

# **Intelligence Squared U.S. Audience Does Not Agree "Better Elected Islamists Than Dictators"**

**Daniel Pipes and M. Zuhdi Jasser Win Debate Over Reuel Marc Gerecht and Brian Katulis**

*Debate Will Air on NPR Stations Nationwide and Telecast on WNET/Thirteen on November 3rd at 3 PM*

NEW YORK, Oct. 5, 2012 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Intelligence Squared U.S. continued its Fall 2012 season with a sold out debate and a victory against the motion "Better Elected Islamists than Dictators." In the final tally, Daniel Pipes and M. Zuhdi Jasser won the Oxford-style debate by convincing 16% of the audience to change their minds and oppose the motion. After the debate, 47% of audience members agreed that elected Islamists would not evolve Middle Eastern political systems, up from 31% pre-debate.

Watch the full debate here:

<http://www.intelligencesquaredus.org/iq2-tv/item/763-better-elected-islamists-than-dictators>

Arguing for the motion, Reuel Marc Gerecht and Brian Katulis sought to prove that elected Islamists, rather than dictators will lead to the dissolution of violence and radical ideologies of groups like al-Qaida that threaten the West. But at the end of the evening it was Daniel Pipes' and M. Zuhdi Jasser's arguments that elections will not influence centuries-old Islamist supremacist beliefs that convinced the audience to vote against the motion.

This latest intellectual match up was IQ2US's 64th debate and was streamed live on WSJ Live.

Key Excerpts For the Motion:

REUEL MARC GERECHT:

"The only way you're going to get a more liberal order in the Middle East is through people of faith. It is through the fundamentalists participating in the system that you're actually going to develop the jousting ethic that is going to allow liberals to have greater chances. It's only through them participating that you're going to have people become responsible for politics."

BRIAN KATULIS:

"Elected Islamists, not dictators, will defeat the radical ideologies of groups like al-Qaida. ...al-Qaida, over the last three decades, essentially, has tried to build its ideological platform on two core pillars. Number one, tapping the popular discontent with dictators. Number two, anti-Americanism. That's a combustible mix, and breaking that, and having the people in the region break that, I think, is extremely powerful. The fact that al-Qaida and its affiliates had virtually nothing to do with the removal of leaders in places like Egypt and Tunisia and the widespread calls for political reform and the battles that are still going, I think, is telling. The fact that Ayman Zawahiri, the head of al-Qaida, wrote a book attacking the Muslim Brotherhood for actually participating in democratic politics is telling. Looking ahead, it seems that al-Qaida's popular appeal, I think, will remain low, given that many of the protesters are out there supporting democratic reforms. People are going to the ballot box, the very thing that radical jihadists are opposed to.

Key Excerpts Against the Motion:

DANIEL PIPES:

"Expect the worst of the Islamist regimes. These are people who are not going to let go of power. One man, one vote, one time or maybe two times is what you can expect. And therefore I say, better the greedy dictators that we can push around than the Islamist dictators who are our deepest enemies who we cannot change, who will be there for decades to come, who will do enormous -- inflict enormous damage on their own populations, be aggressors toward their neighbors and deeply mired in anti-Americanism."

M. ZUHDI JASSER:

"I'll tell you, as a Muslim, I'm insulted at people who believe that Islamism is progress for me as a Muslim, that somehow the theocrats and those with robes that memorize their scripture, that somehow know how to run democracy, when, in fact, it's an illusion. I think one of the things our opposition hasn't even begun to tell you is how they can trust one word that the Islamists tell them. They're deceptive theocrats who will do anything to monopolize and control our societies. This is far more dangerous than a simple dictator.... And once you understand that Islamism is no different than what our Founding Fathers fought against when we fought against theocracy in this country, you'll realize that fighting against theocracy is the only way to achieve liberty."

Before the debate, the IQ2US audience voted as follows:

- 38% of audience agreed with the resolution
- 31% of audience against the resolution
- 31% undecided

After careful consideration of the points by the audience, Daniel Pipes and M. Zuhdi Jasser won the debate: the team that moves the most votes at the end of the evening is determined the

winner.

- 44% of audience agreeing with the resolution (+6%)
- 47% of audience against the resolution (+16%)
- 9% undecided (-22%)

To learn more about the debate and review a detailed breakdown of how the audience voted pre- and post-debate, please visit us at: <http://www.intelligencesquaredus.org/debates/past-debates/item/762-better-elected-islamists-than-dictators&tab=2>

The showdown at Kaufman Center in New York City puts the leading public intellectuals in the limelight in front of a live audience for nearly two hours of heated debate.

#### NOTES TO EDITORS

- To view transcripts and videos, download audio or video clips or learn more about Intelligence Squared U.S., please visit: <http://www.intelligencesquaredus.org/>
- NPR will air the debate on stations nationwide and the podcast will be available to download. Please check with your local NPR stations for additional details or visit: <http://www.npr.org/series/6263392/intelligence-squared-u-s>
- WNET/Thirteen will air this debate November 3rd at 3 PM

#### ABOUT INTELLIGENCE SQUARED DEBATES (IQ2US)

Named One of "Five Podcasts that Will Change the Way You Think" by Forbes, Intelligence Squared U.S. was founded in New York City in 2006 by Robert Rosenkranz, and has grown into an internationally syndicated series heard and watched by millions. The debates have attracted some of the world's top thinkers including Paul Krugman, Karl Rove, Malcolm Gladwell, Alan Dershowitz, Peter Thiel and Arianna Huffington.

Based on the highly successful Oxford-style debate program originated in London, Intelligence Squared U.S. has presented over 60 debates on a wide range of provocative topics including global warming, the financial crisis, the marketing of organic foods, and the death of mainstream media. The Rosenkranz Foundation initiated the Intelligence Squared U.S. Debate Series and continues to provide major support. ABC News correspondent John Donvan is the moderator, and the executive producer is Dana Wolfe.

For more information about Intelligence Squared U.S., please contact Andrea Bussell ([abussell@shorefire.com](mailto:abussell@shorefire.com)), Rebecca Shapiro ([rshapiro@shorefire.com](mailto:rshapiro@shorefire.com)) or Mark Satlof ([msatlof@shorefire.com](mailto:msatlof@shorefire.com)) at Shore Fire Media, 718.522.7171.

This information was brought to you by Cision <http://www.cisionwire.com>

<http://www.cisionwire.com/intelligence-squared/r/intelligence-squared-u-s--audience-does-not-agree--better-elected-islamists-than-dictators-,c9314589>