

MStudies, The International Relations of the Modern Middle East

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Lecture 6:

Revolution and three Gulf Wars – The Consequences of Political Islam

Framework and Themes:

- 1. Iran's was one of the great revolutions of the 20th century. Why? And what was the role of political Islam within the Shia doctrine?**
- 2. The Iran-Iraq War – Sectarian or ethnic conflict? The impact on the Middle East.**
- 3. The American wars in Iraq – consequences of Islamic extremism, and global terrorism**

I. The Revolution in Iran, and the role of Shia Political Islam.

A) First, a brief look at how Shi'a differs from Sunni and how that informed the Islamic political movement that overthrew the Pahlavi Dynasty.

1. Shi'ism is a version of Islam that has successfully constructed a religious order inside a political order. The Safavid Dynasty's decision to give Shi'ism legitimate state status led to the growth of the clerical class as a recognized political force. However, this set up a tension between the Shah (the embodiment of secular power) and the religious power of the mollahs. We saw this at the time of the Tobacco Revolt under the Qajars, and at the time of the constitutional movement,

which although the clerics backed away from the constitution, legitimized Islamic political action as social protest.

2) In 1953, the politics of Iran took a drastic turn with the election of Prime Minister Mossadeq, the leader of the National Front, whose platform was the nationalisation of oil. In effect, nationalism within Iran had developed as a response to the British domination of this key resource, and the inability of the Iranian government to force the Anglo-Iranian Oil company to equitably share the vast wealth that it generated. According to Daniel Yergin, author of *The Prize*, between 1945 and 1950, Anglo-Iranian registered £250 million in profit, compared to Iran's £90 million. The British government received more in taxes from Anglo-Iranian than Iran did in royalties, while not even on the score-card, was the fact that Anglo-Iranian sold oil to the British Navy at a substantial discount, an arrangement over which Iran had no control, but which fuelled popular hatred of the British and the perception that Iran's resources were being plundered. (p. 451). What is more, the arrangement between Iran and Anglo-Iranian was much less favourable to Iran than the arrangements between other exporting countries and the oil companies operating on them, and Iran wanted redress. Mossadeq's bold answer was to nationalize all the company's holdings inside Iran, an act he accomplished with the support of the clergy, particularly the leading Ayatollah, Kashani, but not of the Shah, who fled to Rome for safety. However, the Americans, concerned that Iran would fall into the Soviet orbit, mounted a CIA managed coup against Mossadeq called Operation Ajax, and re-instated the Shah. For the Iranians, the coup was an enormous betrayal of American ideals, for it engineered the over-throw of Iran's first democratically elected leader, and re-integrated the oil industry back into international control. It was an event that deeply marked the Iranian psyche, and played a large role in the subsequent Revolution of 1979.

3). Mossadeq's overthrow marked the beginning of American dominance in Iran, which lasted 25 years. Under the rule of Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, Iran was secularized, its Islamic character subjugated to a mythology of Persian imperial renaissance and dynastic aggrandizement, exemplified, among other things, by the rejection of the Islamic calendar and the adoption instead of an imperial calendar dating back 2500 years. The Shia establishment was shorn of power: many clerics spent years in jail, others left the country, while again others adopted the principle of quietism. However, a distinctly Shia political ideology of opposition developed during this period, and was spread through a classic Persian political structure, the *anjoman* or society, to which many of the clergy that would surface during the Islamic Revolution, belonged to. What the Westernized and Western oriented Court, and elites, were unaware of, was the degree to which this Shia oppositional creed was being disseminated throughout the rural and poor urban communities. This took place in two different guises: through the teachings of Ayatollah Khomeini, and through the lectures of lay thinker, Ali Shariati.

4) Ayatollah Khomeini broke the surface of the public sphere in 1963 when he spoke out against the Shah's White Revolution – a reform project imposed from above that carried out sweeping agricultural and legal reforms. A repressive, badly conceived project, it led to widespread resistance, and mass urban migration, and critically, was linked to a loan from the US, for which in return, the US demanded Iran grant it capitulation privileges that would exclude Americans operating in Iran from Iranian laws. Khomeini spoke out strongly against the Shah during the riots that ensued in a clear voice of resistance. For his pains, Khomeini was exiled to Najaf, in Iraq, where he wrote a series of lectures outlining his vision of Islamic Governance called *Hokumat-e Islami* and the leadership of a single *faghi*, or jurisconsult, at the head of a theocratic state. In effect, Khomeini articulated a new

political concept, in some ways more Sunni than Shi'a, which promoted the idea of the contract between the divine and the ruler, but which interpreted the only legitimate rule as being that of a man knowledgeable in the laws of God, even if he did not fully possess the miraculous qualities of the Prophet. To Khomeini, most of the governments in the Middle East were puppets of imperialist and Zionist forces, and willing accomplices in a grand conspiracy to destroy Islam. These lectures, as well as sermons by Khomeini, raised the banner of Islam as a revolutionary political ideology able to solve the problems of the Islamic world. Smuggled into Iran on cassette (called the cassette revolution), they were widely disseminated and gave form to a spreading underground opposition whose foot-soldiers were the school teachers and postal workers and other low-level functionaries across the country. They viewed him not only as a destroyer of American and Western corruption in the country, but a builder of a new, ideal society.

5) Ali Shariati, had a quite different vision of what religion meant in the modern world and how it energized politics. Having studied in France, where his views were heavily shaped by the Algerian liberation movement, he returned to Iran with a doctorate and taught at what was called the Hosseiniye-ye Ershad, a institute which, during the early '70s, had become a centre of agitation against the Shah, and in which many of the leaders of the subsequent revolution presented and honed their vision of the future. Shariati drew on a fundamental ethos in Shi'ism, that of the Martyrdom of Hossein, the Prophet's grandson, who died confronting the army of the Caliph Yezid in the dry plain of Kerbala. To Shariati, Hossein's struggle against tyranny to construct a city of God on earth, was a powerful force for action, and he interpreted the modern Shia purpose to be active struggle against the oppression of the monarchy and outside exploitation. Importantly, he drew into this philosophy the Shia concept of *entezar* – waiting for the Hidden Imam – reinterpreting it to

mean God's promise of triumph to a classless society freed from tyranny and injustice. Critically, he energized this dangerous call to arms by arguing that those actually killed in defense of Shi'ism would in fact, be eternally alive – 'martyrdom' he stated, 'is death by choice'. Shariati's picture was carried alongside that of Khomeini by the Revolution's demonstrators.

6) The marriage of these two distinct strains of Shia political Islam, Shariati's mass, activist, democratic resistance; Khomeini's theocratic, consultative state, nonetheless shared a rejection of imperialism and embraced a new Islamic social order – and together propelled the mass demonstrations that over-threw the Shah in 1979. **It is, however, an uncomfortable marriage of very different components,** which has continued to cause tensions inside Iran between reformists and conservatives, and in many ways, defines the internal contest that is taking place as we speak in Iran.

7) Other opposition thinkers: Bani Sadr, became first elected president of Islamic Republic – likewise French-educated PhD economist – in 1972 wrote *The Manifesto of the Islamic Republic*. **Clerical thinkers: Mottahari, Beheshti, Taleghani** - all theoretical political philosophers, spoke at the Hosseyniye Ershad, all arrested and spent time in Shah's prisons, where they met each other, formed anjomans (political societies), ideas of a new Islamic society. **Formed networks, mosque pulpits became only outlets of religio-political expression. Number of mosques in this period (1960s, 1970s) began to grow. Also** Mojaheddin-Khalq – Islamic guerilla group, and Fedayeen-e Khalq, secular – socialist guerilla group.

2. Revolution and Rise of Khomeini

- a) People felt betrayal – sale of national sovereignty, to US. **1975 – Consolidation of Shah's regime – single-party Resurgence Party – offered opportunity to assert control over even those orgs that enjoyed a degree of independent action –**

launched party apparatus into Bazaars, reduced role of Islam. Launched new calendar based on Cyrus the Great.

- b) **Cracks in totalitarian control** economic mismanagement, waste, Lavish court expenditure (Celebration at Persepolis), increasing reliance on foreign expertise (60,000 foreigners, mostly Americans, by 1977) (Shootings of 3 US diplomats in Tehran, massive Bell Helicopter city outside Isfahan) – rising feeling of anti-Westernism, anti-imperialism **massive spiral of inflation**
 - c) **Amnesty International Report 1977, identified Iran as greatest abuser of human rights through arbitrary arrest, state of prisons, use of torture, lack of law and court systems, lack of civil rights, etc.** Election of Carter to presidency enabled actual publicity of such abuse through international organizations.
 - d) **Shah, anxious to retain special relationship, felt pressured by Carter, relaxed his grip on draconian measures:** released 300 political prisoners (out of 3,000), allowed trials for political dissidents.
 - e) **First public expression of protest against the Shah led by urban professionals, Middle class** – Mehdi Bazargan – Freedom Movement of Iran (moderate Islamic) and militant Ulema calling for overthrow of regime, Shah selling Iran to foreigners. Mosque network. Committee of Writers, Lawyers activated calling for restoration of Constitution.
3. Shah's rule perfect example (seen throughout Cold War and post-Cold War period in MENA) of reducing alternative opportunities or sites of political expression – narrowing options only to mosque and political Islam. Additionally, example of oblivion of elite, West to actual foment inside state – and channelling of that foment in ways unaccommodating to any Western approach.
4. For US – **Shah was Iran. Anti-communist, Overlooked his totalitarianism. CIA centre for ME in Tehran.** Shah thought to be in total control and loved. His overthrow a shock

to US system, and self-image, as Khomeini's supporters attacked US as supporting a 'criminal' Shah, and being an 'imperialist' force, responsible for 'looting' Iran.

II. Post Revolution, Hostage Crisis

1) Iran

- a) **Mehdi Bazargan, moderate Islamic politician, named interim PM. But at same time, Revolutionary Council, headed by Ayatollah Beheshti, became supreme authority, issuing laws and decrees, countering Bazargan's gov. May 1979, Kho created Revolutionary Guards (under Khamenei).** Composed of rural, impoverished youth, deployed against regime opponents, including Kurds, Baluchis, alternative Ayatollah power centres (Shariat-Madari in Tabriz). **Kho, under Behesti, also instituted tribunals to try and execute Shah's henchmen, including ex-PM Hoveyda – huge amt of resentment against Shah, US.**
- b) **Revolutionary Council created party: Islamic Republican Party (IRP) to provide structure for ideology.**
- c) **Referendum March 1979 – supporting replacing monarchy with Islamic Republic. Constitutional Assembly of Experts elections in June. Bazargan gov drafted Constitution based on Islamic principles but did not grant special administrative or judicial powers to clergy.**
- d) **Elected Assembly redrafted constitution to require all laws, regulations be based on Islamic rules, giving dominant position to religious authority inside state.** This launched Iran on path of full political, legal and social Islamization – as revolutionary as the overthrow of the monarchy. Establishment of **Velayate-Faqhi – rule of the Islamic jurist.**
- e) **Bazargan didn't support the arbitrary laws and tribunals, and resigned in Nov. after hostage taking**

2) US

- a) US, because clergy and Islamic Revolution so outside its knowledge, and because Shah still considered ally – and emblem of US support for its friends – refused to send experts to advise on constitution, democratic practice, etc.
- b) US didn't recognize itself in the Iranian rhetoric – the anti-Americanism, the outrage, being called 'The great Satan!'. Rejected revolution and its leaders. **Never recognized Khomeini (although he was recognized by Britain, France, etc)..** Saw him as evil, medieval, vengeful, accused him of extremism, of terrorism. The language of Islamic politics, of anti-Westernism, anti-imperialism, 'Neither East nor West' – completely discombobulated US. Couldn't conceive of cleric as political leader with political savvy. Modernity of rev., of Khomeini's Islamic interpretations lost on US. Saw Iran as throwback to 3rd world images.

CIA briefing 1978: 'A country we thought of as a close friend, in fact, we don't understand it at all'

- c) When finally Washington accepted Shah into US (October 26) on humanitarian grounds, US did not take recommendations of State Department Iran Desk Director **Daniel Precht: Shah should formally abdicate; renounce claim of his family to throne; US should publicly refute any claim he makes to throne; US should recognize Islamic leadership – and importance of timing. Instead:** Washington ordered Bazargan to protect Embassy, never communicated to Iran intention to accept Shah, never consulted with Tehran, or offered to have Iranian doctor (Baz's demand). Didn't realize Moderates were already out of power.
- d) **Timing: Moharram** (outpouring of Shia martyrdom, Important Khomeini speech)
- e) **US Embassy: Iranians**, dubious of US intentions as Embassy was CIA ME centre, Mossadeq CIA coup hatched in its basement (US didn't make this connection). US: ignored **3 other hostage occasions:** Valentines Day, files sent to DC; twice in summer

(Sept, embassy files returned to Tehran) – never took Precht’s recommendation to strengthen embassy compound, doors, alarm connections to Washington, etc.

A. Hostage Crisis

- 1) **In US – first called a Sit-in. Washington claimed it did not know demands of hostage takers. 52 American hostages**
- 2) **Demands** written on Embassy Wall, broadcast three times on radio, announced by Revolutionary Council: Shah back for trial.
- 3) **Questions: A move by Kho’s group to consolidate power?** Opportunity to export revolution – historically consistent move by victorious political idealists?

B. US – handled it as a crisis

- 1) **Failed to look at previous hostage takings (Sec of State Vance): Ward** incident, US Consul in Manchuria taken hostage with entire staff, 1949, held for year during political upheaval similar to Iran’s. **Pueblo Affair** – 86 US hostages seized by N. Korea from US spy ship (1967) held for 11 months by gov. Neither of these made an issue, US did not respond as victim. **Why did US take such a different tack this time?**
- 2) **Separated hostage crisis from Shah** - Pres. Carter – as political observer noted, ‘has repeatedly said that now is not the time to discuss the demerits of the Shah’s regime; yet now is precisely the time to talk about the shah’s crimes against the people of Iran, and US complicity in them’.
- 3) **Carter administration: concerned about damage control, media (information) dominance, establish US innocence, hostages as innocent civilians, not as diplomats representing US – constructed US object of rage, hostage taking unique in history (no gov had ever supported such a move), un-provoked.** What is a crisis?: ‘Creation of language used to depict it – a political act, not a recognition of a fact or of a rare situation – but how that situation is represented.’ Carter the Human Rights President – the way Iran depicted US didn’t fit that. Constructed Hostage Crisis as question of US

Honour (we don't negotiate with terrorists);, US courage, Restraint, legal approach.

Europeans did not support US approach, did not support it's position in UN Security Council. Vance resigned.

- 4) **With no recognition of Khomeini and clerical gov, no one to talk to.** Huge support inside Iran. Hostage takers rep'd by Mary – Iranian student in US – with Amer. accent
- 5) **Dragged on for 14 months.** US mantra of outrage, hurt – Walter Cronkite's Daily Countdown, Ted Koppel's Nightline Launched; image of blindfolded hostage being marched up and down Embassy steps: emblem to Iran's depravity, terrorism. Daily media drama. US policy approaches under-estimated Iran's conviction, staying power (still does). Carter hostage to White House.
- 6) Negotiations for release engineered by Algeria. Release timed for Reagan innauguration. Simulcast

C. Reagan

- f) Never would US suffer this way again – Sec. Shultz: US must never again become the 'Hamlet of nations'. Inaugurated first War on Terrorism, emplacing necessary federal statutes and laws (passed through Congress) which were in place for Pres. GW Bush's War on Terror in 2001.

III. The Iran-Iraq War – the first Gulf War

- A) This began as a purely geostrategic calculation by Saddam Hossein, who hoped, with the fall of the Shah, to capitalize on Iran's chaotic revolutionary state in order to claim the Shatt-al Arab, the thin waterway between them at the head of the Persian Gulf. The ensuing War, which dragged on for ten years and claimed 800,000 lives – the most deadly war of the late 20th century, came to represent several key elements at play within the Cold War Middle East.

- B)** First, the War disrupted – and abbreviated – Iran’s revolution, forcing it to become a war-based economy and reliant on an army to protect the nation that was still not fully revolutionized. To try and counter the latter drawback, a new armed force was established, the Revolutionary Guard, a vanguard Islamist force dedicated to the preservation of the revolution, which became the elite force driving the existing army in the war. Originally established by the current Supreme Leader, Ayatollah Khamenei, it remained a semi-private force upon which he could draw, and played an important role in his induction into the top job – a position he was not originally tagged to receive, but which he engineered toward the very end of Khomeini’s life. The Revolutionary Guard was instrumental in developing the tactic of child waves to clear the minefields that separated Iran from Iraq – which institutionalized the cult of martyrdom. At the same time, a youth corps called the Basij, composed of large contingent of dedicated Islamic young men were organized under the direction of the Revolutionary Guards not only to fight in the trenches, but to help maintain order at home. The Basij, and the Revolutionary Guard, after the war, would become the arms of the domestic security forces tasked to ensure the population maintained its Islamic vigilance and purity. Over time, both forces have grown and spread in power, with the Revolutionary Guard becoming involved in economic, financial, industrial and infrastructure projects in all aspects of the Iranian government, including vast components of the nuclear complex. Critically, they have become inducted into government, filling many of the representative slots in the majles; President Ahmadinejad was previously an officer in the Guards. In fact, it has been mooted that they have carried out a coup inside the government, institutionalizing the military and fascist aspects of what had already become a shadow regime.
- C)** **Second, the Iran-Iraq War** revealed that the state-building that had taken place over the previous four decades, despite having to develop a national ethos inside

arbitrarily drawn borders, and despite the counter-claims of Arab nationalism on citizen identity, had in fact developed a strong imaginary community within each state. Originally, the Iraqi Shia's were expected to abandon Saddam and join the Iranians; likewise, the Iranian Sunni tribes that dominate the south and its critical oil fields were viewed as a serious liability to the Islamic Republic, and likely to defect to the Iraqi side. Neither situation arose and both populations remained loyal to the patria.

- D) During the Iran-Iraq War,** Saddam Hussein employed chemical weapons against Iranian troops, an act that did not elicit condemnation by the UN. This followed the UN's silence on Saddam's original invasion of Iran, a silence which was the result of American pressure due to the US view that Iran was a rogue state, and a threat. These two non-acts by the UN resulted in Iran developing the view that it was unprotected by international institutions, and therefore, it would have to rely on its own resources exclusively. This orientation has informed Iranian foreign policy ever since, and explains in large part its lack of faith in, and unwillingness to cooperate with, international bodies such as the security council, or the nuclear watchdog, the IAEA.
- E) As the Iran-Iraq War** dragged on, and Saddam's visions of a quick win receded, he adopted the trappings of political Islam to further his cause, formulating the struggle as a jihad against the Shia infidel. Language of Islamic jihad became common in his exhortations to his troops, and his populace, and he presented Iraq as being the outside bastion of Sunni Islam against the threat from the east.
- F) Finally, the cost of the Iran-Iraq war** proved devastating to both sides. Iran's economy floundered, while Iraq acquired huge debts that it owed to its Arab supporters, over \$10 billion to Kuwait, over £25 billion to Saudi Arabia, over \$10 billion to the UAE. It was the debt to former that was to prove a decisive factor, as it

has been argued that it was one of the motivators behind Saddam's subsequent invasion of Kuwait.

IV. The second Gulf War – what in American parlance is the First Gulf War occurred in 1990 – was the first war in the post-Cold War era.

A) We shall look at this war, not so much in terms of America involvement, but what it meant for the Middle East.

B) Arab States reluctantly rallied against Iraq, despite Saddam having broken a cardinal rule of Arab solidarity that still informed relations in the Middle East (despite the death of Arab nationalism). Only Syria leapt to the opportunity to fight Iraq, the result of the long-standing animosity that characterized their relationship, as well as in the hope that by gaining US sympathy as a result of its cooperation, the US would, in future negotiations with Israel, support its claim to the Golan Heights. Egypt came along as a moderate and supporter of the US. The Yemenis, the only Arab state to be sitting at the time on the Security Council, couldn't bring itself to support Resolution 667 condemning Iraq, and its vote led to the immediate cut-off of all American economic support. Jordan, meanwhile, miscalculated by trying to mediate. It depended on Iraq for oil, which it received free in exchange for having opened its city of Aqaba to Iraq some time before, in order to give it access to a Red Sea port, since Iraq was otherwise limited to its few ports on its narrow strip of land on the Shatt-al Arab.

C) It is worth spending a moment here on Jordan, since it was perpetually having to jockey for position, being as it was an unviable state that depended exclusively on external rent – that is, on importing cash – from others. Early on, its first king, Abdullah, realized that it could only survive with British support and that meant coming to terms with the Jewish state on its border. To that end, it started secret

negotiations as early as 1930, calculating that a close relationship with Israel could guarantee Jordan's future. In 1948, Jordan accepted huge numbers of Palestinian refugees, and uniquely among the Arab states, gave them nationality. However, Abdullah was assassinated in 1951 by a Palestinian in Jerusalem because it had become known that the king had betrayed them. Even so, King Hussein, who eventually succeeded him, made the same calculations. Thus, Jordan's history up until 1993 was governed by the need to remain friendly to both the Arab states and Israel, so as to ensure it would have a constant source of rent. However, it remained wary of Saudi Arabia, because of the historical Hashemite claim to Mecca; and of Syria, a frontline state to Israel that made constant demands that Jordan be more resistant to the Israelis, a demand Amman counter-balanced with its close relations to Iraq. Thus its dilemma at the time of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, and its offer to mediate. However, the US flatly condemned King Hussein, and it took a long time for him to recoup his losses. However, in 1993, Jordan seized on the opportunity to make formal peace with Israel, and in 1994 signed a treaty.

D) The Palestinians likewise miscalculated by throwing their support to Saddam. What they did not understand was that the US wanted to crush Saddam as a first example of US Cold War might. As such, Arafat, and the PLO, were marginalized, and their claim to controlling the Palestinian cause discredited. However, with the end of the Cold War, and because of the vision of then US Secretary of State, James Baker, a new effort was put into place in 1991 to begin negotiations on the Arab-Israeli dispute. The end of the Cold War meant that Israel no longer had the strategic relevance it had previously enjoyed. Additionally, the US unipolar moment meant that it was the only state that could bring the parties together. Thus, Baker persuaded the Arab states, and forced Israel, to attend a conference in Madrid. This was followed by another conference in Washington, giving it the name the

Washington Process, even though, for various reasons, the process failed. Because he'd been excluded from Washington as a result of his support for Saddam in the Gulf War, Arafat now opened a back-door to Israel through the intervention of Israeli academics and the Norwegians, and was able to persuade them that they could get a much better deal by working with him personally. This eventually set the stage for the Oslo Accords – something that could not probably have occurred without the miscalculation of the Second Gulf War.

- E)** US intentions to overthrow Saddam were unsuccessful during that war, and US withdrawal left many strings hanging, including Saddam on his dais. The ensuing centralization of control by Saddam into purely Tikriti hands, and the punishment exacted on both the Kurdish and Shia communities, however, left Iraq in a severely parlous situation. International sanctions reduced its population to poverty and solidified the patrimonial system that rendered every citizen dependent on connections to ensure survival. In the years between the Second and the Third Gulf wars, several attempts on Saddam Hussein's life failed, including two engineered through the nuclear inspection teams and masterminded by the now notorious Chalabi. (This by the way was noted by the Iranians, and simply confirmed their suspicions of the intentions of international organizations).
- F)** Although the 2003 US invasion can be attributed to George Bush's desire to finish a job his father left undone, that is, to finally toppling Saddam, or to wanting to stop Saddam's nuclear weaponisation, the element of Islamic extremism played an important role in that decision, and therefore, prior to going on to that war, we will take a detour into the specifics of the Sunni version of political Islam, and its jihadi component.

V. The Sunni Articulation of Political Islam

A) **Specific to the Sunni conception of Islam as a politicizing ideology, one can point to four important categories:**

- i) **Ijtihad** – literally, striving to understand, was a process of interpretation to discover new visions or versions of Islam’s application to the world
- ii) **Hijra** –drawn from the name used for Mohammad’s departure from Mecca to establish his own community in Medina, it symbolizes removal from the old to the new;
- iii) **Towhid** – unity, which we’ve discussed in several guises
- iv) **Jihad** – from the word jehada- meaning struggle (the same root as ijtihad) and which acquired the specific meaning of a striving for purification. This is manifested in two ways: a) a personal struggle to prepare for Muslim life, and b) a struggle to defend Islam. Khomeini drew an important distinction between the two, calling the first, the personal struggle, the **Greater Jihad**, and the second, the struggle to defend, the **Lesser Jihad**. Thus, the internal struggle is the more prized, and further, the second cannot take place until the first is achieved. Some, particularly extremists, consider jihad to be the missing pillar of Islam. However, it does not mean the use of violence, per se, but instead, a striving to protect the dogma of Islam.
 - **Historically, Jihad** rarely invoked, because it only came into play in the event of an external threat to Islam. There was also, the possibility of a domestic threat, through the corruption of Islam in society, but this was also rare.
 - However, this changed with colonialism which clearly presented an **external threat** to Islam, and jihad was revived as a relevant mechanism for resistance within Islam.

- How this was interpreted can be best understood by looking at how resistance has been defined within a colonial context– and we take here our cue from political analysis that came out of the wars of Zimbabwe.

Two types of resistance were identified:

- a) **Primary resistance:** the necessary resistance of the population to colonialism using indigenous structures and techniques;
- b) **Secondary resistance:** the mobilizing of the ideas and techniques of the colonizer for their use against him.

B) In the colonial period, Islam was reasserted as a mechanism of primary resistance.

Islam was instrumentalized as a political mobilizer.

C) Once colonialism was established, however, how could Islam be protected?

i) **First** was Islam's success in re-interpreting modernism, which led to the post-colonial purpose: the rise of The Young Ottomans, the Young Turks, the Young Tunisians, the Young Algerian movement, the Free Officers of Egypt – which formed the basis of the construction of the modern political Middle Eastern state, and a struggle for independence. Although many of these groups were ostensibly secular, the process of construction a modern political Islam accompanied their rise to power, as intellectuals and populations at large sought a sense of authenticity inside the political order.

ii) **Egypt was the key to this process.**

- **In 1928**, a school's inspector, Hassan al-Banna, created a new political movement based on Islam. Originally, the **Muslim Brotherhood** was not about politics, but about re-ordering political Islam for the sake of re-Islamizing society. It drew on the writings of Mohammad Abdu and other Islamic thinkers, and responded to the particular political climate of the time, where in Europe, new ideologies such as Fascism and

socialism were being experimented with - many of their concepts filtering through into the Muslim world.

- **The success of the Muslim Brotherhood** attracted the unwelcome attention of the state, which saw it as a threat. In response, the Brotherhood became politicized, and, in time, it developed a secret wing called the **Jihaz al Khass**. In effect, it developed a split identity: on the one hand, a) pursuing a policy for the peaceful re-ordering of society; on the other, b) a policy, being pushed specifically by the Jihaz al Khass of directly challenging the state, through an agenda of violence.
- **In 1949** (3 years before the Young Officers Coup), **the Brotherhood was banned**, and al-Banna was assassinated.
- **The Brotherhood** however, continued on, and even more surprisingly, it did not become a violent party. After the 1952 Revolution, the Brotherhood concluded that violence was not the path to follow, and instead, focused on re-Islamizing society so it could inspire legally elected political actors – a plank it retains to this day – and which is termed **Islam from Below**. However, the Jihaz al Khass likewise continued on, promoting a tradition of violent contestation to replace the state – what is termed **Islam from Above**.
- Earlier on, **Nasser** was a member of the core Muslim Brotherhood, but when he rose to lead Egypt under the banner of Arab Nationalism, he condemned it, when the Jihaz al Khass attempted to assassinate him, he attempted to exterminate it – and arrested many of its leaders.

- Among these were Sayyed Qutb, who saw replacement of the state as essential, and formulated justifications to do so. Qutb's book, *Milestones on the Way*, contrasted good governance (*Hokumiya*) with corrupted Muslim government, *jahaliya* – a term used to describe the ignorance of the pre-Islamic era. However, unlike that era, Qutb argued, today there are no grounds for such ignorance, since Islamic revelation now exists, and therefore, ignorant governments needed to be replaced to achieve the purification and re-ordering of society. Importantly, he argued for jihad as a necessary fight to achieve this goal.
- Allied to Qutb's ideas were those of Mawdudi in Pakistan who likewise spoke of jihad as including the necessary violence to revive and recreate Islamic society. He argued that acceptance of revelation had to be complete – not half-measure. He drew on a marvellous anecdote from Ibn Tawmia in the 14th century, who, when asked if the Mongols were Muslims, after their conversion, answered No! - because they still maintained the honour code of the Mongols, called Yassa, which meant they didn't accept Sharia Law – and so, were not fully committed to Islam.
- Thus, even though the main corps of the Muslim Brotherhood chose not to take a violent approach, not least because it would make them a state target, a minority accepted the call to arms for purification – possibly through violence – to achieve reformation at the popular level.

- iii)** In 1974, a small, radical fringe attacked the military academy in Cairo. Out of this grew several important secret groups that represent the rise of Radical Islam.
- The first was Takfir wa Hijra – Repent and Retreat – better known by its street name of Jamma al Muslimi (the Society of Muslims)
 - The second, Jihad-e Islamia – was a group in which surfaced a surgeon whose name is today very familiar as an important ideologue: Ayman Zawahiri – who sees at that stage the corruption of the Egyptian state.
 - A third is Jamiyat Islamia – which focused on the need to proselytize among the masses to confront the state.
 - A fourth – Hezbe Tahrir – became established first in the university, and eventually then spread to universities across the Middle East and Europe, where it operated as a vanguard party to revive and recreate the Caliphate.
- iv)** These movements gained strength as a result of the popular response to Sadat’s decision to go to Israel and then, in the Camp David Agreement, sign a treaty of peace with Israel – actions he took to refocus Egypt on its internal affairs, but which spawned violent popular opposition . At the same time, a series of small, informal groupings, called the *ankundi*, sought a fatwa from a known cleric to justify violence. This form of clandestine consolidation of an Islamic challenge emerged in Al Azhar, the great university in Cairo, and influenced members of the *umma* there, including **Omar Abdul Rahman** – currently mouldering in a Brooklyn jail, who provided a fatwa justifying the killing of Sadat. This inspired cells of violent resistance within the army, and the assassin who killed **Sadat** emerged from one of these.

- v) In 1992, Jammiya Islamia and Jihade Islamia both returned to violence to overthrow the state, a period that lasted for 5 years, with the Mobarak government eventually winning. Jammiya Islamia is crushed, but Jihade Islamia exiles itself to Afghanistan to continue the jihad of resistance. There, the US is providing money and arms for the insurgency against the Soviets, and Saudi Arabia is providing money and recruits to establish a purely Islamic (primary) resistance. Here, Zawahiri joins with Bin-Laden, who is running a reception organization called al-Qaeda.
- vi) Bin Laden previously had partnered with a man called Abdulla Al Azzam while both were still in Peshawar. Al Azzam had applied a classic conception of jihad to the situation in Afghanistan, where he perceived the Soviets so threatening to Islam that he promoted the idea of an offensive jihad to be used against them. Building on this base, when Zawahiri joined with Bin Laden, he develops an transnational ideology of resistance, conceived as a weapon against both apostasy and the infidel. Here was a jihad articulated as a resistance to secularism and Westernization. This secondary resistance had four components (these are not, however his terms, and are not mainstream interpretations):
- Collective jihad – Muslims could act on behalf of Islam to protect it.
 - Individual jihad – at times of acute crisis, all Muslims had to act.
 - Nomadic jihad – the Muslim duty was to travel to other parts of the Muslim world that were under threat.
 - Dispersed jihad –to bring violence through emigrant communities in, for example, Europe.

A further point: this defined the object of violent resistance as being a near enemy – that is, the corruption of Islamic regimes, and a far enemy – the supporters of those regimes.

- v) **In Afghanistan**, the US made the disastrous mistake of supporting insurgency and its use of jihadi terror as a form of fighting a modern war, providing its Islamic fighters with both a sense of their own ideological success at the conclusion of that war, and the means to focus on a new object against which to continue that war. Too late did the US realize that the Islamic insurgency within Afghanistan had metastasized. And that the recruits to that war had dispersed afterwards, not only to go back to their home countries, but infiltrating communities in Europe, Pakistan, and even the US. When the World Trade Centre bombing took place, and the US military entered Afghanistan to fight a more conventional war, it was clear that many of the jihadists were no longer there – having planned 9/11 from cells throughout Europe and the Middle East.

D) This brings us finally to the 2003 invasion of Iraq – the Third Gulf War

- 1) **Plans to invade Iraq** had been mooted in the US by the Neocons as early as 5 years before during the Clinton Administration. Their object was to turn a weak enemy state into a democracy – a cameo for the rest of the Middle East – on the premise that democracy could be planted in such a society with ease, and that other states would naturally follow.
- 2) **After the initial response to 9/11** and the invasion of Afghanistan, fears that the escaping jihadists were travelling through Iran to seek haven in neighbouring states that were US enemies, such as Iraq and Syria, added fuel to what was shaping up to be a compelling set of arguments to remove Saddam, and all the ills he represented. Unlike the Second Gulf War, however, the US could count on

no Arab State to support the effort, for there was no provocation by Iraq significant enough to justify an inter-Arab fight.

- 3) **In effect, the US and UK dominated war** offered the jihadists a new opportunity to fight the far enemy in the land of the near enemy. It can be argued that the war in Iraq, although it was not the quick fix the Neocons anticipated, and certainly did not prompt surrounding states to fall like a house of cards into the lap of democracy, the excesses of the jihadists practiced in the war in Iraq served to delegitimize it as a fast evolving ideology within the Middle East. In Saudi Arabia, the home of Salafism, the a-political project of creating a social order based on the life of the Prophet, jihadist extremism was unable to gain purchase against the perceived Islamic corruption of the princes of the Kingdom, as indeed, it has failed to do in the rest of the Gulf emirates, which constituted the epitome of the near enemy in the transnational ideology of resistance.
- 4) **In fact, the pendulum** post-Iraq (if I can call it that) has been toward that of the Islamic Modernists of a century ago, in that the declared aim of many Muslim groups is to accept alternative visions and competing ideas – not just Muslim ones. In the debate currently raging in the Muslim world in regards to how Islam can begin to adjust to pluralistic political systems, the focus has been on Islam from Below, that is, rather than capturing the state, the goal is the capture of society.
- 5) **This suggests** the vitality of the Muslim world reviving today,, something we see in the rise of Islamism and Islamist parties in post-Arab Spring elections. In some ways, this parallels the vitality of Christian politics in Europe – in that it is a majority movement looking at ways in which religious dogma and tradition can be incorporated into adjustment and modern economic vigour.

