Islam and Terrorism

Modern Islamist terrorism is related to three factors:
1) The spread of Wahhabism:
2) The impact of the Iranian Revolution of 1979
3) The advent of technology
   - The Internet
   - Independent television channels
   - Cellular phones

1) Expansion of Wahhabism

Two factors contributed to the spread of Wahhabism:
1) Abd al-Wahhab created an alliance with an Arab tribal chief by the name of Mohammed ibn Sa’ud, the ancestor of Abdul Aziz ibn Saud
   - Abdul Aziz ibn Saud later conquered most of the Arabian Peninsula, created the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia after WW I, and made Wahhabism the state religion

1) Expansion of Wahhabism (cont.)

2) The discovery of vast amounts of oil in Saudi Arabia
   - Saudi Arabia began sending huge amounts of money to Muslim communities all over the world
     - Funds were used to establish madrassas (religious schools) that almost exclusively teach Arabic and the Quran, and to build mosques
     - In the US alone, up to 80% of all mosques are managed by Saudi-funded Wahhabi clerics

   - In a few decades, Wahhabism went from a largely ignored form of Islam to a serious rival to mainstream Sunni Islam
### Connection Between Wahhabism and Militant Fundamentalism

- A sampling of literature from Saudi-funded mosques in the US:
  - It is a religious obligation for Muslims to hate Jews & Christians
  - Befriending, helping, or taking part in the festivities of Christians and Jews is strictly forbidden
  - Treat democratic and hence un-Islamic societies with contempt
  - Believers who are in the US for any reason should feel as if they are in hostile territory, and, therefore, should try to convert local nonbelievers, accumulate funds to be used later in the jihad, or conclude their business ASAP and leave
  - Treat non-Wahhabi Muslims as infidels
  - Kill anybody converting out of Islam
  - Veil and separate all Muslim women from men and bar them from certain vocations

### 2) The Iranian Revolution - A Brief History

- Uniquely Persian
  - Iranians are not Arabs
    - They are Persian with strong ethno-national ties to the ancient Persian Empire
  - Iranians resisted the Turks, and later, European imperialists
  - European imperialism cannot be overemphasized when considering the politics of Iran

- During the 19th century, Iranians developed a hierarchy of Shi'ite Islamic scholars:
  - Mullahs (Local prayer leaders)
  - Hojatalislams (Masters of Islam or middle-ranking scholars)
  - Ayatollahs (recognized scholars with authoritative writings)
  - Grand Ayatollahs

- Iranian scholars formed the *majlis* council, a theological advisory board to the government
  - *Majlis* took political leadership
2) The Iranian Revolution - A Brief History of Iran (cont.)

- British influence and control
  - British imperialism came to Iran in the 1800s
  - Oil production had a tremendous impact on the way the British used Iran
  - Reza Shah Pahlavi, with British support, became Shah of Iran in 1925
  - Reza Shah was under no illusions about his dependency on British power
    - For Iran to gain full independence, he needed to develop an economic base that would support the country and consolidate his strength among the ethnic populations in Iran

- He encouraged Western investment, primarily British and American, in the oil and banking industries
- He courted various power groups inside Iran, including the Shi'a fundamentalists
- Reza Shah's long-term failure was a result of his foreign policy
  - In the 1930s, he had befriended Hitler and saw German relations as a way to balance British influence
- In 1941, Britain and the USSR invaded Iran, forcing Reza Shah to abdicate
- His son, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, was left in charge
- In 1951, Dr. Mohamed Mossadegh was elected prime minister

- Mossadegh became very popular in Iran after he nationalized Iranian oil reserves
- In response, the British used the fear of communism to convince US President Dwight Eisenhower that the only hope for stability in Iran was to empower the shah, Mohammed Pahlavi
- In 1953, Eisenhower authorized the CIA to execute Operation Ajax
  - Resulted in the overthrow of Mossadegh and the re-enthroning of Mohammed Pahlavi as the Shah of Iran
- After Operation Ajax, the Shah became increasingly autocratic
  - Developed SAVAK, a national intelligence and security organization
2) The Iranian Revolution – A Brief History of Iran (cont.)

- The Shah used SAVAK to locate and destroy his enemies.
  - Rather than taking on all his enemies at once, he became selective.
- From their seminary in the holy city of Qom, the Shi’ite clergy began to organize against the Shah.
- The clergy organized demonstrations among theology students in Qom and marches of the faithful in Tehran.
- The Shah used SAVAK to infiltrate Shi’ite opposition groups in Tehran, and the army attacked Qom.
  - Opposition group members were arrested.

- The clergy organized demonstrations among theology students in Qom and marches of the faithful in Tehran.
- One of the Shah’s political prisoners was the Master of Islam, Ruhollah Khomeini.
  - In a gesture of mercy, the Shah ordered Khomeini exiled to Iraq rather than having him executed.
- While in exile, Khomeini continued to denounce the Shah.
  - He had spoken numerous times about the Shah’s love affair with the US.
  - This raised the ire of common Iranians.
    - To them, the US was no different than the British and Russian imperialists.

- In 1978, Khomeini was forced out of Iraq by Saddam Hussein and received asylum in Paris.
  - Ironically, he was better able to control the revolution from Europe because Paris had a modern telephone system and he could directly phone Iran.
- Anti-Shah protests broke out all over Iran.
- On January 16, 1979, the Shah fled Iran.
- Khomeini returned to Tehran on Feb 1st, 1979.
### 2) The Iranian Revolution – (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes of the Revolution</th>
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<tr>
<td>- Shah was viewed by the Iranians as a puppet of a non-Muslim Western power, the US</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Failed economic and development programs</td>
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<td>- Failure of the security forces to deal with the protests</td>
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- With the Shah gone, Khomeini seized control and created his own government:
  - Consolidated power by destroying or silencing his enemies
  - Created an Iranian theocracy with the majilis in charge of spiritual and temporal life
  - Khomeini-influenced majilis council dominated Iranian politics
- Khomeini believed the Iranian Revolution was the first step in purifying the world
- Khomeini believed it was time to launch a holy war against the West and traitors to Islam

- Since the Revolution, Iran has gone on to become the most conspicuous supporter of terrorism in the world
  - It has done this in two ways:
    1. Consistent sponsorship of political violence outside of its borders to advance its foreign policy goals
      - Hezbollah in Lebanon
      - Control of the Palestinian Islamic Jihad
      - Anti-Israeli and anti-Jewish attacks in Argentina in the 90s
    2. Relentless generation of anti-Western sentiment among Muslims
3) Communication Technology

- Means of communication
  - Traditional means of communication have been augmented by the newest delivery media
  - Has had a dramatic impact on the political climate in Muslim lands
- An alleged bias
  - Al Jazeera
- Impact of Internet and cellular technology
  - Unprecedented number of people with access to this technology helps to quickly spread rumor and conspiracy theories
  - Governments are unable to control the radicalization of Arab and Muslim public opinion

What do Islamists Want?

1) They plan to topple all governments in the Middle East in order to create a united, wealthy, and powerful Islamic caliphate
2) Next comes the destruction of Israel
3) Then they intend to recapture all areas of the world that were once under Muslim control
4) Last, they wish to keep pushing the West until the whole globe falls under the domination of Islam

Modern Israel - A Synopsis of Modern Middle Eastern Issues

- In the late 1800s, three critical events helped shape the modern Middle East
  1) The Ottoman Empire
     - Victorious Allies partitioned Ottoman Empire after 1918 victory
     - Group of military officers took control of Turkey, banned religious government, and brought an end to the caliphate
  2) Zionism
     - European Jews wanted their own homeland
     - Tensions rose when Jewish settlers moved into the area
  3) World War I
     - European armies engulfed the Middle East in war
     - Victorious nations felt they had won the area from the Turks
     - Divided the Middle East to share spoils of victory
3 Sources of Violence in Mahan’s Middle East

- Three factors became prominent in Middle Eastern violence
  1) The Palestinian question
     - Questions about the political control of Israel and Palestine
  2) Intra-Arab rivalries/struggles
     - Questions of who would rule the Arab world
  3) The future of revolutionary Islam
     - Questions concerning the relations between the two main branches of Islam:
       - Sunnis
       - Shiites

3 Sources of Violence in Mahan’s Middle East (cont.)

- All forms of Middle Eastern terrorism exhibit certain common traits
  - Many Arab groups express dissatisfaction over the existence of Israel
  - Most Middle Eastern terrorist groups are anti-imperialistic
- When the Israelis practice terrorism, they usually claim their activities are conventional military operations
- It is perhaps more accurate to argue that all Middle Eastern violence, Arabic and non-Arabic, is locked into symbiosis
  - It is interdependent

The Early Zionist Movement in Palestine

- The Zionist movement took place at the same time the Ottoman Empire was breaking up
- Palestinians sold land to the Zionists
  - The Zionists linked their holdings together
  - Goal was to create a Jewish state
- The Zionists originally stated that they had no desire to displace the Palestinians
  - They wanted to co-exist with them
- As Jewish settlers bought land, they purchased large parcels next to each other
  - They established governing councils for their farmland and refused to sell land back to the Arabs
### World War I and Contradictory Promises

- On Oct. 24, 1915, the British made an unclear promise to the Arabs
  - In return for a general Arab revolt against the Turks, the British agreed to support the creation of an independent Arab state at the end of WWI
  - Arabs were also promised the Caliphate would be moved to Mecca and an Arab named as Caliph
- The Arabs felt that they had been promised the ancient Arab realm of Islam, to include Palestine and Jerusalem

### World War I and Contradictory Promises (cont.)

- The British promised the Zionists a Jewish homeland in Palestine
  - The **Balfour Declaration** of November 1917 promised the creation of Israel
- Additionally, Sir Mark Sykes, a British foreign service officer, negotiated a secret treaty with the French to extend spheres of British and French influence in the states of the old Ottoman empire

### World War I and Contradictory Promises (cont.)

- The British also approached the Russians with another deal
  - Iran would be divided into three parts:
    1) A northern area controlled by Russia
    2) A southern zone under British control
    3) A neutral area in between
- When the war ended in 1918, the entire Middle East was controlled by the British, French, and Russians
World War I and Contradictory Promises - The Real Story

- The Balfour Declaration was based on the ludicrous belief that Zionist leaders controlled the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia and the political destiny of the US
  - Sir Mark Sykes, author of the Balfour Declaration, believed that it would keep Russia in the war and speed up America's commitment to send troops to Europe

World War I and Contradictory Promises - The Real Story (cont.)

- The British governor general of Sudan, Sir Henry McMahon, did send a letter to Sherif Hussein of Mecca, but it was in no way a treaty obligation
  - More importantly, Palestine was not remotely promised in the letter
- McMahon, who did not speak or write Arabic fluently, entrusted the translation to his assistant, Ronald Storrs, who did speak and write Arabic—at least he thought he did
- When translated, the portion that supposedly promised Palestine to the Arabs did not make grammatical or geographical sense
- There is no other evidence that the British ever thought of promising Palestine to the Arabs

World War I and Contradictory Promises (cont.)

- The Arabs could not counter the continuing British influence
  - Neither a pan-Arabic state nor a Jewish national state could develop under the watchful eyes of the British
- In 1922, the League of Nations gave Britain permission to create the Mandate of Palestine
  - The Mandate of Palestine officially gave Britain control of Palestine and placed the British in the center of Middle Eastern affairs
- The Arabs believed that they had received a false promise, and the Jews avidly demanded their right to a homeland
The Birth of Israel

- The roots of the Arab-Israeli conflict lie in the 1917-1920 period
  - The Jewish people have hereditary roots in Palestine going back more than 3,000 years
    - There have always been significant numbers of Jews there, especially in Jerusalem
  - Anti-Semitic prejudice was rampant in the British controlled area and the British did little to stop it

The Birth of Israel (cont.)

- The British strictly limited Jewish immigration into Palestine, while turning a blind eye to illegal Arab immigration
- In 1921, the British placed Mohammed Amin al-Husseini as the mufti of Jerusalem
  - He internationalized and Islamicized the native Palestinian Arab opposition to Jewish settlement in Palestine
  - In 1929, he took advantage of riots in Jerusalem to claim that the Jews were plotting to destroy the Dome of the Rock and the al-Aqsa Mosque
    - Violent Arab riots broke out and scores of Jews were killed

The Birth of Israel (cont.)

- In 1936, a popular Arab revolt broke out against the British and the Jews
  - Guerillas recruited by Husseini were responsible for most of the attacks on Jews during the early part of the revolt
  - He also formed gangs to assassinate his political rivals
- The 1936-1939 Arab revolt increased the hatred and mistrust between the Arab and Jewish communities
  - It also was the catalyst for the formation of what would later become the foundation of the Israeli Defense Forces
The Birth of Israel (cont.)

- Orde Wingate was a British Army officer who was assigned to Palestine during the revolt.
- While there, he received permission to raise a group of Jewish volunteers to protect the British oil pipeline from Iraq to the port of Haifa.
  - The volunteers became known as the Special Night Squads (SNS).
  - Organized as small, fast units specializing in night attacks.
  - The SNS played a crucial role in damaging the morale of Palestinian guerrilla groups.
  - SNS members included men who would later become some of the greatest generals in Israeli history.

The Birth of Israel (cont.)

- Following WW II, the British bottled up thousands of Holocaust survivors in detention camps, mostly in Cyprus, to prevent them from emigrating to Palestine.
  - They were afraid that their presence would set off another Arab revolution.
- Despite British efforts, in late 1945 and 1946, thousands of Jews displaced by the Holocaust flocked to Palestine.
- Palestinian Arabs, seeing the danger presented by the massive influx of Jews, began to arm themselves.

The Birth of Israel (cont.)

- From 1945-1947 a fierce guerilla revolt led by two Palestinian Jewish groups forced the British to give up their mandate.
  - Irgun Zvai Leumi (National Military Organization) led by Menachem Begin.
  - Lehi or Stern Gang (Fighters for the Freedom of Israel) led by Yitzhak Shamir.
- Both groups employed terrorist tactics.
  - Irgun believed individual bombings of British soldiers would make the occupation of Palestine too costly.
  - Irgun was concerned about the presence of Arabs in newly claimed Jewish areas.
  - Leaders of the Irgun studied the tactics of the IRA's Michael Collins.
The Birth of Israel (cont.)

- In 1947, the new United Nations voted to approve the creation of two new states in the Palestinian Mandate area: one Jewish, and one Arab
- The Jewish community leaders accepted the UN plan
- The Palestinian Arab leaders, following the lead of Husseini, did not
- Fighting between the Jewish and Arab communities broke out in November 1947, and spread as the British withdrew

The Birth of Israel (cont.)

- 14 May, 1948, the Jewish Agency declared the creation of the state of Israel, in accordance with the 1947 UN Partition Plan
- 15 May, 1948, the United Nations recognized the modern nation-state of Israel
- 15 May, 1948, Arab League members Egypt, Trans-Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq declared war on Israel and invaded
  - Saudi-Arabia and Sudan also sent troops
  - They claimed the right of self-determination for the Arabs of Palestine over the whole of Palestine

The Birth of Israel (cont.)

- In 1950 the Knesset (Israeli parliament) passed the Law of Return
  - Granted all Jews and those of Jewish ancestry, and their spouses, the right to migrate and settle in Israel and gain citizenship
    - 1950: 50,000 Yemenite Jews were secretly airlifted to Israel
    - 1949-1951: Massacres led 30,000 Jews to flee Libya
    - 1951: Iraqi Jews were allowed to leave the country and 120,000 were airlifted to Israel
    - Jews were not permitted to live in or enter Saudi Arabia
    - Approximately 500,000 Jews left Algeria and Morocco by the late 60s
The Birth of Israel (cont.)

- Between 1948 and 1951, mass immigration doubled the Jewish population (700,000 immigrants)
- Most immigrants were either Holocaust survivors or Jews fleeing Arab lands
- From 1948 to 1958, the population rose from 800,000 to two million

Arab Power Struggles and Arab-Israeli Wars

- Modern Middle Eastern terrorism is a result of continuing conflicts in the 20th century
- Aside from the Palestine issue, other Arabs felt slighted by various peace settlements, and their dissatisfaction grew through the end of WW II
- The French and the British created a number of states that did not reflect the realistic divisions of the Middle East
  - Libya
  - Egypt
  - Syria
  - Lebanon

Arab Power Struggles and Arab-Israeli Wars (cont.)

- In an effort to secure a land route to India, the British established several states from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf in the 19th and early 20th centuries
  - Jordan
  - Syria
- Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf states fared somewhat better because of their immense oil wealth
- From 1947–1967 the Middle East was dominated by a series of short conventional wars
- During that time, the Israeli armed forces grew
Arab Power Struggles and Arab-Israeli Wars (cont.)

- During the 1950s, Palestinian Arabs launched guerrilla attacks (supported by Egypt) from the Egyptian-occupied Gaza Strip on Israel
  - In response Israel launched reprisal attacks against Gaza and Egypt
- In 1967, Syria, Egypt, and Jordan amassed troops along the Israeli borders and Egypt closed the straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping
  - Egypt demanded that UN peace-keeping forces leave the Sinai Peninsula

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Arab Power Struggles and Arab-Israeli Wars (cont.)

- On 5 June 1967, Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) launched a pre-emptive strike
  - The Israeli Air Force destroyed the air forces of Syria, Egypt, and Jordan
  - The Israeli Army then defeated the armies of Egypt, Syria, and Jordan
- By 11 June, the Arab forces were routed and all parties accepted a cease-fire
  - Although badly outnumbered, the IDF defeated its opponents and doubled the territory of Israel
- The conflict became known as the Six-Day War

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Arab Power Struggles and Arab-Israeli Wars (cont.)

- Israel gained control of:
  - The Sinai Peninsula
  - The Gaza Strip
  - The Golan Heights
  - The formerly Jordanian-controlled West Bank of the Jordan River
- East Jerusalem was immediately annexed by Israel and its population granted Israeli citizenship
### Arab Power Struggles and Arab-Israeli Wars (cont.)

- In 1967, the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) began a series of terrorist attacks against Israeli civilians.

- The Arab states split into several camps:
  - One group, represented by King Hussein of Jordan, was anxious to find a way to co-exist with Israel.
  - A few nations, like Egypt, simply wanted to avenge the embarrassment of the Six-Day War.
  - A group of Arab socialists, represented by the Ba’ath Party, called for both Arab unity and the destruction of Israel.
  - A group of wealthy oil states hoped for stability in the region.

### Arab Power Struggles and Arab-Israeli Wars (cont.)

- The stunning victory of the Israeli’s over the Arab forces in 1967 led to two things:
  1. The desire of some Arabs to avenge the embarrassment of the Six-Day War.
  2. The underestimation of Arab military capabilities by the Israelis.

- Yom Kippur War – 6 October 1972
  - On the day of the Hebrew festival of atonement, Egypt and Syria launched a surprise attack on Israel.
  - Egyptians drove Israeli forces back into the Sinai.
  - Syrians pushed into the Golan Heights.
  - The IDF managed to stabilize the front.

### Arab Power Struggles and Arab-Israeli Wars (cont.)

- In September 1967, Menachim Begin became the Prime Minister of Israel.

- 26 May 1976 – Camp David Peace Accord
  - Under the mediation of US President Jimmy Carter, the President of Egypt, Anwar Sadat, agreed to a separate peace with Israel.
  - Israel agreed to withdraw from the Sinai Peninsula.

- In 1981, Sadat was assassinated by Muslim fundamentalists for agreeing to peace.
Rise of Terrorism

- The Arabs who rejected peace with Israel fell into two camps
  - Radicals who rejected any peace or recognition of Israel
  - Moderate groups who were concerned about the fate of the Palestinians

Rise of Terrorism (cont.)

- In the 1980s Middle Eastern terrorism fell into several broad categories
  - Suicide bombings and other attacks on Israeli and Western positions in Lebanon
  - Various militias fought other militias in Lebanon
  - State-sponsored terrorism from Libya, Syria, and Iran
  - Freelance terrorism to high-profile groups
  - Terrorism in support of Arab Palestinians
  - Attacks in Europe against Western targets
  - Israeli assassinations of alleged terrorists

Rise of Terrorism (cont.)

- Despite the appearance of terrorism, conventional war continued to dominate the Middle East, and Arabs struggled against Arabs
- In 1990, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait to impose historical territorial claims and to gain control of its oil production
- As Iraq retreated in the Persian Gulf, terrorists began plotting new methods for striking the US