

## "The War on Terror's goal is to reduce the influence of the Radicals"

Contributed by Administrator  
Friday, 29 June 2007

Rome, Brussels, June 20, 2007 In an interview to the Arabic service of Italian Press Agency AKI, FDD-EFD expert Walid Phares said "the strategic goal of the War on Terror is in fact to reduce the influence of the radicals." Speaking in Brussels, where he was a key note speaker at the launching of his new book at the European Parliament in June, *The War of Ideas: Jihadism against Democracies*, Professor Phares underlined that the aim of the international efforts in this confrontation is to "open spaces for freedom, out of which local energies will take the fight against extremism."

Asked about his new book *The War of Ideas: Jihadism against Democracies*, Phares said the confrontation is in fact between those movements calling themselves Jihadist -mostly Salafists but also Khomeinists- on the one hand and democracies, both in the West and beyond it. "The confrontation is not only between the Salafists and the United States but between the Jihadists and the rest of the Planet. For the latter not only is fighting against America and the West but also against all Arab, regional and international systems. The Jihadists oppose international law, relations and the UN as we know it." The book, said Phares "is essentially aimed at Western readers to understand that Jihadism is radically opposed to the basic components of democracy in theory and in action: women, human rights, pluralism, parties, etc."

The book redefines the War of Ideas between the Jihadists and democracies as in three stages. The first war of ideas took place between 1945 and 1990, during the Cold war. Salafists, then Khomeinists penetrated the Arab Muslim world ideologically and culturally: This war was won by the Jihadists. The second stage was between 1990 and 2001, where the Jihadists penetrated the West and won that conflict. Finally the third war of ideas is taking place since 2001. Phares argued that the 9/11 shock created the War on Terror not the US. This war will persist as long as the shock would remain, under President Bush and after his Presidency.

Addressing the various conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan and Lebanon, Phares argued that there many ways to wage them. "It would have been better to support an Iraqi opposition against Saddam? Of course yes, but that should have been done 12 years before." Phares said the change is taking place in Iraq via the transformation of civil society: Dozens of political parties, elections etc. "It is a tunnel and one cannot go backward, only forward."

Regarding Lebanon, Phares said the Cedars Revolution was in fact a half revolution and it need to complete itself. He said "unfortunately many politicians tok advantage of this historic revolution and rushed to score points for themselves instead of moving forward rapidly taking advantage of the international new context." On Hezbollah, Phares said it is linked ideologically and financially to Iran and in strategic alliance with Syria. Finally, he said a change can occur in Europe with the elections of Sarkozy." (Partial translation)

Link to the Arabic version June 15, 2007 is here:

[http://www.adnki.com/index\\_2Level\\_Arab.php?cat=Politics&loid=8.0.424568092&par=0](http://www.adnki.com/index_2Level_Arab.php?cat=Politics&loid=8.0.424568092&par=0)