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THE ENEMY WITHIN ISLAM

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Abstract

The recent spread of political, radical Islam around the world has captured the attention of the secular world. This movement has launched a spate of violence and unrest, culminating in the al-Qaeda attack on the United States on September 11, 2001. Public interest in Islam has not been so keen since the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979—another event that took the world by surprise.

Political observers have pinpointed the Saudis as the source of the problem. Not only were the majority of the terrorist bombers Saudi, but also they were thoroughly indoctrinated into the severe Muslim Wahhabi sect that is unique to Arabia. Or rather, it used to be unique. Today, thanks to massive infusions of money and willing missionaries, this sect has spawned thousands of religious schools throughout the non-Arabic-speaking Muslim world, from Afghanistan and Pakistan through Central Asia, Malaysia, and Indonesia and the Philippines. These schools are producing willing sacrificial foot soldiers of the new global Jihad. [see V. S. Naipaul, Beyond Belief, and Jeffrey Goldberg; Robert D. Kaplan]

Some political observers have noted that this rise of radical Islam was spurred by the successful Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979. [Farhat-Holzman, "Janus Revisited"] Iranians, who adhere to the minority Shiite sect of Islam, are not much loved by the majority Sunni Muslims, and in particular, by Arabs. However, ideas are contagious.

Political Islam, once specifically Iranian Shiite, has become the inspiration for the radicalization of Islam worldwide. What may not be as obvious to observers is that Shiite values themselves have transformed the practices of Islam in regions that consider themselves Sunni. The religion is changing daily, and its consequences are being felt everywhere.

Introduction

Many political observers have claimed that the current crisis of Radical Islam can be laid on the doorstep of Saudi Arabia. The Wahhabi sect that dominates Islam in Arabia has embarked in global missionary work during the past twenty years of Saudi oil wealth. Across Central Asia, Indonesia, Africa, and into Europe and the United States, mosque
building and intensive recruitment of converts has gone on unhindered by the host countries who did not know until recently that this gift was accompanied by brainwashing and terrorism training. [Emerson: American Jihad.]

What is less obvious about this campaign is that the stern face of Wahhabism is a mirror image of Islam's minority sect, Shia Islam. What seems to have launched the Saudi Wahhabis on their campaign to seduce minds and hearts and topple governments was the success of Shiite Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran. This aged cleric toppled the modernizing monarchy of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi and then hijacked the revolution from the young secular socialists who innocently thought they would rule.

On the surface of things, the conflicts between the Sunni and Shiites remind us of the long and bloody struggle between the Catholics and the Protestants in the 16th and 17th centuries. However, the Christian struggle was largely doctrinal—there were real issues between Catholics and Protestants on how to interpret the Bible—and to a degree, the issue of authority: the Pope and hierarchy in Rome or each person's conscience and freedom to interpret independently. With the Shia-Sunni struggle, however, the issue is not doctrinal at all; rather, it has ethnic roots and can be traced to Iranian-Arab antipathy. It also has political roots—the difference between a people with an imperial history and those with a Bedouin-merchant history. [See Raphael Patai for further discussion.]

Despite this long history of bad blood between Shiite and Sunni Islam, we are seeing a new twist today. The values and techniques of Shia are being adopted by Sunni Muslims in areas that were once moderate and rather relaxed about religion. Although the Saudi Wahhabis carried the water, Shia Islam seems to have carried the underlying religious-political philosophy. It will be apparent after surveying the roots of Shia and its characteristics that this once minority sect has set the modern Muslim agenda. What Shia offers is a "culture of resentment," which appeals to the emotions of millions of Muslims around the world.

In this paper, I will trace the Shia "dissident" sect from its beginnings in the birth of Islam, explore its two most famous practitioners (the first in the 11th century and the second in the 20th), and then examine today's radical Islam as it is being practiced around the world today. The resemblance between the practices of current radicals and Shiite practitioners does not seem coincidental.
Most of us never heard of Shiites until the Iranian Revolution in 1978-9. We learned then that only 10 percent of Muslims around the world adhere to this dissident sect, while the remaining Muslims are Sunni, or traditional Muslims. Most Shiites live in Iran, where they represent 90% of the population. In addition, perhaps 60% the population of Iraq is Shiite, but there are also pockets, remnants of Shiite merchants, in the Persian Gulf, Saudi Arabia, North Africa, Lebanon, Syria, Turkey, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Central Asia, where they are watched with suspicion by the host governments. Governments fear this sect because of its turbulent past and equally turbulent present. Shiites are hostile to all governments, which they consider illegitimate, until a descendant of the Prophet Mohammad returns to rule the world.

Origin of the Sect. The split in Islam can be traced back to its very beginnings in the 7th century CE. When the Prophet Mohammad died, he left no will in which he might have appointed a successor to himself as Commander of the Faithful. His followers met in traditional Bedouin style and selected the Caliph (or religious-political successor) by consensus from among their number. Their criteria were ostensibly competence and piety, but in truth, as with every organization, political considerations played a large role.

Although one of the candidates for Caliph was Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Mohammad, he was passed over three times and only became the fourth caliph after a turbulent campaign by his followers, the Party of Ali (Shiites). [Armstrong: Muhammad; Lewis: The Arabs in History; Kiernan: The Arabs, and Hourani: A History of the Arab Peoples.

The conflicting views of the early Muslims had to do with succession. Some insisted that the Prophet’s family should be accorded political power, but others supported the rough democracy of Bedouin tradition. The backers of Ali did not fare well. Ali was assassinated shortly after assuming power, and his two sons, one of whom challenged the next appointed Caliph, were slaughtered, along with most of their families, in a pitched battle in the Mesopotamian desert. Their surviving supporters went underground and seethed for centuries with bitterness and a sense of injustice. The central holiday of Shiites to this day is the emotional mourning for the young martyrs who died on the Mesopotamian plains so long ago.

To see how these feelings of injustice have survived to today, one need only witness the processions of the Shiite pious in Iran who relive the millennium-old slaughter in the desert by beating themselves with
chains and knives, chanting and drawing blood. The enemy is clearly the Sunni establishment. Old-fashioned Iranian ice cream parlors in Tehran have wall murals depicting the battle and slaughter of the “innocents.” The source of resentment has been stirred up in Iran for the past four centuries, through fiery sermons, processions, and even a religious passion play (the Taziye), and was only beginning to disappear under the secular-minded Pahlavi dynasty. The Islamic Revolution revived it.

What was at stake here was that oldest of political arguments: is bloodline (as in monarchy) or election by a council of elders the best way to guarantee good rule? Until the past few centuries (except for ancient Athens and Republican Rome), blood was considered the most important issue in the legitimacy of a ruler. Those who hold to such a view have not been vindicated by history. Royal descent, certainly as successive generations of kings follow a great first king, generally illustrates increasing decadence, weakness, and incompetence.

But how do Muslims think the Prophet Mohammad felt about this issue? The Sunnis note that Mohammad did not leave a will; he only ordered that his body be buried simply so that there would be no cult of worship that would follow his death. He wanted to make it clear that he was only a prophet, and not a divine figure. A verse in the Koran expresses Mohammad’s admonition about avoiding the cult of personality:

*Muhammad is naught but a Messenger; Messengers have passed away before him. Why, if he should die or is slain, will you turn upon your heels? If any man should turn about on his heels, he will not harm God in any way; and God will recompense the thankful.* Sura 3.138.

For many centuries, orthodox Islam accepted this principle. But as the Muslim hordes swept through non-Arab realms in their thrust for empire, the conquered peoples did not speak Arabic, were not part of Bedouin tradition, and furthermore, their experience was with the bloodline tradition of hereditary rule.

The fall of the Persian Empire to the Arab invaders was a shock to the Iranians, from which they have never quite recovered. Iranians have always been ambivalent about Islam, to the point of having their own aristocratic version of the religion or a flood of irreverent humor (underground) that has circulated for centuries.

The Shiite faction in support of Mohammad’s daughter’s children may have died on the plains of Iraq, but this loss became an under-
ground movement taken up by the Iranians. Many Iranian aristocrats claim the Prophet’s blood in their ancestry (as do the Kings of Jordan and Morocco), which gives them some cachet among the religious lower classes. Of course, such bloodline claims are as unprovable as the thousands of “pieces of the true cross” that were hawked during the Middle Ages to the gullible pious in Europe. There are altogether too many “black turbans” around for credibility. (The Black Turban is the badge of those claiming descent from the Prophet.)

The sect flourished in Persian soil and when the last Caliph with any credible descent from the Prophet’s family died, his death was mythologically transformed into a disappearance. He was not really dead, they said, but hidden somewhere and he would return at the right time to preside over a Muslim world. Until then, no leadership could be considered legitimate, and was only to be tolerated while satisfactory and brought down by force when objectionable to the Shiites. The Shiites appointed themselves the arbiters of good and bad rule. [Lewis: The Assassins.]

For centuries, the devotion to saints and shrines flourished in Iran, from southwest to northeast (today’s Afghanistan). In Qom, a town south of today’s Tehran, there is a shrine to Fatima, the sister of the eighth “Imam,” a woman with the same name as the Prophet Mohammad’s daughter (which may cause some confusion among illiterate women praying for fertility).

Qom was originally a military barracks for the invading Arabs, and only later a Shiite pilgrimage site. It has since been made famous as a center of Shiite learning that gave rise to the Ayatollah Khomeini. Fatima’s brother, Imam Reza, a man who claimed descent from the Prophet and who was the bosom buddy of a Caliph in Baghdad, died in Mashhad, a town on the eastern border of Iran, at the gateway to Central Asia. A practice of worship has grown up around this man, and more Iranian pilgrims visit this shrine than any other, aside from Kerbala in Iraq, the burial place of the Prophet’s martyred grandsons. The gossip about Imam Reza’s relationship with the Caliph died out well before the mythology about Reza’s sainthood, which is a key pillar of Shiite faith in Iran.

The Assassin King, Hasan-i Sabbah. Bernard Lewis, the dean of Islamic studies, is the source to consult for insight into the infamous “Old Man of the Mountain,” the world’s first international terrorist leader. Lewis charts the rise of this terrorist cult (I use “cult” here because it had no theological base, but relied on total obedience to a
leader.) He traces it from the succession crisis after Mohammad’s death in 632 AD, through the chaotic 8th century when extremist Shiite sects and sub-sects tried, through assassination and unrest, to unseat the Baghdad Caliphate. The terrorism failed, and the Shiites split into two groups: the Ismaili’s who followed the disinherited elder son of the 6th Imam (line of the Prophet), who died in 765 AD. The other Shiites shifted their allegiance to Ismail’s younger brother, whose followers continued until the 12th Imam, who “disappeared” in 873 and is still awaited by Shiites today. The Ayatollah Khomeini stems from this tradition, as do most Iranian Muslims.

According to Lewis, what characterizes most Shiite organized groups is that their semi-holy leader runs all three branches of government: bureaucracy, religious hierarchy, and armed forces.

The first example of a Shiite state occurred from 909 to 1171 in Egypt. Named the “Fatimid Caliphate” to honor the Prophet’s daughter Fatima, this government did not win the hearts and minds of Egyptians, especially when one of their Caliphs, al-Hakim, claimed to be God. The Egyptians turned them out. But during this administration’s tenure, its leading institution, al-Azhar University, attracted Iranian students. The idea of transferring allegiance to a “hidden Imam” was appealing; this idea was transplanted abroad. It was taken up by an Iranian Shiite, who had been trained in the Egyptian Shiite schools and who took the ideas home with him.

The man was Hasan-i Sabbah, born in the 11th century in Qom, a town already beginning to nurture Shiite sympathies. Hasan received a religious education both in Qom and Egypt, and when Egypt cast out the Shiites, he founded his own sect and took it back to Iran. His followers were passionate fanatics who were sworn enemies of the newest Muslims in the region, the conquering Sunni Seljuq Turks.

Sabbah found an impregnable castle named Alamut in the Elborz Mountains of Western Iran, and he bought the owner out and established his community of assassins there. He ruled Alamut for the next 35 years, from where he directed attacks on the most powerful and famous men in Islam and sowed fear internationally. His mission was to win converts and secure more castles, and to this end, he sent out agents to carry out assassinations far and wide. He actually boasted that he would unseat the Sunni Caliphate in Baghdad and replace it with the perfect Muslim empire—under himself, of course.

There is a curiously modern note that assassination and drugs were intertwined. He used hashish to addict young assassins, who were then
willing to go forth and find and murder anyone fingered by their master. These young men were also willing to die in their mission, if so required. One judge in Isfahan wore armor, had a bodyguard, and took precautions—but was murdered at Friday prayers in a mosque. That same year (1108-9), Grand Vazir Nizam al-Mulk, the most powerful man of his time, was wounded by an assassin in Baghdad, but survived.

Bernard Lewis tells us that Hasan-i Sabbah knew that his preaching could not prevail against the entrenched orthodoxy of Sunni Islam—that his followers could not meet and defeat the armed might of the Seljuq state. Others before him had vented their frustration in disorganized violence, in hopeless insurrection, or in sullen passivity. Hasan found a new way, by which a small force, disciplined and devoted, could strike effectively against an overwhelmingly superior enemy. Terrorism can be defined as actions carried on by a narrowly limited organization and inspired by a sustained program of large-scale objectives in the name of which terror is practiced. This was the method that Hasan chose—the method that he may well have invented.

What was characteristic of Ismaili Shiite doctrine is characteristic of modern state Shia in Iran today. The doctrine is authoritarian, with the believer having no right of choice. He was compelled to follow the authorized teaching of an Imam or his accredited representative. Furthermore, the Imam could not be elected, as was common in Sunni Islam. Shites were told that God appointed the Imam and the Imam was the sole repository of truth. “Only the Imam could validate both revelation and reason; only the Ismaili Imam, by the nature of his office and teaching, could in fact do this, and he alone therefore was the true Imam. His rivals were usurpers, their followers sinners, their teachings falsehood,” according to Bernard Lewis.

Sabbah’s strange monastic order came to an end, along with the Caliphate in Baghdad, when the Mongol hordes came through and destroyed them both in 1258. However, the resentful, bitter, and dictatorial qualities of Shiite Islam remained entrenched in this “Party of Ali” among their many survivors, in pockets across North Africa and in to Central Asia. In Iran a fanatical Turkic tribe in the 16th century, the Safavids, seized power and mandated Shia as the state religion.

**Arabs and The Other Converts.** The Arabs, who were the first bearers of the faith of Mohammad, poured out across a non-Arab world. Their first major conquest was the Persian Empire, and from there they swept through Central Asia, northern India, and eventually as far afield as Malaysia and Indonesia (then Malaya and the Spice Islands). Unlike
most of the people they conquered and converted, the Arabs were ini-
tially relatively egalitarian. All Muslims, convert or native-born, were
supposed to be treated equally under the law.

However, people being what they are, the Arabs wanted to be the
first among equals, and later, the superior among inferiors. In Persia,
peasants converted in considerable numbers because for the first time,
they were treated with dignity (and were spared from paying the head
tax). Many aristocrats converted too (with mental reservations) because
that was the way to survive and get ahead. The aristocrats learned
Arabic, but maintained their Persian language, which was revived at the
first possible time that the Arab grip had loosened, two centuries after
conquest.

The only conquered people who maintained knowledge of their
pre-Islamic history were the Iranians. Everywhere else that Arabs pre-
vailed, there was a concerted campaign to stamp out any cultural mem-
ory prior to conversion. V.S. Naipaul in his book Beyond Belief, calls
this “Arab cultural imperialism.” He attributes the unrest and general
unhappiness of Asian Muslims to this hole in their history. We see evi-
dence of this today in Afghanistan (with the destruction of the great
Buddhist sculptures), Pakistan, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

Because of the way Islam was transmitted, those who were non-
Arabs were at a disadvantage because they could not read the holy texts
for themselves. They were compelled to rely on authorities (hence the
mullahs and imams) for interpretation of the faith. This suited the dic-
tatorial nature of Shia Islam and it suited the experience of people
accustomed to obeying an absolute monarch and his authorized agents.
Furthermore, because the sect was so passionate, angry, and full of
drama, it served as a safety valve for unhappy subjects. People’s anger
could be directed at an injury centuries old rather than at their current
leaders.

The Ayatollah Khomeini: Shia Resurgent. The tacit relationship
between Iran’s monarchs and the Shiite hierarchy kept Iran backward
and turbulent for the past four centuries. The monarchy did not dare
innovate or institute change, and the clergy kept the rage of an unhappy
population channeled into religious processions and dramas. Predatory
tribes made the roads dangerous, protection money had to be paid to
move goods, and the central government had to rely on the feudal lords
and feudal clergy to provide armed men when needed. Of course such
soldiers were loyal to their masters, not to the state. (This, of course,
sounds like Afghanistan under the Taliban.)
In the turbulent 19th century, there were numerous Shiite and Shiite-like pockets of rebellion both in Iran and in other Middle Eastern Muslim states. Shia became identified with anti-government hostility and even, for a brief time, constitutional reform in Iran (1905-6). This movement was reversed by the feudal establishment, with the help of the Tsarist Russians. Then the Pahlavi Dynasty assumed power (1926) and began the modernization and secularization process.

Despite a great leap forward for backward Iran, a revolution unseated the modernizers and a reactionary Shiite revolution won the day. The charismatic Ayatollah Khomeini triumphed in 1979, after years of suppression and resentment. He undid what he could of modern institutions and hijacked what many young people thought would be the triumph of socialist democracy. Furthermore, he appeared to triumph over the superpower United States, which did not go unnoticed by Sunni Muslims. [See Farhat-Holzman.]

**Shiite-Like Radical Islamic Movements.** Sunni Muslims who were looking for a way to expand Muslim (and their own) power found the techniques and emotions of Shia useful. They could be incorporated to harness the directionless unhappiness of once moderate Muslims who felt powerless. They felt powerless against their incompetent and authoritarian governments, powerless against Western culture which was overwhelming their young, and powerless against the enormous and restless population explosion of youth.

Movements such as the al-Qaeda terrorists made use of elements they observed in the Islamic Republic of Iran. Osama bin Laden, a member of a billionaire Saudi family, created an outlaw organization dedicated to bringing the Muslim world back to strict, literal adherence to his (and Wahhabi) perception of early Islam. They preached messianic sermons about the wonderful future when Islam would once more dominate the world. They revived a rather skewed history about how wonderful the early world of Islam was, but were very careful not to encourage exploration of pre-Islamic history. (The Ayatollah Khomeini tried, but failed to suppress the knowledge of pre-Islamic history and such holidays as the ancient Zoroastrian New Year by Iranians). And like Osama’s predecessor, Hasan-i Sabbah, Osama set up cells around the world of dedicated assassin/suicide-murderers.

**The Taliban Experiment in Afghanistan.** Until a few years ago, the only place that the Saudi’s Wahhabi sect could be seen in action was Saudi Arabia. Religious police enforce their notion of Islam with whips, lashings, amputations, and beheadings. It is a closed country where vis-
itors cannot come without a sponsor and prior approval, where women are totally segregated and totally invisible under black shrouds, and where there is no such thing as participatory government or free press. It is a religious police state, and if it were not for the geological good fortune of sitting on a giant pool of oil, nobody would care what it does.

However, that pool of oil has been funding turbulent factions throughout the world. It has financed the likes of Osama bin Laden and his terrorist network, as well as thousands of Muslim "schools" throughout both the Arab Muslim world and the non-Arab Muslim east. Youngsters who "graduate" from these brainwashing academies can only memorize the Koran and receive training to become holy war martyrs.

When the Saudis helped finance the Afghan war against the Soviet invasion (with American help), a number of Muslim fanatics received guerrilla military training. These "veterans" have fanned out across the world to form cells of Osama bin Laden's holy war to be directed against Jews, Zionists, and Americans—all enemies of Allah, said bin Laden.

Afghanistan drove out the Russians, but then failed to create a credible central government, so in time-honored fashion, the warlords went after each other and trashed the country altogether. Osama found Afghanistan a perfect place to set up his corporation (Terror, Inc.) and he helped establish a puppet government, the Taliban, graduates of the Saudi religious academies in Pakistan, under the leadership of a one-eyed veteran, Mullah Omar. That the Mullah never even graduated from the religious academy did not matter to his followers. He was a perfect, utterly ignorant, charismatic figure. Osama's organization flattered Omar and he took on delusions of grandeur, without realizing that the tail was wagging the dog. [Peter L. Bergen, *Holy War Inc.*]

The Taliban set up a religious state that resembled Saudi Arabia but was even more backward and unlike oil-rich Arabia, desperately poor. Every day new edicts came out from on high that were enforced by religious police who were fully empowered to punish. Women, who had comprised the majority of government workers and teachers at all levels, were sacked and were confined to house arrest. An all-concealing shroud was mandatory—and it went one better than the Saudis—this garment did not even permit the eyes to be seen—or to scarcely see—through an embroidered mesh.

There were to be no kite flying, no keeping of song birds, no chess, no backgammon, nor anything else that looked like it might be fun.
Women were not to be heard ever (rubber-soled shoes) and no talking or singing that could be heard by men. Lower story windows were to be painted over so that women could not be seen (nor see out) from their homes.

All schooling for girls was forbidden. Most of what had become very meager medical care was barred to women as well. Television was banned, as were cinema and anything other than local radio. Afghanistan had become a giant jail.

**Shiite Elements?** Although the Taliban and Osama’s peculiar sect, the al-Qaeda, claimed Sunni adherence, there were several practices that look suspiciously Shiite. One institution was the “temporary wife” system, in which a traveling Muslim could engage in contractual sex for one hour to 99 years. This is not a Sunni custom (and is not domestic concubinage), but the al-Qaeda and Taliban engaged in this free pass at will. Since their loss of Afghanistan, there are countless women forced into such “marriages,” women who have been abandoned by their fleeing masters and are without legal Islamic status.

Another Shiite element is the reverence for the Prophet’s descendants and passion for religious relics. Shiites, unlike Sunnis, maintain holy shrines throughout their territories that supposedly house the bodies, bones, or (in Kandahar, Afghanistan) the supposed cloak of Muhammad himself. One mosque in Northern India houses a hair from the beard of the Prophet Mohammad, and blood has been shed over this pilgrimage site.

While journalist Robert Kaplan was trekking through Pakistan and Afghanistan in the late 1990s, he was present when the now notorious Mullah Omar, the holy leader of the Taliban, stood before a mob and donned the holy relic, a brown cloak, supposedly belonging to the Prophet Mohammad himself. Some observers were shocked by his boldness.

The cloak had originally been housed in Samarkand, the city of Tamerlane in Uzbekstan. Several centuries ago, an Afghan king briefly took Samarkand and then asked to look at the holy relic. He promised he would move it no farther than a rock at his feet. The robe was brought out and he then ordered his men to pick up the rock too, and moved both of them back to Kandahar. [Kaplan] So much for honor. But even more important, how could they think a robe worn by the Prophet could have survived from the 7th century? And even if it had, why would this be significant?

Shiites base their sect on resentment of secular rulers. In their eyes,
only a descendant of the family of Ali would have legitimacy. As a result, this community is easy to arouse, and can easily assume the mantle of martyrdom. A new “cult of martyrdom” has now taken root among Sunni Muslims—given new and grotesque life among the Palestinians, as well as among all Muslims who are rallied to fight to the death the “Crusaders and Jews.”

**Consequences**

There is little doubt that our era has begun an engagement that Samuel P. Huntington called “The Clash of Civilizations.” When Huntington’s book first came out, I thought he had gone too far in lumping all Islam under a consistent “civilization.” It seemed to me that the Muslim world was itself divided into very different cultures: a modern or modernizing elite, whose children went to school in Europe and the United States; a burgeoning middle class that was somewhat educated in mostly secular schools; an illiterate peasantry and working class that was religious; and a handful of dissident groups that were seeking solutions to their badly functioning authoritarian states in either Communism or renewed religious fanaticism. In a clash, surely the elite and most of the middle class would not be hostile to modernization and would not be fanatics, would they?

Since Huntington wrote his book, the scene has changed. The Islamists—who have much that looks like Shiite values to me—have nearly silenced any opposition in their countries. Even the gradually secularizing Egypt has pulled back and fundamentalism is increasingly applying pressure in the daily lives of Egyptians.

Indonesia, which was rather moderately Muslim and had a secular authoritarian government, is now attempting democracy. The government is so afraid of the street power of Islamists that they dare not arrest even international criminals, such as influential mullah who runs a Wahhabi-type religious school and urges attacks on the west, on Indonesian Christians, and backsliding Muslims.

Despite protestations from our own national leadership that we are not at war with Islam but only with fanatical terrorist cults, it looks to me (and increasingly to other scholars) that war is already exploding between the modern developed world and the world of Islam. Those Muslims who would like a modern life with separation of governance from their faith will increasingly flee to our side, leaving the poor, the unhappy, and the violence into which Islam has sunk, to fight a losing war with the West.
Perhaps it requires a crisis such as the one that Islam faces today for Islam to experience the same sort of reformation that Christianity and Judaism had in the 17th and 18th centuries. A handful of educated scholars in the Muslim world are contemplating the unthinkable: that for Islam to survive as a profound and spiritual religion, it must be unchained from government and compulsion. This movement is small, but offers the one hope for the future of Islam to survive its current disastrous trajectory.

**Bibliography**


Armstrong is a theologian and former nun whose works on religion are thoughtful and illuminating. *The Battle for God* explores the grievances of the once marginalized religious fundamentalists and charts their often militant challenge to secular life. *Islam, a Short History*, is the most recent book to review the history of this religion from its beginnings through their current agonies.


This is the most definitive book to date on the al-Qaeda organization of Osama bin Laden, which formally declared war on the United States on September 11, 2001. Most fascinating is the global network of terrorists who comprise 80 Jihad networks. While alarming, it is also apparent that these factions only have the capacity to destroy, but not to build. There is no agenda that has credibility for a modern, free, and technologically sophisticated world.


Brooks is an Australian journalist who spent years in Egypt. From Egypt, she traveled throughout the adjacent Muslim world to explore the world of Muslim women. She tracks the rapid Islamization and radicalization of that hitherto modernizing world.
Laina Farhat-Holzman

Journalist Steven Emerson was focused on Islamic terrorism well before it was chic. He sounded the alarm 18 months before the September 11 attacks, and has testified before a Congressional subcommittee that terrorist organizations were making good use of the freedoms accorded by American society to network, raise money, and buy the weapons of destruction they planned to use against the United States and worldwide.

This paper reviews the events that led up to the Islamic Revolution of 1979, and disputes some generally held views about the inevitability of this event.

Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples*, Fine Creative Media, INC., 1997. This is a much admired study by an Oxford professor, which traces Arab culture from the time of Mohammed to the present days.

This article details the buildup of fanatical youth trained as Holy Warriors in Pakistan and the total control of Afghanistan by the Taliban, well before our own contact with them after September 11, 2001.

This work is almost prophetic in its analysis of the dangers of modernization and the problems facing modernizing authoritarians. Monarchy is particularly dangerous because its support comes from the very people who become alienated when the modernizer is successful. Although written ten years before the Iranian Revolution, Huntington seems to have predicted its trajectory.

Kaplan, an extremely astute journalist and historian, travels “on
the ground” from East Africa, through the Middle East, Central Asia, and into South and Southeast Asia, where he notes the changes that will usher in the meltdown of nationalism as we have known it. For most of these places, the nation-state is dead or dying, and the ethnic identifications are changing the map.

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*Kaplan looks to the future by looking back in history. He claims there is no modern world; it is a continuation of all that passed before. For this exploration, he consults Churchill, Livy, Sun-Tzu, Thucydides, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Malthus, Kant, Tiberius, and Lt. Col. Ralph Peters. It is a fascinating guide to modern political policy issues.*

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*Kaplan sees a host of terrors in the wake of the Cold War. Volatile new democracies in Eastern Europe, fierce tribalism in Africa, civil war and ethnic violence in the Near East, and widespread famine and disease—not to mention the brutal rift developing as wealthy nations benefit from seemingly boundless technology while other parts of the world slide into chaos. This is a clear-eyed look at the changing global picture.*


This is an insightful study by the biographer of Yasir Arafat.


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*This indispensible anthology includes articles on Islamic History, The Faith and the Faithful (both by Lewis), Islamic Art and...*
Laina Farhat-Holzman

Architecture, Urban life, Mysticism, Islamic literature, Islamic music, Science, Military History, Moorish Spain, Iran, the Ottomans, the Moghuls, and Islam Today—written by some of the best known Islamic specialists in Europe and the United States.

This is the major source for historic details on the fascinating Assassin Cult that terrorized the 12th Century.

After the Islamic Revolution of 1979, Naipaul set out on a trek throughout the non-Arab Muslim world, asking everywhere why there was such enthusiasm for resurgent Islam.

---------------------, Beyond Belief: Islamic Excursions Among the Converted Peoples, Random House, 1998. Fifteen years after his first trek, Naipaul took the same journey and called upon many of the same people he had interviewed previously. He also traces the growth of Wahhabi Muslim schools funded by the Saudis as the latest form of “Arab imperialism.” He observes the formerly moderate Islamic practices of Southeast Asia being challenged—and transformed—by Islamic fascism.

Raphael Patai, The Arab Mind, Charles Scribners, 1983. In Chapter 13 of this book, “Unity and Conflict,” Patai notes that there is far more hostility (in Lebanon) between Shiites and Sunnis than between either Muslim sect and Arab Christians. Perhaps this is a confirmation of the truism that no war is as horrible as a civil war between cousins. Patai cites a study conducted twice at the American University of Beirut in 1935 and again in 1951. “In the intervening 16 years,” he says, “hostility between Sunnite and Shi’ite Muslims had increased to such an extent that the Sunnites expressed greater hostility toward Shi’ites than toward several Christian denominations.”

This book is the work of a writer who has had a lifetime of contact with the Arab world, beginning in his childhood experiences
in Morocco. His conclusion, at the end of this long and documented work, is: "The Arab world has no institutions evolved by common consent for common purposes, under guarantee of law, and consequently there is nothing that can be agreed as the general good. No mechanism exists so that people may participate in whatever is being decided and performed in their name, and ostensibly for their sake. Without some such mechanism, presumably electoral but certainly representative, rights and duties cannot be defined, wealth cannot be shared with any degree of fairness, and vital issues of peace and war and life and death are at the sole disposition of whoever has power." This assessment goes far toward explaining contemporary Arab rage, a rage projected onto the United States, Europe, and Israel.

Amir Taheri, The Spirit of Allah: Khomeini & the Islamic Revolution, Adler & Adler, 1986. Amir Taheri was editor-in-chief of Kayhan, Iran's largest-selling daily newspaper, until late 1979. This work is an informed, albeit unsympathetic analysis of the rise of Khomeini and his revolution.