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, New York City, 2009).

[62] Elisabeth Klaus and Susanne Kassel, "The Veil as a Means of Legitimization: An analysis of the Interconnectedness of Gender, Media, and War," *Journalism* 6, no. 3 (2005): 335-355.

[63] Jasbir Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007). See also: Shoshana Magnet and Corrine Lysandra Mason, "Of Trojan Horses and Terrorist Representations: Mom Bombs, Cross-Dressing Terrorists, and Queer Orientalisms," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 39, no. 2 (2014).

none of these studies are dedicated to thoroughly understanding the rhetoric of the Truman and

Eisenhower administrations vis-à-vis Islam.[64] These gaps in the literature warrant the necessity

of this dissertation and its focus on executive branch intelligence produced about Muslims and

Islamists in the crucial era of the early Cold War. The next section reviews some existing studies

about the discursive constructions of the Nation of Islam in dominant US discourse.

1.2.2   *American Imaginations of the Nation of Islam*

Most literature in the field of rhetoric and communication which has been produced about the

Nation of Islam analyzes the rhetorical strategies of NOI leaders and their effectiveness.[65] The

speeches of Malcolm X and Luis Farrakhan are the most commonly scrutinized artifacts among

these studies. Several scholars compare the rhetoric of Malcolm X to that of Civil Rights

Movement leaders like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.[66] While these studies are politically and

academically significant, and essential to understanding the history of Islam and its reception in

America, they are beyond the scope of this dissertation. These studies analyze counter-

hegemonic discourse, which is very distinct from, and in fact antithetical to, the dominant

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[64] Ray Takeyh, *The Origins of the Eisenhower Doctrine: The US, Britain and Nasser's Egypt, 1953-57* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000); Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower's Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2006); Kathryn C Statler and Andrew L. Johns, editors, *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006); James Vaughan, *The Failure of American and British Propaganda in the Arab Middle East, 1945-1957: Unconquerable Minds* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005).

[65] Carlo D. Morrison, "The Rhetoric of the Nation of Islam, 1930-1975: A Functional Approach" (PhD diss., Howard University, 1996); Steven R. Goldzwig, "A Social Movement Perspective on Demagoguery: Achieving Symbolic Realignment," *Communication Studies* 40 (1989): 202-228; Gabriel A. Acevedo, James Ordner and Miriam Thompson, "Narrative Inversion as a Tactical Framing Device: The Ideological Origins of the Nation of Islam," *Narrative Inquiry* 20, no. 1 (2010): 124-152; Robert E. Terrill, *Malcolm X: Inventing Racial Judgment* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2007); Robert E. Terrill, "Protest, Prophecy, and Prudence in the Rhetoric of Malcolm X," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 4, no. 1 (2001): 25-53.

[66] John Louis Lucaites and Celeste Michelle Condit, "Reconstructing <Equality>: Culturetypal and Counter-Cultural Rhetorics in the Martyred Black Vision, *Communication Monographs* 57 (1990): 5-24; Mark Lawrence McPhail, *The Rhetoric of Racism Revisited: Reparations or Separation?* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2002); David Howard-Pitney, *Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2004).

discourse that frames the NOI in the US imaginary.[67] This section outlines the limited

scholarship pertaining to dominant discursive constructions of the NOI and its leaders.

Several scholars have scrutinized declassified executive branch documents to expose the

motives and strategies of the US executive branch in its operations against the NOI. In

COINTELPRO: The FBI's Secret War on Political Freedom, Nelson Blackstock exposes how

the FBI aimed to "disrupt, miscredit, discredit, and neutralize" the NOI and other forms of Black

or African Nationalism.[68] Kwame Farrakan Muhammad unveils an "all-out media assault" on the

founder of Nation of Islam, including the circulation of a myth that W.D. Fard was an ex-con

who was actually Caucasian.[69] John Drabble and Christopher Vaughan uncover executive efforts

to control and disrupt NOI movement using mass- and alternative- media campaigns, aimed at

exploiting divisions between groups seeking common causes. They describe the FBI's use of

agent provocateurs as "communication-oriented action," employed effectively to thwart the

growth and radicalism of the movement.[70]

These studies support Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall's argument that the US

executive branch uses "intelligence" operations to wage secret wars against constitutionally-

protected dissent in the United States.[71] Drabble illuminates how the FBI's distribution of

material to elected officials, police, and the media, coupled with anonymous telephone calls and

counterfeit movement literature, "thwarted fund raising, recruiting, organising, and favourable

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[67] Mark Lawrence McPhail, "Passionate Intensity: Louis Farrakhan and the Fallacies of Racial Reasoning," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 84, no. 4 (1998): 416-429.

[68] Nelson Blackstock, *COINTELPRO: The FBI's Secret War on Political Freedom* (New York: Pathfinder, [1975] 2015), 17.

[69] Kwame Farrakhan Muhammad, *Prevent the Rise of the Messiah: FBI's War with the Nation of Islam's Point #12.* Middletown: CreateSpace, 2014), 7-9.

[70] John Drabble and Christopher Vaughan, "Fighting Black Power: FBI Media Campaigns, 1967-1971" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, San Francisco, California, 2007).

[71] Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, *The COINTELPRO Papers: Documents from the FBI's Secret Wars against Dissent in the United States* (Cambridge: South End Press, [1990] 2002).

publicity, [and] prevented coalition building" for the NOI.[72] Churchill and Vander Wall explain how in approaching the NOI, Cold War executive agents "tended to view the newly awakened black militancy through the tinted prism of the Red Scare… leading them to adopt against blacks many of the same repressive measures employed against so-called subversives."[73] Sohail Dualatzai exposes how the US government formed alliances with the NAACP and other Civil Rights Movements leaders, who severed the struggle for racial justice in America from a broader decolonial coalition. The prioritization of Civil Rights narratives functioned to delegitimize Nationalist movements like the NOI, while helping to portray America as an egalitarian and benevolent hegemon.[74]

In addition to studies charting the internal rhetoric and communicative strategies of the US executive branch, some studies focus their criticisms on imaginations of the NOI in the American mass media. Muhammad notes that a 1959 expose on the Nation of Islam, "The Hate that Hate Produced," marked the beginning of the NOI's spotlight in the national press, which generated a national paranoia of Black Nationalism.[75] In *Making Malcolm: The Myth & Meaning of Malcolm X*, Michael Eric Dyson examines a wide swath of popular culture representations of the prominent NOI leader, arguing that images ranging from idolization to caricature have undermined appreciation for his greatest accomplishments.[76] Howard-Pitney observes that the conceptualization of King and X as "exact opposites" lingers in the dominant discourse, despite

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[72] John Drabble, "Fighting Black Power-New Left coalitions: Covert FBI Media Campaigns and American Cultural Discourse, 1967-1971," *European Journal of American Culture* 27, no. 2 (2008): 65-91.

[73] Churchill and Vander Wall, *COINTELPRO,* 94.

[74] Sohail Daulatzai, *Black Star, Crescent Moon: The Muslim International and Black Freedom Beyond America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).

[75] Muhammad, *Prevent the Rise*, 5.

[76] Michael Eric Dyson, *Making Malcolm: The Myth & Meaning of Malcolm X* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.

the fact that King and X disagreed only upon means, but not ends.[77] Scott Varda explains how this false dichotomy functions to mask over King's harsher criticisms of US foreign policy and imperialism. He unveils the dominant discursive construction of an "appropriate activism," which was juxtaposed to the "extremism" of the NOI's political platform.[78]

Besides the limited quantity of studies conducted with regards to the imagination of the NOI in dominant US discourse, two gaps in the literature warrant the research undertaken by this dissertation. First, most of the scholarship reviewed in this section deals with artifacts that were gathered from COINTELPRO operations, which did not formally commence until 1956. While Clayborn Carson analyzes documents that span back to 1952, he focuses exclusively upon investigations of Malcolm X.[79] Although Malcolm X was a more prominent public figure, he learned from and answered to the Prophet Elijah Muhammad, and he never obtained leadership status over the NOI as did Muhammad. Yet very little (if any) scholarly attention has been paid to dominant constructions of Muhammad, the most central figure in the development of the NOI from the 1930s to the 1960s.[80] This dissertation offers an opportunity to explore constructions of the NOI and Muhammad that began with the Truman administration, and laid the groundwork for COINTELPRO operations. A second shortcoming of the scholarship outlined here is the under-theorization of the relationship between dominant discursive framings of the NOI and dominant constructions of Muslims in the Middle East.[81] This dissertation enhances

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[77] Howard-Pitney, *Martin*, 17-19.

[78] Scott J. Varda, "A Rhetorical History of Malcolm X" (Phd diss., University of Iowa, 2007).

[79] Clayborne Carson, *Malcolm X: The FBI File*, ed. David Gallen (New York: Carroll and Graf, 1991).

[80] See Chapter Two.

[81] Melani McAlister analyzes the role of the Middle East, Islam, and Arab and African nationalism in African American cultural politics during the Cold War, but her research focuses on the counterhegemonic rhetoric of the NOI, whereas my research focuses on the hegemonic response to the NOI's invocation of Islam. See: Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, & U.S. Interests in the Middle East since 1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 84-124.

understanding through an interactive analysis of domestic and foreign intelligence campaigns to imagine Islam in the early Cold War.

1.2.3 *"American Orientalism"*

The last two sections provide an overview of the studies which clarify dominant discursive imaginations of Muslims in the Middle East, and of the Nation of Islam, and expound upon their uses and effects. This section turns to scholarship that charts the operation of Orientalism in the context of post-colonial America. Said interprets that the Orientalist framework contains and constrains the US imagination of Islam.[82] He argues that despite the appearance of refinement, "the traditional Orientalist outlook remains in America."[83] The deconstructive work of Said has been so influential, that today the word "Orientalism" is more commonly invoked by scholars to refer to the dangerous ideologies and policies condemned by Said, rather than the academic discipline as a functioning apparatus. In *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East since 1945,* Douglas Little details how the US has exuded attitudes toward "the Orient" that have often moved beyond ambivalence to racism and Western exceptionalism, just like its imperial predecessors.[84] Despite the ambitious title of his book, Little only dedicates one chapter to an analysis of Orientalist *discourse;* the word "Orientalism" is not mentioned again until the conclusion.

Several scholars point to the persistence of Orientalist tropes in the American news media.[85] Fred Vultee conducts a rhetorical criticism of the rules and guidelines, set forth in the

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[82] Said, *Covering Islam*, 7.

[83] Said, *Orientalism,* 295.

[84] Douglas Little, *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East since 1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

[85] Kumar, *Islamophobia*, 42-55.

Associated Press Stylebook, for how news about the Middle East ought to look and sound for US readers. He uncovers "Orientalized features," such as otherization of Arabs and Muslims.[86] In another study, Vultee analyzes US news coverage of *fatwas*, explaining how Orientalist tropes are used to falsely articulate these religious rulings as "death sentences." [87] Vultee also uses Orientalism to explore how *Fox News* creates an "ideological clearinghouse for a uniquely menacing image of Islam," which casts Islam as irreconcilable with Western progress and rationality.[88] Foad Izadi and Hakimeh Saghaye-Biria conduct a discourse analysis of three elite American newspapers' coverage of Iran's nuclear program, concluding that the *Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post* draw upon "Orientalist themes" and "Orientalist arguments" more than *The New York Times*.[89] Kumar highlights "the resurgence of Orientalist and Islamophobic rhetoric" in the era of George W. Bush and the War on Terror.[90]

Some scholars have turned an eye towards Orientalist propagation in entertainment media. Little argues that Orientalism became a staple of popular culture in the US during the 1920s, through its dissemination in movies, best-selling books, and mass-circulation magazines such as *National Geographic*.[91] Brian T. Edwards analyzes Hollywood films of the Cold War era, noting how the Arab world is represented as "a place of abandon, irrational legal and political structures, ominous and barbarous men, and filled with the titillating temptation of

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[86] Fred Vultee, "A Paleontology of Style: The evolution of the Middle East in the AP Stylebook 1977-2010," *Journalism Practice* 6, no. 4 (2012): 450-464.

[87] Fred Vultee, "'Fatwa on the Bunny.' News Language and the Creation of Meaning About the Middle East," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 30, no. 4 (2006): 319-336.

[88] Fred Vultee, "Jump Back Jack, Mohammed's Here: Fox News and the Construction of Islamic Peril," *Journalism Studies* 10, no. 5 (2009): 623-638.

[89] Foad Izadi and Hakimeh Saghaye-Biria, "A Discourse Analysis of Elite American Newspaper Editorials: The Case of Iran's Nuclear Program," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 31, no. 2 (2007): 140-165.

[90] Deepa Kumar, "Framing Islam: The Resurgence of Orientalism during the Bush II Era," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 34, no. 3 (2010): 272.

[91] Little, *American Orientalism,* 17.

harem women."[92] Coeli Fitzpatrick examines the Orientalist trope casting Islam as the morally

deficient antithesis of the West in works of American fiction and memoir.[93] Elissa Nelson and

Karin Wilkins criticize representations of Arabs in action-adventure films, pointing to their

dominant display of Orientalist ideologies.[94] All these authors express concern at the ability for

these texts to normalize racist assumptions and engender support for foreign intervention.

Because these texts "function as producers of meaning in contemporary American culture in

ways which are both problematic and limiting," Fitzpatrick concludes that "the symbiotic

relationship between texts of this nature and American foreign policy needs to be brought to light

and subject to critical review."[95]

What this section demonstrates is that Orientalism itself should be subjected to critical

review. Unfortunately, there remains a tendency amongst scholars of contemporary political

discourse to operate with unshared or ambiguous conceptualizations of Orientalism. Some refer

to Orientalism wherever they see a dominant discourse serving racist (Islamophobic) and/or

imperial administrations, but others only when specific tropes are normalized in that discourse.

Studies that uncover Orientalism in American discourse often do so without properly theorizing

what constitutes the defining features of Orientalism. Including Said, many scholars interpret the

persistence of Orientalist myths as evidence that American discourse *is* Orientalist.[96] But this

conflation ignores that Orientalist tropes can sometimes be employed within a post-Orientalist

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[92] Brian T. Edwards, "Yankee Pashas and Buried Women: Containing Abundance in 1950s Hollywood Orientalism," *Film & History* 31, no. 2 (2001): 13-24. See also: David C. Oh and Doreen V. Kutufam, "The Orientalized "Other" and Corrosive Femininity: Threats to White Masculinity in 300," *Journal of Communication Inquiry* 38, no. 2 (2014): 149-165.

[93] Coeli Fitzpatrick, "New Orientalism in Popular Fiction and Memoir: An Illustration of Type," *Journal of Multicultural Discourses* 4, no. 3 (2009): 243-256.

[94] Elissa Nelson and Karin Wilkins, "Cultural Memory of Action-Adventure Films" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, San Francisco, California, 2007).

[95] Fitzpatrick, "New Orientalism," 243.

[96] A more thorough analysis of scholarly conceptions of Orientalism will be discussed in Chapter Four.

framework. Uncertainties surrounding the definition of Orientalism beget confusion regarding whose and which discourses have either reified or transcended Orientalist doctrine. The arguments presented by this study can help resolve problematic ambiguities for scholars who would like to understand the spatial and temporal trajectory of Orientalist thought.

Section 1.2 has provided a comprehensive overview of literature pertaining to the dominant discursive imagination of Islam and Muslims in the post-colonial United States. Each subsection has pointed to important work done within the field of rhetoric and communication; these studies foster an understanding of how representations of Islam have been used to prime audiences for the American imperial agenda, both at home and abroad. But each subsection has also exposed weaknesses in the field's grasp of the American imagination of Islam. These shortfalls can be summarized as follows: a disproportionately small literature base surrounding the early Cold War period, an even smaller amount of scholarship that merges an analysis of domestic and foreign policy discourses as they pertain to Islam, and minimal theorization about the meaning of Orientalism which corresponds to lack of resolve about whether the dominant American imagination of Islam conforms to Orientalism. Section 1.3 previews the forthcoming chapters, which collectively work to help fill these gaps in the literature.

1.3   CHAPTER PREVIEW

Chapters Two and Three each feature a case study in the Truman and Eisenhower administrations' imagination of Islam. Chapter Two conducts a rhetorical criticism of the FBI's (de)classified reports and memorandums about the NOI and its leaders, uncovering multiple tactics to render the organization illegitimate. The FBI constructed the NOI as a threat to national security and the broader Western order, which helped legitimize executive branch measures that

violated constitutionally-protected rights. Agents portrayed the organization as a "hate group," interpreting it to be more racist than the country from which it wished to separate. And most intriguingly, the FBI depicted the NOI as inauthentically Islamic, by designating it a "cult," and by juxtaposing its doctrines and practices to those of praiseworthy, "orthodox" Muslims.

Chapter Three offers a criticism of the concurrent US executive branch strategies for approaching Islam in its foreign policy toward the Middle East. To accommodate its growing interests, the executive branch expanded its own reach and its capabilities, and stimulated the creation of an informal network of government, media, and academic intelligence agents who could (and would) produce knowledge in the service of US empire. This chapter reveals an attempt by executive agents to mobilize Muslims against the Soviet Union, by interpreting Islam as incompatible with communism, by identifying America with Islam, and by sponsoring Saudi Arabia as a religious role model for the region. Likewise, agents supported Islamism as a counterweight to secular Arab Nationalism.

Chapters Four and Five synthesize these case studies, bringing in additional theoretical tools to help answer the research questions posed above. Chapter Four argues that the US executive branch deviated from Orientalism, insofar as the US discourse no longer accepted as norms the constitutive tropes of Orientalism. In the nascent Cold War, agents reframed the primary discursive binary of imperial geopolitics, from that of Orient versus Occident, to Soviet Union versus America. Within this framework, Muslims that were opposed to Soviet Communism were positioned closer to the United States than Orientals had been positioned to the Occident. And in its attempt to exploit divisions between Muslims, the US executive branch departed from a conception of Islam as static and monolithic.

Chapter Five defines, by its constitutive tropes, the post-Orientalist framework for imagining Islam introduced by the US executive branch, designated by this dissertation as "the lesser-evils paradigm for imagining Islam." It situates this paradigm within a more general consideration of the ethical, theological, and political entailments of lesser-evil reasoning. This chapter theorizes broader implications of the arguments put forth in this study, in three areas: the status of Orientalism, the codependent relationship between dominant Western discourse and Western imperialism, and the interactive dynamics of domestic and foreign policy. It concludes with a discussion of some of the study's limitations, and suggests directions for future research.

2.0 RENDERING ILLEGITIMATE THE NATION OF ISLAM

The Nation of Islam (NOI) emerged in approximately 1930 in Detroit, Michigan.[1] In this time period, many black people in America were migrating from the South, where they experienced harsh conditions of indentured servantry and Jim Crow legislation, to the North, where the prospect of work and life was more promising.[2] When they arrived and settled in the Northern cities, however, their hopes usually remained unfulfilled: expanding urban areas suffered because when black people moved in, white people moved out, and these areas quickly deteriorated into ghettos or urban slums; many black people could not find work; and the Ku Klax Klan was rising in popularity, even in the North. To cope with or adjust to unfamiliar and often dangerous urban life, and in search of a frame of reference through which the black experience could be understood, many black people in the North turned to newly flourishing black religious movements.[3] Among them, the NOI was also a political organization, which evolved to be the most powerful Islamic organization in American history.[4]

In the beginning, the NOI was small: its founder W.D. Fard traveled door-to-door throughout Detroit, explaining to any willing ears his purpose: he was an Arab from the Holy

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[1] Mattias Gardell, *In the Name of Elijah Muhammad: Louis Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1996), 50.

[2] Arun Kundnani, *The Muslims are Coming! Islamophobia, Extremism, and the Domestic War on Terror* (London: Verso, 2014), 41.

[3] Gardell, *In the Name*, 49.

[4] Richard Brent Turner, *Islam in the African-American Experience*, second edition (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 148.

City of Mecca on a mission from God to reunite His lost chosen people and reintroduce them to their original way of life. Mattias Gardell clarifies Fard's position, "the African Americans were of the lost, but finally found Nation of Islam, the tribe of Shabazz that had been stoned by the 'Caucasian cave man' or the 'blond blue-eyed devil' and brought as slaves" to North America.[5] Only one year after the first recorded activity of the NOI, Fard met a man who would over the next three decades elevate the organization to national, and even international, relevance.[6] That man was Elijah Poole, later to be known as the Messenger Elijah Muhammad.[7] To manage the growth in popularity and membership of the movement, Muhammad created a bureaucracy, establishing temples nationwide, appointing administrative officials, and organizing schools and paramilitary units.[8] Between 1934 and 1955 the number of NOI temples increased from two to thirteen, and by 1960 to over thirty.[9]

In Elijah Muhammad's *History of The Nation of Islam,* he outlines the purpose or goal of the organization: "to reform our people in America and put them to themselves in some place where they can go for themselves and do for themselves."[10] The NOI invoked Islam as spiritual and political resistance to the racialized violence of the Western political and socioeconomic systems in which they were forcefully immersed. NOI leaders, most notably Muhammad and his protégé Malcom X, became heavily involved in the growing movement against anti-black, Jim

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[5] Gardell, *In the Name*, 51.

[6] Turner, *Islam*, 148.

[7] Elijah Muhammad, *History of the Nation of Islam* (Phoenix: Secretarius MEMPS Ministries, 1993), 2.

[8] Gardell, *In the Name*, 54-55. Malcolm X also played a major role in the organization's expansion beginning in 1952. He helped by establishing temples in cities across the country. See Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, & U.S. Interests in the Middle East since 1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 94.

[9] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Monograph prepared by the Central Research Section, "The Nation of Islam (Antiwhite, All-Negro Cult in United States)," October 1960, in *FBI Records: The Vault*, "Nation of Islam," parts 1 and 2, https://vault.fbi.gov/Nation%20of%20Islam.

[10] Muhammad, *History*, 1. By "our people" Muhammad means black people.

Crow racism in America.[11] But whereas their Southern Christian counterparts, like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), prioritized integration, civil rights, and equality under the law, the NOI sought separation from white society in order to achieve independent black nationhood and self-determination.[12] Islam was an appealing religion for black people who felt disillusioned by the Christian church, its pro-integrationist messages, and with white Christians' continued violence against black people and black non-violent protest.[13] Sohail Daulatzai explains, "Islam was seen as 'the Black Man's religion,' an alternative form of a radical black consciousness… that was internationalist in nature."[14] NOI leaders understood Islam as a point of connection between black people in America and the broader Muslim Third World, who experienced overlapping struggles and diasporas as a result of globalized white supremacy and Euro-American colonialism and imperialism.[15]

Although citizens of the United States of America are constitutionally entitled to free speech, free assembly, and free religious expression, the rhetoric of the Nation of Islam, which displayed "vivid disloyalty to the Government and… continual disrespect for its laws," sparked concern and prompted investigation by federal authorities, most notably the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).[16] In 1952 the FBI suggested the "Muslim Cult of Islam," its own designation

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[11] Sohail Daulatzai, *Black Star, Crescent Moon: The Muslim International and Black Freedom beyond America* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2012), 2-9.

[12] David Howard-Pitney, *Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s: A Brief History with Documents* (Boston: Bedford/St. Martins, 2004), 9.

[13] McAlister, *Epic Encounters,* 93.

[14] Daulatzai, *Black Star,* xv.

[15] Daulatzai, *Black Star,* 6; McAlister, *Epic Encounters,* 94.

[16] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Monograph prepared by the Central Research Section, "The Muslim Cult of Islam," June 1955, in *FBI Records: The Vault*, "Nation of Islam," part 1.

for the NOI, be added to the Attorney General's list of subversive organizations.[17] Initially,

agents filed the investigation as a security matter related to communism, despite the NOI's stated

position as Islamist and not communist, and its outward rejection of the Cold War geopolitical

frame.[18] But loose affiliations justified suspicion from the perspective of agents. For example,

investigators opened a case against Malcolm X in 1953 because he "had written two letters that

included comments on Communism."[19] Independent of its links to the deadliest of ideologies, the

NOI earned designation as its own separate security matter as early as 1954, due to its "hatred…

towards the white race."[20]

Far from mere investigation, the FBI took the leading role in a federal counter-

insurgency, aimed to destroy NOI leadership before it could consolidate and gain significant

political power.[21] The NOI was officially listed as a target under the FBI's Counter Intelligence

Program (COINTELPRO) in 1967. One year later, FBI director J. Edgar Hoover specified the

program's goals: "to expose, disrupt, miscredit, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities of

black nationalist, hate-type organizations and groupings, their leadership, spokesmen,

membership, and supporters, and to counter their propensity for violence and civil disorder."[22]

Noam Chomsky characterizes the operation against Black Nationalists as the "most serious of

the FBI's disruption programs" in the span of COINTELPRO's existence between 1956 and

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[17] Clayborne Carson, *Malcolm X: The FBI File*, ed. David Gallen (New York: Carroll and Graf, 1991), 27. See section 2.3.1.

[18] Carson, *Malcolm*, 103; Daulatzai, *Black Star,* xv-xvi.

[19] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Report, "Malcolm X Little," file no. 100-399321, section 1, May 4, 1953, cited in: Carson, *Malcolm X*, 98.

[20] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Detroit Report, "Malcolm X Little" file no. 100-399321, section 1, March 16, 1954, cited in: Carson, *Malcolm X*, 104.

[21] Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall*, The COINTELPRO Papers: Documents from the FBI's Secret Wars against Dissent in the United States* (Cambridge: South End Press, 2002), 106.

[22] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Letter from Director J. Edgar Hoover to all offices, August 25, 1967, cited in Churchill and Vander Wall, *COINTELPRO Papers,* 92.

1971.[23] While COINTELPRO tactics were most intensely practiced in the 1960s, these operations were modeled on programs developed under the Truman and Eisenhower administrations, undertaken to disrupt the American Communist Party and affiliated threats.[24]

This chapter focuses on the rhetoric of the FBI in the formative years of its investigation and counter-intelligence operation against the Nation of Islam. Through an analysis of (de)classified intelligence briefings, prepared by the Central Research Section of the FBI and circulated internally and to key Truman and Eisenhower administration officials, this chapter reveals three central tropes employed by the FBI to render the organization illegitimate.[25] First, it constructed the NOI as a Cold War security threat. Second, it framed the NOI as an organization rooted in fanatical racism. And third, it accused NOI members of falsely pledging allegiance to the religion of Islam. Taken together, these characterizations exhibit a unique post-colonial American logic and a departure from the European colonial imagination of Islam and Islamism. This chapter is divided into three sections, each of which uncovers and dissects one of the three tropes isolated within this paragraph, respectively.

2.1   SECURITIZING AGAINST THE COLD WAR THREAT

While the origins of the FBI can be traced back to a force of special agents assembled by Attorney General Charles Bonaparte in 1908 under the command of Theodore Roosevelt, the

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[23] Noam Chomsky, Introduction to *COINTELPRO: The FBI's Secret War on Political Freedom*, by Nelson Blackstock (New York: Pathfinder, [1975] 2015), 17.

[24] Chomsky, Introduction to *COINTELPRO,* 14; Churchill and Vander Wall, *COINTELPRO Papers,* 1. Churchill and Vander Wall argue that the FBI's reason for existence is and always has been the implementation of COINTELPRO: to destroy or neutralize dissident groups and individuals. J. Edgar Hoover was the director of the FBI from 1924 until 1972, which also provided stability in the FBI's doctrine throughout the decades.

[25] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Muslim Cult," ii. FBI researchers stated: "This monograph is intended to serve as an investigative aid to field office agents and to facilitate the handling of any problems which may arise in the conduct of this investigation."

agency increased in prominence during World Wars I and II, and displayed its maximum force during the Cold War. Despite an initial limitation of its jurisdiction to domestic cases involving naturalization, national banking, antitrust, peonage, and land fraud, the FBI was enlisted to play a significant role in overseas intelligence as the US took an active role in World War II: the agency became responsible for the pursuit of espionage, sabotage, and links between Nazi parties in the Western hemisphere and the Axis powers. As the Cold War commenced at the heels of World War II, the capabilities of the FBI were expanded again, as the agency recalls, "counteracting the communist threat became a paramount focus of the government at all levels."[26] This expansion was indicative of a broader trend in American politics: mounting imperial ambitions abroad, coupled with a readiness to exercise executive power to execute and accomplish them.

Lamont Colucci describes the Truman Doctrine as "the most significant shift and amplification of national security strategy since Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln set the stage for the entire trajectory of American grand strategy."[27] The Truman Doctrine was maximalist in its aim to contain the rising Soviet empire; it required the strengthening of executive authorities (both at home and abroad) to protect the interests of America and the "Free World" globally.[28] The National Security Act of 1947 restructured and expanded the executive branch: it formed the National Military Establishment and at its head the Secretary of Defense; it established the National Security Council (NSC) to advise the president with respect to any policies pertaining to national security; and it created the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to advise and make recommendations to the NSC (as well as "to perform… additional services of

[26] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "A Brief History of the FBI," https://www.fbi.gov/about-us/history/brief-history, accessed September 25, 2015. Charles Bonaparte was grandson of Jérôme Bonaparte, youngest brother Napoleon Bonaparte.

[27] Lamont Colucci, *The National Security Doctrines of the American Presidency: How they shape our Present and Future*, vol. 2 (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2012), 311.

[28] Colucci, *National Security Doctrines*, 309.

common concern").[29] At home, Truman put into operation a series of measures which laid the

basis for "McCarthyism," or the federal repression of (constitutionally-protected) ideological

dissidence.[30] The policing of ideology in the name of national security exposed a paradox in US

Cold War strategy: liberal freedoms were usurped domestically in the name of protecting

liberalism on a global scale.[31]

Serving as the "touchstone for every security doctrine hereafter," the Truman Doctrine

enabled Eisenhower to intensify the role of the intelligence apparatus. In what Colucci calls the

"golden age of the CIA," Eisenhower appointed Allen Dulles to direct covert operations that

interfered with and significantly affected political outcomes in countries around the globe,

including Guatemala, Ukraine, and in the Baltic.[32] In 1953, the CIA restored an old alliance with

the Shah in Iran by orchestrating a coup d'état against Mohammad Mossadegh, the secular and

nationalist leader who resisted American meddling in the region.[33] At home, Eisenhower

amplified the FBI's role in neutralizing subversive or unorthodox political activity with the

formal establishment of COINTELPRO operations in 1956.[34] Both agencies employed a

bifurcated, *with us or against us* logic, so that anything (construed as) anti-American could be

characterized as enemy behavior. Within this framework, Robert Dreyfuss synopsizes, "the

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[29] *National Security Act of 1947,* Public Law 253, 80th Congress, 1st session, July 26, 1947, https://legcounsel.house.gov/Comps/National%20Security%20Act%20Of%201947.pdf.

[30] Chomsky, Introduction to *COINTELPRO,* 34-35.

[31] Chomsky, Introduction to *COINTELPRO*, 40; Kundnani, *Muslims*, 192-193.

[32] Colucci, *National Security Doctrines,* 341. See also: Stephen Kinzer, *The Brothers: John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles, and Their Secret World War* (New York: Holt, 2013).

[33] Robert Dreyfuss, *Devil's Game: How the United States Helped Unleash Fundamentalist Islam* (New York: Owl Books; Henry Holt and Company, 2005), 3.

[34] Brian Glick, Preface to *COINTELPRO Papers,* by Churchill and Vander Wall, xii. COINTELPRO was the first FBI covert operation to be both broadly-targeted and centrally-directed.

enemy was not merely the USSR," but any leader "who did not wholeheartedly sign on to the American agenda or who might challenge Western and in particular U.S. hegemony."[35]

With its ever-expanding powers, the FBI therefore targeted: the Communist Party, USA; the Socialist Workers Party, the Puerto Rican independence movement, the American Indian Movement, and the black liberation movement.[36] The last of these referred not only the NOI, but also to the SCLC, the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, and the Revolutionary Action Movement, among others.[37] Despite its frequent homogenization of black resistance groups, the FBI could at least tactically distinguish the NOI from others: it demarcated the group as "a fanatic Negro organization purporting to be motivated by the religious principles of Islam" that was comprised of "a collection of autonomous temples bound by a tremendous personal relationship between the heads of the temples and the headquarters of the Cult in Chicago."[38] This section uncovers the FBI's formulation of a narrative which positioned the NOI as an existential risk to the American nation and global humanity alike. This dual threat construction folded the protest of white supremacy and Western imperialism into the paradigm of communism-versus-freedom, distorting perceptions of black activism.[39]

2.1.1   National Security Threat

In 1941 Hoover catalogued as "subversive" at least two kinds of activities: 1) "the distribution of literature and propaganda favorable to a foreign power and opposed to the American way of life," and 2) "class hatreds and the development of activities which in a time of war would be a

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[35] Dreyfuss, *Devil's Game,* 2.

[36] Churchill and Vander Wall, *COINTELPRO Papers,* 33-300.

[37] Churchill and Vander Wall, *COINTELPRO Papers,* 91-164.

[38] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Muslim Cult," iii.

[39] Chomsky, Introduction to *COINTELPRO*, 23.

serious handicap in a program of internal security and national defense."[40] In the next two

decades, the NOI came to be classified as subversive on both counts. The FBI's first

comprehensive report of the NOI to circulate widely amongst the FBI and the NSC, prepared in

1955 "by the Central Research Section at the request of Special Agents investigating this cult,"

emphasized in its overview that "though small, this is an especially anti-American and violent

Cult."[41] The report summarized that the "aims and purpose of the [NOI] are directed at the

overthrow of our constitutional government, inasmuch as the Cult members regard it as an

instrument of the white race."[42] Despite the report's conclusion that the organization was neither

large nor powerful enough to inflict any serious damage upon the country, it still found "obvious

that this group, as long as it retains the ideas now motivating it, will remain an investigative

problem to the FBI."[43] And it did.

In 1960 (the last year of Eisenhower's presidency), the Central Research Section of the

FBI produced a second comprehensive analysis of the NOI and its political activities. This

document repeated many themes and observations contained in the 1955 report, but supplied

additional testimonies and investigations. To substantiate the NOI's anti-Americanness, the

researchers observed, "the teachings and attitudes reflected by the followers of Muhammad at

various temples and on different occasions often vary from mild defiance against the white man

and 'his government' to insane hatred for all facets of the 'white man's society.'"[44] At NOI

temple meetings, investigators reported "the ministers speak of [the American] flag as the 'rag'

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[40] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Memorandum issued by Director J. Edgar Hoover, 1940, cited in: Churchill and Vander Wall, *COINTELPRO Papers*, 94.

[41] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Muslim Cult," cover page.

[42] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Muslim Cult," iii.

[43] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Muslim Cult," iii.

[44] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Nation of Islam," 55.

and repeatedly denounce the 'white man's government' which they claim gives them no freedom, justice, or equality."[45] The FBI interpreted that the NOI's "teaching of civil disobedience and nonconformity to the laws of the country" were disingenuous and merely "calculated to engender racial hatred" against white Americans.[46]

The agency reasoned along these lines: the NOI promotes hatred of white Americans; white Americans constitute the majority of our nation; the NOI is therefore a threat to the majority of our nation. For this logic to be sound, the FBI would need to establish a positive relationship between "teachings and attitudes" of hatred on the one hand, and a propensity toward mass violence on the other. It rose to the challenge. The agency observed in 1955, "although there have *been no organized acts of violence* committed by the Cult, the element of *desire for violence* appears to be an emotional stimulant for every practicing member."[47] The source or proof of this desire is never substantiated. In its updated report in 1960, the FBI attempted to show how the NOI's promotion of law-abidingness actually *increased* its members' inclination towards mass violence:

> The teachings of Muhammad and his ministers are ambivalent in nature. On one hand, they teach the followers doctrines which inflame and incite hatred of the white race and, on the other hand, they restrain and repress them into doing nothing to violate the laws of the United States Government. Contradictory teachings of this kind produce frustrations, and frustrations very easily can express themselves in acts of violence.[48]

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[45] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Nation of Islam," 64.
[46] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Muslim Cult," 67.
[47] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Muslim Cult," 56. Emphasis mine.
[48] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Nation of Islam," ii.

While the FBI conceded that NOI leaders, including Elijah Muhammad, overwhelmingly publicized the peaceful ways of the organization, it cautioned that "real feelings of the members cannot be shown through statements made at open meetings."[49] In the eyes of FBI agents, the "primitive instincts," or the psychological being of NOI members made violent outbursts an impending inevitability.[50]

The FBI's pathologization of NOI members led it to conclude that that the organization posed a danger to national security: "Based upon an analysis of the rabid teachings of this group, it is definitely considered that these people present a threat to the internal security, and would, with the right number of followers and the opportunity, be more than willing to perform any acts which would subvert American principles and endanger the existence of the American nation as such."[51] The FBI's assertion fails to specify how many followers would comprise the "right number" to carry out an attack, or to provide one example of an opportunity which would permit the NOI to take largescale action against the government or the white American masses. At best, the FBI's logic here relies upon a slippery-slope fallacy, whereby a series of increasingly improbable consequences are construed as opposition to some action that is not in-itself objectionable.[52] In this case: preaching hatred against white America leads to subversion of American principles, which arouses violent tendencies, which under opportunistic circumstances escalates to the endangerment of white Americans, which poses a threat to the nation; therefore, the teaching of hatred against America constitutes an existential threat to the nation.

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[49] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Nation of Islam," 63.

[50] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Muslim Cult," 18.

[51] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Muslim Cult," 47.

[52] Douglas Walton, *Slippery Slope Arguments*, Clarendon Library of Logic and Philosophy (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).

The irony in the FBI's assessment that hate speech and opposition to the government constituted a threat to the "nation as such" lies in its contradiction with America's basic mission in the Cold War: to protect freedoms on a global scale; freedoms like those of speech, assembly, and religious expression. Using fallacious logic to construct unsubstantiated threats, the executive branch established a state of exception, whereby concern for national security barred openness to the political doctrines of the NOI, or any party that leaned towards communism or against the status quo. The FBI's protection of the "nation as such" can be taken quite literally, as the executive branch appeared justified in using its (anti-democratic) authority to police, and functionally criminalize, counter-hegemonic ideologies—all so as to sustain "liberal" political orthodoxy. Because the US served as protector of the "Free World" and all its afforded luxuries, any menace to the US government was inevitably a menace to the entire world. Section 2.1.2 turns to the FBI's imagination of the NOI as a threat to the global order.

2.1.2 International Security Threat

In the blossoming Cold War, US security rhetoric relied upon a simple binary: you are either with us or against us – either with us liberals and the West, or with the communists and the USSR. And according to the FBI, the NOI was definitively on the wrong side. In 1953, the FBI compiled a report regarding a member of particular interest: Malcolm K. Little, known also as Malcolm X. The agency offered legal justification for its investigation: "The Communist Party has been cited by the Attorney General of the United States as coming within the purview of Executive Order 9835," and Little had been identified with the Communist Party. The FBI cited two pieces of evidence to substantiate the latter of these claims. First, investigators had caught wind that "the Subject mailed a letter" in 1950 in which "he claimed… that he was Communist"

(although no copy of the letter was obtained). Second, the "Subject had been visited by… a member of the Crispus Attucks Club of the American Youth for Democracy," a group that had also "been cited… as coming within the purview of Executive Order 9835." While the agency confessed "there is no further information concerning the Subject's communist activities," these two leads were apparently sufficient to keep the case open.[53]

Loose ideological affiliations with Russia, exercised via practices of free thought and expression, justified the FBI's targeting of the NOI under "Security Matter – C," its classification for groups and activities related to communism.[54] The NOI was portrayed as an ally to the USSR. "At the outbreak of war in Korea," for example, the FBI noted that the NOI "immediately allied its sympathies with the cause of North Korea and spoke in glowing terms of the strength and prowess of their Korean brothers."[55] In its analysis of the Fruit of Islam, the NOI's paramilitary unit, the FBI observed, "the Cult looks on this section as an extremely important factor in the eventual emergence of Asiatic world dominance," yet fails to uncover any militaristic plots in conjunction with foreign powers.[56] While the bureau plainly assessed "there is no evidence to prove affiliation with the Communist Party," it nonetheless remained suspicious, observing that NOI leaders "have consistently referred to their Asiatic brothers in Russia" and "have lost no occasion to rise, verbally, to the defense of the Soviet Union."[57]

Intelligence analysts interpreted NOI protests against the US government, in conjunction with members' verbal affiliations with Russians and Asians, made the group Communistic. The classification of the NOI as an agent of Soviet power was made possible by the bifurcated logic

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[53] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Malcolm X," May 4, 1953, cited in Carson, *Malcolm X*, 99-100.

[54] Carson, *Malcolm X*, 95.

[55] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Muslim Cult," 42.

[56] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Muslim Cult," 23.

[57] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Muslim Cult," 43.

of the Cold War. Broadly speaking, executive branch officials of the Cold War era (publicly and sometimes privately) refused to acknowledge that opposition to the US government could legitimately derive from any source besides the USSR and the propagandizing of its mythos. This reasoning functioned to paper-over any (geo)political orientation that prioritized a struggle other than liberalism-versus-communism. For example: the FBI recorded the NOI's avowed aims for economic independence, its own schools, and its own state; yet agents dismissed these aspirations as "fanatical," deriving from "a great desire to see Russia and the Asiatic countries destroy the continent of North America."[58] Critiques of US imperialism could only be interpreted as fodder for communist flames.

This Manichean scheme proved particularly useful to the executive branch in its approach to the synergistic movements of decolonization and nationalism, which had been growing in strength since the conclusion of World War II.[59] Dualatzai juxtaposes "the U.S. security state [which] interpreted international, national, and even local concerns through the lens of the Cold War," with "Black and Third World peoples [who] sought to seize the terrain and argue for colonial and working peoples' control of their resources and rights, their land and their labor, and ultimately their basic destinies."[60] From the perspective of the latter, European domination was still substantially more threatening to everyday security and quality-of-life than communism.[61] Divergences in standpoint and priority established competing (dis)orders: for the US executive branch, *communism* was the ultimate force of evil that must be contained at all costs; for many

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[58] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Nation of Islam," 14-22; "Muslim Cult," iii & 42.

[59] Thomas Borstellman, *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003), 45.

[60] Daulatzai, *Black Star, Crescent Moon,* 3.

[61] Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower's Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 124.

people of color and for Third World nationalists, *imperialism* and its parent *white supremacy* were the greatest sources of evil, compelling resistance "by any means necessary."[62]

These two frameworks were understood as mutually exclusive, in the sense that the adoption of one necessarily prevented the embrace of the other. Nationalist leaders at home and abroad argued that the geopolitical prioritization of anti-communism served to reify imperialism. Malcolm X rejected the (ostensibly) enlightened American paradigm of the Cold War, warning that it permitted the US to practice "benevolent colonialism," or "philanthropic imperialism."[63] In the discourse of US security strategists, however, geopolitical programs that primarily emphasized anti-imperialism risked being realized at the expense of defeating communism globally. Truman and Eisenhower cautioned against "premature independence," fearing that a rush away from Euro-American control may leave post-colonies vulnerable to Soviet infiltration.[64] In this way, the US executive branch could resist foreign national independence movements on pragmatic grounds, while professing moral support for liberation in-itself. While US executive agents worked globally to dispel an image of America as imperialistic, they also attempted to spoil the success of nationalism by linking it to communism.[65]

Black nationalists in the early Cold War period were the first group in US history, other than Arab Americans, to claim a positive sense of alliance with Arab culture and Arab Nationalism.[66] But the NOI's associations with nationalist and decolonial movements abroad were not merely theoretical or ideological; Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X established real

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[62] Howard-Pitney, *Martin,* 74. Malcolm X insisted on black peoples' fundamental right to defend and free themselves, by "any means necessary," including the resort to violence in self-defense.

[63] Malcolm X, Speech at Ford Auditorium in Detroit, February 14, 1965, "Educate our People in Politics," *February 1965: The Final Speeches* (New York: Pathfinder, 1992), 109.

[64] Dualatzai, *Black Star,* 10; Osgood, *Total Cold War,* 125.

[65] See Chapter Three for more information on this linking.

[66] McAlister, *Epic Encounters,* 86-87. NOI leaders looked to the Middle East as a site and source for explorations of blackness and the recovery of black culture and history.

and practical alliances with Muslim leaders of the Third World.[67] These relationships sparked

concern amongst FBI agents:

> [I]t was just recently that the 'Messenger' completed a long-planned trip to the
>
> Middle East and an alleged pilgrimage to Mecca. His main purpose in making the
>
> trip, it is believed, was so that he could gain publicity and thereby help in his
>
> efforts to achieve an aura of respectability for his teachings and to impress his
>
> followers and the general public…
>
> ... In July [1959], Malcolm X, the minister of the New York temple, travelled to
>
> the Middle East 'to act as a goodwill ambassador for Elijah Muhammad' and to
>
> arrange for meetings between Muhammad and Gamal Abdel Nasser, President of
>
> Egypt and the United Arab Republic, and other leaders.[68]

With this information, the US Department of Justice pursued the possibility that the two most

prominent NOI leaders were in violation of the Logan Act, a federal statute that forbids

unauthorized citizens from negotiating with foreign governments in dispute with the US Federal

Government.[69] In a 1964 memo delivered to the director of the FBI, the US Assistant Attorney

General concluded that their trips to the Middle East "could conceivably fall within the

provisions of the Logan Act, and are moreover deemed to be inimical to the best interests of our

country, prejudicial to our foreign policy."[70] Clearly, US officials felt susceptible to a disruption

in the American pursuit of global hegemony if it allowed this partnership to flourish.

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[67] Turner, *Islam,* 191; McAlister, *Epic Encounters,* 100.

[68] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Nation of Islam," 35-36.

[69] U.S. Department of Justice, Memorandum from the Assistant Attorney General to the Director of the FBI, "Malcolm X Little" file no. 100-399321, section 12, cited in: Carson, *Malcolm X*, 297. The Logan Act: 1 Stat. 613, 18 U.S.C. § 953, enacted January 30, 1799.

[70] Carson, *Malcolm X,* 297.

Decolonization and nationalism posed a particular problem for the emerging US empire: complete realization would disrupt the geopolitical normalization of Western domination, limiting vital access to the land, strategic waterways and resources of the Middle East and North Africa.[71] The US executive branch greatly feared Nasser and his regional influence: he refused to be controlled, could play super-powers against each other, and inspired Arab loyalty.[72] In the framing of US security discourse, a Cold War victory for the US and the "Free World" depended on the geopolitical stability provided by colonialism and imperialism in the Middle East and North Africa. The dangerous potential of Soviet influence, and the ever-looming threat of the nuclear bomb, necessitated the preservation of Western domination. As proponents of decolonization and nationalism, the coalition of NOI and foreign leaders thereby constituted a threat to global security. The next section will demonstrate how, in addition to framing the NOI as a national and international menace, the FBI discredited the NOI's anti-imperial platform by depicting the organization as zealously racist toward white people.

2.2 TURNING THE TABLES OF RACISM

Muhammad and his ministers forwarded a political platform that opposed the pervasive and systemic anti-black racism of US politics and culture. Because indictments of structural racism like these exposed contradictions in the US Cold War agenda, which promised the spread of liberal freedoms throughout the world, US executive agents prioritized efforts to improve the

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[71] Kenneth Osgood, "Words and Deeds: Race, Colonialism, and Eisenhower's Propaganda War in the Third World," in *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War,* edited by Kathryn C. Statler and Andrew L. Johns (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006), 4 & 10. See also, Chapter Three.

[72] Dreyfuss, *Devil's Game*, 98.

image of its domestic racial politics. But in the post-WWII political environment, the US

executive branch could not dismiss NOI criticism in the same way that European colonial powers

had once dismissed the protests of those whom they colonized: by relying upon scientific

justifications for white supremacy, paternalism, and imperialism.[73] Executive agents were thus

tasked with inventing a new discourse to render illegitimate the anti-racist political positions of

the NOI (and other anti-racist and anti-imperial resistance groups). Instead of discounting and

rendering inferior the source of the message (black people), early Cold Warriors challenged the

legitimacy of the message itself (black opposition to white supremacy). This section analyzes the

FBI attempt to turn the tables of racism on the NOI, by interpreting resistance to anti-black

racism as a form of dehistoricized anti-white racism. Section 2.2.1 explores the significance of

anti-black racism in the geopolitics of the early Cold War, further explaining the executive

impetus to reimagine race relations. Section 2.2.2 uncovers the specific tropes used to frame NOI

political doctrine as anti-white racism.

2.2.1   Anti-Black Racism

Kenneth Osgood notes that "the Cold War was first and foremost a political war—a war of

persuasion… that would be won or lost through public opinion more than military victory."[74] As

the US moved into a position of world leadership during and especially after WWII, American

politics and culture received unprecedented attention from audiences globally.[75] And especially

in the wake of the Nazi Holocaust, the persistence of racial segregation and anti-black violence

tarnished the US image, thereby creating a propaganda problem for executive agents in their

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[73] See Chapter Four.
[74] Osgood, "Words and Deeds," 3.
[75] Borstellman, *Cold War*, 45.

quest to win partners with promises of freedom and equality.[76] In *The Cold War and the Color Line: American Race Relations in the Global Arena,* Thomas Borstellman explains that rising demands for racial justice were so loud, US government officials "recognized that the reconstruction of race relations along more progressive lines would be a crucial task on both the national and international levels."[77] The Soviet Union promoted itself as a genuine supporter of anti-colonialism, and lost no occasion to shun the US for its anti-black racism in Soviet propaganda campaigns.[78] Despite personal proclivities toward white supremacy and segregation, Truman and Eisenhower administration officials conspired to depict the US as a progressive and egalitarian nation.[79] For these agents, anti-black racism and the pervasiveness of Jim Crow tactics such as lynching, police and prison violence, and segregation were understood as geostrategic, rather than moral, problems.

Abroad, US propagandists fostered the perception that racial advancement in the US was outpacing reality. The State Department organized goodwill tours with prominent black American artists and entertainers. For example, the government-sponsored jazz group, "Jambassadors" (jazz ambassadors), were deployed on high-profile tours abroad to help alter impressions, bolster alliances, and persuade nonaligned states that the US was different than European colonial powers.[80] The CIA instructed Hollywood film directors to remove negative stereotypes and "to plant well-dressed negroes as part of the American scene." [81] Despite its

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[76] Borstellman, *Cold War,* 45 & 54; Osgood, "Words and Deeds," 12.

[77] Borstellman, *Cold War,* 46.

[78] Osgood, "Words and Deeds," 10-12.

[79] Borstellman, *Cold War,* 48-53.

[80] Hisham D. Aidi, *Rebel Music: Race, Empire, and the New Muslim Youth Culture* (New York: Vintage Books, 2014), 105-107.

[81] Frances Stoner Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: The New Press, 1999), 290-291.

scant legislative or executive enforcement, agents exploited the US Supreme Court's 1954 ruling

in *Brown vs. Board of Education* to its fullest, citing the case as evidence of American

repudiation of segregation. US propaganda highlighted improvements for racial minorities in the

areas of civil rights, social mobility, employment, education, sports and entertainment, business

and government.[82] And while Truman and Eisenhower felt real pressure, from internal and

external forces alike, to hasten these developments, their challenge was to gain enough headway

to eschew charges of hypocrisy while avoiding significant backlash from Southern

segregationists, who constituted a powerful political base, or from European allies trying to

preserve their grip of racialized colonial power.[83] When these acts could not be balanced, the

reality of structural racism in the US combined with expanding hegemonic ambitions meant US

officials ultimately catered to the more-powerful (white, European) forces, at the expense of

progressing as promised and/or simulated by these campaigns.

On the domestic front, black nationalists and the Civil Rights Movement (CRM) alike

protested white supremacy in US culture and politics. But whereas the former saw anti-black

racism as systemic to (and thus inseparable from) the US government, the latter believed

reformulated laws and policies could redress white supremacy.[84] Elijah Muhammad argued that

CRM leaders "have good intentions, but they just don't have the right instruments to work

with."[85] Muhammad and his ministers warned black people in America that justice could never

be reached within a civil rights framework, since US civil society was structured upon the

exclusion and objectification of black people. Muhammad explicated this position:

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[82] Osgood, "Words and Deeds," 13.

[83] Borstelmann, *Cold War,* 48.

[84] Howard-Pitney, *Martin,* 57-70 & 102-103.

[85] Elijah Muhammad, *Message to the Blackman in America* (Chicago: Muhammad's Temple No. 2, 1965), 308.

The Constitution gives to the people of America. And if we understand it well, it

was not written with the so-called Negro in mind. It was written for the white

citizens of America and not the slaves.

The slave is not mentioned there and it was not in the mind of these lawmakers

that he should share equal justice with the master. No, he was considered to be the

property of the master. Therefore, the servant or the slave cannot get justice—

equal justice—with the master *unless the master wants to give up his position as*

master.[86]

Muhammad and his ministers advocated for a black nation, independent of the US Federal

Government, precisely because they had no faith in the master giving up his position. In a speech

delivered at the Harvard Law School Forum of 1961, Malcolm X professed, "There will be no

peace for America as long as twenty million so-called Negroes are here begging for the rights

America knows she will never grant us." [87]

Malcolm X publicly condoned the CRM for limiting black resistance to the domestic

political realm, and thus severing the struggle for racial justice in the US from a broader fight

against Western imperialism and racialized colonialism. X criticized the CRM's dual platform of

racial integration and anti-communism for enabling, rather than stunting, the growth of US

empire.[88] In observing how the tokenization of CRM leaders and other black figures of power

served US imperial interests, X referred to Dr. King as "the White Man's best weapon."[89] And

despite the reality that US executive agents feared the power and the revolutionary potential of

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[86] Muhammad, *Message*, 309. Emphasis mine.

[87] Malcolm X, speech delivered at the Harvard Law School Forum of March 24, 1961, in *The Speeches of Malcolm x at Harvard*, ed. Archie Epps (New York: William & Marrow, 1969), 127-129.

[88] Dualatzai, *Black Star,* 4-12.

[89] Malcolm X, interview with Kenneth B. Clark, June 1963, cited in: Howard-Pitney, *Martin,* 135.

Dr. King and the CRM,[90] Malcolm X was not wrong when he asserted the government preferred

the CRM's platforms of integration and non-violence, over the more radical separationist

messages of the NOI and other nationalists. In 1968, the FBI clarified a "long-range goal" for

COINTELPRO operatives to:

> Prevent the rise of a "messiah" who could unify, and electrify, the militant black
>
> nationalist movement. Malcom X might have been such a "messiah"; he is the
>
> martyr of the movement today... Elijah Muhammad is less of a threat because of
>
> his age. King could be a very real contender for this position *should he abandon*
>
> *his supposed "obedience" to "white, liberal doctrines" (nonviolence) and*
>
> *embrace black nationalism.*[91]

Although this memorandum was not issued until several years after Eisenhower left office, it is

still worth noting as it keenly demonstrates the FBI's intent not only to suppress anti-racist

resistance, but to (re)direct its flow into an ideological path less-threatening to the American

imperial agenda. This attempt to channel opposition away from the pulse of nationalism

corroborates Borstelmann's observation that "the management of racial change" was central to

early Cold War strategy.[92] Section 2.2.2 explores one component of this racial management: the

attempt by FBI agents to discredit the anti-racist politics of the Nation of Islam, and to depict

them instead as rooted in an irrational hatred for the white race.

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[90] See Churchill and Vander Wall, *COINTELPRO,* chapter 5.

[91] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Memorandum issued by Director J. Edgar Hoover, March 4, 1968, cited in: Churchill and Vander Wall, *COINTELPRO Papers,* 100.

[92] Borstellman, *Cold War,* 48.

2.2.2 Anti-White Racism

The FBI interpreted NOI leaders' reaction and resistance to anti-black racism in the US as anti-white racism. In the subtitle of its 1960 report on the Nation of Islam, the FBI classified the group as: "Antiwhite, All-Negro Cult in United States."[93] But instead of understanding anti-white political positions or remarks as an expression of disdain for centuries of slavery, gratuitous violence, and white discrimination against black people in the US, the FBI insisted that NOI "teachings [were] calculated to engender racial hatred," and similarly "motivated by hatred of the white race."[94] In its determination to delegitimize the anti-racism of the NOI by constructing the group as itself racist (against white people), the FBI utilized three tropes: NOI criticism of white supremacy was unwarranted, NOI politics were motivated by black supremacy, and NOI members possessed a fanatical hatred for the white race. This section turns to a deeper analysis of each of these tropes, and their (mis)understandings of racism.

In 1955, researchers at the FBI deduced that the NOI was "born of a *chimerical* resentment against the supremacy of the white race."[95] Chimerical resentment appears fantastically and is distinct from reasoned resentment. The logic of the FBI reflects an odd presumption that white supremacy should be appealing to black people, or at the very least, that black people should not harbor resentment toward their oppressors or the systems that continue to keep them oppressed. The FBI noted that "cult members" regarded the US Federal Government "as an instrument of the white race," as if it could reasonably be interpreted some other way.[96] Rather than admitting that even some of the NOI's statements reflected the reality of

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[93] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Nation of Islam," Title Page.

[94] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Muslim Cult," 67; U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Nation of Islam," i.

[95] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Muslim Cult," 37. Emphasis mine.

[96] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Muslim Cult," iii.

race relations in American culture or politics, the FBI characterized them as unprovoked and unjustified. In its analysis of the University of Islam, the NOI's educational wing, the FBI claimed, "the subject matter which was taught appeared to be of a fantastic nature quite outside the realities of life."[97] Agents frequently referred to leaders and members of the NOI as "fanatical," suggesting their political positions were a product of single-mindedness rather than rationalization.[98] Portraying the NOI (and other anti-racist resistance movements) as irrational helped the US executive branch censor and deny the extent to which anti-black racism and white supremacy were cemented into US law, politics, and culture.

The FBI suggested the anti-white politics and rhetoric of the NOI were motivated by a pursuance of "Negro supremacy," or "a world in which the Negro will have attained the enviable supremacy of the white man."[99] In 1960 agents surmised, "Elijah Muhammad, through his preachings of superiority of the 'black man' and his demands for complete independence from the white race, has furnished many dissatisfied Negroes with a new pride and purpose in life through the *militant and arrogant black unity* within the Nation of Islam."[100] The dual rhetorical strategy of dismissing the racialized history of the politics of the US, while calling attention to the racialized politics of the NOI, fosters an image of a black-centered politics based in a dehistoricized sense of racial supremacy; as if the racialized political schema of the NOI transpired from the genes of its members, instead of as reaction to the political and material conditions of black people in a world colonized and dominated by white Europeans. In the 1965 foreword to Elijah Muhammad's *Message to the Blackman in America,* Daniel Burley observes a

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[97] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Muslim Cult," 25.
[98] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Muslim Cult," ii.
[99] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Muslim Cult of Islam," 66.
[100] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Nation of Islam," vi. Emphasis mine.

popular reaction to "label the spread of the Islamic doctrine as espoused by Muhammad as a form of extreme… 'black supremacy,'" to which he responds:

> Actually, Muhammad is exposing Negroes for the first time to a brutal appraisal of their actual standing in the American community and what they can expect in the future from a system that under various disguises still grips them in mental, physical and moral slavery and after 100 years of alleged freedom from the clanking shackles of southern plantation servitude continues to lull them to sleep with false promises of a bright tomorrow which never comes.[101]

While FBI agents construed NOI rhetoric as deluded, unreasonable, and unfair in its assessments, followers of Muhammad, like Burley, found truth in his pessimistic outlook on the (in)capacity for the US government to redress anti-black racism.

These competing worldviews are clearly evidenced in the juxtaposition of NOI and FBI discourse with regards to police brutality against black people in the US. In a section of his *Message to the Blackman* titled "Answer to Critics," Muhammad decried: "This is what I want you to understand. We are tired of suffering, brutality, beatings, killings, just because you don't like us, and just hate us, and absolutely knowing that we are powerless to resist because you have all the odds against us."[102] Muhammad and his ministers spoke out against the commonplace of lynchings in the US, and the failure of police to investigate or seek justice.[103] But FBI agents questioned the legitimacy of such criticism, and blamed it on a bad attitude. For example, agents reported that although the police assigned to monitor a 1958 NOI Feast at Temple No. 7 in New

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[101] Daniel Burley, foreword to *Message to the Blackman in America,* by Elijah Muhammad (Chicago: Muhammad's Temple No. 2, 1965), xvi. Burley served as Muhammad's writer and editor for NOI newspaper and book publications, beginning in 1947.

[102] Muhammad, *Message*, 317.

[103] Michael A. Gomez, *Black Crescent: The Experience and Legacy of African Muslims in the Americas* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 309.

York City "were especially tolerant and calm… polite and cooperative," NOI members "exhibited attitudes of ridicule and sarcasm to the police whenever they had the opportunity to do so."[104] Agents also argued that a growing population of black federal inmates laying claim to the NOI were "primarily interested in those features which enable[d] them to *complain* about prison conditions and racial discrimination."[105] In the eyes of these agents, charges of injustice were merely complaints; they exposed a defect in the complainer, not the systems in question (i.e. the justice system and the US political system writ large). The FBI interpreted NOI resistance to anti-black racism as derivative of black supremacy and a corresponding, innate hatred for the white race.

In 1960 the FBI concluded: although the NOI "purport[ed] adherence to the religious principles of Islam [and was] ostensibly dedicated to the spiritual and physical uplift of the Negroes," in reality its "constant emphasis on the vindictive doctrines of the cult results in propagation of hatred of the white race."[106] Agents described how "children of cult members were taught hatred of the white people."[107] As per the agency's narrative, the roots of NOI racism were planted by none other than the organization's forefather, W.D. Fard:

> Fard at first utilized the Bible, inasmuch as most of his listeners were familiar
> with its teachings, but as his following increased, he became more and more
> inflammatory in his remarks against the whites and denounced the Bible in
> shocking terms. The element of *fanatical racial hatred* became more and more

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[104] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Nation of Islam," 52.
[105] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Nation of Islam," 51. Emphasis mine.
[106] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Nation of Islam," vi. Emphasis mine.
[107] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Nation of Islam," 15.

pronounced than it had been in similar organizations and it was evident that Fard

was actually *cementing this factor into the foundation* of his organization.[108]

By painting a picture of NOI members being brainwashed and indoctrinated into an ideology of

"fanatical, insane hatred" beginning at a young age, the FBI attempted to strip away the agency

of adult members who had valid reservations about the political systems in which they were

forcefully included.[109] Fanatical and insane hatred is distinct from reasoned or rationalized

hatred; the former is preordained, while the latter is learned from experience. The FBI's rhetoric

precluded the possibility that black people could *legitimately* hold hatred toward the ideologies,

structures, and people responsible for their oppression.

Rather than acknowledge the NOI had informed positions that were anti-white, the FBI

highlighted "anti-Caucasian feelings" as the proximate cause of racial hatred.[110] In describing

anti-whiteness as a *feeling* instead of a *politics*, the FBI positioned counter-hegemonic protest as

a product of some psychological and/or emotional imbalance. The interpretation of NOI doctrine

as founded in "racial prejudice" [111] is ignorant to the reactive nature of NOI politics: in the face

of structural anti-black racism, anti-white politics were essential to redress (via substantive

independence for black people). Michael A. Gomez summarizes NOI cosmology as centered

around "explaining and reversing the relationship between European power and African

weakness."[112] While anti-black racism transpired from a European sense of transcendental white

supremacy that was engineered into the fabric of colonial and imperial (geo)politics, the anti-

white "racism" of the NOI (and other resistance groups) did not derive from a parallel sense of

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[108] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Muslim Cult," 15. Emphasis mine.

[109] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Muslim Cult," 48.

[110] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Muslim Cult," 10.

[111] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Muslim Cult," 54-55.

[112] Gomez, *Black Crescent,* 302.

transcendental black supremacy or hatred, nor was it structured into the code of the dominant (geo)political framework. Rather, the anti-whiteness of the NOI should be understood as anti-anti-blackness. As Muhammad remarked: "You [white people in America] are our worst enemy. We have no other people who are an enemy to us but you, because we don't live in the country of other people." Despite the FBI's effort to discursively frame anti-anti-black racism as anti-white racism, the tables could not be turned, due to the disparity in power between white and black people in the (geo)political system.

The FBI's classification of the NOI as a "hate group" functioned to obfuscate the need for reflection upon the legitimacy of the NOI's opposition to US politics and culture: if executive agents could frame the politics of the NOI as rooted in an irrational hatred, as opposed to a reasonable and historically accurate antagonism, then these politics could be dismissed without consideration (or the pursuance of justice). In an editorial entitled "The Nation of Islam is NOT a Hate Group," NOI member Jason Muhammad recollects how this "habitual misnomer" has been used to "discredit and isolate" the organization. He describes the label as a "tool of propaganda," used to "undermine, and ultimately destroy those that are deemed a threat to the status quo."[113] The FBI's characterization of the NOI as a hateful organization that espoused only unwarranted, insincere, and ultimately racist evaluations of white America and the US Federal Government, served the executive branch in its mission to render illegitimate the black nationalist movement. While this section has uncovered the FBI's rhetorical maneuvering to position anti-racism as racism, the next section will delve into the agency's simultaneous attempt to discredit the organization along religious lines.

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[113] Jason Muhammad, "The Nation of Islam is NOT a Hate Group," *Minority Reporter,* February 23, 2017, http://minorityreporter.net/the-nation-of-islam-is-not-a-hate-group, accessed August 2017.

2.3   CHALLENGING THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE NATION'S ISLAM

In a country where the freedom of religious expression is constitutionally guaranteed, one would

not expect the federal government to concern itself with policing the religious legitimacy of

particular churches or temples. When viewed in the context of the FBI's active mission to

"expose, disrupt… [and] discredit" the NOI, however, calling into question the authenticity of

the party's claim to Islam is revealed as one of the executive branch's tools in "neutralizing" the

dissident organization. In the early Cold War era, US executive agents departed from the

traditional Orientalist method of discrediting Muslims: instead of relying on tropes that depicted

Muslims as universally and monolithically inferior and irrational (as did Orientalists), American

agents scorned "bad Muslims," who opposed or threatened the US agenda, by juxtaposing them

with "good Muslims," who aided and abetted the US government. This section explores three

rhetorical strategies the FBI employed to frame the NOI as "bad" from an Islamic perspective:

designating the party a "cult," appealing to Muslim authority figures who denounced the party,

and delineating "the orthodox religion of Islam" from the "unorthodox" NOI.

2.3.1   What's in a Name?

In 1955, researchers at the FBI titled the agency's first comprehensive report on the NOI, "The

Muslim Cult of Islam." The FBI utilized this designation which it had invented throughout the

report, while avoiding mention of the organization by its chosen name. (Needless to say, Nation

of Islam leaders never referred to themselves as cult members.) And even when the bureau

adjusted the title of its follow-up report to "The Nation of Islam" in 1960, it still regularly

referred to the group as "the cult" or "the cult of the Black Muslims." The FBI's misnaming can

only be interpreted as strategic; since one can assume the FBI had the interrogative skills to

discover the name of an organization about which it had compiled almost 100 pages of initial research. The FBI's refusal to say the name was in itself a strategy of discrediting the organization, under the agency's own logic that "individuals such as Muhammad assuredly seek any and all publicity be it good or bad."[114] In treating the NOI as undeserving of proper acknowledgement, the FBI hoped to starve it of any unnecessary attention.

While refusing to call an organization by its chosen name is surely a sign of disrespect, designating it a "cult" has harsher implications yet. Paul Olson surveys decades of religious-studies scholarship on discourses surrounding cults, and synopsizes that the term has become "laden with negative connotations," serving as "a pejorative label given to religious groups the user [of the label] does not like or understand."[115] The distinction between a "religion" and a "cult" is political—and not in the sense that there are real political differences between the two, but rather that the decision to label a new religious movement "a cult" is a political decision. Sam Fleischacker shows how the distinction is actually semantical: "if your definition of 'cult' is a group with a charismatic and very odd leader who thinks he or she has direct access to the divine and spreads a theology that seems both heretical and confused to the established religions around it, then Christianity and Islam and Buddhism were certainly cults when they began."[116] In fact, early Christianity was considered a cult by both Jews and Romans, and early Islam was considered a cult by medieval Christians.[117] Over time, the normative legitimacy of these religious organizations allowed them to pass from "cult" to "religion."

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[114] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Memorandum, January 22, 1969, cited in: Churchill and Vander Wall, *COINTELPRO Papers,* 102.

[115] Paul J. Olson, "The Public Perception of 'Cults' and 'New Religious Movements,'*" Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 45, no. 1 (2006): 97.

[116] Sam Fleischackler, "Cult vs. religion: what's the difference?" *Baltimore Sun* (October 13, 2011), http://articles.baltimoresun.com/2011-10-13/news/bs-ed-mormons-20111013_1_cult-religion-mormonism.

[117] Olson, "Public Perception," 97.

Before any new religious movement gains normative legitimacy, it usually faces hostility

and harsh opposition within mainstream society. And research has shown that labeling a new

religious movement or organization a cult is an effective oppositional strategy: when a group is

designated a cult, its legitimacy empirically tends to suffer.[118] James R. Lewis expounds,

"minority religions lose their chance at a fair hearing as soon as the label 'cult' is successfully

applied to them."[119] Catherine Wessinger finds that discourses around "cults" usually propagate

that myth that members are crazy, deviant, and brainwashed by their leader(s).[120] The FBI's

stance on the "Muslim Cult of Islam" ("MCI") did not deviate from this pattern. The reports

concluded, for example, that: "Cult members are rigidly disciplined and well-organized

followers of Muhammad. They are generally uneducated Negroes whom Muhammad and his

ministers, through their violent teachings, keep in a confused mental state of readiness."[121]

Depicting NOI members in this fashion allowed executive agents to discount the coherence of

their dissidence. Furthermore, the FBI's construction of the "Muslim Cult of Islam" was

intended to stand in contrast to acceptable (normative) expressions of Islam. The next two parts

examine the FBI's attempts to highlight this contrast.

2.3.2   *Appeals to Islamic Authority*

The FBI discredited the NOI through a series of appeals to Muslim authorities. First, the agency

appealed to the Muslim masses, as it reported: "Although Elijah Muhammad constantly *claims*

he is a believer in the *recognized* religion of Islam, many orthodox Muslims openly denounce

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[118] Olson, "Public Perception," 100.

[119] James R. Lewis, *Legitimating New Religions* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 206.

[120] Catherine Wessinger, *How the Millennium Comes Violently: From Jonestown to Heaven's Gate* (New York: Seven Bridges Press, 2000), 4.

[121] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Muslim Cult," iv.

him as a *fraud*, who is using their religion to deceive and exploit the American Negroes."[122] Second, the FBI appealed to the authority of particular Muslim leaders whom it presumably trusted to interpret the religion. It reported of "one leader from among the American followers of the orthodox Islamic teachings," for example, who had allegedly "revealed that he considers Elijah Muhammad to be nothing more than a confidence man [sic] who 'preyed upon the emotions and pocketbooks of the noneducated [sic] and ignorant negro people for the financial gain of Elijah Muhammad and his henchmen.'"[123] Although the report does not provide a name, an institutional affiliation, or any further qualifications for this leader, executive agents imply that his opinion is valid by appealing to it without a doubt. Elsewhere the agency reported that the president of the Addeynue Allahe Universal Arabic Association of Philadelphia, an "orthodox Muslim organization," had "classified the MCI as the *most unorthodox* and *least acceptable* Muslim group in this country. He stated there were no evidence in the Koran to support the MCI's civil disobedience and nonconformity to the laws of the country, their adherence to the principles of racial prejudice, or the militaristic approach to their religion."[124] These three excerpts demonstrate that in order to prove the religious inauthenticity of the Nation of Islam, the FBI tacitly confirmed the legitimacy of "orthodox" Islam.

To present the NOI's practice of Islam as inauthentic, the FBI relied upon *and reified* the normative legitimacy of "orthodox" Muslims. The FBI acknowledged the usefulness of this legitimacy in its reasoning that a "knowledge of the orthodox religion of Islam is considered essential to an understanding of one of its most deformed branches."[125] In other words, bringing

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[122] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Nation of Islam," 55. Emphasis mine.
[123] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Nation of Islam," 23.
[124] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Muslim Cult," 66-67.
[125] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Muslim Cult," i.

light to the "good Muslims" could function positively to draw relative attention to the "bad Muslims." Imams of Middle Eastern (rather than African) descent who were opposed to (Arab-, African-, and Black-) nationalism were treated as representatives of an authentic, peaceful Islam. Executive agents presumed a causal relationship between the status of "orthodox" Muslim leaders and the Truth or correctness of their religious interpretations. These appeals suggest that when different interpretations of Islam surface, one must be right and the other wrong; and moreover, that the "orthodox" version should be respected over the newly-emergent.

By leaning on the credibility of established Muslims and their leaders, executive agents painted a picture of the NOI as a fake religious organization: a "cult" with a "distorted interpretation of the religious principles of Islam."[126] To the FBI, it was "obvious that W. D. Fard, the founder of the Cult, selected those tenets of the orthodox religion of Islam which would lend themselves to dilution with a Congo Passion."[127] Just like agents had questioned the genuineness of the NOI's commitment to uplift black people in America, they also doubted its religious intentions. Investigators concluded that while the organization "purport[ed] to be motivated by the religious principles of Islam," it was "actually dedicated to the propagation of hatred against the white race," adding that "the services conducted throughout the temples are bereft of any semblance to religious exercises."[128] For the US executive branch, the NOI's allegiance to – and practice of – Islam did not confirm its status as a Muslim organization; to the contrary, the agents defined "Muslim" in a way that would exclude and preclude followers of the Nation of Islam. Section 2.3.3 details the FBI's attempt to do just that.

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[126] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Muslim Cult," 52; "Nation of Islam," i.
[127] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Muslim Cult," 48.
[128] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Muslim Cult," iii.

2.3.3   NOI versus Orthodox Islam

In a fifteen-page section of its 1955 report on the Nation of Islam, FBI agents produced a

"Comparison of Certain Tenets of the Orthodox Religion of Islam with the Unorthodox MCI."[129]

The bureau described this section as an "effort… to clarify the position of the MCI as a

mongrelized product of the orthodox religion of Islam," noting "certain aspects have been

selected which lend themselves readily to clear comparison."[130] To be precise, the FBI outlined

ten criteria for differentiation. Abridged versions of these comparisons have been laid out in

Figure 1. What is apparent from the FBI's perception of the "chasm existing between the

orthodox religion of Islam and the unorthodox MCI" is that the government seriously doubts (or

wishes to cast doubt upon) the authenticity of the NOI's claim to Islam.[131] In underscoring the

sincerity, dignity, greatness, and spiritual mastery of "orthodox" Muslims, the FBI strongly

suggested that NOI members lacked these traits. The FBI interpreted any unique characteristics

of NOI doctrine firstly as evidence of its leaders' exploitation of the religion for personal or

financial gain, and secondly as distortions that prevented the NOI from obtaining the spiritual

dimension of Islam.

 In knocking down the "unorthodox" Nation of Islam, the FBI built up quite an esteemed

image of "orthodox Islam." The agency positioned orthodox Muslims at the apex of human

dignity, depicting them as devoutly spiritual and faithful, yet peaceful and egalitarian. Agents

went so far as to define Islam as "an international religion which has as its ideal the complete

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[129] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Muslim Cult," 52-66.

[130] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Muslim Cult," 52.

[131] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Muslim Cult," ii.

Figure 1. The FBI's Comparison of Orthodox Islam to the Nation of Islam

	Orthodox Islam	Unorthodox NOI
Belief in Allah and the Prophets	The orthodox Muslim sincerely believes in Allah as the Supreme Being who created the universe, and expresses his faith by complete submission to the Divine Will	Allah, together with unexplained digits and pseudo-scientific data, has become merely a name to be memorized
Racial Hatred	Nowhere in the tenets of the orthodox religion of Islam does there appear any indication of racial prejudice	This aspect is the very foundation of all the teachings of the Cult
Advocacy of Violence	Murder and revenge are sins against society, punishable under Moslem law	Leaders advocate a bloody revenge against the white race in the "War of Armageddon"
Attitude toward Places of Worship	The mosque is a training ground where the doctrines of the fraternity and equality of mankind are put into practical working	No one but a Negro is allowed access to the inner sanctum of the temple, and many dire threats have been made against any member of the white race that attempts entry
Prayer	Prayer is the second pillar of faith and is one of the instruments by which an individual develops the art of self-mastery	Prayer is merely a series of words used as a measure of opening and closing a meeting, and is repeated with an absolute lack of devotion and fervor
Charity and Fasting	These practices enable the Muslim to attain the apex of dignity, human conduct, and elevation of mind	Charity as a means to spiritual perfection is virtually unknown, and members and leaders have no clear perception of the significance of Ramadan
Cleanliness	The striving toward physical purification is motivated by a spiritual force	Cleanliness is strictly a matter of hygiene, as there appears to be no spiritual motivation present
Food and Drink	At the beginning of Islam, it was considered that the food which a man used affected not only his constitution but also the building up of his character	The MCI has formulated rules in keeping with their own tastes and tendencies
Science and Mathematics	Great contributions were made to studies of mathematics, geography, medicine, astronomy and physics	The mutilation of theories is reflected in statements of the cult
Last Judgment and Eternity	Belief in the last judgment and eternal reward or punishment is a very important part of a true Moslem's faith	Nowhere in the ravings of the Cult is there anything but a shadowy reference to Paradise or Hell

Source: FBI, "Muslim Cult of Islam" (1955), 52-66.

Note: All figure entries, excepting minor grammatical changes, are direct FBI quotations.

equality of races and the unity of mankind."[132] Although it is clear that the FBI's rhetoric

commands respect for (these seemingly liberal tenets of) "orthodox Islam," what is not so clear is

wherefrom the agency derives its understanding of "orthodox Islam" in the first place. While the

document contains a heroic image of "the orthodox Muslim" in theory, it fails to specify where

any Muslim of this standing resides, or practices his faith, in material reality. In its synopses of

the (true) religion of Islam, the FBI cited only a few sources: Reuben Levy's *An Introduction to

the Sociology of Islam*; Maulana Muhammad Ali's *The Religion of Islam,* which cites only the

most authoritative Islamic sources (the Koran, the *Sunnah* of Muhammad, and *ijtihad*);

Mohammad Marmaduke Pickthall's *The Meaning of the Glorious Koran*; and the Koran itself.[133]

To construct a binary order of "good Muslims" and "bad Muslims," the FBI propagated

the idea that all "orthodox Muslims" adhered strictly to (that is, without any deviation from) the

Koran. Here the FBI employed a seemingly paradoxical strategy: it simultaneously invoked and

disavowed the myth that Islam is a monolith which can be understood primarily through its

classical texts.[134] Executive agents invoked this myth by relying upon the most authoritative

primary Islamic texts (and their interpreters) to substantiate its conception of the "true" faith of

Islam. The insinuation that authentic Islam is homogenous and unchanging overlooks the

diversity in practices and interpretations of the religion around the globe: differences based in

location, history, and culture. The notion of a fixed orthodoxy disregards, for example,

significant dissimilarities between Sunni and Shiite interpretations of the Koran and other

classical texts.[135] More importantly, this notion fails to grasp the interpretive nature of Islam, or

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[132] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Muslim Cult," 54.

[133] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Muslim Cult," 89 (the works cited for the FBI's memo).

[134] Deepa Kumar, *Islamophobia and the Politics of Empire* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2012), 42.

[135] Kumar, *Islamophobia and the Politics of Empire,* 42-43.

any other religion at that. By its nature, religion involves the organization of humans attempting to access super-human concepts and/or phenomenon; communication is therefore essential to collectivizing religious experiences. Bobby Sayyid explains: "Islam does not only bear the marks of its previous interpretations, it also bears the marks of its current articulations in different discourses. Thus, the content of Islam is provided by the contestation between past and present reinterpretations."[136] The FBI's understanding of "orthodox Islam" ignores that practicing Islam purely, or without interpretation, is impossible.

But even as it appealed to the Orientalist notion of a timeless Islam, the ten-point comparison performed by the FBI was aimed at demonstrating the superiority of one group of Muslims over another. The executive analysis assumes and asserts a hierarchy of ways to practice Islam: at the top of this hierarchy are orthodox Muslims, who abide by the Koran and other classical texts; and at the bottom are unorthodox followers of the same faith, and in particular the NOI. This ordering schema disavowed the myth that any and all Muslims can be understood through one lens, and required a recognition that Islam varies by interpretation. The paradox in the FBI's reasoning (i.e. its reliance on contradictory assumptions) could reflect a genuine/unintentional misunderstanding on the part of researchers, or it could reflect a strategic/intentional misunderstanding (or most likely, both). Consciously or unconsciously, these early Cold War documents reveal that agents utilized scripts ready-made by Orientalists of the colonial era when it suited their agenda, but departed from the components of those scripts which were not useful, or palatable, in the post-colonial environment.

The FBI's designation of the NOI as a "cult" instead of a religion, its appeals to the legitimacy of orthodox Muslim authorities, and its delineation between good, orthodox Muslims,

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[136] Bobby S. Sayyid, *A Fundamental Fear: Eurocentrism and the emergence of Islamism* (London: Zed Books Ltd, 1997), 43.

and bad, unorthodox Muslims are all three examples of the US executive branch deviating from the tropes used to imagine Islam in the discourses of Orientalism and European colonialism. Whereas Orientalist rhetoric treated Muslims as a homogenous race of people, naturally inferior to the white race, US executive branch rhetoric began to depict the Muslim community as divided.[137] Within this new framework, inferiority was gauged in terms of political identity, rather than biological function. "Good Muslims" were those whose political and ideological platforms would assist the United States in its dual mission to establish global hegemony and win the Cold War. "Bad Muslims" were those antagonistic to this mission, and particularly to it racist and imperialist backbone.[138] The delegitimization of the NOI on Islamic grounds was indicative of a broader transition in the Western imagination of Islam, initiated by the US executive branch in a crucial era of geopolitical transition. The next chapter continues to scrutinize this re-orientation.

2.4   CONCLUSION

Through an analysis of declassified US executive branch documents, this chapter has revealed a strategy of "neutralization" that involved discrediting the Nation of Islam from multiple vantage points. In constructing the NOI as a threat to the United States and the "Free World" writ large, the FBI folded the Islamist organization in with the Soviets and all "communists," and thus objected to its geopolitical agenda. In locating fanatical racism at the root of NOI doctrine, the FBI turned post-colonial demands for racial equality against the organization, and thus objected

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[137] Deepa Kumar, "The Right Kind of 'Islam,'" *Journalism Studies* (2015), 5-10.

[138] Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror* (New York: Three Leave Press, 2004)*,* 15. See also, Chapter Five.

to its socio-political agenda. And in reprimanding the NOI for practicing Islam in unorthodox ways, the FBI painted the organization as an inferior sub-sect and objected to its religious agenda. The imagination of the Nation of Islam as geopolitically, socio-politically, and religiously illegitimate, should be understood as a three-pronged discursive strategy enacted by executive agents to reduce the ideological and political strength of the organization. This strategy exhibits a unique post-colonial American logic, which departs from European colonial and Orientalist imaginations of black and Muslim peoples.

The transition to a post-colonial geopolitical landscape demanded that Western imperial powers find new ways to devalue groups of black people and Muslims who resisted Western colonialism and hegemony. This chapter has shown how the US executive branch adapted in three distinct ways. First, executive agents perceived the need to quell ideological dissidence in the name of protecting liberal freedoms like political expression globally. Second, instead of degrading non-white peoples with appeals to naturalized racial hierarchies, agents besmirched black and Muslim people by alluding to their racial prejudices. And third, agents demonstrated the irrationality of certain Muslims, not by employing stereotypes of all Muslims, but by employing stereotypes of "good Muslims" in order to exhibit the challenge presented by "bad Muslims." To better understand the deviations in imperial logic contained in these domestic intelligence records, it is important to also reflect upon the US foreign policy agenda, and particularly those policies directed at Muslim-majority colonies and post-colonies. Chapter Three turns to an examination of the tropes formulated to imagine Islam in early Cold War American diplomacy and foreign intelligence.

3.0 ENDORSING ISLAM AND ISLAMISM IN THE MIDDLE EAST

In its early Cold War aspiration to sustain Western imperialism and to assume the mantle of

hegemony in the Middle East, the US executive branch felt vulnerable in the face of two forces.

As was the mantra of the Cold War, America's primary menace was the Soviet Union, whose

military and ideological influence threatened to transform the Middle East in such a way as to

endanger the survival of the "Free World."[1] A secondary and related threat was Arab

Nationalism, a movement led by Gamal Abdul Nasser of Egypt, and committed to Arab unity

and independence from Western imperial control or manipulation.[2] The executive branch feared

that Arab Nationalists were susceptible to communism and that its leaders would turn to the

Soviet Union for diplomatic and military assistance.[3] The rising popularity of Nasser's anti-

Western messages and the success of his politics in the Middle East stoked anxiety in executive

agents, determined to establish presence and exert influence.

In an era of decolonization and rapid political transition in the Middle East, the US

executive branch perceived its ability to manipulate the international sea change for its own

geostrategic benefit.[4] In a 1952 report drafted to assess the socio-political conditions of the Arab

States, the National Security Council (NSC) highlighted features of the region which marked its

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[1] Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower's Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 2006), 106.

[2] Khalid Bin Sayeed, *Western Dominance and Political Islam: Challenge and Response* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 43.

[3] Osgood, *Total Cold War,* 126.

[4] Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 113.

importance to the US: "It lies at the land, sea and air crossroads of three continents, contains important sites for military bases, has natural defensive barriers in its mountains and deserts, and lies close to Soviet centers of industry, population, and oil resources" (the last of which Arab states possessed more than a third of all global reserves). The strategic resources of the Middle East were "so important to the over-all position of the free world" that it was "in the security interest of the United States to take whatever appropriate measures it [could]… to insure that these resources [would] be used for strengthening the free world."[5] In order to secure its economic and military interests, the US would have to gain the support of (at least some) Arab and Muslim leaders and peoples.

Accordingly, the US executive branch employed rhetorical strategies to influence Arab and Muslim opinions. The Truman Doctrine and the creation of the NSC dramatically expanded executive power, granting agencies limitless influence with limited accountability.[6] In 1950, the State Department advised utilizing these relatively new resources to instigate a propaganda campaign aimed at countering anti-Americanism amongst Arabs. "We must try to impress upon the Arab countries the fact that the dissipation of their energies in fanaticism against the United States… will lead to worse conditions which can only benefit their avowed enemies," emphasized Secretary of State Dean Acheson.[7] William A. Eddy, Special Assistant to the Secretary of State for Research and Intelligence, stressed the importance of ideological alliance-building, arguing that "from the point of view of psychological warfare alone, we need

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[5] U.S. National Security Council, Executive Secretary Report, "United States Objectives and Policies with Respect to the Arab States and Israel" (Annex to NSC 129), April 7, 1952, in *Documentation on Early Cold War U.S. Propaganda Activities in the Middle East*, ed. Joyce Battle, National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book no. 78, doc. 59 (2002), http://nsarchive2.gwu.edu//NSAEBB/NSAEBB78/docs.htm.

[6] Frances Stoner Saunders, *The Cultural Cold War: The CIA and the World of Arts and Letters* (New York: The New Press, 1999), 33.

[7] U.S. Department of State, Airgram from Secretary Dean Acheson to Certain Diplomatic and Consular Offices, May 1, 1950, in *Early Cold War U.S. Propaganda*, doc. 3.

desperately some common ground to which we welcome the Muslims and the Arabs as respected and valued friends."[8] The US would have to forge identifications between itself and the peoples and governments of the Middle East.

Following in the footsteps of its imperial predecessors, the US mobilized knowledge in the service of power, or rhetoric in the service of policy. Just as Great Britain and France had mobilized Orientalist discourses to legitimate their colonial domination over "the Orient," the US constructed images of "the Arab," "the Muslim," and "the Middle East" that would complement its ambitions in a post-colonial context.[9] However, the US departed from traditional colonial powers who treated the region and its peoples as monolithic. Matthew F. Jacobs elucidates how Orientalism's reliance on foundational texts and doctrines of early Islam to explain contemporary circumstances limited the framework under which the US could effectively operate.[10] In order to manipulate political circumstances in a post-colonial context, the US would need to take advantage of *divisions* within the peoples of the region once homogenized as "the Orient." This chapter specifically analyzes the US executive branch's framing of Muslims in the Middle East, arguing that: in the early Cold War period, as the US rapidly expanded its role in the region, the executive branch adopted a geostrategic approach to its discursive imaginations of Islam and Islamism.

This chapter is divided into three sections, analyzing three interrelated rhetorical strategies employed by the US executive branch to accomplish and secure its foreign policy objectives. Section 3.1 interrogates how the executive branch created a network of specialists,

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[8] U.S. Consulate General William A. Eddy, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia Letter to Miss Dorothy Thompson, June 7, 1951, in *Early Cold War U.S. Propaganda*, doc. 26.

[9] Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, [1979] 2004)*,* 285.

[10] Matthew F. Jacobs, *Imagining the Middle East: The Building of an American Foreign Policy, 1918 – 1967* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 65.

who could inform and guide policymakers in their geopolitical exchanges with Muslims and Islamists. Section 3.2 shows how these early Cold Warriors promoted Islam as an ideological and political counterweight to communism and the Soviet Union. Section 3.3 delves into executive agents' framing of Islamism as incompatible with Nasser's vision of Arab Nationalism. Taken together, these studies demonstrate that even while holding onto some of the tropes or stereotypes about Islam that belonged to the era of colonialism, the US departed from its Orientalist predecessors in its conceptualization of Islam as an ideology that could be unglued and then equipped to benefit the US empire.[11]

3.1   CREATING KNOWLEDGE ABOUT ISLAM

Occasions for discussing Islam in the United States have primarily been motivated by political crises creating exigencies for rhetorical and political action.[12] As the US government's "needs" proliferated in a post-World War II (WWII) environment, the lack of knowledge about the peoples, cultures, and governments of the Middle East became a policy problem.[13] This section explores the US executive branch's attempt to meet the demand for expertise via generation of a supply of specialists who could inform and guide policymakers in their encounters with the Middle East, and particularly in their exchanges with Muslims and Islamists. Section 3.1.1 conducts a thorough analysis of the unsupplied demand for expertise, brought about by US

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[11] The "era of colonialism" was an era in which colonialism was the global norm. It is commonly understood to have ended after World Wars I and II. This is not to say that colonialism ended; colonialism continues today, but we are in an era of post-colonialism.

[12] Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World* (New York: Vintage Books, [1981] 1997), 16.

[13] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 23.

policymakers' perception of newly emergent "needs" in the Middle East.[14] Section 3.1.2

introduces the network of government, media, and academic specialists who supplied the US

with adequate information to move forward with its objectives. Section 3.1.3 takes the 1953

Colloquium on Islamic Culture, hosted by Princeton University and the Library of Congress, and

covertly funded by executive agencies, as a case study in the operations of this network and its

relationship to Islam.

3.1.1   Unsupplied Demand

When President Franklin Delano Roosevelt established a relationship with Saudi Arabia to gain

access to its vast oil resources in 1945, so began US political and military engagement with the

Middle East.[15] As the State Department reiterated in its proceedings from an influential

conference of Middle East Chiefs of Mission under Truman in 1951: "oil is the most important

single factor in the United States with relation to the area. Economic and political stability in the

area is dependent upon realistic policies with respect to oil."[16] The US executive branch had

begun to concern itself with stabilizing the economic and political conditions of the Middle East,

in large part because its main ally, Great Britain, had to surrender many of its colonial powers

after World Wars I and II. Although Great Britain held onto some control of its former colonies

through the League of Nations mandate system and then through the United Nations and a sheer

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[14] The word "needs" is in quotation marks because what the US perceived as "needs" were only such because of the desires policymakers had and the objectives they chose in defining and expanding the global position of the US.

[15] Robert Dreyfuss, *Devil's Game: How the United States Helped Unleash Fundamentalist Islam* (New York: Holt Paperbacks, 2005), 7; Deepa Kumar, "The Right Kind of 'Islam,'" *Journalism Studies* (2015), 5.

[16] U.S. Department of State Report, "Conference of Middle East Chiefs of Mission (Istanbul, February 14-21, 1951): Agreed Conclusions and Recommendations," February 21, 1951, in *Early Cold War U.S. Propaganda*, doc. 20. The Middle East Chiefs of Mission included: Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern, South Asian and African Affairs (chair); Director of the Office of Greek, Turkish, and Iranian Affairs; Director of the Office of Near Eastern Affairs; Secretary of the Air Force; Commander-in-Chief of the US naval Forces in the Eastern Atlantic and Mediterranean; Ambassadors of Greece, Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Israel; and several others.

continuation of economic and military presence, the US would have to complement and reinforce British strategy in order to protect the "free world" and its resources from falling into the hands of communists or Arab Nationalists.[17]

Executive agents believed military and cultural presence in the Middle East was essential not only for the security of Western interests, but also for the peoples of the Middle East themselves. At least one trope of European colonial discourse that US policymakers mimicked was that of the (post-)colonies *in need* of Western guardianship and intervention. This trope is exemplified in President Eisenhower's positing of the rhetorical question: since Arabs "cannot understand our ideas of freedom and dignity… how can we expect them to run successfully a free government?"[18] Since change would never come from within the (post-)colonies, it was the burden of the West (the "white man's burden") to civilize, modernize, and democratize the Middle East.[19] This logic is echoed by the NSC when it reported, "an essential condition to restoring stability in the Arab states… is a clarification and a positive demonstration of United States-United Kingdom *responsibilities* for the area."[20] Despite global hostility towards colonialism, exceptionalism still appeared to be the order for the day.

But while the US followed tradition in accepting its paternal role, the scope of its mission was defined in novel ways. Borrowing concepts from Anders Stephanson, Jacobs clarifies the American "impulse to transform" the post-colonial Middle East as the product of two interacting visions of its global project: "The *sacred* concept was the belief that the United States was a special place 'providentially selected for divine purposes.' The *secular* concept, meanwhile,

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[17] U.S. Department of State, "Chiefs of Mission."

[18] Kumar, *Islamophobia*, 55.

[19] Kumar, *Islamophobia*, 55-57.

[20] U.S. Department of State, "Chiefs of Mission." Emphasis mine.

drew from the notion that the United States was an experiment in republican virtue, liberty, and

orderly progress that served as an 'exhibition of a new world order' that may benefit 'humankind

as a whole.'"[21] Taken together, the sacred and secular concepts painted a picture of the United

States as the natural and inevitable leader of the globe. The federal government understood its

expanding role in the Middle East (and particularly its support for the creation of Israel) as a

fulfillment of the biblical prophecy of a new Jerusalem emerging to redeem the old one; at the

same time, government officials were confident that only the US possessed both the military

might and political will to bring peace and stability to the post-WWII geopolitical environment.[22]

In order to effectively complete the sacred and secular missions with which they had been

burdened, the US executive branch would face a primary intelligence obstacle: their lack of

expertise with regards to the peoples and governments of the Middle East.[23] Said explains how

government and academic interest around Islam in the US grew explicitly out of the desire to

shape the internal politics of the Middle East to suit early Cold War (and imperial) objectives.[24]

The State Department's 1952 "Working Group on Special Materials for Arab and Other Muslim

Countries" couldn't have more accurately summarized the executive's attitude when it

proclaimed "we will never have enough information on the Arabs."[25] For strategic reasons, the

US executive branch would have to gather intelligence beyond the scope of what was provided

by traditional Orientalism.[26] While American experts of the early Cold War period frequently

drew upon Orientalist frameworks and often invoked the trope of Islam as unchanging and

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[21] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 7. Emphasis mine.

[22] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 7.

[23] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 23.

[24] Said, *Covering Islam*, 27.

[25] U.S. Department of State, Transcript of Proceedings: "Working Group on Special Materials for Arab and other Moslem Countries," April 2, 1952, in *Early Cold War U.S. Propaganda*, doc. 58.

[26] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 40.

rooted in its foundational texts, they contrarily emphasized the dramatic potential for externally-driven change in the Middle East.[27] The image of an unchanging Middle East, although sometimes useful, was not compatible with the overarching goal of bringing the region out of traditionalism and into modernity.[28]

Said pointedly remarks: *interest derives from need*, and in particular the Western interest in the peoples of the (post-)colonies derives from a perceived need to establish and maintain power and control.[29] As new "strategic objectives" and "problems" arose in the American quest to spread its influence, the president and his officers were not about to sit and wait for experts in the modern Middle East to emerge by their own right. In order to move forward with establishing reliable alliances and securing military contracts, they would have to *create* a base of knowledge to justify and guide imperial mingling via intelligence gathering.[30] The Department of the Army circulated a paper in 1955 that typified interest-for-need reasoning with its justification of funding the study of religion, and in particular Islam: "If we can discover what men really believe, and how firmly they believe it, their behavior under given circumstances will become in some degree predictable."[31] To aid in its game of predictions, the Army called for the creation of training bases at established academic centers for Middle Eastern studies, and at think tanks with connections to government and universities.[32] Section 3.1.2 will uncover how the Army's (and other executive agencies') wish for an advanced network of expertise came to fruition throughout the early Cold War era.

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[27] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 77.

[28] Kumar, *Islamophobia,* 38-39.

[29] Said, *Covering Islam*, 139.

[30] Dreyfuss, *Devil's Game,* 11. See also: Zachary Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 244-246.

[31] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 56.

[32] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 57.

3.1.2 The Network

Beginning in the midst of US involvement in WWII, and dramatically intensifying during the

Truman and Eisenhower administrations, a new type of Middle East specialist was emerging in

the United States: one whose focus was solely on *contemporary* international politics. The

intelligence, planning, and language-training institutions established by the executive branch at

this time represent some of the first organized programs that US foreign policymakers could turn

to for information about Arabs and Muslims of the Middle East.[33] What Robert Dreyfuss terms a

"military-intellectual complex of Middle East studies" had become fully functional by the 1950s,

"producing" specialists who were "called upon by policy makers for advice in grappling with the

region's complexities."[34] The military-intellectual complex consisted (and continues to consist)

of government, academic, and commercial agents, who embark on unilateral or joint efforts. This

section reviews key agents in each of these spheres during the early Cold War era.

First and foremost, the government took matters into its own hands by founding research

and intelligence agencies. When Congress passed Truman's National Security Act of 1947, it

birthed the National Security Council, an agency intended "to advise the President with respect

to the integration of domestic, foreign, and military policies relating to national security," and

under it the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), tasked with "coordinating the intelligence

activities of the several Government departments and agencies in the interest of national

security."[35] In addition, the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), Department of State (DOS), and

War Department developed research or intelligence arms of their own.[36] As well as producing

[33] Jacobs, *Imaginingt,* 39.

[34] Dreyfuss, *Devil's Game*, 10.

[35] U.S. Congress, *National Security Act of 1947*, Public Law 253, 80th Cong., 1st Sess., July 26, 1947.

[36] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 39.

research for its own consumption, the executive branch dedicated many efforts towards

disseminating pro-Western propaganda in the Middle East.[37] Truman created a Psychological

Strategy Board in 1951 to unify planning for psychological warfare, replaced in 1953 by

Eisenhower with the Operations Coordinating Board (OCB).[38] The United States Information

Agency (USIA) served as the official propaganda arm of the government, working mainly from

US embassies and consulates to manipulate indigenous media and intervene in local politics.[39]

So as to not limit their access to internal sources of information, the US executive

branch invested in building relationships with academic departments and media outlets. Jacobs

defines the emergence of an "informal transnational network of analysts, commentators, experts,

observers, and specialists… concerned with interpreting the region for American audiences."[40]

Working in an environment where *useful* knowledge about the Middle East was in high demand,

academics and journalists were met with rewards for its manufacture.[41] So while the network

was not formally centralized (by the government or any other agent), neither was its variety

unrestrained.[42] Invoking a realistic example, Said demonstrates the market-driven nature of

independent scholarship:

> If someone at Princeton happened to be studying contemporary Afghan religious
>
> schools, it would be obvious… that such a study *could* have "policy
>
> implications," and whether or not the scholar wanted it he or she would be drawn
>
> into the network of government, corporate, and foreign policy associations;

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[37] Osgood, *Total Cold War,* 149.

[38] Osgood, *Total Cold War,* 43.

[39] Osgood, *Total Cold War,* 3 & 104.

[40] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 6.

[41] Said, *Covering Islam,* 19.

[42] Said, *Covering Islam,* 48.

funding would be affected, the kind of people met would also be affected, and in

general, certain rewards and types of interactions would be offered.[43]

Academics – and to an even higher degree agents of the news media – were motivated by profit,

reputation, and livelihood, and so the majority conformed to certain ideological norms in an

effort to reach an audience with predetermined assumptions about key political and geopolitical

realities (such as the desirability of Cold War power plays).[44]

And so arose a slew of media pundits and "professor-consultants," drawn together by

ideologically- and/or monetarily- driven aspirations to advance the US Cold War agenda, as they

participated in creating the field of modern Middle East (area) studies.[45] While many of these

individuals were only indirectly influenced by US government objectives, many actually

developed and maintained close working relationships with the government. Independent think

tanks such as the Council on Foreign Relations brought together well-connected government

officials, academics, journalists, and businesses interested in US foreign relations, generating

studies and reports that would be distributed to members of the US Federal Government.[46]

Executive agents also established close relationships with departments at universities like

Princeton, Harvard and Yale, among others.[47] Universities facilitated US empire in many ways,

but to name a few: they worked with the Army to coordinate lessons for its Specialized Training

Program; they increased the number of contemporary Middle East and Arabic language classes

offered, generating experts that could translate, negotiate, and even spy; and they cooperated

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[43] Said, *Covering Islam,* 19.

[44] Said, *Covering Islam,* 49.

[45] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 6.

[46] Jacobs, *Imagining*, 47.

[47] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 40.

with the DOS and the CIA to sponsor academic research and conferences, such as the 1953

Colloquium on Islamic Culture.[48]

3.1.3   The Colloquium

A State Department briefing anticipated that the September 1953 "Colloquium on Islamic

Culture in its Relation to the Contemporary World," co-sponsored by the Library of Congress

and Princeton University, would "bring to the United States the largest number of outstanding

intellectual leaders of the Islamic world that have ever been here at the same time."[49] Although

the colloquium occurred only months into Eisenhower's first term, executive agents had been

orchestrating the conference since 1952 (the last year of Truman's presidency).[50] Promoted and

financed by the International Information Administration (IIA), a DOS subsidiary, the

colloquium was theorized as an opportunity to "bring together persons exerting great influence in

formulating Moslem opinion in fields such as education, science, law, and philosophy *and*

inevitably, therefore, on politics."[51] Among the attendees were "intellectual leaders from thirteen

Muslim countries" and "an equal number of American scholars."[52] While the "impression

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[48] Jacobs, *Imagining,,* 44.

[49] U.S. Department of State, Memorandum from G. Huntington Damon to Fred L. Hadsel, "Briefing Paper for Secretary – Islamic Colloquium," April 30, 1953, in *Early Cold War U.S. Propaganda*, doc. 93.

[50] U.S. Department of State, Princeton University Letter from Bayard Dodge to Richard H. Sanger, on behalf of the Colloquium on Islamic Culture (Includes Enclosure with Minutes from a May 4, 1953 Meeting), May 8, 1953, in *Early Cold War U.S. Propaganda*, doc. 94. A contract between the Department of State and Princeton University was signed on September 2, 1952, granting the University $25,000 to organize and administrate the Colloquium.

[51] U.S. Department of State, Memorandum from Wilson S. Compton to David K.E. Bruce, "Colloquium on Islamic Culture to be held in September, 1953, under the Joint Sponsorship of the Library of Congress and Princeton University" (Includes Enclosure with "Summary of Salient Facts"), January 13, 1953, in *Early Cold War U.S. Propaganda*, doc. 89.

[52] U.S. Department of State, "Briefing… Colloquium."

desired" by the State Department was for the conference to appear "[o]n the surface" as "an exercise in pure learning," the agency goes on to reveal its tactical and political intentions.[53]

The DOS noted that the IIA promoted the conference along the lines of "further[ing] mutual understanding between Islamic peoples and the United States," because "this psychological approach can make an important contribution to United States objectives in the Muslim area at this time."[54] In other words, *appearing* to have genuine concern for Muslims of the Middle East was crucial to building the alliances needed to execute US foreign policy. "Among the various results expected from the colloquium," the DOS emphasized two: "stimulate[d] interest in and research within American educational circles," and more significantly "the impetus and direction that may be given to the Renaissance movement within Islam itself."[55] To accomplish the latter required modernizing the political orientations of Muslims in the Middle East, at least enough to influence the politics and geopolitics of the region. Along these lines, the IIA expressed hope "that Moslem intellectual leaders [would] themselves promote favorable reactions [to the colloquium] from indigenous publicity sources." The challenge for the US executive was "to gain favorable response among the Moslem peoples without arousing the various elements hostile to the West."[56] This was a delicate matter which would have to be managed by the DOS in coordination with its foreign embassies.[57]

One strategy for influencing political thought at the conference involved inviting Islamist leaders who would align themselves against communism.[58] For example, the executive

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[53] U.S. Department of State, "Briefing… Colloquium."
[54] U.S. Department of State, "Briefing… Colloquium."
[55] U.S. Department of State, "Colloquium."
[56] U.S. Department of State, "Colloquium."
[57] U.S. Department of State, "Colloquium."
[58] Dreyfuss, *Devil's Game*, 80.

branch was committed to including a representative from the Muslim Brotherhood, a fundamentalist Islamist party that originated in Saudi Arabia, but at the time of the conference had its strongest contingency in Egypt, where it opposed Nasser's secular nationalism. The State Department ensured the inclusion of Said Ramadan after receiving the following recommendation from the US Embassy in Cairo:

> Saeed RAMADHAN is considered to be among the most learned scholars of Islamic culture in Moslem Brotherhood… At present he is engaged as editor in chief of El Musliman, a monthly magazine now in its second year, which publishes articles on Islamic law and culture by scholars through the Muslim world… The Embassy believes that Ramadhan's scholarly attainments are sufficient to make him eligible to attend the Colloquium on Islamic Culture. His position with the Muslim Brotherhood makes it important that his desire for an invitation be considered carefully in light of the possible effects of offending this important body.[59]

This exchange draws attention to the executive branch's perception of its own political stakes in the colloquium: failure to include the right people or ideas could offset the ability for the government to secure pro-Western alliances. Executive agents sought to establish relations with the Muslim Brotherhood because of its cultural influence and its militant anti-communist outlook.[60] Not only did Ramadan attend the colloquium proper, he was amongst a number of colloquium attendees whom the IIA extended "leader grants" and invited to spend three months

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[59] U.S. Embassy in Iraq, Dispatch from Burton Y. Berry to the Department of State, "Anti-communist 'Brain Washing' Program to Be Instituted at Summer ROTC Camps for Students," May 26, 1953, in *Early Cold War U.S. Propaganda*, doc. 95.

[60] Dreyfuss, *Devil's Game,* 66.

on a diplomatic and educational tour throughout the United States, including a visit with

President Eisenhower at the White House.[61]

Conference proceedings were published in both Arabic and English.[62] Dr. Bayard

Dodge, professor emeritus at the American University of Beirut and Director of the Colloquium

on Islamic Culture, secured funding for printing the Arabic copies from Franklin Publications, a

nonprofit organization that promoted American values by translating and publishing US books in

Muslim-majority countries.[63] Princeton University Press published the proceedings in English,

comprising of the conference program, summaries of the introductory addresses, and a list of the

scholars who took part.[64] The program outlines several topics of conversation that forward an

agenda of politicizing and/or modernizing Islam and its affiliated cultures. Examples include:

"Ways of Giving the Muslim Youth an Interest in Historical Traditions," "Questions and

Remarks concerning Religious Education," "Social Reform in Communities of the Muslim

World," "Law and the Modernization of the Legal Systems in the Muslim Countries," and

"Ways of Meeting Modern Ideas in the Islamic Communities."[65] Amongst the scholars'

introductory addresses, there appears significant points of accord: that Islam is compatible with

modernity and Western notions of progress, including science and free market economics; that

mutual understanding and friendship between Islam and the West is possible and desirable; and

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[61] U.S. Department of State, "Briefing… Colloquium." See also: Dreyfuss, *Devil's Game,* 72-77.

[62] U.S. Department of State, "Briefing… Colloquium," 1953.

[63] U.S. Department of State, Princeton University Letter from Bayard Dodge to Richard H. Sanger, on behalf of the Colloquium on Islamic Culture, February 2, 1953, in *Early Cold War U.S. Propaganda*, doc. 90. For information about Franklin Publishing: Louise S. Robbins, "Publishing American Values: The Franklin Book Programs and Cold War Cultural Diplomacy," *Library Trends* 55, no. 3 (2007): 638-650.

[64] *Colloquium on Islamic Culture in its Relation to the Contemporary World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), 7.

[65] *Colloquium on Islamic Culture*, 10-13.

that Islam should take precedence over nationalism.[66] Consciously or unconsciously, these messages legitimized US early Cold War objectives in the Middle East.

The Colloquium on Islamic Culture provides an illuminating illustration of how a newly emergent, private-blurred-public network of specialists used rhetoric to advance and facilitate US interests in "the Muslim World." While much of this section accounted for executive intelligence gathering vis-à-vis the Middle East as a geostrategic region, it did so in order to contextualize American motives for (re)framing Islam in the first place. Confirming one of Said's primary theses that interest derives from need, this section has employed many primary executive documents to show how the creation of knowledge about Islam in the US was inspired by a desire to transform the political dynamics of the Middle East in ways that would benefit the US economic and foreign policy agenda. Implicit in the executive branch's demand for intelligence about the Middle East and Islam was a predetermination of desired outcomes, namely victory in the Cold War via the defeat of communist and nationalist forces in the region. As such, the network was bound to frame Islam in manners which would (hopefully) accelerate those outcomes. The next two sections will consider how US executive agencies utilized particular images of Islam in their fights against communism and Arab Nationalism in the Middle East.

3.2   MOBILIZING ISLAM AGAINST COMMUNISM

While the bipolar conflict that would come to be known as the Cold War began brewing as President Franklin Delano Roosevelt sat in office, it was drastically intensified and officiated by Harry S. Truman. In an unprecedented fashion, Truman strengthened the power of the executive

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[66] These points are based upon my own reading and assessment of the *Colloquium on Islamic Culture* proceedings.

branch in order to accomplish his primary goal: the containment of communism and Soviet

power on a *global* scale.[67] In 1947 he introduced his doctrine to a joint session of Congress,

proclaiming "it must be the policy of the United States to support free peoples who are resisting

attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures."[68] For the first time in

history, the US executive branch attempted to project power into every corner of the world.

Lamont Colucci describes the Truman Doctrine as "the most significant shift and amplification

of national security strategy since Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln set the stage for the

entire trajectory of American grand strategy."[69] In deciding to directly confront the rising power

of the Soviet Union (USSR) through any willing and available global proxies, Truman

established US leadership of the "free world" and guided strategy for presidents throughout the

duration of the Cold War.[70]

To execute such a grand strategy, Truman adopted a maximalist approach that

confronted the communist threat on multiple fronts: economic, military, diplomatic, and

psychological. Under the Truman Doctrine, the US gave economic assistance to over 100

countries, and established mutual defense pacts with more than one quarter of them. When the

Marshall Plan (which reinforced the Truman Doctrine by mandating US support for free states

against communism) was passed in 1948, some of its first aid recipients were Turkey and

Greece, confirming the Middle East as a key battleground in the struggle against communism.[71]

By the late 1940s or early 1950s, most specialists in the aforementioned network had turned their

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[67] Lamont Colucci, *The National Security Doctrines of the American Presidency: How They Shape Our Present and Future* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2012), 310.

[68] U.S. President Harry S. Truman, "Truman Doctrine: Address before Joint Session of Congress," March 12, 1947, cited in Colucci, *Doctrines,* 313.

[69] Colucci, *Doctrines,* 309-311.

[70] Colucci, *Doctrines,* 313.

[71] Colucci, *Doctrines,* 312-314. At this time, Greece was considered part of the Near East by US intelligence analysts.

attention to analyzing which paths the US could pursue to prevent the spread of Soviet and communist influence.[72] Large percentages of practicing Muslims in the Middle East, combined with an American "need" for strong allies (or proxies) in that region inspired the administration to consider how Islam and Muslims could be mobilized, ideologically and politically, against the USSR. This section explores three discursive approaches toward such an end, adopted by the US executive branch: to demonstrate conflicts between communism and Islam, to establish identifications with Islam on behalf of the United States, and to promote Saudi Arabia as a regional leader and religious role model.

3.2.1   Islam versus Communism

Because the Middle East was undergoing drastic changes in an era of decolonization, its political and intellectual leaders were primarily concerned with achieving independence and early stages of nation-building; they were less interested, and sometimes even unwilling to engage, in superpower rivalries.[73] In 1952, a report published by the NSC bluntly acknowledged "the reluctance of the Arab States to identify their interests with those of the United States" and outlined three factors contributing to such a state: "a growing tendency in the area to believe that the United States gives unqualified support to the U.K.," "communist propaganda to the effect that U.S.… activities in these countries indicate an ambition to dominate and exploit the area," and "a belief… that there is little danger of Soviet aggression."[74] To tackle this discrepancy in priorities, the executive branch would have to invest in psychological warfare designed to

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[72] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 158-159.

[73] Osgood, "Words and Deeds: Race, Colonialism, and Eisenhower's Propaganda War in the Third World," in *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War*, eds. Kathryn C. Statler and Andrew L. Johns (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 9.

[74] U.S. National Security Council, "Objectives… Arab States and Israel."

persuade key figures in the Middle East that the Cold War was one worth fighting.[75] Within the same week of the NSC report's publication, the State Department's "working group on special materials for Arab and other Moslem countries" concluded that effective propaganda campaigns in the Middle East would "have to try to make the Arabs aware of the Soviet danger."[76] Just as a base of knowledge had to be produced in the US, the government would have to discursively plant Cold War logic into the minds of Middle Eastern peoples.

In 1952 (the last year of Truman's presidency), the NSC suggested that: "Changes in [Arab] attitudes can be assisted by an intensified psychological effort designed to support the various political, economic, and military measures being undertaken by the United States in the area."[77] Eisenhower delivered such an intensification: under his "New Look" policy, American strategy shifted to rely even more heavily upon "soft" warfare strategies like overt and covert diplomacy and propaganda.[78] In just the first few days of his presidency, Eisenhower appointed a high-level committee to make recommendations for strengthening psychological warfare; this "Jackson Committee" (nick-named after its chairman and one of America's most influential covert strategists, C.D. Jackson) found that psychological warfare was *inseparable* from other aspects of US foreign policy.[79] The same year, Eisenhower established the United States Information Agency (USIA) to intervene in local politics, manipulate Third World indigenous media, and disseminate anti-communist propaganda.[80] USIA agents assembled libraries in countries where it wanted to manipulate attitudes, seeing to it that no books by pro-communist

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[75] Osgood, *Total Cold War,* 149.

[76] U.S. Department of State, "Working Group on Special Materials."

[77] U.S. National Security Council, "Objectives… Arab States and Israel."

[78] Colucci, *Doctrines,* 339-346. Part of Eisenhower's motivation for de-emphasizing hard power assistance was a fear of over-spending on the part of the US Federal Government.

[79] Osgood, "Words and Deeds," 5.

[80] Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 104.

writers were made available.[81] The USIA complemented the DOS in its professed mission to "convince" Middle Eastern leaders and publics of the "speciousness [of] Soviet 'friendship' and the fate of nations accepting it."[82]

Executive agencies attempted to present the Soviet Union as a threat to the practice of Islam, or any organized religion at that. Before Reagan would popularize the terminology of the "Evil Empire," Truman and Eisenhower had already discursively instituted a spiritual binary between the East and the West.[83] Frances Stonor Saunders argues, "with the religious imperative insinuating its way into every major Cold War policy plank, the whole edifice of American power in the 1950s seemed to rest on one fundamental, monist proposition: that the future would be decided 'between the two great camps of men – those who reject and those who worship God.'"[84] Truman emblemized this theme in his 1949 inaugural address, when he interpreted that "the United States and other like-minded nations find themselves directly opposed by a regime with contrary aims and a totally different concept of life."[85] Four years later, Eisenhower expanded upon this religious reasoning in his first inaugural address, prescribing that "we who are free must proclaim anew our faith" in the face of enemies who "know no god but force, no devotion but its use."[86] The president was determined to "constantly strengthen those spiritual

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[81] Saunders, *Cultural Cold War*, 194.

[82] U.S. Department of State, Telegram from Theodore C. Streibert and the U.S. Information Agency to U.S. Embassy in Iran, September 11, 1953, in *Early Cold War U.S. Propaganda*, doc. 107.

[83] Colucci, *Doctrines*, 328 & 337.

[84] Saunders, *Cultural Cold War,* 281.

[85] U.S. President Harry S. Truman, Inaugural Address, January 20, 1949, quoted in Colucci, *National Security Doctrines,* 325.

[86] U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Inaugural Address, January 20, 1953, quoted in Colucci, *National Security Doctrines,* 344.

weapons which forever will be our country's most powerful resource" in peace and at war, including at the battlefield of the Middle East.[87]

In August 1952 the Psychological Strategy Board introduced Directive 22 (PSB D-22), a "coordinated psychological operations" program for the Middle East.[88] Under Eisenhower, the PSB advanced a propaganda line with a strong emphasis on the "godlessness" and "anti-religious" nature of the USSR, advocating the deployment of every possible technique to "identify local communist elements as a tool of a foreign power."[89] In July of that year, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles circulated his "Information Plan for the Arab Area," which assured "the Communist attitude toward religion and the family [were] topics that [would] continue to be fully exploited in information output."[90] For example, the USIA designed a poster campaign in Iraq to highlight a "comparison of the state of religion in the United States [to the state of religion] in 'a Communist state.'"[91] Through diplomacy, USIA agents secured access to radio airwaves in order to broadcast anti-communist messages throughout the Middle East.[92] Another instance where Dulles' goal was realized was in the USIA's execution of "Project Al Azhar," which provided tuition to select students and staff at Al Azhar University in Cairo who would actively promote "Islam's rejection of Communism."[93] As Section 3.2.2 further demonstrates,

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[87] U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Flag Day Speech, June 14, 1954, quoted in Saunders, *Cultural Cold War,* 282.

[88] U.S. National Security Council, Memorandum from the Executive Secretary, "Status of United States Programs for National Security as of June 30, 1952," August 1, 1952, in DOS, *Office of the Historian,* https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1950-55Intel/d127.

[89] U.S. National Security Council, "Status of U.S. Programs for National Security as of June 30, 1953," quoted in Osgood, *Total War*, 133.

[90] U.S. Department of State, Airgram from Secretary of State John Foster Dulles to Certain American Diplomatic Posts, "Information Plan for the Arab Area," July 6, 1953, in *Early Cold War U.S. Propaganda*, doc. 99.

[91] U.S. Embassy in Iraq, Cable to the Department of State, "Anti-Communist Poster Material prepared by USIS Baghdad," March 10, 1951, in *Early Cold War U.S. Propaganda*, doc. 21.

[92] Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 134.

[93] James Vaughan, *The Failure of American and British Propaganda in the Arab Middle East, 1945-1957: Unconquerable Minds* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 124.

the US executive branch intended to promote an interpretation of Islam that was mutually exclusive with its interpretation of communism.

3.2.2   Islam + America

When Truman and Eisenhower framed the Cold War struggle against communism in religious terms, they positioned "men of faith" as natural allies to the "free world."[94] US propagandists stressed America's own religious values in juxtaposition to the atheistic Soviet Union, aspiring to draw Muslim majorities of the Middle East into the American camp.[95] In 1951, the DOS outlined regional objectives to "promote on the basis of the common elements in our faiths, mutual respect and understanding with all peoples who cherish like ethical and spiritual values," and to "enlist the cooperation of all peoples in the defense of moral and spiritual freedom against the threat of Communist totalitarianism."[96] In this way, the US executive branch attempted to identify with Muslims of the Middle East for its geostrategic benefit. This intention was made clear by the NSC, when it reported in 1952: "The three monotheistic religions in the area have in common a repugnance to the atheism of communist doctrine and this factor could become an important asset in promoting Western objectives in the area."[97] Eisenhower acknowledged his own utilization of this asset, when he assured that he "never failed in any communication with Arab leaders, oral or written, to stress the importance of the spiritual factor in our relationship."[98]

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[94] Colucci, *Doctrines,* 328.

[95] Dreyfuss, *Devil's Game*, 81; Kumar, *Islamophobia,* 65-66.

[96] U.S. Department of State, "Information Program Guidance Special Series: Moral and Religious Factors in the USIE Program," June 22, 1951, quoted in Vaughan, *Failure of American and British Propaganda,* 120.

[97] U.S. National Security Council, "Objectives… Arab States and Israel."

[98] U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, White House Letter from President to Edward L.R. Elson, July 31, 1958, in *Early Cold War U.S. Propaganda*, doc. 133.

While a moral alliance was framed as natural and seemingly inevitable, the executive branch sought to quicken its advent.[99]

To the task of scouting and securing such an alliance, the DOS appointed William A. Eddy, acting as the United States Consulate General. Having served as the first US minister in Saudi Arabia (from 1944 to 1946), having worked as an undercover CIA agent, and remaining a correspondent in some fashion for the government until his death in 1962, Eddy was one of the most influential US informants on Middle Eastern affairs.[100] In a 1951 letter to American journalist and foreign correspondent, Dorothy Thompson, Eddy "referred to the possible strategy of the Christian democratic West joining with the Muslim world in a common moral front against communism." He included in the letter "some extracts from [his] correspondence [with] others who showed a genuine interest in this possibility, the value of which would be not only to strengthen support for the democratic West in the Muslim world, but also to constitute a recognition by the West of the moral strength and historical significance of Islam." Eddy presented details of his securing support from the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem, the Secretary General of the Arab League, and the King of Saudi Arabia. He emphasized the importance of recognizing Islam's strength and significance because historically, "there have been very few signs that the Western powers place any value upon Muslims."[101] Discursive identifications would serve as a necessary corrective to the stigma surrounding Western, and particularly US, interference in the region.

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[99] Kumar, *Islamophobia*, 66.

[100] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 36-37.

[101] Eddy, Letter to Thompson.

In addition to pursuing a moral alliance, the US executive branch sought to formulate a "cultural link" between Arabs and Americans.[102] Propaganda distributed in the Middle East illustrated bonds of friendship between Arabs and Westerners, and called attention to the achievements of Arab-Americans.[103] US executive agencies, in coordination with private industries, aimed to develop artistic and sporting relations with the Middle East.[104] For example, the CIA, USIA, and DOS prepared "a spectacular U.S. cinerama exhibit" for the 1954 Damascus Fair, "to compete for prestige with an exhibit expected to be set up by Russia."[105] American participation in film festivals abroad was regulated by the Motion Picture Service, which accepted government funding and worked through 135 US Information Service posts across 87 countries. The Motion Picture Service advised the Operations Coordinating Board on films suitable for international distribution, and produced films that articulated US objectives.[106] American psychological strategists focused on winning the hearts and minds of the elite, influential segments of Middle Eastern societies.[107]

In 1954 the NSC issued Directive 5428, its policy statement for the region which focused on strengthening the *political positions* of those elites that offered "the best prospect of orderly progress towards free world objectives."[108] Caught in a tide of decolonization, the executive branch reasoned that it ought to take initiative to "guide the revolutionary and

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[102] Osgood, *Total Cold War,* 130. Osgood quotes the USIA as it expressed an objective to form a "cultural link between the U.S. and the influential leaders of the new states."

[103] Vaughan, *Failure,* 80-81.

[104] Vaughan, *Failure,* 82.

[105] U.S. Department of State, "Rapp to Heads of all Middle East Missions," February 1, 1951, quoted in Vaughan, *Failure,* 85.

[106] Saunders, *Cultural Cold War*, 289.

[107] Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 115.

[108] U.S. National Security Council, "United States Objectives and Policies with Respect to the Near East," Report 5428, July 23, 1954, in *Early Cold War U.S. Propaganda*, doc. 127.

nationalistic pressures throughout the area into orderly channels not antagonistic to the West."[109]

Because the revolutionary and anti-imperialist messages of Soviet Communism had the potential to appeal to states newly escaping Europe's colonial control, US officials were concerned that some of their leaders would be tempted to adopt neutralist or pro-Soviet positions.[110] Although intelligence agents wanted to identify the US with anti-imperialism, they were hesitant to take propaganda campaigns too far in the direction of alienating Great Britain, America's primary ally both regionally and globally. Recognizing the inevitability of its association with colonial powers, psychological warriors adopted three approaches. First, they hoped that the spiritual and cultural bridges they built would prevail over criticism. Second, they relied upon the *tu quoque* fallacy that US imperialism should be absolved because the USSR was itself imperialist.[111] And finally, the executive branch appealed to realist doctrine in order to convince leaders that the US was their most geostrategic ally.

PSB D-22 advised that US programs should be designed to convince government officials, military officers, and other leadership groups that their security needs would best be met through cooperation with the West.[112] In an April 1955 OCB progress report on NSC 5428, the Executive Secretary of the NSC reported positively, "Efforts to encourage the development of closer ties between Turkey and certain Arab states, particularly Iraq, culminated in the conclusion of a defense pact between Turkey and Iraq on February 24, 1955."[113] This was in reference to the Baghdad Pact, a defensive treaty organization promoting shared political,

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[109] U.S. National Security Council, "Objectives… Near East."

[110] Osgood, "Words and Deeds," 3-4.

[111] Osgood, *Total Cold War,* 125.

[112] Osgood, *Total Cold War,* 133.

[113] U.S. National Security Council, Memorandum from the Executive Secretary, "Progress Report on NSC 5428 (Near East)," May 12, 1954, in *Freedom of Information Act Electronic Reading Room,* https://www.cia.gov/library/readingroom/docs/CIA-RDP80R01731R003000120009-1.pdf.

military, and economic goals amongst its member nations: Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Pakistan, and Great Britain.[114] While the Eisenhower administration's burgeoning defense relationship with Israel prevented it from formally signing onto the Baghdad Pact, it informally recognized that such an alliance complemented its "Northern Tier" strategy. Regarding the line of countries that formed a border between the north of the Middle East and the south of the Soviet Union, NSC 5428 had specified that assuring the security of the "Northern Tier" would "substantially increase the ability of the area to resist Soviet attempts at subversion," and so it pursued tacit security alliances with these nations.[115]

In its mission to gain and/or maintain Muslim allies in the Cold War, the US executive branch found common ground between America and Islam in three arenas: religion, culture, and national security. In doing so, it highlighted positive and liberal-leaning tenets and characteristics of Islam and Muslim peoples. Combined with its strategy to differentiate true Islam from communism, the government's rhetorical acts of identifying with Islam promulgated a conception of Islam which excluded any Muslim allies of the Soviet Union from the confines of proper practice. Within this newly constructed framework for imagining Islam, "good Muslims" were those that interpreted the faith in a manner consistent with the (geo)political ideologies of the "Free World," whereas "bad Muslims" were those that practiced the religion in way that posed obstacles to the US agenda in the early Cold War. The last part of this section explores how the US executive branch sought to bolster the most powerful representative of the "good Muslims," Saudi Arabia, as a means of counteracting the growing strength of "bad Muslims" in the Middle East.

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[114] "The Baghdad Pact (1955) and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO)," *U.S. Department of State Archive*, http://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/lw/98683.htm, accessed June 2017.

[115] U.S. National Security Council, "Objectives… Near East."

3.2.3   A Muslim Role Model

The special relationship between Saudis and Americans began at the onset of the 1930s with the al Saud family consolidating power in the Arabian Peninsula and the concurrent discovery there of oil.[116] Unlike Great Britain, who attempted to negotiate oil by means of direct government contracts, the US opted for a free market approach, utilizing diplomacy to secure access for private investment.[117] The first concession statement was granted by King Abdul ibn Saud to Standard Oil of California in 1933, the same year the US government established diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia via a friendship and trade treaty.[118] The Saudi-US oil partnership played a crucial role in legitimating the political leadership of the Saudi royal family and gaining Saudi Arabia international acceptance as an independent nation.[119] From the beginning, the basic formula that sustained the relationship was oil-for-security: the US could explore and exploit Saudi crude, maintaining functional control over Saudi energy and foreign policy, in exchange for US diplomatic support and military protection of the family's reign.[120] The power of the Saudi state was strengthened during the Roosevelt years, when the State Department offered a hefty aid package to the Saudis, which included long-term financing of the government and its oil infrastructure, construction of an airfield, and development of its broadcast media.[121] By

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[116] Nathan J. Citino, *From Arab Nationalism to OPEC: Eisenhower, King Sa'ūd, and the Making of U.S.-Saudi Relations* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 1.

[117] Anthony Cave Brown, *Oil, God, and Gold: The Story of Aramco and the Saudi Kings* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999), 43.

[118] Gilbert Achar, *The Clash of Barbarisms: The Making of the New World Disorder*, second edition, translated by Peter Drucker (New York: Paradigm, 1999), 44.

[119] Kumar, "Right Kind," 5.

[120] As`ad AbuKhalil, *The Battle for Saudi Arabia: Royalty, Fundamentalism, and Global Power* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2004), 185.

[121] Brown, *Oil, God, and Gold*, 120.

1945, the US had succeeded in persuading Saudi Arabia to deal almost exclusively with American oil companies.[122]

While the House of Saud was a valuable ally before, it became even more so during the Cold War. Dreyfuss describes Saudi Arabia as "the entry point and anchor for the American presence in the region."[123] Not only was the protection and preservation of Saudi oil considered essential to ensure the economic survival of the Western world (and way of life), but the assurance of Saudi support for American objectives in the region gave the US a geopolitical advantage.[124] In exchange for almost unfettered American support, the Saudi family never expressed any serious interest in resisting US hegemony in the Middle East.[125] In a 1951 memo, Secretary of State Dean Acheson labeled the Saudi King as "the best friend the United States has in the Middle East," reporting directly to President Truman that "he frequently refers to you as 'my brother.'"[126] When the Eisenhower Doctrine promised substantial military and economic aid to countries engaged in a fight against communism, Saudi Arabia's proactive acceptance of such terms would "seal the fate of Saudi Arabia as a lynchpin of U.S. strategic posture in the Middle East and beyond," according to As'ad AbuKhalil.[127] To demonstrate his commitment to the Cold War, the King requested that his *ulama* (the Kingdom's highest ruling religious body) issue a *fatwa* (religious decree), interpreting Islamic doctrine to prohibit aid from the communist bloc. Needless to say, the *ulama* did not disappoint.[128]

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[122] Brown, *Oil, God, and Gold*, 115.

[123] Dreyfuss, *Devil's Game,* 67.

[124] Achar, *Clash*, 32.

[125] Sayeed, *Western Dominance,* 29.

[126] U.S. Department of State, Memorandum from Secretary Dean Acheson to President Eisenhower, "Urgent Request to You from King Ibn Saud for the Services of General Graham," August 9, 1951, in *Early Cold War U.S. Propaganda*, doc. 28.

[127] AbuKhalil, *Battle*, 188.

[128] Citino, *Arab Nationalism*, 97.

Religion has always been an important element in the US-Saudi relationship. Although the US legal system is not formally bound to religious text, as in Saudi Arabia, fundamentalist Christian values have always been represented and embodied more here than in any other Western nation.[129] And while the US executive branch had the chance to encourage the secularization of Saudi Arabia in its early stages of state formation, it chose instead to embolden a fundamentalist Islamic government: a Wahhabi theocracy.[130] Intelligence and information posts in the Middle East labored to promote the regional prestige of King Saud, on the basis of his guardianship of Islam's two holiest cities: Mecca and Medina.[131] This effort was part of "Operation Omega," a sustained mission to detach Saudi Arabia from Egypt's Nasser and bolster the regional position of Saudi Arabia.[132] Eisenhower documented this strategy in a 1956 diary entry: "the Saudi Arabians are considered to be the most deeply religious of all peoples. Consequently the King could be built up, possibly as a spiritual leader… to urge his right to political leadership."[133] Some officials even began referring to the King as the "Islamic Pope."[134] The US executive branch estimated that Islamism in Saudi Arabia was a productive regional (counter-) force.

US agents abetted Islamic Fundamentalism because they thought it likely to attract the Arab and Muslim masses on the one hand, and an important segment of the Arab elite on the other.[135] The Muslim Brotherhood was having some success attracting young Arab professionals

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[129] Achar, *Clash,* 32.

[130] John O. Voll, "The Impact of the Wahhabi Tradition," in *Religion and Politics in Saudi Arabia: Wahhabism and the State*, eds. Mohammed Ayoob and Hasan Kosebalaban (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2009), 162.

[131] Osgood, *Total Cold War,* 136.

[132] Ray Takeyh, *The Origins of the Eisenhower Doctrine: The US, Britain and Nasser's Egypt, 1953-57* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000)*,* 112.

[133] Takeyh, *Origins,* 113.

[134] Rachel Bronson, *Thicker Than Oil: America's Uneasy Partnership with Saudi Arabia* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 74.

[135] Dreyfuss, *Devil's Game,* 81.

and university students in Egypt; a similar movement with the backing of the Saudi Royal family seemed a promising stage from whence the US could counteract the ever-menacing threat of Soviet Communism as well as the mounting challenge posed by Nasser's Arab Nationalism.[136] In 1952 a DOS agent reported of a personal conversation with Crown Prince Saud, in which the prince mentioned plans "to spark plug a pan-Islamic movement."[137] The agent's response? "I told him that we would welcome such a movement under his leadership because we could be sure that it would be friendly and wisely… designed to advance the welfare of both the Muslim and Western nations."[138] Pan-Islamic ideology and organization complemented the American strategy to form an "Islamic Bloc" stretching from North Africa to Pakistan.[139] In 1957, the USIA working committee on Islamic Organizations forewarned of the consequences of abandoning the mission to promote Islamic unity: "unless a reconciliation is achieved between Islamic principles and current social and political trends, the spiritual values of Islam will be lost and the swing towards materialism will be hastened."[140] This logic justified the funding of a Saudi project to reconstruct the Hejaz Railway that would bring more pilgrims to the holy cities, as well as propaganda aimed at penetrating and unifying religious organizations.[141]

American sponsorship of Saudi Arabia's institutionalization of Wahhabi Islamism reveals the value US agents saw in proselytizing and politicizing monotheistic religion abroad. Both Truman and Eisenhower depicted the globe as a grand theater of conflict, endangered by

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[136] Dreyfuss, *Devil's Game,* 81.

[137] U.S. Department of State, Memorandum from the Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, "Conversation with Prince Saud," March 10, 1952, in *Early Cold War U.S. Propaganda*, doc. 55.

[138] U.S. Department of State, "Prince Saud."

[139] Dreyfuss, *Devil's Game,* 3.

[140] U.S. National Security Council, Report, "Working Committee on Islamic Organizations," January 1957, quoted in Citino, *Arab Nationalism to OPEC*, 126.

[141] Citino, *Arab Nationalism*, 126.

the demonic force of communism and increasingly in need of an American savoir and protector. While the Truman Doctrine aspired to project America's hard and soft power into every corner of the globe, executive agencies were limited by resource constraints and a tide of global resistance to colonial occupation. These circumstances required the US executive branch adopt rhetorical strategies to spread Western influence and combat communist ideologies abroad. Osgood notes "the Cold War was first and foremost a political war, a war of persuasion, a cultural war, and a propaganda war that would be won or lost on the plane of public opinion, rather than by bloodshed on the battlefield."[142] Through an interrogation of the branch's discursive attempts to detach Islam from communism, establish bonds between Muslims and Americans, and provide support for Saudi Arabia, this section has demonstrated that the Truman and Eisenhower administrations understood the significance of rhetoric in preventing the fall of any one of its post-colonial dominoes to the Soviet Union. The next section explores how the executive branch adapted its rhetorical strategies to confront a mounting regional force that refused to settle with the binary logic of the Cold War: Arab Nationalism.

3.3   UTILIZING ISLAMISM AGAINST ARAB NATIONALISM

During Eisenhower's first term, three significant historical events culminated in an unprecedented grand strategy shift towards concentrating on the regional dynamics of the Middle East.[143] First, Joseph Stalin's death in March 1953 shifted the playing field: while Stalin's aggressive tactics had compelled some nations to form alliances with the United States, the

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[142] Osgood, "Words and Deeds," 3.
[143] Colucci, *Doctrines,* 340.

softer-line approach of his successors had begun to pull some back into the Soviet orbit.[144] After Stalin's death, the US-Soviet rivalry concentrated less on direct conventional conflict and more on winning proxies in the "Third World," where revolutionary movements were gathering steam.[145] Second, the Bandung Conference in April 1955, a historic meeting of Afro-Asian peoples which included 29 nations or soon-to-be-nations, presented a strong opposition to Cold War logic and a called for a neutralist, anti-colonial bloc.[146] Bandung sparked a renewed administrative and diplomatic interest in Cold War neutralism, perceived more as a problem than an opportunity.[147] Third and most significantly, Nasser's July 1956 nationalization of the Suez Canal, an international trade route that had been controlled by the British and French, jeopardized Western oil supply and simultaneously improved Nasser's popularity among Arab peoples and intensified his bid to unify the Arab world under his (Cold War neutral) leadership.[148] Eisenhower and his officials were fearful that Nasser's bold yet successful achievement would inspire other post-colonial leaders to act out against Western presence, threatening US interests in the region, and hence on a global scale.[149]

The Suez "crisis" served as a catalyst for the president's declaration of the Eisenhower Doctrine.[150] In a January 1957 "Special Message to the Congress on the Situation in the Middle East," Eisenhower expounded:

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[144] Osgood, "Words and Deeds," 7.

[145] Osgood, *Total Cold War,* 113 & 398. "Third World" is a categorization scheme coined in the 1950s: First World indicated alignment with the US, Second World with the USSR, and Third World with the non-aligned.

[146] Jason C. Parker, "Small Victory, Missed Chance: The Eisenhower Administration, the Bandung Conference, and the Turning of the Cold War," in *Eisenhower Administration,* eds. Statler and Johns, 154-155.

[147] Parker, "Small Victory," 165.

[148] Sayeed, *Western Dominance,* 44; Osgood, *Total Cold War,* 140.

[149] Osgood, *Total Cold War,* 140.

[150] Colucci, *National Security Doctrines,* 339.

The Middle East has abruptly reached a new and critical stage in its long and important history…

The evolution to independence has in the main been a peaceful process. But… crosscurrents of distrust and fear with raids back and forth across national boundaries have brought about a high degree of instability in much of the Mid East… All this instability has been heightened, and at times, manipulated by International Communism…

The Suez Canal enables the nations of Asia and Europe to carry on the commerce that is essential if these countries are to maintain well-rounded and prosperous economies…

It is now essential that the United States should manifest through joint action of the President and the Congress our determination to assist those nations of the Mid East area, which desire that assistance.[151]

Eisenhower asked for Congress's approval on a plan with three planks: assist any nation "in the general area of the Middle East" with economic development, authorize the executive to provide military assistance to any nation that in said area, and authorize the employment of armed forces to "protect the territorial integrity" of nations "against overt armed aggression from any nation controlled by International Communism."[152] Couching his rhetoric within the well-established and thus convenient terms of anti-communism, Eisenhower's effort was ultimately more about containing the independent threat posed by Nasser's regional influence.[153]

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[151] U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, "Eisenhower Doctrine," January 5, 1957, https://www.eisenhower.archives.gov/education/bsa/citizenship_merit_badge/speeches_national_historical_importance/eisenhower_doctrine.pdf

[152] Eisenhower, "Doctrine."

[153] Osgood, *Total Cold War,* 142.

The anti-colonial movement spearheaded by Nasser occurred on two axes: resistance to white supremacy and colonialism, expressed as *nationalism*; and the desire for independence from the Cold War dichotomy, expressed as *neutralism*.[154] Neutralism complemented nationalism, underscoring the primary importance of nationhood and independence from "great powers" and their politics. Post-colonial leaders used this double-edged sword as a rallying point and to form solidarities outside the two offered by the Cold War paradigm.[155] Nasser's powerful variant, Arab Nationalism, represented what agents considered the most difficult propaganda challenge facing the US in the Middle East.[156] Sections 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 analyze US executive branch discursive constructions of the nationalist and neutralist threats posed by Nasser. Section 3.3.3 investigates how Islamism was uniquely outfitted to confront these two distinct but interrelated phenomena.

3.3.1   The Nationalist Threat

The post-World War II dismantling of empires drastically altered geographies: within a few years after the war's end, and again a decade later, a wave of colonial nations gained independence.[157] As the previous section noted, many Arabs and Muslims of the Middle East primarily concerned their political agendas with decolonization; accordingly, they hesitated to trust the United States, as Britain's most reliable partner with racial injustices of its own.[158] Nasser's rhetoric and policies appealed to these sentiments. His goal was to form an Arab Union, which under his leadership would help liberate Arabs from the grip of "great powers," including

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[154] Parker, "Small Victory," 154.
[155] Parker, "Small Victory," 154.
[156] Osgood, *Total Cold War,* 138.
[157] Parker, "Small Victory," 153.
[158] Osgood, "Words and Deeds," 4.

Great Britain, France, the United States, Israel, and the Soviet Union.[159] Miles Copeland, a CIA

and State Department official who worked closely with Nasser, emphasized Nasser's authenticity

and conviction when it came to Arab peoples gaining substantive geopolitical freedom: "As he

told both the British and the American ambassadors… his key objective was this: to get into a

position where he could decide individual questions of international politics on their merits, not

in accordance with whether or not they fitted into one or another of the Great Powers' scheme of

things."[160] Nasser disagreed with US aids that economic self-advancement should be the driving

force behind Egypt's revolutionary appeal; he wanted progress for Egypt, but progress as

measured by Arab standards, rather than Western ones.[161]

US executive officials had perceived nationalism as a benign force in the Middle East

and contingently supported it since the end of World War I (when the Ottoman Empire broke

apart).[162] But the rising power and popularity of Nasser in Egypt, and Mohammad Mossadegh in

Iran "shattered the existing belief that nationalism was a benevolent force and led to the creation

of interventionist policies designed to defend U.S. interests from 'radical' nationalists."[163] The

US and Britain were fearful of Mossedegh because he was unafraid to change political courses

abruptly in order to meet the demands of the nationalist cause, even at the cost of embarrassing

foreign leaders. Like Nasser, his independent streak make him an untrustworthy interlocutor in a

war between two great powers.[164] US officials constructed and distributed paternalistic and

dismissive imaginings of Mossedegh, setting the stage for a CIA-sponsored coup in 1953 that

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[159] Sayeed, *Western Dominance,* 43; Jacobs, *Imagining*, 117-118.

[160] Miles Copeland, *The Game of Nations* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1969), 143.

[161] Copeland, *Game*, 99 & 120.

[162] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 96; Takeyh, *Origins,* 105. For example, the United States supported nationalist appeals in Saudi Arabia and Turkey, two countries that were willing to submit to a broader US agenda in the region.

[163] Jacobs, *Imagining*, 96.

[164] Jacobs, *Imagining*, 112-114.

would return power to the shah of Iran.[165] And while the British intelligence apparatus, and portions its US counterpart, would have liked to see Nasser go by way of a coup or assassination, there existed a powerful faction in the US executive branch that believed Nasser could be isolated or neutralized.[166] To counter Nasser's nationalist platform, officials adopted three discursive strategies: to discredit the source, to deny the allegations, and to dramatize the threat.

Executive agents discredited Arab Nationalists along the lines that they were emotional, instinctual, violent, and harbored racial hatred. In 1956 the NSC warned of the danger posed to Western hegemony by the "alarming emotional drive" of Arab Nationalism.[167] Copeland assessed that predicting the course of European or Soviet politics was easier than predicting the behavior of Afro-Asian countries, where "we had to rely more and more on human sensitivities and instincts which we hadn't yet worked out how to program into a computer."[168] Nasser and his followers were depicted as irrational fanatics, willing to sacrifice their own interests for a precarious cause.[169] The DOS reasoned in 1956, for example, that Nasser was gaining strength in the region, not because he legitimately appealed to the needs and demands of his people, but because he "viciously exploited anti-Western sentiments to seize leadership of Arab Nationalism."[170] A year before, the PSB had predicted, "the combined violence of nationalism, settlers resistance and racial hatreds will henceforth divide the free world, whose sympathies

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[165] Dreyfuss, *Devil's Game,* 96. For a more detailed account of the 1953 coup, see: Steven Kinzer, *All the Shah's Men: An American Coup and the Roots of Middle East Terror* (Hoboken: Wiley & Sons, 2008).

[166] Dreyfuss, *Devil's Game*, 101.

[167] U.S. National Security Council, "Status of National Security Programs," June 30, 1956, quoted in Osgood, *Total Cold War,* 131.

[168] Copeland, *Game,* 23.

[169] Copeland, *Game,* 122.

[170] U.S. Department of State, Record of Conversation between Dulles and Maurice Harold Macmillan on the Egyptian Purchase of Arms from the USSR, January 3, 1955, quoted in Takeyh, *Origins,* 120.

cannot fail to be engaged simultaneously on opposite sides."[171] While Nasser protested the violence and racism of imperialism and great power politics, US agents flipped the script and claimed the Arab Nationalists were the ones with the intent to dominate. Dulles, for example, estimated that Nasser desired "to reduce Western Europe to subservience to Arab control."[172] In this construction, the US government was a victim of undeserved criticism when it was only attempting to aid the development of the region.

Executive officials denied allegations that the US was complicit with colonialism. In 1956 DOS Policy Planning Staff stated: "It is universally admitted that the colonial era is dead, yet in the current phase of the Cold War we [are] saddled, in the minds of millions, with the onus of colonialism."[173] In 1957, the NSC reported that despite "our massive economic aid and military assistance,… our anti-colonial record, our recognized good intentions, [and] our free and diverse society, we seem to be becoming more identified with the negative aspects of the past."[174] Propaganda campaigns were designed to display progress and diversity in American political and cultural life.[175] For example, C.D. Jackson's "Cultural Presentation Committee" planned and coordinated tours of Black American artists, to serve as "living demonstration of the American Negro as part of America's cultural life."[176] Towards the same end, the CIA worked with Hollywood film directors to plant "well dressed negroes as part of the American scene,

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[171] U.S. Operations Coordinating Board Working Paper, "A U.S. Position on North African Problems," August 31, 1955, quoted in Osgood, *Total Cold War,* 127.

[172] U.S. National Security Council, Memorandum of Discussion at the 292nd Meeting, August 9, 1956, in *Office of the Historian,* https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1955-57v16/d72.

[173] U.S. Department of State, Policy Planning Staff Report, "U.S. Foreign Policy and the Problem of Social-Political Change," January 28, 1956, quoted in Parker, "Small Victory," 167-168.

[174] U.S. National Security Council, "Status of United States Programs for National Security as of June 30, 1957," Report 5720, quoted in Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 124.

[175] Saunders, *Cultural Cold War,* 225 & 290-292.

[176] U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, Letter from C.D. Jackson to Nelson Rockefeller, April 14, 1955, quoted in Saunders, *Cultural Cold War*, 291.

without appearing too conspicuous or deliberate."[177] With regards to US intentions abroad,

Dulles insisted on the floor of Congress, "the United States is freer than almost any great nation

has ever been from the temptation to abuse power for selfish purposes."[178] And Eisenhower

assured a global audience in 1957 that America "supports without reservation the full

sovereignty and independence of each and every nation in the Middle East."[179] Contrarily, the

administration placed conditions upon their support for revolutions.

In typical Cold War fashion, US policymakers dramatized the global threat posed by

Arab Nationalism. They expressed fear that the Soviet Union would profit from the dismantling

of empires, or any substantial altering of the international status quo.[180] While top-level

administrative officials like Eisenhower and Dulles supported independence *in theory*, they

discouraged "premature independence," which *in practice* they argued would bring about a

power vacuum, leaving new nations vulnerable to communist infiltration.[181] The CIA's Office of

Reports and Estimates observed as early as 1948 that the breakup of colonial empires had "major

implications for US security, particularly in terms of possible world conflict with the USSR," for

proxies in the Middle East assured the US "access to bases and raw materials in these areas in the

event of war."[182] Even when regional tensions had no prospect of rising to a hot war between the

US and USSR, the executive branch was unwilling to accept a Soviet or communist success

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[177] U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, Report on Correspondence with Carlton Alsop, "Hollywood Reports," 1953, quoted in Saunders, *Cultural Cold War,* 290.

[178] Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, Address to U.S. Foreign Service Officers, April 21, 1956, quoted in Salim Yaqub, *Containing Arab Nationalism: The Eisenhower Doctrine and the Middle East* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 17.

[179] Eisenhower, "Doctrine."

[180] Osgood, "Words and Deeds," 9.

[181] Osgood, *Total Cold War,* 125.

[182] U.S. Central Intelligence Agency, Office of Reports and Estimates, "The Break-up of the Colonial Empires and Its Implication for US Security," ORE 25-48, September 3, 1948, in Prados, "Central Intelligence Agency," 30.

anywhere.[183] Eisenhower invoked slippery-slope logic with his "falling domino" principle: "You have a row of dominoes set up, you knock over the first one, and what will happen to the last one is the certainty that it will go over very quickly."[184] By 1955, US National Intelligence estimated that the risk of "peripheral" states falling to the USSR was "a more serious threat to the Free World than… Stalin's aggressive postwar policies."[185] This dramatized logic justified a state of exception which opposed post-colonial bids for nationalism. Section 3.3.2 will interrogate the US executive response to a phenomenon which complemented and heightened the nationalist threat: Cold War neutralism.

3.3.2   The Neutralist Threat

Nasser pushed for Arab independence not only from the old colonial configuration of geopolitics, but also from the newly imposed dichotomy of great powers. Leaders of the former colonies did not want ties that would relegate them again to satellite status and leave them vulnerable to armed intervention.[186] In 1955 at the historic conference in Bandung, Nasser joined a coalition of prominent world leaders—including Marshal Tito of Yugoslavia, Prime Minister Nehru of India, Premier Chou En-Lai of China, and President Sukarno of Indonesia—in rejecting bilateral alliances with either the United States or the Soviet Union.[187] Because siding with the East or the West was understood as sacrificing newly-earned and deserved state sovereignty,

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[183] David L. Anderson, "The Devil Is in the Details: Eisenhower, Dulles, and the Third World," in *Eisenhower Administration,* eds. Statler and Johns, 272.

[184] U.S. President Dwight D. Eisenhower, News Conference, April 7, 1954, quoted in Colucci, *Doctrines,* 346.

[185] U.S. National Intelligence Estimate 100-7-55, November 1955, quoted in Osgood, "Words and Deeds," 10.

[186] Georgiana Stevens, "Arab Neutralism and Bandung," *Middle East Journal* 11, no. 2 (1957), 144.

[187] Adeed Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism in the Twentieth Century: From Triumph to Despair* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003), 166.

these leaders opted for a neutral or non-aligned position.[188] After the conference, Nasser reported

back to his people: "Egypt desires that the world go hand in hand and that its states not be

playthings of the big powers."[189] US officials feared Nasser because in backdoor meetings, he

stood behind his promises to pave an independent path for Egypt.[190] In a defense meeting with

US military and diplomatic officials, Nasser accused: "you are trying to get us [Arabs] to fight

your enemy."[191] Nasser was willing to sacrifice the security umbrella made available to him by

the Truman and Eisenhower Doctrines for a firm adherence to his principles and goals, which

were crafted with Arabs' needs in mind and not Americans' needs.

The failure of US officials to come to terms with the anti- and de-colonial objectives of

Arab Nationalism contributed further to Arab leaders' frustration with the US Cold War security

paradigm.[192] The OCB's "Working Group on the Afro-Asian Conference" evidences the

American inability and/or refusal to understand the significance of its own complicity with white

supremacy and the racialized violence of the imperial geopolitical order: the racial symbolism of

Bandung received no direct reference in the group's reports. Jason C. Parker notes, "American

officials tended to analyze the Afro-Asian meeting in terms of its Cold War realpolitik rather

than as an intensifying, racially inflected challenge to a crumbling colonial order."[193]

Paradigmatic divergences are demonstrated in two competing interpretations of Nasser's position

on racial ordering. The first perspective – that of the nationalist – is embodied by Carlos Cooks,

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[188] Stevens, "Arab Neutralism," 144.

[189] Stevens, "Arab Neutralism," 148-149. Georgiana Stevens was a journalist who spent time investigating in the Arab Middle East. While she put direct quotations around Nasser's words, this is not an official translation and could have been handed down orally and/or interpreted by the journalist.

[190] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 120.

[191] Copeland, *Game,* 147. Copeland was present at the 1954 meeting between Nasser and US Army Colonels. While he put direct quotations around Nasser's words, this is not an official or direct translation and could have been distorted by the author's memory or experience.

[192] Stevens, "Arab Neutralism," 140. Also see: Parker, "Small Victory," 158; Osgood, "Words and Deeds," 9.

[193] Parker, "Small Victory," 158.

an African Nationalist and intellectual leader operating out of Harlem (often in tandem with

Marcus Garvey) from the 1940s until his death in 1966.[194] In a 1955 lecture, Cooks exclaimed:

> Venom is coming from Egypt as far as white supremacy is concerned. The
> architect and moving force behind the offensive is Gamal Abdel Nasser…
> This man's ancestry is African and Arabic, but he refuses to follow the classic
> road of championing white supremacy and exploiting black people…
> Nasser is telling the Arabs that they have their oil as a weapon against European
> imperialism, and as a means of establishing economic independence and raising
> their standard of living…
> Nasser has made Egypt a base for African, Arabic, and Muslim liberation
> movements and the site for training their armies of liberation.[195]

Like most Arab and African Nationalists of his time, Carlos Cooks identified with, trusted, and

had faith in the counter-hegemonic spirit of Nasser (and the Bandung Conference). In

juxtaposition, the second perspective, that of the US executive official, is exemplified by Agent

Miles Copeland, in his account of Nasser's neutralism:

> *The Myth:* Before the coup, Nasser… realized that even the most unsophisticated
> people require an appeal that is much more substantial than they are capable of
> articulating. Nasser needed a unifying motivator…

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[194] Robert Harris, Introduction to "Part II: Excerpts from the Lectures of Carlos Cooks, 1954-1966," in *Carlos Cooks and Black Nationalism from Garvey to Malcolm*, eds. Robert Harris, Nyota Harris, and Grandassa Harris (Dover: Majority Press, 1992), 55.

[195] Carlos Cooks, Lecture, "Gamal Abdel Nasser; Marcus Garvey Day," May – December 1955, in *Carlos Cooks*, eds. Harris, Harris, and Harris, 73-74.

It is not important if he does not mean anything precisely: a myth may be just as

effective in mobilizing emotions against some great unknown because, after all,

the myth is an appeal to emotions, not to reason…

Nasser's myth is the body of images that surround the battle between the colored

man—Arab, Moslem, African (Nasser's "three circles")—against the European

(Soviet as well as Western), a battle in which the colored man is sure to triumph

in the end.[196]

Copeland's account reveals how the Cold War paradigm distorted US officials' understanding of

nationalist and neutralist trends and attitudes.[197] Rather than accepting Nasser's racialized

rhetoric as genuine or based in reason at all, Copeland understood it merely as an emotionally-

charged tool employed by Nasser to play the Great Powers against one another in order to

accomplish maximum realist gain for Egypt.[198]

US executive agents repeatedly insisted that each new perceived problem, either in the

Middle East or the "Third World" writ large, was driven by communism rather than overriding

local or regional concerns.[199] While the ideals of non-alignment were difficult to fit within the

Cold War frame, the Eisenhower administration was determined to do so.[200] Ray Takeyh notes

the irony in Western officials' crediting of neutralism to Soviet influence, to which it was

defined in opposition.[201] As was the case throughout the duration of the Cold War, any nation

that did not sign on to the American agenda was placed into the Soviet camp.[202] A 1953 State

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[196] Copeland, *Game*, 129-131.

[197] Prados, "Central Intelligence Agency," 43.

[198] Copeland, *Game,* 132.

[199] Prados, "Central Intelligence Agency," 43.

[200] Takeyh, *Origins,* 106; Jacobs, *Imagining,* 120.

[201] Takeyh, *Origins,* 108.

[202] Dreyfuss, *Devil's Game,* 1.

Department cable indicated joint cooperation with the USIA to distribute propaganda citing the "dangers and inadvisability [of] small nations trying to play big powers off against each other."[203] According to NSC 5428, the USSR had everything to gain and nothing to lose from supporting any nationalist movement that could force the US and its allies to relinquish power or withdraw from the region.[204] This reasoning compelled Dulles to designate neutralism as "an immoral and short-sighted conception" in 1956.[205]

Not only did executive officials attempt to reposition neutralism within the binary frame of the Cold War, but they also attributed its inception to Arab ignorance and unruliness. A study of US information programs reported: "The African, whether a leader or one of the people, is comparatively disinterested and unconcerned with the issues which divide the world today, and he can be expected to resist any efforts to align him formally with either side."[206] And while the US executive branch ignorantly believed in the ignorance of African and Arab Nationalists, it paternalistically assumed it could bring (Western) order to the region. Agent Copeland recalled: "It was with the Arab countries that we were almost totally in conflict—and this, we thought, was almost entirely due to mischievous or misguided leadership. We believed that under *more enlightened* and effective leadership they would be natural allies. The Arabs had every reason to fear the Soviets, and not us, and they should have welcomed our offers of protection."[207] In other words, US manipulation of politics in the Middle East had the potential to awaken Arabs to the benefits of Western hegemony. Section 3.3.3 examines how the executive branch utilized

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[203] U.S. Department of State, Telegram from Streibert to U.S. Embassy in Iran.

[204] U.S. National Security Council, "Objectives… Near East."

[205] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 120.

[206] Report to the President's Committee on Information Activities Abroad, July 11, 1960, quoted in Osgood, *Total Cold War,* 129.

[207] Copeland, *Game*, 43-44.

Islamism as part of its strategy to manipulate the regional politics of the Middle East in such a way as to defeat Nasser's twofold threat of nationalism and neutralism.

3.3.3 Islamism versus Nasser

The United States government and its network of informants did not make a significant effort to understand Islam's relationship to nationalism until the 1950s, particularly until after the Iranians democratically elected Mossadegh in 1951, and a year later Nasser and his Free Officers successfully staged a coup in Egypt.[208] At the same time US officials were developing icier opinions of nationalism, they were warming up to both Islamist and pan-Islamic movements in the region. Although executive officials had expressed much reserve about lending support for what they perceived as fanatical, anti-Western, and totalitarian elements of these movements, Nasser's 1956 show of force at the Suez Canal left them desperate to find and stimulate a unifying force strong enough to oppose Nasser's regional appeal and strength.[209] Jacobs elucidates: "Facing what they believed to be an increasingly intransigent secular Arab nationalist regime in Egypt, between 1956 and 1958 U.S. policymakers reversed their position on religious-based identity and unity movements in the Middle East" from that of net-hesitancy to that of hopeful and active embracement.[210]

Due to their experiences with Pakistan and Turkey, executive officials had initially perceived a symbiotic relationship between nationalism and Islam, but that view had also begun to shift in the latter half of the decade. The rising popularity of nationalism in both non-Muslim

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[208] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 78. While Nasser did not take leadership of Egypt immediately following the coup, it was widely recognized that he master-minded the coup and that President Naguib was Nasser's frontman from the start. Nasser technically assumed power in January 1954. For more information on the coup and Nasser's role in it, see: Sayeed, *Western Dominance*, 40; Copeland, *Game*, 74-75.

[209] Jacobs, *Imagining*, 85-88.

[210] Jacobs, *Imagining*, 88.

and secular Muslim nations made apparent that religion was not an intrinsic component of nationalism.[211] Given this realization, experts wondered if Islam could be mobilized *explicitly in opposition* to Arab Nationalism. This would be tricky because Nasser did not disavow Islam: he conceptualized Egypt as having a central role in three circles—Arab, African, and Islamic—but he emphasized the primacy of the Arab circle.[212] Socialism and Arab Nationalism came first, with Islam providing social underpinnings.[213] Nasser made clear, "We have never said… that we are opposed to religion. What we have said was that our religion is a socialist one."[214] In this context, the US executive branch reasoned that to effectively promote Islam as a counterweight to Nasser, it must form alliances with groups and individuals who would interpret their religion as a rejection of Nasser's relegation of Islam to secondary political status.[215]

One such organization was the Muslim Brotherhood, who preached that a return to the fundamentals of Islamic doctrine should dominate all political and economic programs.[216] Its founder, Hassan al Banna of Egypt, defined the Brotherhood as "a Sunni way, a Sufi truth, a political organization, an athletic group, a cultural-educational union, an economic company, and a social idea," and conceptualized Islam as not only a religion but a homeland, a nationality, and a state.[217] This Islamist framework was mutually exclusive with the secular Arab Nationalist model, which treated Islam as one of several religions to be freely and privately practiced by citizens of an ethnically- and linguistically-based Arab nation.[218] US officials were attracted to

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[211] Jacobs, *Imagining*, 87.

[212] Sayeed, *Western Dominance,* 40.

[213] Sayeed, *Western Dominance,* 42.

[214] Quoted in Sayeed, *Western Dominance,* 42.

[215] Kumar, *Islamophobia,* 64.

[216] Sayeed, *Western Dominance,* 42; Dreyfuss, *Devil's Game,* 59.

[217] Richard P. Mitchell, *The Society of the Muslim Brothers* (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 14; Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism*, 84.

[218] Dawisha, *Arab Nationalism,* 84.

the Muslim Brotherhood not only for its antagonistic ideology, but also for its strength: it functioned as a party, an intelligence operation, and a paramilitary unit that was rapidly building branches in many Middle Eastern nations.[219] Before Nasser's revolution, the Prime Minister of Egypt had provided open support for the Muslim Brotherhood, providing it with training grounds and allowing it to publish a daily column in the government newspaper.[220] After the revolution, both Great Britain and the United States invested in keeping the Muslim Brotherhood afloat in Egypt, as well as in Syria and Iraq – as a base for gathering intelligence and disseminating counter-intelligence regarding Nasser.[221] The CIA toyed with plans to use the Brotherhood to overthrow and/or assassinate Nasser.[222] In Saudi Arabia, where the organization had gathered so much steam in the 1930s that the Saudi government had come to fear its power and subsequently cracked down upon it, Eisenhower and the Dulles brothers encouraged the King to rebuild the Muslim Brotherhood in the face of Nasser's growing regional strength.[223]

US officials had even greater aspirations for Saudi Arabia and its role in counter-balancing Nasser. The previous section discussed Eisenhower's attempt to build up the King as a spiritual leader and regional counter-force to communism; this logic was extended to cover Arab Nationalism as well. In 1957, King Saud visited Washington for the "Saud-Eisenhower Summit," whereat the US secured a five-year renewal of the US Air Force base at Dhahran and whereat Saudi Arabia received a $180 million increase in US economic and military aid.[224] In

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[219] Dreyfuss, *Devil's Game,* 57. The Muslim Brotherhood had a significant presence in Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Syria, Iraq, Oman, Yemen and Saudi Arabia.

[220] Dreyfuss, *Devil's Game*, 55-56.

[221] Rashid Khalidi, "The Superpowers and the Cold War in the Middle East," in *The Middle East and the United States: History, Politics, and Ideologies,* fifth edition, eds. David W. Lesch and Mark L. Haas (Boulder: Westview Press, 2012), 164.

[222] David Talbot, *The Devil's Chessboard: Allen Dulles, the CIA, and the Rise of America's Secret Government* (New York: HarperCollins, 2015), 248; Copeland, *Game of Nations,* 184.

[223] Dreyfuss, *Devil's Game,* 121.

[224] AbuKhalil, *Battle for Saudi Arabia*, 189.

preparing the USIA for the summit, the State Department pronounced: "The Department wishes

to obtain the maximum publicity for the visit throughout Arab countries to demonstrate the close

and friendly relations between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia… We wish to encourage continued

adherence by the Saudi Government to moderate and constructive policies, freed from the

destructive aspects of emotional nationalism as exemplified by Nasser."[225] By proactively

encouraging the polarization of Saudi Arabian and Egyptian leadership, executive branch

officials contributed in the production of "the Arab Cold War," with Nasser and the Soviet-

leaning states at one end, and Saudi Arabia and the Western-leaning states at the other.[226]

While Nasser obviously rejected the imposition of the Cold War frame onto the politics

of the Middle East, the US executive branch had every reason to draw lines in the Arabian sand.

Dreyfuss clarifies:

> The emergence of Nasser was an existential threat to the oil kingdoms—to Saudi
> Arabia, to Iraq, and to the British-owned sheikhs in the Gulf… What was
> intolerable to London and Washington… was that Nasser refused to be
> controlled… and inspired loyalty among Arabs outside of Egypt, including those
> sitting on top of the oil.
>
> What especially worried London and Washington was the idea that Nasser might
> succeed in unifying Egypt and Saudi Arabia, thus creating a major Arab power.[227]

To prevent such a mighty force from evolving against imperial interest, Great Britain and the

United States embarked on Operation Omega, a coercive plot designed to contain neutralism and

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[225] U.S. Department of State, Policy Information Statement, Bureau of Near Eastern, South Asian and African Affairs, January 28, 1957, quoted in Vaughan, *Failure,* 236-237.

[226] Yaqub, *Containing,* 45; Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 141. In establishing the "Arab Cold War" as a frame, the landmark text emerging from the American network at the time was: Malcolm Kerr, *The Arab Cold War 1958-1964: A study of Ideology in Politics* (London: Oxford University Press, 1965).

[227] Dreyfuss, *Devil's Game*, 98-99.

curb Egyptian influence.[228] The DOS determined that the objective of Omega was to "induce

reorientation of Nasser's policies toward cooperation with the Free World while lessening the

harmful Egyptian influence in other countries of the Middle East."[229] In addition to placing

dramatically substantive demands on Nasser in a combined carrot-and-stick approach, Operation

Omega also concentrated on eroding Egypt's regional position by building up alternative power

centers that supported US interests.[230] Operation Omega therefore intensified the American effort

to embolden the ideological and military strength of Islamism.

The US executive branch failed in both its attempts to placate Nasser and to elevate Saud

to a regional leadership that could match Nasser's.[231] In a well-publicized address alluding to the

demands placed upon him by Omega, Nasser asserted: "Imperialism means exploitation and

domination which we cannot accept. They have no good intention toward us."[232] While

Operation Omega represented an acknowledgement of Nasser's growing regional strength, it

ironically demonstrated US officials' continued underestimation of his power and his appeal.[233]

But despite the failure of US efforts to discursively and militarily leverage Islamism against

Nasser, such a strategy succeeded in lending strength to an emergent (and not plainly inevitable)

wave of fundamentalist political Islam in the Middle East.[234] The US executive branch's use of

rhetoric and hard power to mobilize Islamic and Islamist forces in the Middle East to combat

both communism and Arab Nationalism also significantly altered the dynamics of imperial

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[228] Takeyh, *Origins*, 107.

[229] U.S. Department of State, Memorandum from American Ambassador to Egypt, Henry Alfred Byroade, to J.F. Dulles, May 25, 1955, quoted in Takeyh, *Origins of the Eisenhower Doctrine,* 110.

[230] Takeyh, *Origins,* 111-113.

[231] Vaughan, *Failure,* 238-249; Kumar, "Right Kind," 10.

[232] U.S. Department of State, Foreign Offices Memorandum by Ivone Kirkpatrick, October 28, 1955, quoted in Takeyh, *Origins,* 119.

[233] Takeyh, *Origins of the Eisenhower Doctrine,* 116.

[234] Dreyfuss, *Devil's Game,* 3; Kumar, *Islamophobia*, 64 & 83.

geopolitics: in an unprecedented fashion, US officials had fashioned shared sites of identification between Muslims and the West.

3.4   CONCLUSION

Through an examination of the policies and rhetoric of Truman and Eisenhower and their administrations, this chapter has shown how the US executive branch (and its affiliated intelligence network) formulated a new hegemonic discourse surrounding Islam. At a time when America was rapidly increasing and expanding its military, political, and cultural presence in the Middle East, the executive branch began to deviate from Orientalist scripts as it adopted a geostrategic approach to its discursive imagination of Islam. The creation of a vast intelligence network, whose focus was mainly on contemporary policy, allowed the government to utilize knowledge in the service of imperial power. Newly founded diplomatic and psychological missions were intended to manipulate ideological positions and political actions of leaders and peoples around the world, but often with special attention to the Middle East. In promoting a vision of Islam, and even of Islamism, that was compatible with Western values, but incompatible with both communism and Arab Nationalism, the US executive branch mobilized and deployed a self-serving interpretation of Islam.

The strategies employed by the US executive branch and uncovered by this chapter demonstrate the importance of rhetorical strategy in the US mission to adapt Western imperialism to the post-colonial geopolitical environment. Instead of rejecting and devaluing all Muslims, as did discourses of colonialism, American agents only rejected and devalued those Muslims who posed an ideological or political threat to the US and the "Free World." Even while holding onto some of the tropes or stereotypes about Islam and the Middle East that

belonged to the era of colonialism, the US departed from its predecessors in its conceptualization of Islam as a force that could be divided and differentiated, on the one hand, and emboldened to serve US empire, on the other. The imposition of a distinction between "good Muslims" and "bad Muslims" represents not only a reformulation in Western discourse about Islam, but also a transformation in the method by which Western imperial powers used rhetoric to normalize Western dominance in the Middle East (and other post-colonies as well).

Chapters Two and Three have rigorously examined primary US executive branch documents to provide a broad survey of the branch's multifaceted (and multi-agency) approach to its (re)imagination of Islam. The separate treatment of the domestic operation to discredit the Nation of Islam in Chapter Two, and the foreign mission to bolster Islam and Islamism in Chapter Three, may have left an initial impression that these rhetorical strategies embodied distinct phenomena. The next two chapters will dispel any potential of that perception by revealing how these rhetorical undertakings cohere into one strategy for the preservation of Western imperialism and the attainment US hegemony in a post-colonial era. In conducting an interactional analysis of domestic and foreign policy rhetoric surrounding Islam, Chapter Four turns to delineate the specific tropes which constitute US executive branch discourse within a post-Orientalist framework for imagining the Middle East and Islam.

4.0 DEVIATING FROM ORIENTALISM

Orientalism is a concept that bears significantly upon Western discourses about Islam, and

correspondingly upon scholarship in this area.[1] "Orientalism" as a Western discipline and

tradition, as well as Edward Said's *Orientalism* as deconstructive criticism, have each made their

own lasting and undeniable impressions on the dominant Western understanding of Islam in the

post-colonial geopolitical era.[2] In his groundbreaking work, Said expounds that "by Orientalism I

mean several things, all of them, in my opinion, interdependent."[3] But there are limitations

inherent in accepting multiple, albeit interdependent definitions when it comes to such a

significant term. Unfortunately, there remains a tendency amongst scholars of contemporary

political discourse to operate with unshared or ambiguous conceptualizations of Orientalism.

These ambiguities pose a problem for scholars who would like to understand the spatial and

temporal trajectory of Orientalist thought: if some refer to Orientalism wherever they see a

dominant discourse serving racist (Islamophobic) and/or imperial administrations, but others

only when specific tropes are normalized in that dominant discourse, then any collective attempt

at theorization may find it difficult to attain precision. Scholars can help lessen confusion around

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[1] Deepa Kumar, "Islamophobia and Empire: An Intermestic Approach to the Study of Anti-Muslim Racism," in *What is Islamophobia: Racism, Social Movements and the State,* eds. Narzanin Massoumi, Tom Mills, and David Miller (London: Pluto Press, 2017), 49-50.

[2] Zachary Lockman, *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 184 & 91. Lockman characterizes Said's work as the "most influential scholarly work published in the last quarter of the twentieth century" and a "bombshell" within the field of Orientalism.

[3] Edward Said, *Orientalism*, 25th anniversary ed. (New York: Vintage Books, [1979] 2004), 2.

American (post-) Orientalism in two ways: first, by resolving and remaining committed to a definition of Orientalism; and second, by making arguments for- or against- an interpretation that dominant US discourse complies with the standards of that definition. This chapter contributes in both these regards.

Drawing upon insights generated from analysis of the rhetorical strategies examined in Chapters Two and Three, this chapter argues that dominant discourse in the post-colonial era of US empire departed from the Orientalist framework for imagining Islam. This chapter builds upon an interpretation presented by Matthew F. Jacobs in *Imagining the Middle East: The Building of an American Foreign Policy, 1918-1967,* that a network of intelligence analysts and policymakers in the US transitioned to a more-flexible and more-malleable "post-Orientalist" framework as it rose to geopolitical prominence at the end of World War II (WWII).[4] This chapter intervenes by documenting two important deviations from Orientalism that transpired during the Truman and Eisenhower administrations. Section 4.1 presents an etymology of Orientalism and formulates a precise working definition of the term. Section 4.2 explains how US executive branch discourse ceased to presume an absolute difference between the Orient/East and the Occident/West. And section 4.3 details how US executive branch rhetoric divided "good Muslims" from "bad Muslims," thereby abandoning the notion of a monolithic Orient. These key differences demonstrate how US executive agents strategically deviated from the essential tropes that constitute Orientalism.

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[4] Matthew F. Jacobs, *Imagining the Middle East: The Building of an American Foreign Policy, 1918 – 1967* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 45.

4.1　AN ETYMOLOGY OF ORIENTALISM

The conclusion of WWII marked a significant shift in the geopolitical configuration of Western imperial power. Great Britain, France, and other European nations had begun to lose legitimacy in their domination over colonies as early as World War I, but the Nazi's mass invasion and destruction of Europe during WWII accelerated efforts at establishing a global framework for decolonization at the war's end, and signified a broader transition into the post-colonial era of geopolitics.[5] In the same period that European powers were losing their grip over the land, resources, and peoples of the Middle East, the US was establishing one. Said summarizes: "From the beginning of the nineteenth century until the end of World War II France and Britain dominated the Orient and Orientalism; since World War II America has dominated the Orient, and approaches it as France and Great Britain once did."[6] Many prominent scholars agree with Said that in the era of US hegemony, "Orientalism has been successfully accommodated to the new imperialism."[7] In *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East since 1945*, for example, Douglas Little classifies "anti-Islamic sentiments" as being "as American as apple pie" in his analysis of the Orientalization of the peoples of the Middle East in the service of American military and economic expansion.[8]

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[5] John Prados, "The Central Intelligence Agency and the Face of Decolonization under the Eisenhower Administration," in *The Eisenhower Administration, the Third World, and the Globalization of the Cold War*, eds. Kathryn C. Statler and Andrew L. Johns (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2006), 27. While the era of post-colonialism is characterized by its departure from formal colonization, the era is certainly not free of this phenomenon; many nations including Great Britain, France, the US, and Russia held on to colonies, some of which they still possess this day. While domination over colonies was almost never deemed legitimate by the colonized, legitimacy in this case refers to that granted by the dominant discourse of world superpowers.

[6] Said, *Orientalism*, 4.

[7] Said, *Orientalism*, 322.

[8] Douglas Little, *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East since 1945* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), 10.

Despite shifts in its dominant conceptualization, scholars for generations and across many disciplines have often used the term Orientalism casually, or without pause for careful definition. Before the transition to post-colonialism, a common assumption amongst scholars, government agents, and lay persons alike was that Orientalism referred simply to the study of the Orient: its land, its history, its peoples.[9] Like the chemist studies chemicals, or the linguist studies language, the Orientalist studies the Orient, as objectively and neutrally as possible. Said himself embraces such a vague and neutral definition when he stipulates, "Anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient… either in its specific or its general aspects, is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism."[10] Universities in Europe fashioned departments under the name Orientalism beginning in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.[11] While Orientalism was the dominant framework for both European and American understandings of the Middle East and Islam until WWII, many American scholars signaled a move away from Orientalism by renaming their academic departments to "(area) studies" (for example, Near Eastern Studies) as the US rose to geopolitical prominence.[12]

There were numerous reasons for this shift in nomenclature. According to Said, American specialists were drawn away from the title of Orientalism "both because it is too vague and general and because it connotes the high-handed executive attitude of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century European colonialism."[13] With regards to its vagueness, new intelligence agents and scholars were skeptical of Orientalism's reliance on foundational texts

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[9] Daniel Martin Varisco, "Orientalism and Islam," *Oxford Bibliographies: Islamic Studies* (December 2009), doi:10.1093/OBO/9780195390155-0058.

[10] Said, *Orientalism*, 2.

[11] Said, *Orientalism*, 42.

[12] Said, *Orientalism*, 2.

[13] Said, *Orientalism,* 2.

and doctrines of early Islam to explain contemporary political circumstances.[14] To assist the US government in its expanding military, diplomatic, and psychological missions in the Middle East, specialists adopted a more operational understanding of the area and its peoples, and thus adopted more narrowly-suited titles.[15] With regards to its high-handedness, Orientalism had become a politically-loaded term, like many phenomena handed down to Americans by their colonial predecessors. American policymakers in the empire-building stage were tasked with the paradoxical mission to replace Great Britain and France in dominating Muslim colonies and post-colonies, while persuading the globe that the US had the opposite intention: to champion world peace and anti-imperialism.[16] A 1952 State Department memo reveals the government's desire to differentiate itself from colonial Europe, in its postulation, "if we could… cut ourselves away from the imperialism of dying empires, we would raise our score" amongst Arab and Muslim peoples.[17] Yet despite moves like this away from the official embrace of Orientalism, Said maintains that in the era of US hegemony, "Orientalism lives on academically through its doctrines and theses about the Orient."[18]

Scholars of US political discourse have yet to resolve whether Orientalism "lives on" in a post-colonial context; at the core of this controversy lies divergent interpretations of the essential or defining characteristics of Orientalism. Conceptualizing it in the broadest sense as a programmed study of the Orient, as "a mode of discourse with supporting institutions,

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[14] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 65.

[15] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 57.

[16] Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower's Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2006), 125.

[17] U.S. Department of State, Transcript of Proceedings: "Working Group on Special Materials for Arab and other Moslem Countries," April 2, 1952, in *Documentation on Early Cold War U.S. Propaganda Activities in the Middle East*, ed. Joyce Battle, National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book no. 78, doc. 58 (2002), http://nsarchive2.gwu.edu//NSAEBB/NSAEBB78/docs.htm. See also: Deepa Kumar, *Islamophobia and the Politics of Empire* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2012), 36.

[18] Said, *Orientalism*, 2.

vocabulary, [and] scholarship," leaves no ground to argue that Orientalism's heart has ever skipped a beat.[19] Most scholars, however, operate with more specific conceptions of the term. For example, many consider colonial ambition as an intrinsic quality of Orientalism. In *Edward Said and the Writing of History*, Shelley Walia defines Orientalism as "a discourse motivated by management of colonies for imperial gain."[20] Deepa Kumar characterizes Orientalism as "the handmaiden of colonialism" and positions it as a trans-Atlantic phenomenon when she observes that while "the story starts in Europe, it continues in the US, which took over the mantle of colonial overlord in the 'Muslim World' after WWII."[21] Elsewhere, she argues that Orientalism "is best understood as a taken-for-granted framework that offers a 'common sense' hegemonic view of the world."[22] For these scholars and many others, a diagnosis of the government's intent to mobilize discourse for imperial purposes is indication that Orientalism thrives in the context of American hegemony.

Imperial and colonial ambitions are situated within a broader framework of Eurocentrism and white supremacy. As such, many scholars interpret racism and/or racialization as a defining trait of Orientalism. Amy Aisen Elouafi notes how "race and colour were integral to European constructions of difference that permeated Orientalism," in that "the Oriental" was affiliated with blackness, sexualized and "exoticized with differences becoming symbols of desire."[23] Meghana Nayak argues, "Orientalism *only* works because of the violent remaking, disciplining and construction of race and gender," because these scripts are essential to the possibility of a

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[19] Said, *Orientalism,* 2.

[20] Shelley Walia, *Edward Said and the Writing of History* (Duxford: Icon Books Ltd., 2001), 38.

[21] Kumar, *Islamophobia,* 26.

[22] Kumar, "Intermestic Approach," 50.

[23] Amy Aisen Elouafi, "The Colour of Orientalism: Race and Narratives of Discovery in Tunisia," *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 33, no. 2 (2010): 254-257.

hierarchical social ordering that could legitimate imperial control.[24] Maxime Rodinson traces the

origins of "the *homo islamicus*," or the Muslim race: "The Oriental may have always been

characterized as a savage enemy, but during the Middle ages, he was at least considered on the

same level as his European counterpart… In the nineteenth century, however, he became

something quite separate, sealed off in his own specificity."[25] This process of racialization turned

all Muslims (regardless of physical appearance, nation of origin, or socio-economic situation)

into one Muslim race. In this sense, Islamophobia operates as racism towards a Muslim

population.[26] As these scholars and others uncover the racist backbone of Orientalism, it is

important not to conflate Orientalism with racism and/or Islamophobia. While it is both accurate

and important to reveal how racism was essential to Orientalism, it is inaccurate to assume that

wherever there is racism and/or Islamophobia, there must be Orientalism.[27]

While the material means and racialized imperial motives to produce a discourse about

"the Orient" are generally considered prerequisite elements of Orientalism, the equation becomes

muddied when scholars weigh in on its essential tropes. As Said invokes the broader

conceptualizations of Orientalism discussed thus far, he simultaneously narrows its definition

when he argues, "Underlying all the different units of Orientalist discourse—by which I mean

simply the vocabulary employed whenever the Orient is spoken or written about—is a set of

representative figures, or tropes."[28] Said's deconstructive criticism reveals how these tropes more

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[24] Meghana Nayak, "Orientalism and 'Saving' US State Identity after 9/11," *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 8, no. 1 (2006): 47.

[25] Maxime Rodinson, *Europe and the Mystique of Islam* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002), 60.

[26] Steve Garner and Saher Selod, "The Racialization of Muslims: Empirical Studies of Islamophobia," *Critical Sociology* 41, no. 1 (2015): 9, doi:10.1177/0896920514531606.

[27] Kumar, "Intermestic Approach," 63. Projects of racial formation are different depending on the historical and material contexts which motivate them. Islamophobia in its current form derives from Orientalism, but has been reinvented to suit new political and economic agendas.

[28] Said, *Orientalism*, 71.

accurately denote myth than reality, since "we need not look for correspondence between the language used to depict the Orient and the Orient itself, not so much because the language is inaccurate but because it is not even trying to be accurate."[29] In *Covering Islam: How the Media and Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World,* Said observes imperial scholars and government agents are not interested in producing accessible knowledge about the Middle East or Islam for the sake of a pure or neutral understanding; rather, they build images that can serve their perceived (geo)political needs.[30] Since the Orient itself is a figment of the Western imagination, further insight may be gleaned from a more lucid understanding of the particular images which give shape to its dominant conceptualization.[31]

To demonstrate the perseverance of Orientalism, Said draws attention to tropes in common across European and American imperial discourses.[32] Since the conclusion of WWII, Said contends, "more or less diluted versions of the old Orientalism flourish—in the new academic jargons in some cases, in the old ones in others. But the *principal dogmas* of Orientalism exist in their purest form today in studies of the Arabs and Islam."[33] While he acknowledges the rhetoric of "Orientalism Now" has unique qualities, he simultaneously diminishes the significance of its uniqueness when he characterizes it as "simply the old Orientalist stereotypes dressed up in policy jargon."[34] Underneath the dressing and at the heart of Orientalist discourse, Said locates four principal dogmas:

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[29] Said, *Orientalism,* 71.

[30] Edward Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World* (New York: Vintage Books, [1981] 1997)*,* 4-7. See also: Kumar, "Intermestic Approach," 67.

[31] Said, *Orientalism,* 23.

[32] Kumar, *Islamophobia,* 41.

[33] Said, *Orientalism,* 284 & 300. Emphasis mine.

[34] Said, *Orientalism,* 321. "Orientalism Now" is the name of the final chapter in *Orientalism,* about the post-WWII era of US-led imperialism.

[O]ne is the absolute and systemic difference between the West, which is rational, developed, humane, superior, and the Orient, which is aberrant, undeveloped, inferior. Another dogma is that abstractions about the Orient… are always preferable to direct evidence drawn from modern Oriental realities. A third dogma is that the Orient is eternal, uniform, and incapable of defining itself… A fourth dogma is that the Orient is at bottom something either to be feared … or to be controlled.[35]

Said understands these four tropes to have survived the transition from the European colonial era of imperial domination to the American post-colonial era, despite the "appearance of refinement" in dominant US discourse.[36] Here he makes clear use of the logic that Orientalism is defined by its particular tropes.

Accepting Said's premise that the image of a *monolithic and unchanging* Orient serves as a defining trope of Orientalism, Jacobs comes to an opposing conclusion: that during and after WWII, Western imperial discourse transitioned from an Orientalist to a "post-Orientalist" framework for understanding the Middle East and Islam.[37] He locates the beginning of this departure at the advent of the Cold War: "While many specialists in the 1940s and 1950s [still] believed Islam determined the personal behavior of all Muslims, another strain of thought stressed growing fissures within this supposedly monolithic, global Muslim community."[38] Melani McAlister also characterizes dominant US discourse after WWII as "post-Orientalist," noting the strategic importance of reframing the Middle East as separate from the rest of the

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[35] Said, *Orientalism,* 300-301.
[36] Said, *Orientalism,* 296.
[37] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 10 & 19.
[38] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 63. Emphasis mine.

Orient for US policymakers.[39] Jacobs observes how specialists in the US continued to invoke monolithic conceptions of Islam or the Orient when they were useful, but contradictorily emphasized the great potential for external agents (primarily the US government) to catalyze change in the region.[40] The old Orientalist tropes employed in a post-colonial context might perversely hinder US objectives: How could the US executive branch convince Western audiences (including its own legislative branch) that the government would need to invest manpower, money, and military aid for the purpose of bringing change to an unchangeable region? Or dividing an undividable people?

Jacobs contends that even in the United States, "Orientalism remained the dominant framework for training new academic specialists," that is "until World War II forced scholars to develop *new ways of thinking* about the region."[41] The transition in prevailing modes of imperialism from that of European decadence to American benevolence, as well as the change in status from colony to sovereign nation-state for many peoples of the Middle East, demanded a rhetoric with more flexible tropes than Orientalism had to offer. An image of a stagnant Middle East was barely suited to assist a new superpower in fulfilling its desire to transform the region into an "Islamic Bloc" which could protect American interests while actively resisting Soviet infiltration.[42] Instead, the US executive branch was determined to induce "changes in attitudes" of the leaders and peoples of the Middle East via "an intensified psychological effort designed to support the various political, economic, and military measures being undertaken by the United

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[39] Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, & U.S. Interests in the Middle East since 1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 40.

[40] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 77; Kumar, *Islamophobia,* 35.

[41] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 19. Emphasis mine.

[42] Robert Dreyfuss, *Devil's Game: How the United States Helped Unleash Fundamentalist Islam* (New York: Holt Paperbacks, 2005), 10.

States in the area."[43] Jacobs argues, "*a new kind* of Middle East specialist emerged" during and especially after World War II, one who focused "solely on contemporary international political issues," as opposed to the Orientalist who understood the region through classical texts; and one who practiced a "generally more professional, secular, and scholarly type of political expertise" than traditional Orientalists.[44]

Deepa Kumar agrees that a new kind of specialist surfaced during the Cold War, but she disagrees that this specialist took over for the Orientalist. In *Islamophobia and the Politics of Empire* she specifies, "Two approaches guided the study of the Middle East: Orientalism, which was still dominated by philologists, and social scientific research, from which a new model known as 'modernization' would be developed."[45] Based in Max Weber's distinction between modern and traditional societies, the discourse of modernization theory dominated area studies from the 1950s through the 1970s, utilizing quantitative social data analysis to impose an otherizing schema of modern/superior versus traditional/inferior.[46] But despite the prevalence of modernization theory in area studies departments, Kumar is careful to note how Cold War policymakers were influenced by *both* Orientalism and modernization.[47] Yes, "Orientalism was *challenged* by social scientific research, but ultimately, "Orientalism survived."[48] Kumar's research serves as an important reminder that Orientalism did not suddenly disappear, and has in fact had a lasting influence upon Islamophobic discourse in the era of US hegemony.[49] Her

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[43] U.S. National Security Council, Executive Secretary Report, "United States Objectives and Policies with Respect to the Arab States and Israel" (Annex to NSC 129), April 7, 1952, in *Early Cold War U.S. Propaganda*, doc. 59.

[44] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 39.

[45] Kumar, *Islamophobia,* 35.

[46] Kumar, *Islamophobia,* 38.

[47] Kumar, *Islamophobia,* 65.

[48] Kumar, *Islamophobia,* 36. Emphasis mine.

[49] Deepa Kumar, "Islam and Islamophobia," *International Socialist Review* 52 (March-April 2007), 2; Kumar, "Intermestic Approach," 49.

observation that Orientalism survived, however, is not inconsistent with McAlister and Jacobs'

interpretation that the dominant discourse in the US moved away from accepting Orientalism as

the *universal* norm for imagining the Middle East and Islam.

A network of government, academic, and private producers of knowledge in the United

States made three rhetorical moves that signaled a clear and intentional distancing from the

Orientalist framework. First, they adopted "Middle East" as their designation for the portion of

North Africa and Asia that spans from the Mediterranean to the Arabian Sea, and generally

stopped discussing the area as part of "the Orient," a frame which had encompassed *all* of Asia

during the colonial era.[50] Second, they began to refer to the people of this region as "Arabs" or

"Muslims" rather than "Orientals."[51] Third, they ceased identifying as Orientalists and instead

termed themselves "area specialists."[52] These efforts confirm a distinctively social-scientific

(intellectualized, professionalized, and secularized) style of relating to the region and its peoples.

When Said insists on Orientalism's vitality and chalks US discourse up to "old Orientalist

stereotypes dressed up in policy jargon," he embarks in ambiguous rhetorical theorization. Any

trope, defined as "a word or expression used in a figurative sense," is *always already* a "dressed

up" stereotype.[53] Said's analysis obfuscates a recognition that when a trope is dressed *anew*, it

theoretically ceases to be that trope. In other words, the rhetorical act of "dressing up" the trope

transforms it into a new one. This chapter uncovers how the US intelligence network redressed

"the Orient" and "Orientalism," and in doing so shifted the primary Western framework for

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[50] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 26-29.

[51] Said, *Orientalism,* 285.

[52] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 23.

[53] "Trope," *Merriam Webster Online Dictionary*, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/trope, accessed January 2017.

imagining the region that was "the Orient" then, and which is "the Middle East" now, only because Western powers (re)constructed it as such.

This chapter defines Orientalism as *a dominant Western discourse which constructs a transcendental hierarchy between the West, and a monolithic and unchanging Orient.* This definition accepts Said's characterization of Orientalism as "a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, [and] scholarship" as a necessary but insufficient understanding of its essence, and therefore rejects his claim that "anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient… is an Orientalist."[54] In the absence of any limitations on the content of Orientalist discourse, even a critical scholar like Said would be considered an Orientalist.[55] Understanding Orientalism as a dominant discourse with two essential tropes narrows the frame so the concept can be theorized on a more granular level. The definition this chapter provides subsumes Said's four principle dogmas quoted above: the construction of *a transcendental hierarchy between the Orient and the West* encompasses the myth of an "absolute and systemic difference" and explains why "the Orient is at bottom something either to be feared… or to be controlled," whereas the construction of *a monolithic and unchanging Orient* encompasses the myth that "the Orient is eternal, uniform, and incapable of defining itself" and explains why "abstractions about the Orient… are always preferable to… evidence drawn from modern Oriental realities."[56]

Only a definition which theorizes Orientalism as a discourse with specific tropes exhibits the precision necessary to determine whether Orientalism thrives in the post-colonial context of US imperialism. With the definition presented by this section in mind, Sections 4.2 and 4.3

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[54] Said, *Orientalism*, 2.

[55] See Gilbert Achar's critique of Said's geographical essentialism. Gilbert Achar, *Marxism, Orientalism, Cosmopolitanism* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2013).

[56] Said, *Orientalism,* 300-301. See footnote 38.

support an interpretation that US executive branch rhetoric deviated from *both* of Orientalism's essential tropes during the early Cold War (or the Truman and Eisenhower years). Informed by an interactive analysis of the domestic and foreign policy agendas discussed in Chapters Two and Three, each of the next two sections outlines one of the Orientalist tropes provided within the definition above, respectively, before moving on to uncover and explain the US executive branch's course of discursive deviation. This tropic analysis enables a more precise substantiation of McAlister and Jacobs' argument that dominant Western imperial discourse transitioned from an Orientalist to a "post-Orientalist" framework after WWII.

4.2   REIMAGINING THE EAST/WEST BINARY

Orientalists divided the globe into a dualistic geography of East and West.[57] In the European colonial era, the East or "the Orient" was understood to encompass half the world: Asia, South Asia, the Middle East, and Africa.[58] The locus of "the West" was Western Europe, for while "the New World" was growing in economic and geopolitical prowess, Great Britain and France remained the greatest global and imperial powers of this era. Said describes Orientalism as "an imaginative geography," which has always had less to do with the Orient itself than with fashioning "our world" (the West) by normalizing and naturalizing white European domination.[59] Eighteenth and nineteenth century Orientalists served colonial administrations by generating a "new awareness of the Orient" as ineradicably distinct from, and antithetical to, the West.[60] Their rhetoric halved not only the land, but the peoples of the Earth as well, constructing

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[57] Said, *Orientalism,* 45; Walia, *Edward Said,* 40.

[58] Said, *Orientalism*, 50-52.

[59] Said, *Orientalism,* 54; 12.

[60] Said, *Orientalism,* 42.

"the Oriental" as "a member of a subject race and not exclusively an inhabitant of a geographical area."[61] Kumar elucidates, Orientalism is based upon a civilizational view of history, or "the idea that civilizations come into being, prosper, and then decline."[62] The presumed strength, rationality and superiority of Western civilization over that of the weak, barbaric and undeveloped Oriental implied a burden upon the West to "penetrate" and "give shape and meaning to" the Orient, both militarily/materially and culturally/discursively.[63]

Although the binary construction of East and West did not disappear, it was fundamentally altered after WWII, as the US and the USSR rose to geopolitical prominence at opposite ends of an emerging bipolar international order. Europe's experience of physical and economic devastation left Western Europe in a state of decline, whereby trauma and overstretch forced European empires to substantially withdraw from their colonies. The US and the USSR sat in prime positions to fill this power vacuum, as each had industrialized economies, had achieved moral victory in allying against Germany, and was further detached from imperialism than European colonial powers. As the two nations rose, so did each's fear and spite of the other, thus beginning the Cold War. This new framework gave rise to reformulated imaginations of "the East" and "the West," whereby the former developed into primary affiliation with Russia, the latter into primary affiliation with America. As the center of power in the West shifted from Europe to the United States, the emerging network of US government intelligence agents and collaborating scholars gained a more significant bearing on dominant Western discourse, and specifically on the Western imagination of the Middle East and Islam.[64]

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[61] Said, *Orientalism*, 92.

[62] Kumar, *Islamophobia*, 30.

[63] Said, *Orientalism,* 14 & 40-45; Kumar, *Islamophobia,* 39.

[64] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 6.

The image of a West and an East engrossed in a post-colonial "Cold War" looked very different than the West and East of colonial times, which had been fixed into a naturalized master/slave dichotomy. Under the old order, the West fancied itself a paternal figure with a divine right and an obligation to dominate the East; the Orient was racialized, sexualized, feminized and identified with absence to prime it for European penetration and occupation.[65] Even in the nineteenth century, as justifications for colonialism shifted from religious to scientific grounds, scientific racism had justified an imperialist racial superiority complex.[66] Whereas the East (i.e. the Orient) had been positioned as a passive threat in the dominant Western imaginary of the colonial era, the East (i.e. the Soviet Union) was framed as *the most active threat* to the West in the post-colonial era. As the Cold War materialized, the East and the West came to emblemize two paternal world leaders vying for unipolar hegemony. Unlike past global superpowers, however, these two would have to establish dominance through proxies, forging alliances instead of capturing colonies. The multiplication of sovereign nation-states in post-colonial Africa and Asia called for a new imperial approach: to achieve geopolitical prominence, superpowers would have to rely upon their capacity to persuade Third World leaders to commit to security partnerships.[67]

In the Western pole of the new world order, "the Orient" was no longer a suitable frame for conceptualizing "the East" in its entirety.[68] If US executive agents had limited their rhetoric to the tropes of Orientalism, they would have lost the ability to theoretically separate any post-colonies of the Middle East from the Soviet Union. As a result, they would have ceded important

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[65] Said, *Orientalism*, 179-184.

[66] Kumar, *Islamophobia,* 29-30.

[67] Osgood, *Total Cold War,* 104-115.

[68] McAlister, *Epic Encounters,* 40.

and winnable spheres of influence to their enemy. To facilitate participation in the emerging "game of nations" with the USSR, the executive branch moved past the confines of Orientalism by strategically reinventing geographies.[69] In 1944, the State Department established, for the first time, an office of Near Eastern Affairs, broken into three divisions: Near Eastern Affairs, Middle Eastern Affairs, and African Affairs.[70] These designations provided US agents with a more technical or professional lens to manipulate former colonies into submitting to a new imperial order. Colonies graduated to the "Third World," a new conceptual geography categorized last on a tripartite geopolitical hierarchy and primed for political, economic, and/or military penetration by either the "Second World" of the Soviet Union or the "First World" of Euro-America.[71]

US executive agents had another significant reason not to embrace the geographical schema of Orientalism: its complex and maturing relationship with Israel. The US supported the creation of a Jewish state in Israel in 1948, and has since relied upon Israel as an ally which helps protect Western hegemony in the region. As the Jewish population steadily rose in the Middle East following the termination of WWII and the Holocaust, Western discourse ironically pushed Jews further and further from the category "Oriental" and its associated stereotypes.[72] In classical Orientalist thought, Jews and Muslims alike were more closely associated with each other than with Christians, as both were considered Semitic, therefore Asiatic, therefore Oriental.[73] After WWII, Jews were reclassified as "Western" and became more closely associated with Christians,

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[69] Miles Copeland, *The Game of Nations* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1969). Copeland worked for the CIA in the early Cold War era who defected from sworn secrecy to reveal US strategy in the post-colonial Middle East. He speaks of the Cold War as a "game of nations" between the US and the USSR, whereby the two powers competed for unipolar hegemony via the winning and losing of post-colonial allies.

[70] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 28.

[71] Osgood, *Total Cold War*, 398. The concept of the Third World is itself a byproduct of the binary logic of the Cold War. In the 1950s, analysts divided the world into three tiers: "First World" indicated alignment with the US, "Second World" with the USSR, and "Third World" with the non-aligned.

[72] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 214.

[73] Little, *American Orientalism,* 11.

in what Said refers to as the smooth "transference of a popular anti-Semitic animus from a Jewish to an Arab target."[74] In the post-colonial era, the Arab has been posited antagonistically to the Jew; both an ideological hatred for Jews and a practical disruption of Israeli existence are assumed intrinsic characteristics of Arab-ness.[75] The perceived necessity to identify Israel with the West, despite its physical location in the Middle East, evidences a new significance in the relationship between political identity and conceptions of geography.

In the Cold War era, a nation's designation as Western or Eastern could not so easily be determined by locating its position on a globe; its (geo)political orientation, or identity, became a more significant determinant. "Western" nations embraced liberalism and democracy, and thus belonged on the side of the US and its Western European allies. "Eastern" nations were associated with communism (falsely applied as an umbrella term for all forms of socialism and often other anti-Western ideologies) and identified with the Soviet Union. Imagined as a competition not only between two superpowers, but between two mutually exclusive world orders, the Cold War framework called upon the leaders and allies of the US and the USSR to annihilate the other's power to fully actualize a unipolar order. As Chapters Two and Three revealed, US executive agents would not accept Cold War neutralism as a position which political leaders could legitimately occupy. Instead, a bifurcated *with us or against us* logic was applied to diplomacy, sometimes pushing leaders like Nasser and Malcolm X closer to Russia in the process. The Truman Doctrine volunteered US military, diplomatic, and economic support to any free state who would assist in the global struggle against Soviet Communism.[76] But nations

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[74] Said, *Orientalism,* 286.

[75] Said, *Orientalism,* 286-287.

[76] Lamont Colucci, *The National Security Doctrines of the American Presidency: How They Shape Our Present and Future* (Santa Barbara: Praeger, 2012), 314.

or parties who refused the offer were treated with suspicion, political hostility, and sometimes economic and/or military intervention.

Early Cold Warriors pictured the globe as divided into the God-worshipping "Free World" of the West versus the atheistic (and materially impoverished) tyranny of Soviet Communism to the East.[77] Leaders of "Third World" post-colonial nations were asked (coerced) to position themselves within this new dualism.[78] US promotion of modernization and "Westernization" in the post-colonies fostered a vision of the West that had the potential to expand into the (former) Orient through acts of political, economic, and cultural penetration.[79] Unlike its European predecessors, the emerging US empire officially championed the Western way of life as one naturally and hypothetically available to all people, from all races and all hemispheres. The rising significance of geopolitical identity marks a definitive shift away from the colonial era, wherein geopolitical domination was justified via the naturalization of global racial hierarchies. Mahmood Mamdani explains that in the colonial era, "laws of war applied to wars among the civilized nation-states, but laws of nature were said to apply to colonial wars, and the extermination of the lower races was seen as a biological necessity."[80] But as colonies were rapidly graduating to nation-states, imperial leaders were forced to acknowledge post-colonial governments as "independent members of the world."[81] US executive agents thereby repositioned Third World post-colonies somewhere in between "civilized nation-states" and

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[77] Colucci, *Doctrines,* 312 & 326-328 & 336-339. Truman and Eisenhower both characterized the Cold War in religious terms (good vs. evil), requiring people of faith to contain the Soviet Union and/or liberate the oppressed from its shackles. \

[78] Stephen Kinzer, *The Brothers: John Foster Dulles, Allen Dulles, and Their Secret World War* (New York: Holt, 2013).

[79] Osgood, *Total Cold War,* 115.

[80] Mahmood Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror* (New York: Three Leave Press, 2004)*,* 7.

[81] U.S. National Security Council, "Objectives… Arab States and Israel."

"lower races," in the sense that their value was determined by their willingness to align with the US empire and to serve its expanding hegemony.[82]

The transition into post-colonialism and the Cold War geopolitical order thus brought with it new conceptualizations of "inside" and "outside" the East and the West.[83] The case of Israeli Jews advancing from the category of Oriental to that of Western, as they migrated from Europe to the Middle East, is evidence of this phenomenon. Chapters Two and Three also demonstrate the fading connection between the geo-spatial location of a nation, and its association with a geographically-centered pole. Chapter Two analyzed the FBI's rhetorical positioning of the Nation of Islam as an anti-American, anti-Western, and communist (sympathizing) cult. By targeting the NOI as a domestic and international security threat, executive discourse produced an image of "the black Muslims" as outsiders to the Western order emerging from inside the geographical and legal confines of the West.[84] Ignoring the NOI's decolonial demand for nation-statehood, the FBI rhetorically situated NOI members as traitors, who "disavow their allegiance to the United States and pledge their allegiance only to Allah and do not consider it their duty to… serve in the United States Armed Forces as they cannot serve two masters."[85] Despite the Cold War promise that liberalism was built to protect freedoms such as speech, political organization, and religious expression, the FBI equated Americanness with

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[82] Said, *Covering Islam,* 106.

[83] Timothy Barney, *Mapping the Cold War: Cartography and the Framing of America's International Power* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 61-95.

[84] I use the condition "emerging from the inside the West," instead of merely "inside the West," as to distinguish the NOI from immigrant groups, who have also historically been cast as outsiders on the inside. NOI leaders, like Elijah Muhammad and Malcolm X, objected to the classification of NOI members as American or African-American, because their people were stolen from Africa and brought to America as slaves. Nevertheless, the US executive branch treated NOI members and leaders as Americans, subject to American laws and extralegal surveillance.

[85] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Boston Report, "Malcolm X Little," file no. 100-399321, section 1, May 4, 1953, cited in: Clayborne Carson, *Malcolm X: The FBI File*, ed. David Gallen (New York: Carroll and Graf, 1991), 100.

loyalty to the American military and its objectives, allowing it to frame acts of rhetorical and political resistance as anti-Western.

While FBI agents scripted the NOI as ideological outsiders who belonged inside the West, their counterparts in the CIA and State Department concurrently situated Islamists in the Middle East as insiders to the Western order emerging from outside the geographical and legal confines of the West. Chapter Three uncovered a strategy advanced by the Truman and Eisenhower administrations to form alliances with and strengthen Islamist parties, as a means to undercut Soviet, Communist, and/or Arab Nationalist influence in the Middle East. US executive agents employed the rhetorical tool of *identification*, or the process of using language to reveal shared motives and encourage action. In *A Rhetoric of Motives,* Kenneth Burke explicates the process of identification through the metaphor of two men:

> A is not identical with his colleague, B. But insofar as their interests are joined, A is *identified* with B. Or he may *identify himself* with B even when their interests are not joined, if he assumes that they are, or is persuaded to believe so.
> Here are ambiguities of substance. In being identified with B, A is "substantially one" with a person other than himself. Yet at the same time he remains unique, an individual locus of motives. Thus he is both joined and separate, at once a distinct substance and con-substantial with another.[86]

Burke's sequencing of communicative acts applies to interpersonal relations, but also to political and geopolitical configurations; A and B could just as easily represent two political parties, or two sovereign nation-states. In identifying the US as a religious ally with a shared motive to defeat the atheism of communism in the region, early Cold War executive agents assumed con-

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[86] Kenneth Burke, *A Rhetoric of Motives* (New York: Prentice-Hall, 1952), 20-21.

substantiality with both the Wahhabi government of Saudi Arabia and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. Even if motivated by geopolitical strategy, these discursive acts of identification explicitly contradicted the Orientalist myth that peoples of the Orient were *categorically* unable to access or accomplish the intellectual, moral, or political capacities of the West. At least some were! And although modernization theory advanced an otherizing schema that resembled Orientalism in portraying the "First World" as superior and paternal to the "Third World," this new framework understood superiority as rooted in political and cultural differences, rather than natural or ontological ones.[87]

In the early Cold War era, US executive branch rhetoric departed from Orientalism as it ceased to presume an absolute difference between "the West" and "the Orient." While the West remained in an antagonistic relationship with the East, the East itself transformed. Now affiliated with the USSR and communism, the East had grown into a force which threatened to engulf the area formerly known as the Orient. Early Cold War discourse suggested that the post-colonies of the Third World could choose their political and economic orientation: East or West. That a choice, albeit bifurcated, was offered at all marks a significant shift in imperial logic: leaders in a post-colonial era needed mutual affiliation or identification with post-colonies to justify and expand Western empire. Because "from the point of view of psychological warfare alone," the US executive branch needed "desperately some common ground to which we welcome the Muslims and Arabs," the Orientalist presumption of absolute difference would prove to them counter-productive.[88] Attempts to build bridges between the US and Islam validate Kumar's observation that "the notion of a transhistoric 'clash of civilizations' between a united Christian

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[87] Kumar, *Islamophobia,* 39.
[88] U.S. Consulate General William A. Eddy, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia Letter to Miss Dorothy Thompson, June 7, 1951, in *Early Cold War U.S. Propaganda*, doc. 26.

West and a Muslim East is highly flawed."[89] Early Cold Warriors, even if motivated by military alliance-building strategy, instituted a paradigm shift in the dominant Western conceptualization of (Middle) East/West relations. Section 4.3 analyzes a second strategic departure from the Orientalist paradigm, which permitted the Truman and Eisenhower administrations to divide and conquer the post-colonies of the former Orient.

4.3   DIFFERENTIATING THE ORIENT

Whereas the last section documented the post-colonial deviation from the Orientalist trope of an absolute difference between the East and the West, this section turns to reflect upon the simultaneous retreat from the trope of a monolithic Orient. In the European colonial era, the Orient and its people were conceptualized as homogenous, unchanging, and even incapable of revision.[90] Said describes how the European "knowledge of Orientals, their race, character, culture, history, traditions, society, and possibilities" was understood as "tested and unchanging knowledge, since 'Orientals' for all practical purposes were a Platonic essence."[91] For this reason, Orientalists perpetually turned to foundational religious texts to explain even contemporary Oriental phenomena.[92] Any Muslim peoples could be studied without consideration of their contingent socioeconomic or political circumstances.[93] While the trope of a monolithic Muslim population has certainly remained a popular perspective in (post- WWII) dominant US discourse, early Cold War executive branch strategy disrupted the continuity of

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[89] Kumar, *Islamophobia,* 24.

[90] Said, *Orientalism,* 96 & 301.

[91] Said, *Orientalism,* 38.

[92] Kumar, *Islamophobia,* 42; Jacobs, *Imagining,* 62.

[93] Said, *Orientalism,* 105.

myth-making about Islam, challenging the taken-for-granted-ness of this Orientalist trope.[94] The research presented within this dissertation reveals how the Truman and Eisenhower administrations (and their affiliated networks) divided Muslim peoples and leaders into "good Muslims" and "bad Muslims," thereby abandoning the notion of a monolithic Orient.

Jacobs exposes "contradictions in the ways members of the post-World War II informal transnational network of specialists interpreted Islam and its role in the international political arena."[95] While many specialists still wrote as if early doctrines of Islam determined the behavior of all Muslims, a growing contingent stressed differences and fissures within the Muslim population.[96] These new knowledge-makers often "drew on an Orientalist framework that emphasized an unchanging and monolithic Islam while also emphasizing the dramatic impact of externally driven change."[97] Since discourse is the operationalization of rhetoric by those in power to suit their own goals, it should be no surprise that these contradictions in rhetoric are byproducts of contradictions in US early Cold War strategy. For as Kumar notes, "ideas travel in multiple directions because they suit the interests of various constituencies" within the geopolitical arena.[98] Particularly with regards to political Islam, the emerging American empire faced a complex conundrum resulting from sometimes conflicting political and geopolitical goals: while the CIA and Department of State perceived a need to partner with and embolden Islamists in the Middle East, the FBI was simultaneously pursuing a strategy to discredit and thwart the growth of the Nation of Islam domestically.

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[94] Kumar, *Islamophobia,* 36-38.

[95] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 77.

[96] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 63.

[97] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 77.

[98] Kumar, "Intermestic Approach," 67.

As Chapter Three revealed, the Truman and Eisenhower administrations attempted to mobilize Islam against communism and nationalism, to bridge ideological and political gaps between the US and Muslims of the post-colonies, and to sponsor Saudi Arabia as a religious leader of the Middle East. These three efforts defy the discursive limitations of Orientalist doctrine. An Orientalist would portray Saudi Arabian Wahhabis and the Muslim Brotherhood in the same manner as they treated (all) other Muslims: as exotic, irrational, dangerous and inferior.[99] But if American agents adopted these same tropes, they would have compromised or derailed their own efforts to recruit as many nations as possible to join in the struggle against Soviet power.[100] Without the ability to divide Muslims into allies and enemies in the Cold War, the executive branch would have found it impossible to mobilize any native force in the Middle East against communism or Arab Nationalism.[101] Whereas the image of a "Muslim enemy" was constructed by ruling elites in Europe to advance colonial objectives, the "Muslim friend" was an addendum constructed by the Americans in pursuit of post-colonial hegemony.

The need for friends in the Middle East led executive agents to circulate new images of an Islamic world capable of revision and division. The rhetoric of the Truman and Eisenhower Doctrines challenged the Orientalist assumption that Muslims were incapable of reason and rationality: that the US held Muslim and Arab leaders responsible for choosing and defending their own position within a newly-imposed geopolitical binary demonstrates that in America's game of nations with Russia, the post-colonies of the post-Orient were granted at least enough agency to choose a global leader. Only *those who chose wrong* were then characterized as

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[99] Said, *Orientalism,* 150-170.

[100] Colucci, *Doctrines,* 313 & 339. Both the Truman and Eisenhower Doctrines committed to the utilization of military, economic, and diplomatic resources in the procurement of Cold War allies abroad.

[101] Kumar, *Islamophobia,* 64-68; Kumar, "The Right Kind of 'Islam,'" *Journalism Studies* (2015), 2-10.

irrational or incapable of reason. The (geo)political orientation of Muslims indicated not only

their propensity for reason and democracy, but also their tendency for violence. Nations and

parties who positioned themselves against America's enemies were depicted as champions of

peace and regional stability. Leaders who contributed militarily in "Cold War" proxy battles

were applauded as just warriors using violence to abet a greater (even existential) threat. Within

this new differentiated framework, "good Muslims" (or good Arabs) were those who aspired to

fit into a remaking of the world in America's order, whereas "bad Muslims" (or bad Arabs) were

those who were drawn violently and unreasonably to communism and/or nationalism.

As foreign agents aimed to enhance the prestige of Islam and Islamism abroad, domestic

agents were simultaneously challenged with a rising movement of "bad Muslims" at home.

Chapter Two uncovered the executive branch's framing of the Nation of Islam as a threat to

national security and the liberal world order. But instead of debasing the NOI by grouping them

in with other Muslims and relying upon the colonial devaluation of Islam, American agents

condemned the organization for diverging from "orthodox Islam" in dangerous ways. Figure 1 in

Chapter Two outlined ten points of "clear comparison" selected by the FBI in its "effort… to

clarify the position of the [NOI] as a mongrelized product of the orthodox religion of Islam."[102]

That the agency valued orthodox and unorthodox Islam separately is the first sign of its

abandoning the constitutive Orientalist trope of a single Islam. But in particular, three of the

FBI's observations are worth reviewing here, as they distinctly reveal the US executive branch's

show of support for its new Muslim friends, even as it made new Muslim enemies.

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[102] U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation, Monograph prepared by the Central Research Section, "The Muslim Cult of Islam," June 1955, p. 52, in *FBI Records: The Vault*, "Nation of Islam," part 1, https://vault.fbi.gov/Nation%20of%20Islam, accessed June 2017.

First, the FBI reported that whereas orthodox Muslims are nonviolent, "the element of desire for violence appears to be an emotional stimulant for every practicing member" of the NOI. The agency upended the notion of an inherently-violent Islam when it specified that orthodox Muslims, "though allowed to fight in self-defense to preserve their national existence, were forbidden to provoke war." Second, agents observed that while orthodox Muslims are unprejudiced, "the very foundation of all [NOI] teachings" is "racial hatred." The FBI painted orthodox Islam as enlightened and egalitarian, in stating that the religion "has as its ideal the complete equality of all races and the unity of mankind." Third, the FBI praised orthodox Muslims for advancing important theories in science, in juxtaposition to the NOI, who contributes only to a "mutilation of such theories." Far from portraying Muslims as lacking an innate capacity for reason, the FBI commended orthodox Muslims for their "intense interest" in and "great contributions" to mathematics, geography, medicine, astronomy, and physics.[103] Additionally, the FBI's appeals to Muslim authority figures, residing and practicing inside the US, indicate the bureau's positioning of certain mosques as friendlier to the US than others. This rhetoric indicates a paradigm shift in the way Western imperial administrations imagined Islam: "good Muslims" gained access to the positive attributes and values that Orientalists had once limited to Western culture, while "bad Muslims" were castigated with tropes that Orientalists had applied uniformly to Muslim culture.

In *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots of Terror*, Mahmood Mamdani traces the strength of twenty first century Islamist terrorism to the late Cold War period, when the US executive branch provided military, diplomatic, and economic support

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[103] FBI, "Muslim Cult," 55-64.

for radical Islamists.[104] Most notably, the US and Saudi Arabia armed and trained the *mujahidin*,

led in part by Osama bin Laden to fight against the Soviet-backed communists in Afghanistan.[105]

Because the Vietnam War had created intense domestic hostility around entering US troops into

Cold War battles, the US executive branch was required to work through proxies in the

international arena if it had any chance of succeeding in "Rollback," the Reagan Doctrine's

aggressive bid to reverse defeats in the Third World.[106] Executive agents mobilized the radical

concept of Islamist "jihad" as an ideological and militaristic force to counter the "Godless Evil

Empire."[107] Violent extremists were heralded as "good Muslims," or in Reagan's words as

"courageous Afghan freedom fighters."[108] Muslims that cooperated with the USSR were

obviously "bad Muslims," but so too were moderates with a high level of tolerance for groups

that opposed the US agenda.[109] Mamdani assesses that within this framework, "Judgments of

'good' and 'bad' refer to Muslim *political identities*, not to cultural or religious ones."[110] For this

reason, Americans accepted an ironic reversal in the executive branch's valuing of Muslims after

the Cold War, and especially after 9/11/2001: radical Islamists became "bad Muslims" in their

transformation from America's freedom-fighter into America's terrorist; and secular moderates

graduated to "good Muslims" in their support for the War on Terror.[111]

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[104] Mamdani, *Good Muslim*, 11-12. Mamdani defines the late Cold War period as an era of proxy wars stretching from the end of the Vietnam War until the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

[105] Mamdani, *Good Muslim,* 128-133.

[106] Mamdani, *Good Muslim,* 87-96.

[107] Mamdani, *Good Muslim,* 128-134. "Evil Empire" was a name given to the Soviet Union by Ronald Reagan and repeated frequently by network pundits during the Cold War.

[108] U.S. President Ronald Reagan, "Message on the Observance of Afghanistan Day," March 21, 1983, in *Ronald Reagan Presidential Archives*, http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1983/32183e.htm.

[109] Mamdani, *Good Muslim,* 155.

[110] Mamdani, *Good Muslim,* 15. Emphasis mine.

[111] Mamdani, *Good Muslim,* 24.

Where Mamdani locates the "good Muslim, bad Muslim" template in US political rhetoric as originating in the late Cold War era, the research and analysis presented in this dissertation serves as evidence that its roots run even deeper: to the early Cold War strategies of the Truman and Eisenhower administrations. The success of a global decolonization movement which led to the independence of many post-colonies, combined with US executive branch objectives to expand Islamist influence in the Middle East while quelling Islamist resistance domestically, provided an impetus for the institutional re-imagination of Islam. Whereas Orientalists fabricated the Oriental race as homogenously "bad" using judgments of their culture and religion, specialists of the post-colonial era granted Muslims a higher degree of agency, dividing the "bad" from the "good" with valuations of political identity. "Bad Muslims" like Elijah Muhammad and Gamal Abdul Nasser were demonized in US executive discourse, while "good Muslims" like Said Ramadan and King Saud were made into friends of the American empire. In tandem with its reconceptualization of East-West relations, the US executive branch's delineation of "good" and "bad" Muslims marks a paradigm shift in the dominant Western imagination of Islam.

4.4   CONCLUSION

After reviewing its etymology, this chapter provided a definition of "Orientalism" as a dominant Western discourse which constructs a transcendental hierarchy between the West, and a monolithic and unchanging Orient. If scholars accept this as a suitable definition, then the evidence and analysis presented in this dissertation clearly validates that in the early Cold War era, dominant US discourse ceased to presume the universal legitimacy of the Orientalist paradigm for relating to the Middle East and Islam. In pursuit of global hegemony and Cold War

victory, US executive agents found themselves wanting to direct the political and ideological flow of Islam, both at home and abroad. In a post-colonial environment, however, with decolonization and anti-racist movements growing in strength, American agents could not find as much use in the Orientalist dogmas fabricated by their European predecessors. Because the US executive branch suddenly needed Muslim friends and allies, it forged ideological affiliations with "good Muslims," whom it differentiated from "bad Muslims," thus deviating from both constitutive tropes of Orientalism.

But deviation from a discursive framework does not necessarily equate to complete withdrawal; a new paradigm can replace an old one while still holding onto some of the latter's core assumptions. In this case, despite transcending the tropes of an absolute sameness amongst Orientals and an absolute difference between the Orient and the West, American discourse still suspended the colonial fantasy of Euro-American or white supremacy over Muslims and black people. The next chapter formulates a new designation for this framework, deemed "the lesser-evils paradigm for imagining Islam," which clarifies how the US mobilized an Islam-friendly discourse in the service of controlling or managing Muslim populations. This theory is designed to confirm, but also to supplement, the cataloguing of American post-colonial discourse as post-Orientalist. For while understanding what dominant American discourse *is not* has scholarly significance, accepting what it *is* provides opportunities for more complete analysis.

5.0 THE LESSER-EVILS PARADIGM FOR IMAGINING ISLAM

Significant internal and external factors drove transformations in US policy and discourse pertaining to Islam during the years spanning Truman and Eisenhower's presidential terms (1945-1961). Internally, the hegemonic ambitions of the US government grew, prompting the executive branch to expand US military, diplomatic, and cultural presence around the globe, and especially in the geo-strategic region of the newly-designated "Middle East." To assist in the projection of its power, the government increased its capacities via establishment of new intelligence agencies, which operated both at home and abroad to espouse and/or reinforce ideologies that could accommodate the nascent US Cold War agenda. Externally, the decline of European power, growth of a global decolonization movement, and corresponding geopolitical transition from colonialism to post-colonialism set the stage for new relations between Western imperial powers and "Third World" post-colonies. Meanwhile, the rise of a multidimensional anti-racist resistance movement in the US became an unavoidable force that the US executive branch would have to address and (at least somewhat) assuage.[1] As the Cold War between the US and USSR intensified, an ideological binary between liberalism and communism increasingly shaped US domestic and foreign policy agendas.

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[1] The movement was multidimensional in the sense that it was led by multiple parties, organizations and leaders, who would sometimes form coalitions, but who also worked independently, and who sometimes even opposed each other's methods of resistance. See section 2.2.

This complex series of transformations generated a rhetorical situation, requiring the US executive branch to revisit discursive templates that European colonial leaders had used to justify racialized imperialism. The tropes Orientalism had to offer about Muslims imposed limitations on the growth of US empire: without the ability to divide "good Muslims" from "bad Muslims," the executive branch would have lost opportunities to discredit and thwart the growth of Black Nationalism and Arab Nationalism alike. Moreover, the strict us/them, or East/West division of Orientalism would have precluded the possibility of formulating political or cultural bonds with (some) Muslim-majority post-colonial nations. Since US executive agents perceived the recruitment of Muslim proxies as essential to victory in the Cold War, then for tactical reasons alone they would have to reimagine the region formerly-known-as "the Orient." Through an analysis of primary documents backing US executive branch policy, this study has demonstrated that in the crucial era following World War II, dominant US discourse transitioned from an Orientalist to a post-Orientalist framework for relating to the Middle East and Islam.

A key wrinkle emerging from the analysis in Chapter Four, however, is that this transition was not exactly a clean break, or one that extinguished all uses of traditional Orientalist myths. The notion of a transcendental hierarchy between the East and West, and the concept of an unchanging and monolithic Orient, were both invoked frequently by intelligence agents and policymakers of the Cold War era (and have continued to be employed by US agents in the War on Terror and beyond). But despite the lingering of Orientalist tropes in dominant US discourse, it is still accurate to mark early Cold War US executive branch rhetoric as the entry point into a post-Orientalist era, because it was at this point that dominant discourse in the US moved away from accepting Orientalism as the universal framework for imagining the Middle East and Islam. Eras are defined by norms rather than exceptions or even regularities. Just as

colonization, or the conquest and occupation of indigenous land, is still practiced in the era of post-colonialism, Orientalism is still practiced in the era of post-Orientalism; but neither are the norm. As post-colonialism brought about a transition in the normative mode of Western domination over the non-Western world, it demanded a corresponding change in dominant discourse. Whereas Orientalism was designed to validate European colonialism, a new normative paradigm for imagining Islam was tailored to justify US empire.

To highlight the implications of these findings, this concluding chapter proposes a designation for the post-Orientalist approach invented by early Cold War US executive agents: the lesser-evils paradigm for imagining Islam. Section 5.1 reflects on how this form of lesser-evil reasoning developed from its early Cold War roots to become a strategic focus in later US Cold War efforts and beyond. Framing this phenomenon in a broader context, Section 5.2 explores the ethical, theological, and political entailments of lesser-evil reasoning. Section 5.3 steps back to review how this study's findings relate to ongoing theoretical concerns, such as the status of Orientalism, the relationship between rhetoric and imperialism, and the interactions of domestic and foreign policy. Section 5.4 contemplates some limitations of this study and closes by speculating about possible avenues for future research.

5.1   THE LESSER-EVILS PARADIGM FOR IMAGINING ISLAM

The last three chapters uncovered groundbreaking efforts by the US executive branch to identify and affiliate with Muslims and Islamists, yet it would be misleading to say these efforts grew out of some politically-neutral or intrinsic respect for these peoples. (Geo)political strategy dictated which nations, parties, and peoples were needed (or highly valuable) in the Cold War and in the battle for global hegemony; these calculations sparked episodes of rhetorical invention and

identification.[2] Because US executive agents considered Muslims and Arabs who affiliated with communism and/or nationalism as threats to the US and the "Free World" writ large, intelligence agents were tasked with formulating strategies to diminish the physical and ideological strength of these forces, both at home and abroad. By the same token, officials were tactically driven into alliances with leaders, parties, and governments whom would have otherwise been unwelcomed by Americans, such as imams in the US and Islamists abroad.[3] To justify these nontraditional relationships, agents positioned "good Muslims" as lesser-evil threats to the Western order, especially in comparison to "bad Muslims" and greater menaces.

US assertions of consubstantiality with Muslims strayed from the Orientalist trope of an absolute hierarchy between Islam and the West, yet this rhetoric still failed to accept Islam on terms of its intrinsic value. In a Cold War framework, Muslim allies were lauded as lesser-evil accomplices in a tactical struggle against greater-evil forces, namely Soviet Communism and Arab Nationalism. Within the lesser-evils paradigm for imagining Islam, US executive agents assumed a position of moral hierarchy even as they granted limited sovereignty and elevated agency to Muslim peoples. This section outlines the core tropes of this post-Orientalist framework, helping resolve two seeming-paradoxes in the rhetoric of the Truman and Eisenhower administrations: first, affiliations with Islam and Islamism were formulated on the basis of shared dedications to monotheism but were simultaneously considered deals with the devil; and second, the advancement of Islamic Fundamentalism was portrayed as essential to the security of a modern, liberal, and democratic world order.[4]

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[2] Deepa Kumar, *Islamophobia and the Politics of Empire* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2012), 35.

[3] Robert Dreyfuss, Devil's Game: How the United States Helped Unleash Fundamentalist Islam (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2005), 3 & 85-91; Kumar, Islamophobia, 65-80.

[4] Dreyfuss, *Devil's Game*, 66-91.

In attempting to secure alliances with Muslims and Islamists in the Middle East, the executive branch employed religion as common denominator between itself and its desired associates. In meetings with Muslim policymakers, US diplomats stressed that a dedication to God united Americans and Muslims, and that an infusion of monotheistic values into politics connected US democracy to Islamism.[5] Cosmetically, these acts of identification appeared to be good faith initiatives, yet declassified government documents tell a more complex story. In an internal memo prepared for the Secretary of State regarding the 1953 Colloquium on Islamic Culture,[6] for example, agents briefed that:

> On the surface, the conference looks like an exercise in pure learning. This in effect is the impression desired. The ostensible purpose is to create good will and to further mutual understanding between Islamic peoples and the United States. The International Information Administration promoted the Colloquium along these lines and has given it financial and other assistance because this psychological approach can make an important contribution to United States objectives in the Muslim area.[7]

The executive branch did not invest in the Colloquium because it was intellectually curious about Islam; it invested in light of its observation that "from the point of view of psychological warfare alone, we need desperately some common ground to which we welcome the Muslims and the

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[5] See section 3.2.2.

[6] See section 3.1.3.

[7] U.S. Department of State, Memorandum from G. Huntington Damon to Fred L. Hadsel, "Breifing Paper for Secretary – Islamic Colloquium," April 30, 1953, in *Documentation on Early Cold War U.S. Propaganda Activities in the Middle East*, ed. Joyce Battle, National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book no. 78, doc. 93 (2002), http://nsarchive2.gwu.edu//NSAEBB/NSAEBB78/docs.htm.

Arabs as respected and valued friends."[8] Calculations like these demonstrate that US agents

valued affiliations with particular Muslims for their extrinsic, or relational, properties.

Although the rhetoric of benevolent US hegemony discarded appeals to the naturalized

racial hierarchy which had been used to justify European colonialism, it still preserved an

assumption of Euro-American superiority over Muslim and Arab peoples and culture.[9] In a top-

secret memo summarizing the conclusions of a 1951 Conference of Middle East Chiefs of

Mission, the State Department reported, "all political regimes in the Middle East, with the

exception of Israel, are reactionary or rightest in comparison with our own."[10] Eisenhower

echoed this sentiment in a 1959 NSC meeting when he pondered: "If you go and live with these

Arabs, you will find that they simply cannot understand our ideas of freedom and dignity...They

have lived so long under dictatorships of one form or another, how can we expect them to run

successfully a free government?"[11] These assessments of inferiority justified a post-colonial

white man's burden—an obligation to hasten the transition of "Third World" nations into

modernity and a liberal world order.[12]

Matthew F. Jacobs explains how US policymakers envisioned "a unique transforming

mission for the United States in the Middle East."[13] To complement this mission, executive

agents portrayed Muslim leaders as capable participants in the geopolitical arena, but only as

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[8] U.S. Consulate General William A. Eddy, Dhahran, Saudi Arabia Letter to Miss Dorothy Thompson, June 7, 1951, in *Early Cold War U.S. Propaganda*, doc. 26.

[9] Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, & U.S. Interests in the Middle East since 1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 43-83.

[10] U.S. Department of State Report, "Conference of Middle East Chiefs of Mission (Istanbul, February 14-21, 1951): Agreed Conclusions and Recommendations," 1951, in *Early Cold War U.S. Propaganda*, doc. 59.

[11] Little, *American Orientalism,* 27-28.

[12] Matthew F. Jacobs, *Imagining the Middle East: The Building of an American Foreign Policy, 1918 – 1967* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2011), 7. Kumar also discusses the White Man's Burden in the context of US empire. Kumar, *Islamophobia,* 32-37.

[13] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 8.

secondary players and only under the paternal guidance and supervision of the United States. The State Department exhibited this attitude in prescribing "a positive demonstration of United States-United Kingdom responsibilities for the area" as "an essential condition to restoring stability in the Arab states."[14] This notion of Western responsibility mimicked the Orientalist presumption of Western superiority. But as Chapter 4 observed, the conditions of superiority shifted: whereas Orientalists had evaluated the "Oriental" as inferior using judgments of genetics and religion, early Cold War specialists based their valuations upon assessments of political identity. In the discourse of early Cold War executive agents, the Muslim graduated from vacant to partially-aware: post-colonial peoples were still racially-inferior, and thus more vulnerable to "communist penetration," yet they were moldable as "puppets" in the image of the West.[15] Although no longer posited as the antithesis of Western humanity (as that role had been discursively transferred to Russia), the Muslim or Arab was certainly understood as a force of greater-evil in relation to the Euro-American.

In *The Devil and Uncle Sam: A User's Guide to the Friendly Tyrants Dilemma*, Adam Garfinkle and a team of retired Cold War executive agents look back on their decades-long "challenge of maintaining useful relations with a special breed of regime: those whose rulers profess a community of interests with the United States and, at the same time, rule through authoritarian means."[16] Deemed "Friendly Tyrants" by Garfinkle and Daniel Pipes, this "special breed" poses a dilemma for US policymakers: "Concern with security drives hard-headed efforts to maintain cooperative ties, but repugnance (both popular and official) toward repressive

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[14] U.S. Department of State, "Conference of Middle East Chiefs," 3.

[15] Said, *Orientalism,* 206 & 312; Jacobs, *Imagining,* 79. See Section 4.2.

[16] Adam Garfinkle et al., *The Devil and Uncle Sam: A User's Guide to the Friendly Tyrants Dilemma* (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1992), vii.

regimes eventually erodes relations."[17] In confronting this conundrum, the authors pragmatically

conclude, "However much the conscience calls, such matters as access to minerals, the

protection of sea-lanes, foreign bases, and other aspects of geopolitics also matter."[18] Their

advice demonstrates how a utilitarian framework of lesser-evil reasoning dictated US orientation

to the post-colonies of the Middle East and elsewhere:

> The United States has been dealing with pro-American, or at least anti-
> communist, authoritarian regimes for as long as the United States has been a great
> power. These dealings have generally been justified as both necessary and lesser
> evils: necessary because only a minority of countries are democracies, and great
> powers cannot afford to ignore the majority that are not; and lesser because such
> relationships have been seen… as a means to contain the direct expansion of
> Soviet power and of movements ideologically sympathetic to it. Being able to
> distinguish between lesser and greater evils is a sign of moral sophistication, for
> whoever ignores the existence of varying degrees of evil is bound eventually to
> become a servant of evil.[19]

Cold Warriors presented the accommodation of evil as the most ethical course of action. Because

this frame required the recognition that "evils are still evils," the choice to align with one out of

necessity did not reflect an abandonment of morality.[20] On the contrary, the alternative of

foolishly adhering to principled absolutism would hand a strategic advantage to the greatest force

of evil. As the book title suggests, this logic obliged "Uncle Sam," or the US Federal

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[17] Daniel Pipes and Adam Garfinkle, Introduction to *Friendly Tyrants: An American Dilemma,* eds. Daniel Pipes and Adam Garfinkle (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991), xvi.

[18] Pipes and Garfinkle, Introduction to *Friendly Tyrants*, xvi.

[19] Garfinkle et al., *Devil,* 1.

[20] Garfinkle et al., *Devil,* 1.

Government, to partner with "the Devil" in the form of Friendly Tyrants, including Muslims and Islamists.

Deals with the devil were ethically justified only when the devil-to-be-dealt-with could serve against an evil greater than itself. While Islam was characterized as inferior to Western Christianity, and Islamism to liberal democracy, both became more attractive when Soviet Communism and Arab Nationalism lurked on the horizon.[21] And because "Islam" is not a fixed signifier but a malleable one, it could be reformulated for geopolitical gain.[22] Islam was interpreted as anti-communist, only when the US realized Muslims could help achieve victory in the Cold War; Islamism was praised as a force for global good, only when the US realized its anti-secular stance could assist in the defeat of Arab Nationalism. In sum, Islam could only be understood as lesser-evil in the presence of a greater-evil; in the absence of one, it would revert back to plain evil. This rationale resolves the ostensible paradox in the US Cold War mission to secure the "Free World" via the propagation of Islamic Fundamentalism and shunning of secular nationalism.[23] The ends-justify-the-means attitude of lesser-evil reasoning permitted tactical alliances with anti-democratic "Friendly Tyrants" like Saudi Arabia and the Muslim Brotherhood in the short-term, to ensure the long-term survivability of "the Free World."[24] These early Cold War imaginations strayed from the Orientalist notion of Islam as antagonistic to modernity and the Western world order.[25]

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[21] Jacobs, *Imagining,* 78. Jacobs explains that in the 1950s, the US executive branch and its network of intelligence agents made a new effort to understand Islam in relation to Communism and Nationalism.

[22] Deepa Kumar, "The Right Kind of 'Islam,'" *Journalism Studies* (2015), 2.

[23] Islamic Fundamentalism refers to a rigid institutionalized adherence to the original principles and rituals of Islam. Saudi Arabia and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt both practice(d) Islamic Fundamentalism. Nasser was a secular Muslim leader who stated he was not opposed to religion, but interpreted Islam as a socialist one. See Khalid bin Sayeed, *Western Dominance and Political Islam: Challenge and Response* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 22-42.

[24] See Section 3.3.3.

[25] Said, *Covering Islam,* 55.

Building on the conclusions of Chapter Four, the proposal of the lesser-evils paradigm for imagining Islam complicates Said's interpretation that in dominant US discourse, "Islam is made to cover everything that one disapproves of from the standpoint of Western rationality."[26] Absent a shared fear or a common enemy, Said is right that Muslims are valued negatively; in the presence of one, however, Muslims gain positive value.[27] Shared antagonisms generate new potentials for identification, a process by which humans use language to reveal motives and encourage action.[28] In *Realism and Relativism: A Perspective on Kenneth Burke,* Robert L. Heath explains, "humans often cannot create harmony without using the polarity of disharmony. People are more likely to associate together if they are *against* some other group or force."[29] In the context of the early Cold War, US associations with Muslims were the sacrificial yet indispensable rhetorical acts necessary to overcome the Communist obstacle to global US hegemony. If controlling the Middle East was essential to win the Cold War, which both Truman and Eisenhower believed, then Islam was the malleable key which could be molded to unlock US empire, guaranteeing liberal freedoms and existence on a global scale.

The constituent tropes of "the lesser-evils paradigm for imagining Islam" can hence be paraphrased into three:

> *1) Islam is evil/inferior in relation to the West*
>
> *2) Good Muslims are good/superior in relation to the greatest-evils*
>
> *3) Bad Muslims are evil/inferior in relation to Good Muslims*

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[26] Said, *Covering Islam,* 8.

[27] Kumar, "Right Kind," 2. Kumar also criticizes Said's over-simplification of all Western representations of Islam as negative, pointing out positive representations of Islam in US media outlets.

[28] Burke, *Rhetoric of Motives,* 55.

[29] Robert L. Heath, *Realism and Relativism: A Perspective on Kenneth Burke* (Macon: Mercer University Press, 1986), 225.

Underlying each trope is a *relational* understanding of Islam, in which its doctrines, its people, and the politics surrounding it are comprehended relative to American fears and objectives. As Chapter Four found, this calculative framework is incompatible with the myth of a monolithic and unchanging mass of exotic land and senseless people that was "the Orient." Although Muslims were still subjected to the geopolitical logic of normalized Euro-American superiority, the post-colonial market of ideology lent them the opportunity to be more- or less- valuable depending on their choice of political identity (and corresponding actions). Within the discourse of European Orientalism, the Orient represented the dark antithesis of the West, situated within a naturalized Christian ethics of black-and-white. In an era of emerging American empire, Muslim political parties and nation-states were painted with shades of gray between the white Western world order and the great evil empire to the East. To help elucidate and contextualize the significance of this transformation, Section 5.2 reflects upon the ethical, theological, and political roots of lesser-evil reasoning.

5.2   LESSER-EVIL REASONING

Lesser-evil reasoning is used in "practical conflict-situations where a greater evil can only be avoided when a lesser evil is caused or permitted."[30] The basic logic behind any lesser-evil justification is the same: if we are required to choose between two evils, we ought to choose the lesser-evil.[31] Lesser-evil reasoning plays an important role in liberal democracy: frequently employed by political philosophers and scientists, politicians, and lawyers, its application influences outcomes of democratic processes like criminal trials, domestic policies, and foreign

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[30] Georg Spielthenner, "Lesser Evil Reasoning and its Pitfalls," *Argumentation* 24 (2010): 139.

[31] Spielthenner, "Lesser Evil Reasoning," 140.

policies including wartime allowances.[32] In *The Lesser Evil: Political Ethics in an Age of Terror*,

Michael Ignatieff encapsulates one of the oldest questions in republican politics: "What lesser

evils may a society commit when it believes it faces the greater evil of its own destruction?"[33] To

answer this question, governments and their constituents must employ utilitarian logic to

calculate aggregate risks and rewards. An exemplary lesser-evil justification was provided by the

US military under Truman, in its decision to drop two atomic bombs on Hiroshima and

Nagasaki. It reasoned that the lives saved by the bombing, and its subsequent cessation of the

war, outnumbered the deaths it caused. The decision was therefore justified because it thwarted a

greater-evil.[34] While lesser-evil reasoning emerged as a predominant feature of liberalism, it has

roots in Christian theology.[35]

Some ethico-political traditions are guided by moral absolutes, or "absolutely

exceptionless moral norms whose violation is intrinsically evil."[36] In an absolutist framework,

lesser-evils (like nuclear war) cannot be rationalized; an act that is evil is wrong without

qualification and must never be performed.[37] But even theologians understand that moral

universals place significant limitations on leaders, especially in times of warfare.[38] In *Doing Evil*

to Achieve Good: Moral Choice in Conflict Situations, Richard McCormick and Paul Ramsey

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[32] Spielthenner, "Lesser Evil Reasoning," 140.

[33] Michael Ignatieff, *The Lesser Evil: Political Ethics in an Age of Terror* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 1.

[34] Kenneth Winston, "Necessity and Choice in Political Ethics: Varieties of Dirty Hands," in *Professional Ethics and Social Responsibility*, ed. Daniel E. Wueste (Rowman & Littlefield, 1994), 45. Surveyed WWII veterans are in consensus with Truman's calculus: "Truman Chose the Lesser Evil at Hiroshima," *Wall Street Journal,* May 18, 2016, A12.

[35] Eyal Weizman, *The Least of All Possible Evils: Humanitarian Violence from Arendt to Gaza* (London: Verso, 2011), 3.

[36] Spielthenner, "Lesser Evil," 142.

[37] Spielthenner, "Lesser Evil," 142.

[38] Richard McCormick, "Ambiguity in Moral Choice," in *Doing Evil to Achieve Good: Moral Choice in Conflict Situation* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1978), 7.

explain that whether a theological system permits lesser-evil acts depends on "the moral relevance and decisiveness of the distinction between what is *directly intended* and what is only *indirectly intended* or actively *permitted*."[39] Those sympathetic to lesser-evil reasoning find the distinction significant: an act of evil which is directly intended can never be justified; but an act of evil which is indirectly intended, or permitted because of circumstance, is qualitatively different and thus possible to excuse on moral terms. McCormick summarizes centuries of Catholic moral thought as tolerating evil only when "a proportionately grave reason for allowing evil to occur" exists. In such cases, "the resultant evil [is] referred to as an 'unintended byproduct' of the action, only indirectly voluntary and justified by the presence of a proportionately grave reason."[40] *Jus ad bellum,* or just war theory, notarized by a community of scholars wherein theologians played a significant role, is premised upon the principle of proportionality: that the total benefits of war must outweigh the total harms.[41]

The post-colonial condition demanded rhetorical calculations of proportionality to justify imperial meddling in the politics of the post-colonies. In *The Least of All Possible Evils: Humanitarian Violence from Arendt to Gaza,* Eyal Weizman shows that in the context of benevolent hegemonic leadership, application of lesser-evil reasoning requires a constant policing of the world in order to measure and determine the relativity of evils.[42] Liberal state apparatuses partake in a form of governmentality, in which they presume the inevitability and necessity of militarized presence in the post-colonies and then pursue the path of engagement they have calculated to produce "the best of all possible worlds," or the optimum permutation of

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[39] Richard McCormick and Paul Ramsey, Introduction to *Doing Evil.* Emphasis mine.

[40] McCormick, "Ambiguity," 7.

[41] Andrew Fiala, *The Just War Myth: The Moral Illusions of War* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2008), 38-39 & 89.

[42] Weizman, *Least,* 2.

good and evil.[43] In a 1978 lecture at the Collège de France, Michel Foucault firstly defines governmentality as: "The ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses, and reflections… that allow the exercise of… [a] form of power, which has as its target population, as its principal form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security."[44] The divine law and order which had undergirded colonial power was substituted by a marketplace of good and evil, in which ethics were determined by a "vulgar pragmatism"—what works must be right![45]

In *Covering Islam,* Said confirms the supply-and-demand-based production of dominant US discourse, revealing how images of Islam are used by the government and media to forward the US agenda. Within this framework, Islam "is not an interlocutor but in a sense a commodity."[46] Covert and overt moves to distinguish the good or legitimate Muslims from the bad or inauthentic confirm the endurance of the colonial presumption of the *manageability* of Muslim populations. The image of Western management, however, had transformed from a natural right into a liberal responsibility. To recruit Muslim allies, the US executive branch and its network of intelligence agents assumed the mantle of *interpretive authority* over Islam.[47] Foucault distinguishes sovereign authority from governmentality in noting the latter is practiced primarily by "employing tactics rather than laws, and even of using laws themselves as tactics— to arrange things in a way that… such-and-such ends may be achieved."[48] Whereas colonial

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[43] Weizman, *Least,* 2-3 & 8.

[44] Michel Foucault, "Governmentality," in *Power*, Essential Works of Foucault 1954-1984, ed. James D. Faubion (New York: The New Press, 2000), 219-220.

[45] Mamdani, *Good Muslim,* 234.

[46] Said, *Covering Islam,* 150.

[47] Said, *Orientalism,* 308. Said writes about Western interpretative authority over an Orient presumed to be monolithic and unchanging. This study is in line with Kumar's observation that interpretative authority carried over into the landscape of a divided Middle East. Kumar, "Right Kind."

[48] Foucault, "Governmentality," 211.

powers impose laws upon colonies, post-colonial governments enact a series of tactical measures upon post-colonial allies and enemies.[49] Interpretive authority combined with military and economic prowess gave inescapable force unilateral US executive branch tactics. These measures included economic and political manipulation, "psychological warfare," and military basing or intervention.[50]

Pertaining to the outcomes of lesser-evil governmentality, Ignatieff asks: "Is there no moral limit to what a republic can do when its existence is threatened?"[51] When a society feels vulnerable to a great force (X), the logic of lesser-evils may permit that society to take any unethical action short of (X). If (X) is extinction, great injustices (like nuclear warfare) may be vindicated in the name of winning a war or saving humanity.[52] While Ignatieff remains confident in the checks and balances of liberal democracies, which he claims are "all guided by a constitutional commitment to minimize the use of dubious means—violence, force, coercion, and deception—in the government of its citizens," many scholars are less faithful.[53] In *The Just War Myth: The Moral Illusions of War,* Andrew Fiala criticizes the US government for exaggerating threats in order to skew utilitarian risk-calculus and justify its violations of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello.*[54] For example, the "existential" threat conjured by the Bush administration in its War on Terror made the 2003 preemptive invasion of Iraq, as well as the use of illegal surveillance and interrogation tactics, more palatable to the American people and to US Congress.[55] Gordon R.

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[49] Kumar, *Islamophobia,* 80. Kumar identifies the one constant in US policy toward Islam is that Muslims have been pegged as allies or enemies for tactical, rather than ideological reasons.

[50] See Chapter Three.

[51] Ignatieff, *Lesser Evil,* 1.

[52] Fiala, *Just War,* 6.

[53] Ignatieff, *Lesser Evil,* 16.

[54] Fiala, *Just War,* 12-14. *jus ad bellum* is a set of ethical guidelines for entering war, whereas *jus in bello* is the set of guidelines for conducting war.

[55] Fiala, *Just War,* 14.

Mitchell and Robert P. Newman interpret the War on Terror as a revival of Cold War logic; in both cases, the construction of a singular and existential threat to Western humanity justified an extended period of heightened US military presence and police powers.[56]

Threat construction, lesser-evil reasoning, and hegemonic aspirations combine in post-colonial US discourse to produce a "state of exception," whereby a sovereign power (usually the executive branch) is granted authority to suspend the laws and moral norms that dictate liberal (geo)politicking *only* to confront an emergency.[57] But when the crisis spans decades, the "state of exception" becomes the norm, often solidifying itself institutionally.[58] Some scholars disapprove of the lowering of moral standards facilitated by lesser-evil reasoning. Mamdani blames the rise of Islamist terrorism in the twenty first century on US promotion of low-intensity conflicts and guerilla warfare, or "terrorism by another name," in the late Cold War era.[59] Hannah Arendt foreshadowed the blowback of the Cold War in her 1950 essay "The Eggs Speak Up," where she condemned the US strategy to prop up (friendly) tyrannies and dictatorships as part of a broader strategy of defeating totalitarianism. Arendt advocates a "radical negation of the whole concept of the lesser-evil in politics, because far from protecting us against the greater ones, the lesser-evils have invariably led us into them."[60] Lesser-evil reasoning gives policymakers a convenient method to gain legitimacy for foreign and domestic policies that constituents would normally (under non-emergency conditions) object to on moral and/or legal grounds.

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[56] Gordon R. Mitchell and Robert P. Newman, "By 'any measures' necessary: NSC-68 and the Cold War roots of the 2002 National Security Strategy," in *Hitting First: Preventative Force in US Security Strategy*, eds. Gordon R. Mitchell and William Walton Keller (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006), 70-90.

[57] Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty,* ed. & trans. George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 5-13.

[58] Giorgio Agamben, *State of Exception,* trans. Kevin Attell (Chicago: Univesity of Chicago Press, 2005), 1-3.

[59] Mamdani, *Good Muslim,* 96 & 118. See also: Dreyfuss, *Devil's Game.*

[60] Hannah Arendt, "The Eggs Speak Up" (1950), in *Essays in Understanding, 1930-1954: Formation, Exile, and Totalitarianism*, ed. Jerome Kohn (New York: Shocken Books, 2005), 270-271. Arendt specifies that after the fall of Germany, totalitarianism referred to communism more than anything else.

The characteristics of lesser-evil reasoning can be summarized as follows: it rejects absolutism in favor of utilitarianism, it accepts the inevitability of some evil and aims for the optimum balance of good and evil, and it encourages moral sacrifices for the purpose of managing violence. As this study has shown, the rhetorical situation generated by a complexity of internal and external factors in the early Cold War era was met by US executive agents with an imposition of this type of reasoning and governing. The lesser-evils paradigm for imagining Islam rejects the principled absolutism of Orientalism in favor of an approach that allows policymakers to choose Muslim allies deemed useful in securing US interests. While Muslims remained in a position of relative evil and inferiority to Euro-Americans, this framework allowed collaborating with evil to be imagined as an attractive option in the face of greater-evil threats. US alliances with Muslims and Islamists were thereby framed as moral sacrifices in a tactical battle against threats to the formation US imperialism and hegemony. Sections 5.1 and 5.2 exposed an important shift in the dominant discourse employed to legitimate Western imperialism in the post-colonial era of geopolitics. The next section discusses some broader implications of the observations and arguments made by this study.

5.3   BROADER IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study bear upon three broader issues of ongoing scholarly concern. First, the deconstruction and dissection of Orientalism helps scholars resolve the currently ambiguous status of Orientalism, suggesting fresh answers to the questions: "what is Orientalism?" and "is Orientalism the dominant frame for understanding Islam in the post-colonial era of US empire?" Second, the interdisciplinary examination of US discourse and policies in the early Cold War

period illuminates significant connections between rhetoric and the practice of imperialism. And finally, the dual focus on US domestic policy and US foreign policy contributes to an understanding of the interconnectedness of these spheres of political influence. By working through each of these issues in turn, Sections 5.3.1, 5.3.2, and 5.3.3 synthesize the research of this dissertation with concluding thoughts oriented in a forward-looking direction.

5.3.1   Status of Orientalism

If Orientalism is defined by its constitutive tropes as this study suggests, then it should be conceptualized as a discourse and studied by scholars of political rhetoric. In Chapter Four, this study defined Orientalism as *a dominant Western discourse which constructs a transcendental hierarchy between the West, and a monolithic and unchanging Orient.* This definition has the potential to inflect the way many scholars think about and discuss Orientalism. For example, this interpretation suggests Orientalism would no longer serve as an accurate terminological substitute for imperialism or anti-Muslim racism. Instead, Orientalism has its own unique (discursive) properties that should compel scholars to analytically separate it from interrelated structures and/or ideologies. Allowing for this separation could help resolve the ambiguity surrounding the scholarly use of this term, especially in the context of post-colonial studies. In particular, the definition presented here can assist scholars in pinpointing when, where, and how Orientalism has been deployed, modified, and/or abandoned in the rhetoric of US imperial leadership and culture.

That said, conceptualizing Orientalism as a discourse does not foreclose the capacity for scholars to classify or analyze Orientalism as racist and/or imperialist. On the contrary, it permits a more nuanced and thorough consideration of the interactions, points of confluence, and even

interdependences between (anti-black and anti-Muslim; naturalized and politicized) racism, (colonial and post-colonial) imperialism, and (Orientalist and post-Orientalist) discourse. Discourse is not mere language, nor an objective reflection of reality; discourse is the joining together of knowledge and power.[61] Foucault illuminates how knowledge and power are inter-reliant: "If [any phenomenon] was constituted as an area of investigation, this was only because relations of power had established it as a possible object; and conversely if power was able to take it as a target, this was because techniques of knowledge and procedures of discourse were capable of investing in it."[62] For Orientalism to become a dominant discourse, certain ideological and structural conditions were prerequisite. This study responds to Kumar's appeal for scholars to "underscore the relationship between Islamophobia, Orientalism and Empire."[63]

While historians and political philosophers can contribute to mapping the spatial and temporal trajectory of Orientalism, rhetoricians are best suited to document the particularities of its discursive devices. If scholars agree that Orientalism is a discourse but disagree with this study's assessment of its constitutive tropes, then the work of rhetoricians is especially significant as it is central to facilitating an academic consensus about the meaning or status of the term. Moreover, rhetoricians are needed to chart the movements of dominant US representations of Islam in a post-Orientalist context. And if Orientalism is defined by its tropes, then a post-Orientalist framework should be defined by its tropes as well. The presentation of the lesser-evils paradigm for imagining Islam is one attempt to conceptualize this framework. But for scholars

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[61] Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Volume I: An Introduction*, trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, [1978] 1990), 100.

[62] Foucault, *History,* 98. Foucault had written "sexuality" where I substituted "any phenomenon," but this sentence represents his philosophy on discourse in a broader theoretical sense.

[63] Deepa Kumar, "Islamophobia and Empire: An Intermestic Approach to the Study of Anti-Muslim Racism," in *What is Islamophobia: Racism, Social Movements and the State,* eds. Narzanin Massoumi, Tom Mills, and David Miller (London: Pluto Press, 2017), 50.

who disagree with this study's designation and characterization of this paradigm, its interpretations invite counter-interpretations that may help scholars settle on a more precise designation and understanding of the post-Orientalist paradigm and its essential tropes.

5.3.2 *Rhetoric and Imperialism*

Even as Orientalism lost force in the early Cold War era, rhetoric continued to be mobilized in the service of racialized imperialism. Dana Cloud explains, "The cultivation of attitudes toward enemy Others in the mass media is central to the rallying of public support for war."[64] The US executive branch has played a primary role in the cultivation of those attitudes, since the mass media have traditionally operated to "inculcate and defend the economic, social, and political agenda of privileged groups that dominate the domestic society and the state."[65] The rapid development of intelligence agencies and operations in the early Cold War era facilitated the dissemination of information that reinforced US imperial ambitions, for both American and foreign audiences. Chapters Two and Three revealed how the President, FBI, NSC, CIA, and State Department not only worked with each other, but with congressional, commercial and academic agents to construct useful frames for imagining Muslim, Arab, and black peoples. In demonstrating how the lesser-evils paradigm for imagining Islam primed audiences for accepting the US Federal Government's hegemonic role in the Middle East and beyond, this dissertation falls in line with scholars like Said, Kumar, and Cloud who situate the Western production of rhetoric about Islam as central to strategies of colonial and post-colonial imperialism.

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[64] Dana Cloud, "'To Veil the Threat of Terror': Afghan Women and the <Clash of Civilizations> in the Imagery of the U.S. War on Terrorism," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 90, no. 3 (2004): 299.

[65] Edward Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media* (New York: Pantheon Books, [1986] 2002), 298.

The lesser-evils paradigm reflects not only a reformulation in the US executive imagination of Islam, but also a transformation in the method by which white Western ascendency over the (post-) colonies was normalized. In the colonial era, Western appeals to a transcendental yet scientifically validated racial hierarchy warranted the "white man's burden" to dominate, control, and manage the sociopolitical affairs of all black and brown peoples around the globe. As the legitimacy of these tropes declined on the geopolitical stage, and as resistance to European colonialism and American segregation correspondingly gained strength, US executive agents were required to find or create new mechanisms for practicing and defending Euro-American hegemony or domination. This dissertation confirms that in the post-colonial era, Western imperial leaders (publicly) abandoned the rhetoric of naturalized racism and replaced it with a hierarchy based in assessments of political identity. While fostering the illusion of racial neutrality, this reformulation allowed the Truman and Eisenhower administrations to harmonize the legacy of white supremacy and the paternalistic management of non-white peoples in Cold War geopolitics.

This dissertation exposes how the US executive branch used "intelligence" to counter the movements of decolonization and nationalism, both at home and abroad. Faced with the inevitability of resistance to racial segregation, Jim Crow violence, and militarized hegemony in the post-colonies, the Truman and Eisenhower administrations channeled their support— militarily, economically, and discursively—towards lesser-evil menaces to Western order. As Afro-Asian leaders like Nasser, Mossadegh, Muhammad, and X advocated a model of geopolitics that was transnational, anti-imperial, and Cold War neutral, the US executive branch turned its attention to Afro-Asian leaders who were willing to acquiesce to its hegemonic project. Deals with lesser-devils were essential, from a liberal utilitarian perspective, to this project's

completion: building cooperative relationships with non-nationalist Arab American imams helped executive agents "discredit" and "neutralize" the NOI; backing foreign Islamist leaders helped them impede Soviet influence, thwart Arab Nationalism, and secure US access to newly-repossessed lands, waterways, and resources; promoting "orthodox Islam" also abetted these missions. Hence, the lesser-evils paradigm for imagining Islam can be conceptualized as a rhetorical mechanism of racial-imperial governmentality, operating within the interacting spheres of domestic and foreign policy.

5.3.3   Domestic and Foreign Policy

Government, media, and even some academic outlets in the US tend to treat domestic policy and foreign policy as distinct spheres of influence. But many scholars have deconstructed this bifurcation, revealing how domestic and foreign agents work symbiotically to secure imperial interests. Arun Kundnani explains how domestic propaganda and counter-subversion tactics, such as the entrapment and employment of *agents provocateurs,* assist military operations abroad by fabricating imperatives for military intervention and by censoring or stigmatizing resistance.[66] In a series of case studies, Melani McAlister reveals how "the politics of identity in the United States was intimately interwoven with the changing cultural logic of U.S. foreign policy" since 1945. [67] For example, she observes how representations of marriage in the 1950s helped normalize US benevolent hegemony: "The freely chosen subordination of the good wife suggests the value of a 'conquest of love' in reformulated imperial relations."[68] Kundnani and

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[66] Arun Kundnani, *The Muslims are Coming! Islamophobia, Extremism, and the Domestic War on Terror* (London: Verso, 2014), 185-208. See also: Ward Churchill and Jim Vander Wall, *The COINTELPRO Papers: Documents from the FBI's Secret Wars against Dissent in the United States* (Cambridge: South End Press, 2002).

[67] Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and U.S. Interests in the Middle East since 1945* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 42.

[68] McAlister, *Epic Encounters,* 79.

McAlister both perform what Kumar characterizes as an intermestic mode of analysis, which understands domestic and foreign policy as "part of a single dialectic, an integrated process more appropriately referred to as 'intermestic' policy."[69] This study has also embraced the intermestic approach, presenting an opportunity for scholars to consider how US domestic and foreign policy cohere into one overarching imperial agenda.

The interactivity of domestic and foreign policy was central to suppress the *transnational* pulse of resistance to Western imperialism and white supremacy. The US executive branch imposed political divisions between non-white peoples, including Muslims, because it was fearful of what they could do if they had sovereignty and were united. Sohail Daulatzai explains how these tactics served to domesticate resistance: after 1947, the "broad Black anticolonial coalition [in the US] split and gave shape to the emerging Civil Rights Movement, as liberals such as Walter White and the NAACP abandoned their previous positions of support for colonial peoples and supported American foreign policy."[70] From the perspective of US executive agents, the demand for integration and "civil rights" for African-Americans, when compared to the NOI's demand for independence and "human rights" for Afro-Asians, represented the lesser-evil threat to the US imperial project. As this study has revealed, the (image) management of race relations at home was perceived as essential for the successful implementation of foreign agendas. Thus, the FBI's mission to render illegitimate the Nation of Islam was as much a part of the US executive branch's foreign policy objectives as the CIA and State Department's endorsement of Islam and Islamism in the Middle East.

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[69] Deepa Kumar, "Islamophobia and Empire: An Intermestic Approach to the Study of Anti-Muslim Racism," in *What is Islamophobia: Racism, Social Movements and the State,* eds. Narzanin Massoumi, Tom Mills, and David Miller (London: Pluto Press, 2017), 57.

[70] Daulatzai, *Black Star,* 10-11.

This dissertation documented how Truman and Eisenhower expanded the scope and capabilities of the US executive branch, so as to manage and direct American opinions of its racist and imperial policies. The creation of a vast public-merged-private intelligence network, the Colloquium on Islamic Culture, and COINTELPRO operations against Black Nationalism are examples of "domestic policies" that censored legitimate resistance and made US objectives more palatable to domestic audiences. But similar tactics were employed to control foreign opinions, and often by the same agents and agencies. The establishment of embassies, the support for Saudi Arabia's regional leadership, and the tremendous efforts to disseminate propaganda in public and private spheres of the Middle East are examples of "foreign policies" that eased the acceptance of US leadership amongst foreign audiences. The specific aim of propagandists to portray progress on racial equality in US law and culture *actually* permitted the government to slow down such progress.[71] Domestic strategies were used to cement foreign objectives and vice versa; this accounts for Truman's inclusion of foreign and domestic secretaries on the National Security Council. This dissertation thus conceptualizes US hegemony as a product of interacting domestic and foreign policy, or intermestic policy.

5.4   LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Although the conclusions presented by this dissertation are based in a thorough consideration of primary documents and secondary literature related to the topic, this study leaves multiple stones unturned. This section will outline three limitations and reflect upon avenues for future research that could move usefully beyond the scope of the current project. One limitation relates to

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[71] Sohail Daulatzai, *Black Star, Crescent Moon: The Muslim International and Black Freedom beyond America* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2012), 13.

primary documents selected for the study. While this dissertation drew conclusions from declassified executive branch memos that have received scant scholarly attention, a steady stream of declassified documents from the early Cold War era continues to multiply today, yielding additional opportunities for further study, particularly with regards to the early Cold War interactions between domestic and foreign policies as they pertain to Islam. Perhaps additional research will shed more light on how agents considered their objectives in the Middle East as they strategized against the NOI, or vice versa. Additionally, this dissertation only glosses the important role that CIA strategy played, as the documents analyzed here were primarily written by the NSC, FBI, and State Department. Declassification and subsequent analysis of CIA documents may therefore enhance an understanding of the motives and rhetorical strategies of the US executive branch.

A second limitation of this study is its heavy communicative angle, or its focus on the significance of its findings *for the study of rhetoric.* Undertheorized yet are the socio-political implications of inter-agency strategies for dealing with Islam. For example, more work needs to be done fleshing out the ways in which foreign policy objectives shaped governmental strategies for containing anti-racist resistance within the territorial boundaries of the US. Understanding these interactions is important, as these strategies have real-world implications for the trajectory of resistance and counter-resistance to anti-black racism, and thus the material conditions for black people in the US. Moreover, this dissertation provides an opportunity to more thoroughly contemplate the relationship between anti-blackness and Islamophobia, also inviting further reflection on the relationship between race, colonialism, and post-colonial imperialism.

A third limitation of this dissertation concerns its applicability to dominant US political discourse *after* the early Cold War era. If Mamdani is correct that the "good Muslim, bad

Muslim" framework of the late Cold War was transferred to the War on Terror, then it seems reasonable to wonder whether the lesser-evils paradigm for imagining Islam has been utilized by all post- World War II executive administrations. However, this assumption has yet to be tested thoroughly. Because this dissertation is already so large in scope, this work must be done in future publications and/or by other scholars. Scholars should examine the rhetoric of the War on Terror in order to determine if the lesser-evils paradigm still represents the dominant American imagination of Islam, and if it does not, to determine what framework has replaced it. Additionally, more scholarship is needed to examine the applicability of the lesser-evils paradigm for imagining Islam in the European context. Because European nations maintained a military and cultural presence in the post-colonies despite their diminished capacity to colonize, these efforts could be especially significant.

5.5   CONCLUSION

Through an interactional and deconstructive rhetorical criticism of declassified US executive branch documents spanning from 1945-1961, this study has offered explanations which provide nuance to understandings of both the rhetorical experience, and of rhetoric itself. In exposing the persuasive tactics crafted by executive agents to justify and assist their imperial and Cold War agendas, this study added texture to scholarly conceptions of Euro-American imagination(s) of Islam. Specifically, this study provided interpretations that help draw out the commonalities and differences between European colonial (Orientalist) discourse and American post-colonial (post-Orientalist) discourse. If different constitutive tropes make Orientalism and the lesser-evils paradigm two distinct frameworks for imagining Islam, as this study suggests, then this implies that tropic analyses are essential in coming to terms with other important discourses. This study

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has offered a model for tropic analyses that can be used to define, chart, and analyze frameworks for imagining Islam, but also discourses outside the realm of this study. Rhetorical criticisms like this one are needed to deconstruct the imaginary that reifies violence, oppression, and other problematic arrangements of power.

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