The Amman Message: Arab Diplomacy in the Dialogue of Civilizations

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The “Amman Message”, which was launched by the Jordanian monarch King Abdullah II in 2004, was considered as one of the most important initiatives addressing the Christian West within the framework of the dialogue of civilizations. The said Message seeks to expound a vision characterized by flexibility and openness based on the Islamic Religion in terms of the values of tolerance and humanism which it embodies, especially after the “phenomenon” of religious extremism in the Arab and Muslim world metamorphosized from a “domestic issue” in the shadow of the bipolar international system into an “international phenomenon” with the demise of the Cold War, and the unipolar hegemony of the United in the world, in addition to the September 11, 2001 bloody events, which are considered as among the most important manifestations of the reality of this transformation. Jordan exploited the absence of Arab and Islamic initiatives representing the “silent majority” in those countries by launching this Message, particularly given that it possessed two sources of legitimacy: religious legitimacy represented in the connection between the Hashemite family and the Prophet Muhammad, the prophet of Islam; and political legitimacy represented in the experience of Muslim-Christian coexistence in Jordan. Notwithstanding the fact that this “religio-political” initiative did not achieve its aims as intended by its exponents, either because of competition between Arab and Muslim countries to represent Muslims and to speak in their name, or due to technological weaknesses in the media and means of communication to convey the Message to all corners of the world, it was actually capable of presenting a religious and political discourse dealing with the dialogue of civilizations that merited analysis, discussion and interest.

Keywords: Amman Message, terrorism, Christian-Muslim relations, Middle East, dialogue of civilizations

After September 11, 2001, the world witnessed a new phase in the international system and international relations. With the advent of this phase concepts emerged such as: “war on terrorism”, “who is not with us is against us”, the “axis of evil”, as well as other concepts which have become prevalent in the global political and media discourses. Against this backdrop, the Arabs and Muslims became targeted, particularly since the 19 persons who carried out the attacks of New York and Washington were Arabs and Muslims.

In the shadow of this international climate which was characterized by tension, hostility, and vindictiveness, an Arab Islamic initiative emerged in 2004 at the behest of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan

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known as the “Amman Message”, regarded as the most important Arab initiative toward the other (Europe and America). The “Amman Message” was pronounced in one of the mosques of Amman as an initiative by the ruler of Jordan King Abdullah II and in the presence of a large number of notable Arab and Muslim scholars (Ulama) in the Night of Power (Laylat Al-Qadar) during the month of Ramadan on November 9, 2004. The purpose of the Message was to clarify which actions represented Islam, and also to elucidate the reality of Islam and its values which were rooted in noble intentions, moderation, and peace. This Message came as an emphasis on the recognized and prevalent principles of traditional and moderate Islam to which belonged the majority of Muslims in the world, who numbered 1.4 billion Muslims.

The significance of this Message is that it is at the behest of King Abdullah II who is a member of the Hashemite family and whose ancestor is the Prophet of Islam Muhammad. Moreover, Muslim-Christian coexistence in Jordan, where Christians represent 8% of the population, is a fact which gives strong impetus to an actual application of the ideas of this initiative. Undoubtedly, the image of Jordan in the West reinforces the credibility of this Message, particularly since Jordan endeavors to lead “Arab diplomacy” in explaining the Arab standpoints at the international level, whether in terms of the political aspect represented in the “peace process” with Israel, or the religious aspect through the “Amman Message” which seeks to renew the human covenant between the Arab and Islamic world on the one hand, and the Western Christian world on the other hand.

Hence, in order to comprehend the “Amman Message” initiative, and what it bears in ideas, values and theses which may promote the “dialogue of civilizations” between nations and civilizations, we will study this initiative and analyze its discourse at the political and religion levels.

We must emphasize that our aim from this study is not to enumerate the items of the “Amman Message” but rather to place it in a general context, namely, “global dialogue of civilizations”, with what surrounds this dialogue in challenges represented in negative mutual images, conflicting political positions, and the role of moderate diplomacy, such as Jordanian diplomacy, through this Message, as a “mediator” in this dialogue between conflicting parties.

Why an Islamic International Manifesto From Amman

No human whose heart has been illumined by God could be a radical extremist. At the same time, we decry the campaign of brazen distortion that portrays Islam as a religion that encourages violence and institutionalizes terrorism.

This sentence quoted from the “Amman Message” of 2004 shows clearly the main aim of launching this Message at the international level; it seeks, on the one hand, to refute the “accusation of terrorism” leveled at the genuine Islam and Muslims, and seeks, on the other hand, to accuse unspecified quarters of being behind this systematic campaign targeting Islam and its adherents.

This ineluctably leads us to state that the “Amman Message”, as the Tunisian thinker Al-Janjani argues, occurs in a global climate characterized by a threat to the cultural identity of the nations of the South by reason of globalization, and Western hegemony over its mechanisms on the one hand, and a vicious assault on Islam and Muslims on the other hand (Al-Janhan, 2007, p. 14). The “Amman Message” comes, as the Finnish intellectual Tuomo Melasou said:

\[\text{1 Retrieved from http://www.ammanmessage.com.}\]
\[\text{2 Retrieved from http://www.ammanmessage.com.}\]
\[\text{3 Retrieved from http://www.ammanmessage.com.}\]
50-54 years after the decolonization, at least in this part of the world, about 15 years after the end of the Cold War. When we have witnessed the emergence of the temporary unipolar world and so-called terrorism. And when the understanding between Middle Eastern and other societies deteriorated. (Melasuo, 2007, p. 21)

We could say that shortly prior to the issuance of the “Amman Message”, there occurred international events which affected the trajectory of “East West” relations or “Islam and Christianity”, and “Arab-European”, or even what could be termed as the “dialogue or clash of civilizations”:

(1) In fact, the “Amman Message” came three years after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, described by the American-French professor Stanley Hoffman as the “Divine opportunity” (Hoffmann, 2003), which descended from the sky on the neo-conservatives in the United States of America, given that it afforded them the possibility of putting into effect their old schemes.

The scene of the crash of the airplanes on the two towers, which is shown to people repeatedly around the world—its transmission seeks to symbolically and expressionistically embody the idea of the “clash of civilizations”: two towers which represent the civilization of free exchange and trade, prosperity, technology and liberty, are contrasted with planes that are driven by terrorists epitomizing a civilization of killing, suicide, vindictiveness, and terrorism (El-Ezzi, 2007, p. 46);

(2) The “Amman Message” came after two years from the destructive attack on the US from the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, where this regime was accused of being responsible for embracing Usama Ben Laden who committed his crime against it in Washington and New York in 2001;

(3) Moreover, the “Amman Message” came just 20 months after the American occupation of Iraq in March 2003, where the 21st century was inaugurated by the occupation by the leading power of the 9th-13th century capital of the Arabs and Muslims, Baghdad.

Prior to and concurrent with these events, there have been numerous “distortions” of the reality of Islam as shown in the “Amman Message”. Hence, this Message (Al-Janhani, 2007, p. 15) occurs within the historical framework of the phrase “clash of civilizations”, and resistance against it by the protagonists of the dialogue of civilizations, even though we must basically recognize that the idea of the “dialogue of civilizations” is a new idea which has been abundantly used in the Arab and Muslim world in recent years, and has not spread within a new civilizational venture in which the dialogue of civilizations is a major and distinguishing feature; rather, it spreads as only a reaction against the notion of the clash of civilizations, propounded by Samuel Huntington (1997).

Indeed, Huntington took the view that in the wake of the end of the clash of civilizations, at the end of the 90s of the previous century, the world was divided based on values, civilization and religion, and that the imminent threat to western civilization was particularly represented in Islam and its civilization, which would cooperate with the “yellow peril” (China and North Korea). Perhaps it was for this reason that he wrote his last book Who Are We?, which stressed his feeling that there was an identity crisis in the United States, which impelled him to believe in the necessity of belonging to a cohesive western civilization.

A long time before Huntington, the English-American historian, Bernard Lewis, spoke about a clash between Islam and the West in particular, and contrary to Huntington, who spoke generally about the seven or nine civilizations, Lewis emphasized in his book Islam printed in 1975 (which was translated into French in 2005) that it was Islamic civilization which confronted the West. Also, an article by Lewis was published in 1990 entitled The Roots of Muslim Rage, in which he predicted a powerful Islamic surge leading in the long run to a “clash of civilizations”; that is, a conflict was between the United States and the Arab-Muslim world which
would be Lebaneseized (referring to the Lebanese case), and in which the US would triumph and Israel would emerge stronger (El-Ezzi, 2007, p. 48).

Some quarters, which we will not identify, could accuse the “Amman Message”. And those quarters are responsible for the “supercilious campaign” against Islam and Muslims, and hence, if there is a violent reaction (which would conflict with the tenets of Islam) then the cause is those (quarters—the other) which believes that it can “create an enemy” instead of another enemy: an Islamic enemy instead of a communist enemy.

The Lebanese intellectual Georges Corm has stated:

There is naught that causes greater anxiety about western civilization than its view of Islam: for the West, which dominates the processes of image creation in the world, well chooses those images justifying its view; for Islam is an all-embracing religion, its social action is comprehensive, and it embodies the secular and temporal overlap—it is irrational, an unconquerable adversary, it is violent. (Corm, 2005, p. 123)

The analysis arrived at by the “Amman Message” could be logical if we were to recall that the West, especially the US, perceived Islam as representing interests relating to oil and gas, airspace, and strategic waterways and passages (Chesnot, 2009, p. 206). Moreover, the majority of Arab and Muslim countries suffer from social, political and economic crises which make them vulnerable to pressures from western states, and hence, impel them to take positions and decisions which are in harmony with American interests. And Islam, like Communism, could be an international foreign enemy (the war on Islamic international terrorism after it was a war on Communism). Moreover, Islam could be an internal enemy at the same time through the Muslim immigrants living in western countries, who suffer from numerous tensions and problems regarding their relations with the host countries. Thus, the common “Muslim enemy” could drive a Europe that is apprehensive of it to maintain its traditional alliance with the United States of America, indeed, to strengthen it in the wake of effecting unity since the Maastricht Treaty of February 1992 (El-Ezzi, 2007, p. 49).

This was how the “Amman Message” succeeded in placing its finger on the sensitive point in terms of the relations between Islam and the West through the aforementioned sentence, which enabled this Message to justify the general international context in which it occurred, giving it momentum and force in rejecting the accusation of terrorism, or that Islam and Muslims fostered it as the (other) would claim. Likewise, the “Amman Message” succeeded in assigning to the (other) part of the responsibility for negatively portraying Islam which was something that was promoted by certain forces in the West in cooperation with the international media with a view to achieve the planned for political objectives, and which were put into effect by it.

**The Legitimacy of Jordanian Diplomacy in Representing Arabs and Muslims**

Is it not strange for the “Amman Message” to be issued from Amman, the capital of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan in the form of: “This is a declaration to our brethren in the lands of Islam and throughout the world”⁴, while major Arab states—such as, Saudi Arabia which is a custodian of the holy places in Mecca and Medina, or Egypt which is the largest Arab state, containing Al-Azhar Mosque and University, which is the most important and oldest center of Muslim jurisprudence (fiqh) in the Arab and Muslim world—maintain their silence.

In other words, has Jordanian diplomacy thought it possible for competing with Arab or Muslim states to

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accept or reject this initiative?

Before answering this question, we must refer to a set of challenges and impediments which face the Jordanian political regime which would help us to understand its diplomatic positions which are always regarded as “pioneering” and “moderate” when contrasted with the neighboring states in the Middle East region. The name of Jordan has, since its independence in 1946, been associated with the Arab-Israeli conflict, which began since the catastrophe that befell the Palestinian people in 1948 on the one hand, while the geographic environment had a considerable impact on the regime on the other hand. Actually, Jordan is surrounded by states that are in conflict, not only politically, but also ideologically (the Ba’ath in Syria and Iraq, Wahhabism in Saudi Arabia, Zionism in Israel), which are states that are not perennially in political harmony. In addition to all of the foregoing, Jordan suffers from a scarcity of economic and natural resources (Al Shalabi, 2000, p. 18), which has beset Jordan with internal and external challenges represented by a lack of political stability in the region stemming from the ramifications of regional and international issues and relations with neighboring countries, and culminating with the war on terrorism.

It is for this reason that it is incumbent on Jordan to pursue a vigorous, effective and pioneering diplomacy, and accordingly, emanate officially the philosophy of Jordanian diplomacy from the Jordanian Foreign Ministry which is anchored in the following:

1. Belief in the Hashemite Kingdom as an Arab and Muslim state, and that the Jordanian people are an integral part of the Arab and Muslim nations;
2. The Palestine problem is a fateful issue for the Jordanian people, and the establishment of a Palestinian state is a main objective of Jordanian diplomacy;
3. Adherence to the principles of the Great Arab Revolt which express the aspirations of the nation for unity, liberation, and independence;
4. Being open to the world within the matrix of the new international humanitarian order and human cultures, including new values and trends, and respecting the cultures of other nations, without losing the Jordanian identity and its cultural particularities which conform Arab and Islamic values;
5. Adaptation to the variables of the present age, and the capability of fulfilling its requirements, while having a modus Vivendi with the international system on the basis of justice, equality and freedom, and also positively partaking in the development of the global human civilization.5

Religious Legitimacy

Perhaps, based on these overlapping and interconnected principles, the Jordanian leadership, through its diplomatic approach, does not hesitate to play a role in serving Islam and its adherents, particularly since it is a leadership with a “religious heritage” that allows it to play such a role. Hence the “Amman Message” states:

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has embraced the path of promoting the true luminous image of Islam, halting the accusations against it and repelling the attacks upon it. This is in accordance with the inherited spiritual and historical responsibility carried by the Hashemite monarchy, honored as direct descendants of the Prophet, the Messenger of God—peace and blessings upon him—who carried the message. For five decades, his late Majesty King Hussein Bin Talal—God rest his soul—demonstrated this way with the vigorous effort that he exerted. Since the day he took the flag, His Majesty King Abdullah II has continued this effort, with resolution and determination, as a service to Islam, fortifying the solidarity of 1.2 billion Muslims who comprise one fifth of humanity, preventing their marginalization or extrication from the movement of human society, and affirming their role in building human civilization and participating in its

5 Retrieved from http://www.mfa.gov.jo/.../04_SB8K8xLLM9MSSzPy8xBz9CP0os3hnd0cPE3MfA.
Undoubtedly, “religious legitimacy” is rooted, for the ruling Hashemite family in Jordan, all the way back to the Prophet Muhammad, that is, to the 7th century. Actually, this family has uninterruptedly governed the lands holy to Islam of Mecca and Madina that was called the Hijaz until King AbdelAziz Bin Saud succeeded in distancing them from those lands in 1924 (Chevallier, 2003). And even when the Hashemite family departed from the Hijaz to Syria and Iraq, it was not only perceived as representing the “leadership of the Great Arab Revolt” in 1916 against the Turkish presence in the Arab region, but also perceived as representing a “religious symbol” representing the nation in its entirety.

Accordingly, Amman’s adoption of this Message was harmonious with its role ever since the launching of the Great Arab Revolt from the Hijaz to Syria, and the arrival of the army of Feisal Ibn Al-Hussein in Aqaba, and therefore, the land of Jordan was the land of the Great Arab Revolt, given that it became, after the demise of the Ottoman state in 1918, a part of the Hashemite Kingdom, which was declared on March 8, 1920, after the crowning of Feisal as king of Syria. After the battle of Maysalun in July 1920, and the departure of King Feisal from Damascus, Amman assumed anew its influential position; hence, the Emirate of Transjordan was founded in 1921 under the rule of Emir Abdullah Bin Al-Hussein, the Sherif of Mecca, thus rendering Amman the “capital of the Hashemites” (Abu Al-Sha’r, 2007, p. 82).

Therefore, the adoption of King Abdullah II of this civilized Message did not emerge from a vacuum, but came to emphasize the heritage of the Hashemites which emanated from the premise that the religious discourse was not distant from science, thought and knowledge, and that it was based on the historic responsibility borne by the Hashemites (Abu Al-Sha’r, 2007, p. 82).

It would be possible to highlight some of the speeches of this ruling family which extends deep into history to show that its legitimacy is old, deep and continuing. We may refer to the Sherif of Mecca Al-Hussein Bin Ali, leader of the Great Arab Revolt emphasizing in his correspondence with the British McMahon, the Arab character of the wilayas of Aleppo and Beirut, where he stated, “that they are purely Arab wilayas, and there is no deference between a Christian and Muslim Arab, for they are both descendants of a common ancestor”, thereby underscoring in his political message his religious tolerance (Abu Al-Sha’r, 2007, p. 83).

In another speech addressing the people of Syria, Sherif Hussein Bin Ali emphasized religious tolerance by saying, “when I mention the people of Syria I do not differentiate between any of them based on creed, rather, they are all equal in my view” (Abu Al-Sha’r, 2007, p. 84). His son, King Feisal, the first king of Syria, emphasized this fact in a speech he delivered in Aleppo on November 8, 1918:

I reiterate what I have stated in all my previous positions, namely, that the Arabs were before Moses, Jesus and Mohammad, and that religions command on earth to adhere to truth and brotherhood, and hence, those who seek to sow dissension between the Muslim, the Christian and the Jew are not Arabs… and I swear to you by my honor and the honor of my family, and by everything that is sacred and revered by me, that I do not heed the reproach of people when applying truth, and that I do not refrain from penalizing one who infringes in this regard. (Abu Al-Sha’r, 2007, p. 87)

**Political Legitimacy**

As regards political legitimacy—at the Arab level—with which the Hashemite family was endowed in Jordan, it was represented in the fact that it was the Arab family which led the independence movement challenging the Turkish presence in the Arab region in 1916 (Chevallier, 2003, p. 27). And with the
establishment of the Emirate of Jordan in 1921 by Emir Abdullah Ibn Al-Hussein, before becoming a kingdom in 1946, the Emir succeeded in building a network of relations with the inhabitants of the Jordanian Emirate from amongst Muslims and Christians irrespective of sect, given that in the age of the Emirate churches were built and the number of schools affiliated to the Christian sects increased (Abu Al-Sha’r, 2007, p. 89).

The policy of moderation was officially entrenched in the era of King Talal Bin Abdullah, under whose rule the Jordan Constitution was promulgated in 1952, which is still in effect until the present day. Enshrined in this Constitution is democracy, equality, justice, and respect for human rights; Paragraph (1) of Article (6) states that “Jordanians are equal before the law, and there is no discrimination between them in rights and duties even should they differ in race or language or religion”\(^7\). Moreover, this Constitution does not deprive ethnic or religious minorities from their rights and privileges, but actually affords them the required protection as it is evidenced in Article (14) of the Constitution which stipulates that the “state shall protect the freedom of worship and the practice of faith in accordance with the customs and traditions in the Kingdom”\(^8\). This was again reiterated and expanded in the National Pact of 1991 which called for “entrenching the values of tolerance and objectivity, and respecting the beliefs of the other” (Mo. El-Dajani & Mu. El-Dajani, 1993, p. 489). On the other hand, Article (19) of the Constitution emphasizes the “rights of groups to establish schools with a view to educating their members”\(^9\). The National Pact underscores this point by stating that:

Respect for reason and belief in dialogue, and recognition of the right of others to differ in opinion and respect for the other's opinion, tolerance, and rejection of political and social violence, are all major features of Jordanian society, and by corollary there is no compulsion in religion, nor fanaticism, sectarianism, and regional prejudice. (Mo. El-Dajani & Mu. El-Dajani, 1993, p. 485)

Under the rule of the late King Hussein Bin Talal, there prevailed a policy of moderation, which he promoted at the Arab and international levels. King Hussein crowned his ideas through the establishment of Al-AlBayt Islamic Thought Foundation in 1980, which was a pioneering action reflecting his awareness and long-sightedness; the Foundation engaged an elite of Muslim scholars from the Arab and Muslim worlds, and the Foundation articulated for itself a powerful paradigm based on (Abu Al-Sha’r, 2007, p. 90):

1. Introducing the Islamic Shari’ah;
2. Purifying Islamic culture from accretions;
3. Highlighting a contemporary Islamic vision that is homogenous in terms of social values and systems;
4. Underscoring Islamic contribution to knowledge, and unifying the ranks.

This Foundation, over a quarter of a century, and under the patronage of King Hussein and Prince El Hassan Bin Talal, contributed to the publication of valuable works of reference from the heritage, dealing with Islamic history, and which highlighted the role of Islamic civilization in spreading knowledge. Among the foremost axes which the Foundation focused on were the patronage of Islamic-Christian dialogues held in Amman, with a view to bring closer together the adherents of religions (El Hassan & Alain, 2002), in addition to founding the Royal Institute for Interfaith Studies in Amman in 1987, which issued a remarkable book in this field, with a view to deepen understanding and respecting the other. As a continuation of this enlightening role, King Hussein established Al-Al-Bayt University 1994 (with a view to bring closer together Islamic schools of law and thought, and combine worldly and religious science), encouraging academic research and activating the

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role of Muslim scholars, to distance them from extremism and fanaticism, and to fortify relations between Islamic peoples, while respecting the beliefs and ideas of others (Abu Al-Sha’r, 2007, p. 90).

These successive policies emphatically led to the “Amman Message” in the era of H. M. King Abdullah II, which was the natural outcome of a deep heritage, and awareness manifested in the intellectual and political positions of the ruling family in Jordan (Abu Al-Sha’r, 2007, p. 91).

It behooves us to carefully read the thought of Prince El Hassan Bin Talal, who is distinguished by his vast and deep knowledge, for he is a scholar prince. His commitment to moderation was reflected in his distinguished book Christianity in the Arab World, which was published in English in London in 1995, and which was translated into Arabic. Prince El Hassan concluded his book addressing the Christian Arabs by saying:

The Christian Arabs are in grave error if they are apprehensive about future developments in the Arab World, and also in error are those who express fears which could threaten their future. They have been known throughout their history for their patience, flexibility and rare ability to perceive the feelings of others… and have had, and been at the same time deprived of a creative intellectual leadership, and hence, the Arab Christians will not be losers if they patiently bear the negative events in the changing Arab World thereby serving their own interests and the general Arab interests. (El Hassan, 2007, 2009)

On the other hand, the outcomes of the Jordanian political opening inside and outside the kingdom, have been the acceptance by the Islamists in Jordan of the idea that they are a part of political life in Jordan with its pluralism enshrined in the Constitution and various legislative enactments; starting with the National Pact they participated in formulating and culminating with the Political Parties Law. Dr. Abdel Latif Arabiat, who was a notable Islamic personality and was the speaker of the House (parliament) for three times, emphasized that “all are aware of the results of dissension and conflict, and that people must assess the situation in a manner serving the aims of the nation, and its development”10.

Moreover, the Islamists in Jordan have come to accept personal, intellectual, and political freedom. The former leader of the Society of Muslim Brothers Abdel Majid Thneibat stressed that the movement considered itself as “a group of Muslims” and not the “Muslim community”, that Islam was not a monopoly for them, and that they did not monopolize the truth11.

In light of this unique experiment in the relationship between an Islamic movement and a political system in the Arab World, the Jordanian political system should be proud that it had been justified in accommodating the Islamists, and opening the path before their participation in political life, in their capacity as an important party in an equation, instead of being excluded and isolated them from society, and consequently, compelling them to work toward achieving their interests by resorting to underground action, as currently the case in most other Arab and Muslim states. There were many examples to demonstrate this fact: starting from Egypt, which had witnessed a struggle between the regime and the Islamic movements which led to the assassination of former Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in 1981, and the situation—there was still tenuous and uncertain; in Syria in which the city of Hama had witnessed the bloody events in 1979, which led to thousands death in the armed confrontation between the regime and the Muslim Brotherhood; similarly the case in Algeria in the year of 1992, subsequently in Sudan and Somalia; and finally, in Saudi Arabia with the expanded presence of Al-Qaeda after the year of 2001. Islamic currents and regimes have been in continuous confrontation up to this

moment without any vision for a possible solution.

We have attempted through the aforementioned review of the religious and political legitimacy upon which the ruling dynasty in Jordan has depended, to demonstrate that the “Amman Message” had not come out of a vacuum but had been the crowning achievement of a series of efforts and unceasing experiences, which had reflected an established, systematic and permanent policy. Perhaps, because of this political and religious legitimacy which Jordan possesses, the leadership of this country has felt empowered to speak on behalf of “the Arabs and Muslims”: firstly, on account of its policy of openness and moderation, which it had pursued and still pursues; and secondly, because Jordan had extricated itself from the “cycle of violence” which the Middle East region had witnessed, and which has been an abode for violence, backwardness, and misconceptions (Chesnot, 2009, p. 7) in the 70s and 80s of the last century, and which had reached an apex in the world via the 9/11 destructive event, and which had augured a new page in international relations based on violence, terrorism, preemptive wars, and other means.

The Amman Message: An Official Speech in the Face of Other Speeches

In confronting the “clash of civilizations” and its derivatives, the “Amman Message” issued in 2004 comes within the global dialogues of civilizations as a formal Jordanian initiative, which aims at contributing toward clarifying and expounding the true essence of Islam, and which the religious movements claim to be shouldering through murder, terrorism and destruction. This message carries a discourse at variance with the religious statements which the Islamic movements have been racing to present and which are based on terrorism as a means toward achieving the objectives which those movements claim are based on the Shari’ah and the traditions of the Prophet. It is imperative to state that there are in the Muslim and Arab worlds three types of discourses, or shall we say levels of discourses, as the Syrian scholar Jamal Barout explains in his book The New Madina: Contemporary Islamic Movements, namely:

(1) The popular Islamic discourse

Popular Islam is linked to the traditional forms of religiosity in which worship acquires the attributes of a custom, compatible with the traditions of the local society and its unique cultural, civilization and social attributes;

(2) The formal Islamic discourse

It is linked to the religious establishment of ulema, which in most cases would be constituted of an ideological branch of the state, and which could be described somewhat as the Islam of “the clergy”;

(3) The Islamic political discourse

It is linked theoretically and as a movement with the aim of establishing an “Islamic state” and which has been adopted by the contemporary, political movements and organizations (Barout, 1994, p. 13).

In light of the aforementioned, it could be stated that the “Amman Message” would fall within the second category of the Islamic discourses, because it represents the platform of the state. This means that the “Amman Message” represents the official and ideological orientation of the state itself, so that it has come as an initiative from King Abdullah II himself. Abdul-Salam Al-Abbadi, the Jordanian Minister of Waqf and Islamic Affairs, and a member of the committee, which the King had set up to achieve this objective, has stated:

The issuance of this message has been the result of a blessed initiative of H. M. King Abdullah II, son of the illustrious Al-Hussein, where His majesty has observed in his visitations and journeys the urgent need for a discourse presenting the true image of Islam in contemporary society. He had been observing the brutal assaults attempting to distort
religion, exploiting some of the erroneous practices which had been committed in its name; wherefore, His Majesty felt the responsibility devolving upon him, to perform his national and religious duty. He invited a number of ulema and scholars specialized in the field to articulate a message emanating from Amman, the capital of Jordan to the world and which would present an all-encompassing vision of this religion in all its dimensions. He had been partaking in this work and following up its progress until its accomplishment with God’s help. It was pronounced in his presence on the Holy Night of Al-Qadr in the blessed month of Ramadan 2004, in the presence of a large gathering of Muslim ulema from within the kingdom and outside it. (Abdul-Salam Al-Abbadi, 2007, p. 18)

Thus, we are now faced with two types of Islamic discourses: the first one is the official discourse embodied in the “Amman Message”; and the second is the political Islamic discourse based on “Islamic jihadist movements” and others. What is the difference between the two discourses?

**The Human Vision**

The “Amman Message” augured its thesis with verses from the Qur’an which are normally cited to demonstrate the human and civilizational image of Islam toward others, namely:

> God Almighty has said: “O humankind! We created you from a male and female, and made you into peoples and tribes that you may know each other. Truly the most honored of you before God is the most pious of you”\(^{12}\).

It is a deliberate opening by being addressed to all mankind and demonstrating the unity of humankind, and that the diversity of peoples aims at cooperating and knowing one another and not for purposes of conflict and dispute.

As against this human Islamic discourse, we find that the jihadi Salafi discourse considers the meanings of “faith and Islam” as cardinal concepts upon which its thoughts are founded. This is because of the serious consequences associated with the two concepts, which divide peoples into “the faithful and the infidels”, and upon which likewise the world would be divided on the basis of “the domain of Islam or the domain of unbelief”. This is in addition to the mechanisms for dealing with the “I” and the other in the field of the Call, accountability and jihad (Shhadeh, 2009, p. 81). Indeed, one of the most important amongst the authors of the jihadist message, Sayyid Qutb has gone as far as to categorize current Muslims and their societies in his statement that all contemporary Islamic communities are societies which are pre-Islamic (Jahilliaya), where he describes the Jahilliya society:

> As being every community which is not devoted exclusively to the worship of God alone, embodying such worship in its beliefs and in its religious observances and laws. With this objective definition would be classified within the pre-Islamic community all existing societies in the world today. (Shhadeh, 2009, pp. 88-89)

On his part, the Egyptian thinker Muhammad Qutb describes al-Jahilliaya (the age of ignorance) in his book *Jahiliyat Al-Qarn Al-Ishrin* as all societies which do not genuinely believe in God, and this is the great common denominator between all the Jahilliyas of history (ages of ignorance).

> The genuine faith, he adds, is one which defines for the human his true place in the Universe, and guides his steps in time and place, as it indicates to him its true orientation, and describes to him the true path. Thus, it would rectify his conscience, behavior, feelings, works, principles, and reality. (Qutb, 1995, p. 231)

> It is clear that there are contradictions in the Islamic discourses regarding the basic concepts of Islam, such as, faith, disbelief, the human, and other concepts, and it is for this reason that the “Amman Message” has

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attempted at the start of expounding its views, to clarify who is truly the faithful in order to exonerate itself from any doubts regarding adherence to the Qur’anic text. It states:

Islam is founded upon basic principles, the fundamentals are attesting to the unity of God (tawhid Allah); belief in the message of His Prophet; continuous connection with the Creator through ritual prayer (salat); training and rectifying the soul through the fast of Ramadan; safeguarding one another by paying the alms tax (zakat); the unity of the people through the annual pilgrimage (ihajj) to God’s Sanctified House, [performed] by those who are able; and [observing] His rulings that regulate human behavior in all its dimensions. Over history these [basic principles] have formed a strong and cohesive nation and a great civilization. They bear witness to noble principles and values that verify the good of humanity, whose foundation is the oneness of the human species, and that people are equal in rights and obligations, peace and justice, realizing comprehensive security, mutual social responsibility, being good to one’s neighbor, protecting belongings and property, honoring pledges, and more.

Together, these are principles that provide common ground for the followers of religions and [different] groups of people. That is because the origin of divine religions is one, and Muslims believe in all Messengers of God and do not differentiate between any of them… For all of this we base ourselves upon His saying: The messenger believes in what has been revealed unto him from his Lord as do the believers. Each one believes in God and His angels and His scriptures are messages. We make no distinction between any of His messengers—and they say: “We hear, and we obey. [Grant us] Your forgiveness, our Lord. Unto you is the journeying”.

The “Amman Message” continues its vision of the human dimension of Islam by saying:

Islam honors every human being, regardless of his color, race or religion: “We have honored the sons of Adam, provided them transport on land and sea, sustained them with good things, and conferred on them special favors above a great part of our creation”.

The “Amman Message” also states:

Islam has made clear that the goal of its message is realizing mercy and good for all people. The Transcendent has said, we did not send you [Muhammad] but out of mercy for all creatures. And the Prophet Muhammad—blessings and peace upon Him—said, “The Merciful has mercy upon those who are merciful, be merciful to those on earth, He who is in heaven will be merciful unto you”.

Jihad: Is It the Only Instrument of Change in Islam?

To achieve the aims of the Islamic movements, the Islamic political discourse has mostly relied on the “idea of jihad”. This concept is considered among the most prominent concepts which the Salafi Jihadiyya is based upon, given that it is the most important “instrument” for changing the regime, whether national or international. This concept was the result of the development of the thought of the Sunni Community, specifically, the Hanbali School of Law which was renewed at the hands of Sheikh Al-Islam Ibn Taymiyyah in the 12th century, and again resurrected by Sheikh Mohammad Bin Abdel Wahhab in the 17th century, and finally culminated with the thought of Al-Mawdudi and Sayyid Qutb in the 20th century (Heikal, 1983, pp. 144-145).

The concept of jihad occupies a basic place in the thought of the (Muslim Brothers) (Al Shalabi, 2010, pp. 12-18). Sheikh Hassan Al-Banna authored “message of Jihad”, in which he expounded the understanding of the Brothers of Jihad, where in its conclusion he stated: “O brother, the nation that is well aware of death, and knows how to die an honorable death, is given by God valuable life in this world and eternal solace in the

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Hereafter” (Shhadeh, 2009, p. 54).

Here, we must say that notwithstanding this stringent view of the first leader of the Muslim Brethren in Egypt, the Muslim Brethren in Jordan have acquired a philosophy at variance with that coming from Egypt. Reality indicates that the openness of the Jordanian political system to the Islamic current (Al Shalabi, 2011, p. 117), contrary to many other Arab countries, has facilitated the presence of an Islamic current that is moderate and rational in its discourse. The Secretary General of the Islamic Action Front declared, nine years prior to the “Amman Message”, that is in 1995, that his party rejects any violent or terrorist action to attain its stated aims. In this context, he stated:

As a political party, we reject violence, we are moderate. However, if the Islamic movement cannot pursue politics as political party, the extremists and advocates of violence will be encouraged, and the leadership (of the movement) will not be able to maintain order. (Robinson, 1997)

By contrast, the extreme Salafi Jihadi current which Umar Abu Umar represents (Abu Qatada Al-Falastini) has argued that the call and jihad have been and will continue to ceaselessly exist since the age of the Prophet until the present age. He stated, “And thus is the chain of call and jihad, it spans age after age, and they do not cease until this day” (Shhadeh, 2009, p. 54).

On his part, the Palestinian Muhammad Al-Barqawi, known as Abu Mohammad Al-Maqdissi, and one of the ideologists of the jihadi Salafi current, differentiates between:

A jihad to repel, and a jihad to call, where the former is to resist an occupying enemy, which is exemplified in the occupation of Muslim countries, such as the occupation of Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan; the second, is the jihad of call through which the Muslims approach the unbelievers wherever they are to make the Word of God supreme.

He states:

The first is to defend the abode of Islam and the things inviolable to Muslims in case they are attacked by an enemy, and the second is to pursue the unbelievers in their abodes or to fight them wherever they are. (Shhadeh, 2009, p. 54)

In this respect Abu Mohammad Al-Maqdissi’s position is similar to that of the spiritual father of Usama Bin Laden, Abdullah Azzam, who posits an identical analysis of the concept of jihad (Hecker, 2006). It is perhaps for this reason that the non-Islamic world has the impression that among all the religions on earth, it is only Islam which insists on resorting to holy war (jihad) (Goody, 2006, p. 10).

By contrast, the “Amman Message” relies on a different logic in understanding Islam—a logic which rooted in moderation, for the Message emphasizes that the desired change is accomplished through:

Islam also affirms that the way of calling [others] to God is founded upon kindness and gentleness: “Call to the path of your Lord with wisdom and a beautiful exhortation, and debate with them in that which is most beautiful (ahsan)”. Furthermore, it shuns cruelty and violence in how one faces and addresses [others]: It is by some Mercy of God that you were gentle to them. Were you severe—cruel-hearted—they would have broken away from you. So pardon them and ask forgiveness for them and consult with them in the conduct of affairs. And when you are resolved, put your trust in God; truly God loves those who trust [in Him].16

Regarding the killing of civilians and attacking their properties, the “Amman Message” states:

Islam recognizes the noble station of [human] life, so there is to be no fighting against non-combatants, and no assault upon civilians and their properties, children at their mothers’ bosom, students in their schools, nor upon elderly men and

women. Assault upon the life of a human being, be it murder, injury or threat, is an assault upon the right to life among all human beings. It is among the gravest of sins; for human life is the basis for the prosperity of humanity: Whoever kills a soul for other than slaying a soul or corruption upon the earth it is as if he has killed the whole of humanity, and whoever saves a life, it is as if he has revived the whole of humanity.17

The “Amman Message” summarizes its vision of the means to be used in order to attain the sublime objectives of Islam, in a manner not only serving the interests of the Muslim nation, but also humanity, by stressing that:

Islam is a religion of [noble] character traits in both its ends and means; a religion that strives for the good of the people, their happiness in this life and the next; and a religion that can only be defended in ways that are ethical; and the ends do not justify the means in this religion.18

And regarding present terrorism, the “Amman Message” states:

On religious and moral grounds, we denounce the contemporary concept of terrorism that is associated with wrongful practices, whatever their source and form may be. Such acts are represented by aggression against human life in an oppressive form that transgresses the rulings of God, frightening those who are secure, violating peaceful civilians, finishing off the wounded, and killing prisoners; and they employ unethical means, such as destroying buildings and ransacking cities: Do not kill the soul that God has made sacrosanct, save for justice.19

Vision of Global Values: Democracy, Rights, and Relations With the Other

Regarding democracy, the “Amman Message” did not refer to the concept of democracy in a detailed manner, but it addressed the concept of “comprehensive development” embodying a set of ideas and human values:

Providing for human rights and basic liberties, ensuring life, dignity and security, and guaranteeing basic needs; administering the affairs of society in accordance with the principles of justice and consultation; and benefiting from the goods and mechanisms for adopting democracy that human society has presented.20

This means that Islam and Muslims posses the desire to learn and benefit from other, irrespective of differences in race, religion or color, which manifests the positive reality of Islam as being open to others.

Regarding rights, the “Amman Message” has called for respecting the rights of individuals by alluding to the fundamental value of Islam, namely, justice:

Islam confirms the principle of justice in interacting with others, safeguarding their rights, and confirms that one must not deny people their possessions: And let not the hatred of others make you swerve to wrong and depart from justice. Be just: that is closer to piety; God commands you to return trusts to their owners, and if you judge between people, you shall judge with justice.21

The “Amman Message” then reminds of the necessity of establishing good relations with others, and that this is of the essence of Islam and its teachings. In this regard, the “Amman Message” states:

The source of relations between Muslims and others is peace; for there is no fighting [permitted] when there is no aggression. Even then, [it must be done with] benevolence, justice and virtue: God does not prevent you, as regards those who do not fight you in religion’s [cause], nor drive you from your homes, from dealing kindly and justly with them: truly

God loves the just.22

By contrast, the extreme Islamic view differs, as it does not originally believe in the concept of “democracy” because it is a “western product”, and accordingly, all the values that derive from it are necessarily corrupt and meaningless. Hence, Abu Mohammad Al-Maqdissi, who was regarded as the foremost contemporary jihadi salafist theorist, devoted a book exclusively treating democracy in which he mustered sacerdotal textual evidences to refute it and to characterize as unbelievers its exponents and he called the book *Democracy is a Religion*, in which he said:

> After people being swayed by the lure of democracy, and the apostate idols argued in its favor, or those who wore the cloak of religion and being its exponents mixing truth with falsehood, for once they call it freedom, and at another time they call it Shura, with a view to distort truth, to mix light with darkness, polytheism with monotheism and Islam… We have demonstrate that democracy is a religion other than the religion of God, and a creed other than the monotheistic faith, and that its parliamentary assemblies are but monuments of polytheism and bastion of paganism which must be avoided in order to observe monotheism in terms of the right of God over His servants-actually, it must be destroyed, its supported opposed, hated and fought. (Shhadeh, 2009, p. 124)

By contrast with this extreme current, there is the Society of Muslim Brothers in Jordan which has come to adopt positions that are more developed and open to contemporary global western concepts, compared to the extreme Salafi currents. The media spokesman of the Muslim Brothers in Jordan Ziad Abu Ghanimeh expresses his opinion of the concept of democracy in a manner that contradicts all the Islamic discourses, which are focused on the West as representing Islam. What does this leader say then?

> “Democracy is a form of Jihad for us; the sources of Islam encourage freedom of thought, freedom of action. Democracy is not a tactic for us. It is a strategy… we believe democracy is part and parcel of Islam” (Robinson, 1997, p. 373).

Hence, it becomes clear to us that the Islamic discourse is influenced by its location in terms of: the nature of the political system, the extent of freedom given, the economic condition, the nature of society, and other human conditions that either foster or oppose logical and rational thought, not based on the text but on its spirit and its sublime purpose.

**The Palestine Issue**

The French thinker, Gilles Kepel, an expert on Islamic movements, sees that the Middle East, due to its nature and location, will remain subject to two powerful influences which render it a distinctive region, relative to the rest of the world, namely: the abundant oil reserves and the existence of Israel (Kepel, 2004, p. 86).

In Chapter There entitled *Islam and Terrorism*, Jack Goody, professor at Cambridge University, stated that “this concept was originally applied to the Jacobites during the French Revolution, and continually recurred in the conflicts between the Christians and Muslims, and hence, what some call terrorism is for others struggle for freedom” (Goody, 2006, p. 143).

Perhaps it is for this reason that the “Amman Message” is keen on urging the United Nations to strive to find a just solution to the Palestinian problem, and not to deal through “double standards”. Actually, the “Amman Message” fully recognizes that the extreme Salafi discourse and what follows it in terrorist actions do not emerge from a vacuum, but come due to objective and real causes represented in the presence of lobbies in the major power which seek to distort the relationship between the Christian West and the Islamic East on the

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one hand, in addition to passing of numerous UN resolutions which have still not been implemented on the other hand. This is the reason why the “Amman Message” refers to the necessity of serious and expeditious movement in this direction by the UN with what it represents in significant political, legal and international weight. Accordingly, the “Amman Message” stated:

We call upon the international community to work earnestly to implement international laws and honor the international mandates and resolutions issued by the United Nations, ensuring that all parties accept them and that they be enacted without double standards, to guarantee the return of rights to their [rightful] holders and the end of oppression. Achieving this will be a significant contribution to uprooting the causes of violence, fanaticism and extremism.23

What is indubitable is that the Palestine problem constitutes the “magical mine” supplying the extreme Islamic currents with ideas, men, and supporters, and if a just solution to this issue is reached, as precisely stated in the “Amman Message”, then this current, which is dangerous not only to the West but also to Arab and Muslim societies, could be curtailed irrespective of the underlying motivations and interpretations. Actually, the suffering of Arab and Muslim states from this current preceded that of western countries, and contemporary history is replete with evidence for this which begins with Nasserist Egypt, in terms of terrorist actions, murder, and explosions in the 60s of the previous century.

The Palestine issue has constituted one of the principal axes of the political discourse of Al-Qaeda since the declaration of the formation of the “international front for fighting the Jews and Crusaders” in 1998 (Shhadeh, 2009, p. 219), while the statements of Al-Qaeda and the speeches of its leaders Osama Bin Laden and his assistant Ayman Al-Thawahir often refer to the Palestine issue given that it is a central Islamic issue. The supporters of the Jihadi Salafiyya, its members, and leaders scorn the biased positions adopted by the UN, particularly those relating to the Palestine issue, and they regard the US as having dominated it and its resolutions by force. Some texts are following, in which they show their basic position toward it, namely, a position that underlines combat and opposition, while not recognizing its legitimacy (Shhadeh, 2009, p. 174):

(1) All the members give what they can do in support to the United Nations in any action which it takes in accordance with this Charter, while also refraining from helping any state toward which the UN takes any deterrent or punitive measures, as whenever the major power wishes to punish and suppress then all must applaud and agree;

(2) All the members of the Organization refrain in their international relations from threatening or actually using force against the integrity of the territories or political independence of any state in a manner that discords with the aims of the United Nations. However, in case of accord with the aforementioned aims of the UN, the use of force is desirable and imposing these principles on the others is among the priorities of the UN as we see today in Afghanistan, Iraq, Palestine and other Muslim countries;

(3) The Organization seeks to make the non-member countries conform to these principles to the extent required by the necessity of safeguarding international peace and security. Through “arrogance and tyranny” the members and non-members must be within the orbit of tyrannical nations.

Notwithstanding the suffering of Arabs and Muslims from the “chaos” produced by different interpretations, views and fatwas to the point of contradiction at times in the Islamic religious discourse, there are some writers who have come to speak of Islam in terms of multiplicity, that is, the presence of several Islams rather than a single Islam. They perceive in this strength for Islam as it shows the “diversity and richness

embodied by this civilization” (Etienne, 2005, p. 17). Such diversity has engendered great vitality in Islamic thought, for since the migration of the Prophet in the 7th century A.D., there appeared numerous currents that are consonant with the circumstances and locations in which they exist: some are close to the literal text of the Qur’an, some are adapted, some are extremists, and some are moderate (Renaudie, 2007, p. 12).

Conclusions

The “Amman Message” is viewed as an outstanding Jordanian Arab diplomatic initiative, as it came in the wake of the transformation of the phenomenon of religious extremism from an “internal issue” which belongs to the Arab and Islamic worlds within a bipolar configuration into an “international phenomenon” with the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, and the hegemony of the United States as a unipolar power in the international arena, coupled with the advent of the phenomenon of globalization. The bloody events of 9/11 are considered as one of the foremost manifestations of the reality of such transformation.

It appeared that Jordanian diplomacy had taken advantages of the absence of any Arab and Islamic initiatives expressive of the will of the silent majority in those countries, to launch the “Amman Message” in 2004. This was particularly the case since it was in possession of two legitimacies: the religious legitimacy and political legitimacy. The Jordanian King Abdullah II declared in a speech before the student body of the Shulalungern University in Thailand on December 15, 2005:

I know that more than 1.2 billion Muslims throughout the world join us in rejecting extremism, and live in an environment of tolerance and peace. Their voice is the true voice of Islam, and in order to make heard this voice, Jordan launched the “Amman Message” in November 2004.24

From New Delhi to Athens, from New York to Washington to Bangkok, and from Amman to Amsterdam, the Jordanian King Abdullah II strove relentlessly to convey this message to all those regions from 2005 and up to 2008, striving to clarify the image of Islam and delivering it from the tentacles of those who claimed to be bearers of the banners of Islam by means of murder, terrorism and destruction, or what they called “Jihad”. Hence, at the annual session of the General Assembly of the UN on August 16, 2005, the Jordanian monarch declared:

That there should be no tolerance towards those who propagate terrorism. And in this context, Jordan has striven in conjunction with the global Muslim communities which are opposed to the extremist interpretations of Islam. We have also striven to replace the extreme interpretation of Islam with the genuine traditional and moderate Islam in every part of the world and for ever Muslim. We have launched in November 2004 the “Amman Message” whose objective was to clarify the true nature of Islam.25

Naturally, it is not possible to consider the “Amman Message” as a new religion or a new interpretation of religion, and as an expression of a flexible and open vision of the Islamic Religion and the values it embodies in terms of tolerance, justice and humanness. Therefore, Islam must be invoked as an act of civilization and not merely a religion. This fundamental differentiation is what allows us to consider the enrichment of a civilization which has been in existence for 14 centuries of history, and consequently, it should not be dwarfed into a mere religious dimension (Hamour, 2009, p. 214). And as Thierry Fabre has argued, one of the methods to surmount the challenges of identity and cultures which are poisoning relations between Europe and Islam is

to work toward the emergence of a world with common denominators and values (Hamour, 2009, p. 215). This is what the “Amman Message” has endeavored to achieve through its human and civilizational discourse.

The bitter reality, which we must acknowledge regarding the “Amman Message”, is that this Message has not been disseminated throughout the Arab and Islamic worlds and the world at large as has been planned, notwithstanding the organization of a supportive international conference under the title *The Reality of Islam and Its Role in Contemporary Society* which convened in July 2005, and in which 180 ulemas and Muslim jurists participated, and notwithstanding the considerable and persistent efforts made by the Jordanian sovereign. This may be attributable to the presence of Arab-Arab or Arab-Islamic competition regarding this initiative; or the reason could be that the “Amman Message”, remaining as just a theoretical initiative (Melasuo, 2007, pp. 20-22), could be attributed to the inadequacy of those in charge of promoting it, as it is mostly related to the Islamic Waqf Ministry, whereas the “Amman Message” contains roles which should be performed by other ministries such as: the Ministries of Education, Information, Culture, and of course, the Foreign Ministry. Thus, the “Amman Message” has been confined to its local Jordanian dimension.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, the “Amman Message” has impelled us to think of this initiative not only per se but also as an avenue for the relationship between the West and the East, Islam and Christianity, with all that they entail in diversities, and religious, cultural and political interaction. It is possible to enumerate some of the general observations within this framework:

(1) The Lebanese Arab thinker, Georges Corm has argued that:

Nothing evokes so much anxiety about the contemporary western civilization than its vision of Islam: for the West, which is dominant in the creation of images in the world, well selects those images which justify its vision: of Islam as a totalitarian religion, and which has an all-embracing social action, while the religious and temporal in it overlap—that it is irrational, violent and an unconquerable enemy. (Corm, 2005, p. 123)

We, on our part, ask, within the framework of what Corm posit, why is it that the West focuses on the discourses, actions, and visions of the religious currents, especially the jihadi Salafi currents, more than concentrating on the reformist and progressive discourses as the case is now with the Jordanian “Amman Message” which has been given only scant attention, while the media and university scholars and others know and deeply study Abu Mus’ab Al-Zarqawi, Abdullah Azzam, Al-Maqdisi and analyze them.

(2) The “Amman Message” has come at the appropriate time to delve into the renewal of the Islamic discourse, and to crystallize the concepts that enable renewal and awakening, in a manner taking into consideration the totality of the developments and progress occurring in the field of the humanities so that the Arab and Muslims could extricate themselves from the processes of segmentation and compartmentalization of the components of the Islamic heritage and modernity, with a view to instill an Islamic intellectual paradigm that is rooted in dialogue and difference, while constructing Islamic thought on the foundations of reason, which is free from inertness, violence and extremism, which has colored the political and social life of Muslims and Arabs, and has become among the most prominent constituents of their culture. Perhaps, the article written by Hussein Rawashdeh, the editor of the Islamic page in the *Jordanian Addustour Newspaper*, who is an enlightened Islamic writer and journalist, under the title *Jihad for Life*, differentiates between “jihad as a method of will and challenge to face the myriad challenges of daily life, which is different from the requirements of fighting on a battlefield and in encountering the enemy; for jihad is for life and not death” (Rrawashdeh, 2010), and this is what the “Amman Message” concurs with as a reformist orientation.
References


