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Epilogue

Just as September 11, 2001, proved a major turning point in global
security and international relations, so, too, it signaled a major crisis
and struggle within Islam and among Muslims. The terrorist attacks
against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon raised disturbing
questions about the nature of Islam itself—was it a religion of peace
or a peculiarly violent religion? Many asked "Why do they hate us?"
and expressed strong concerns about the religion of Islam and about
Muslims and their relationship to violence and terror. The most per-
sistent questions revolved around Islam's relationship to violence,
global terrorism, democracy, and modernity: "Is Islam more militant
than other religions?" "What does the Quran have to say about jihad,
or holy war?" "Does the Quran condone this kind of violence and
terrorism?" "Is there a clash of civilizations between the West and
the Muslim world?" "Are Islam and democracy compatible?" "Can
Muslims in Europe and America be loyal citizens?" These questions
continued as America pursued its war against global terrorism, terror-
ists countered with attacks from Spain and Morocco to Saudi Arabia
and Indonesia, and an American-led coalition invaded Iraq and toppled
Saddam Hussein.

Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda symbolized a global jihad, a net-
work of extremist groups threatening both Muslim countries and
the West, whose roots proved deeper and more pervasive internation-
ally than most had anticipated. This new global threat, which had
emerged from the jihad against the Soviet Union's occupation of
Afghanistan, exploded across the Muslim world, from Central, South,
and Southeast Asia to Europe and America. It also highlighted a strug-
gle for the soul of Islam between mainstream Muslims and religious
extremists.

The Globalization and Hijacking of Jihad

As noted earlier, jihad has played a central role in Islam, from the rise of Islam to the creation and expansion of the Muslim community.[135] The importance of jihad is rooted in the Quran's command to struggle (the literal meaning of the word *jihad*) in the path of God and in the example of the Prophet Muhammad and his early Companions. In its most general meaning, jihad refers to the obligation incumbent on all Muslims, individuals and the community, to follow and realize God's will: to lead a virtuous life and to spread Islam through preaching, education, example, and writing. Jihad also includes the right, indeed the obligation, to defend Islam and the Muslim community from aggression. Throughout history the call to jihad has rallied Muslims to the defense of Islam. These two broad meanings of jihad, nonviolent and violent, are contrasted in an often-cited Prophetic tradition. It is reported that when Muhammad returned from battle he told his followers, "We return from the lesser jihad [warfare] to the greater jihad." Historically, jihad has been subject to many interpretations and usages, spiritual and political, peaceful and violent. The meaning of Quranic passages and their use are questions that are not new—they have been debated by Muslims throughout the ages.

Like all scriptures, Islamic sacred texts must be read within the social and political contexts in which they were revealed. The Quran, like the Hebrew Scriptures, or Old Testament, has verses that address fighting and the conduct of war. Arabia and the city of Mecca, in which Muhammad lived and received God's revelation, were beset by tribal raids and cycles of vengeance and vendetta. The broader Near East, in which Arabia was located, was itself divided between two warring superpowers, the Byzantine (Eastern Roman) and the Sasanian (Persian) Empires.

The earliest Quranic verses dealing with armed struggle, or "defensive" jihad, were revealed shortly after the *hijra* (emigration) of Muhammad and his followers to Medina in flight from their persecution in Mecca. At a time when Muslims were forced to fight for their lives, Muhammad is told: "Leave is given to those who fight because they were wronged—surely God is able to help them—who were expelled from their homes wrongfully for saying, 'Our Lord is God'" (22:39–40). The defensive nature of jihad is clearly emphasized in 2:190, "And fight in the way of God with those who fight you, but aggress not: God loves not the aggressors." At critical points throughout the years, Muhammad received revelations from God that provided guidance for the jihad.

The Quran provided detailed guidelines and regulations regarding the conduct of war: who is to fight and who is exempted (48:17, 9:91), when

hostilities must cease (47:4). Most importan and the response to "Whoever transgresse fight the enemy is bal your enemy inclines t put your trust in Goc made them dominate you and offer you pea (4:90). From the earlie well as women and c promise of immunity

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hostilities must cease (2:192), and how prisoners should be treated (47:4). Most important, verses such as 2:294 emphasized that warfare and the response to violence and aggression must be proportional: "Whoever transgresses against you, respond in kind." Permission to fight the enemy is balanced by a strong mandate for making peace: "If your enemy inclines toward peace, then you too should seek peace and put your trust in God" (8:61) and "Had Allah wished, He would have made them dominate you, and so if they leave you alone and do not fight you and offer you peace, then Allah allows you no way against them" (4:90). From the earliest times, it was forbidden to kill noncombatants as well as women and children and monks and rabbis, who were given the promise of immunity unless they took part in the fighting.

The Quran also has a set of verses, referred to as the "sword verses," that call for killing unbelievers, such as, "When the sacred months have passed, slay the idolaters [the Meccans] wherever you find them, and take them, and confine them, and lie in wait for them at every place of ambush" (9:5). This is one of a number of Quranic verses that are often cited by critics to demonstrate the inherently violent nature of Islam and its scripture. These same verses have also been selectively used (or abused) by Muslim rulers to justify their wars of conquest and by religious extremists to develop a "theology of hate" and intolerance and to legitimate unconditional warfare against unbelievers. During the period of Islamic expansion and conquest, many of the *ulama* (religious scholars), who enjoyed royal patronage, provided a rationale for caliphs to pursue their imperial dreams. They maintained that the "sword verses" abrogated, or overrode, the earlier Quranic verses that limited jihad to defensive war. A further complication has been the tendency to cite verses incompletely and thus distort the full intent of the verse. For example, the full intent of the verse "When the sacred months have passed, slay the idolaters wherever you find them" is missed or distorted when quoted in isolation, for it is followed and qualified by "But if they repent and fulfill their devotional obligations and pay the zakat [the charitable tax on Muslims], then let them go their way, for God is forgiving and kind" (9:5). The same is true of another often-quoted verse: "Fight those who believe neither in God nor the Last Day, nor hold that forbidden which hath been forbidden by God and His Apostle, nor hold the religion of truth [even if they are] of the People of the Book." It, too, is often cited without the line that follows, "Until they pay the tax with willing submission, and feel themselves subdued" (9:29).

Jihad has been interpreted and misinterpreted throughout Islamic history to justify resistance and liberation struggles, extremism and terrorism, and holy and unholy wars. In addition to historic battles and wars

to protect Muslim peoples and lands, rulers, from early caliphs to heads
of modern states such as Saddam Hussein, have often used jihad to
legitimate campaigns that could spread the boundaries of their states or
empires. Extremists, past and present, have justified their acts of vio-
lence and terror, from the Kharijites who assassinated the caliph Ali and
the assassins of Egypt's president Anwar Sadat to Osama bin Laden and
al-Qaeda and a host of extremist movements from Egypt to Indonesia.

In the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries, because of Muslim
politics and global communications, jihad became more complex and
widespread. On the one hand, jihad's primary Quranic religious and spir-
itual meanings, the "struggle" or effort to follow God's path, lead a good
life, and build a just society, became more comprehensive (multifaceted)
and contemporary in their applications. Jihad was used to speak of the
spiritual struggle to lead a moral life as well as to create a more just so-
ciety by engaging, for example, in educational, community, and social
service projects. On the other hand, in response to authoritarian regimes
and political conflicts, jihad became a clarion call used by resistance,
liberation, and terrorist movements alike to legitimate their causes, mo-
bilize support, and motivate their followers. The Afghan mujahidin, the
Taliban, and the Northern Alliance each waged a "jihad" in Afghanistan
against foreign powers and among themselves; Muslim movements in
Kashmir, Chechnya, Dagestan, the southern Philippines, Bosnia, and
Kosovo have fashioned their struggles as jihads; Hizbullah, HAMAS,
and Islamic Jihad Palestine characterized war with Israel as a jihad;
Algeria's Armed Islamic Group engaged in a jihad of terror against the
government and their fellow citizens; Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda
waged a global jihad against Muslim governments and the West. The
terms *jihad* and *martyrdom* (*shahid*) had gained such currency that they
were also used by nationalist (secular) leaders and movements, such as
Yasser Arafat and the secular Palestinian National Authority and its
military wing, the al-Aqsa Brigade.

Suicide Bombers

The use of suicide bombing in attacks has become a contentious
"weapon" in the waging of jihad, used in the September 11 attacks
against the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, in postwar Iraq, and
subsequently in many extremist attacks globally. Its widespread use
began initially in Israel-Palestine.

On February 25, 1994, Dr. Baruch Goldstein, a Jewish settler who
had immigrated to Israel from the United States, opened fire, killing

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twenty-nine Muslim worshipers during their Friday congregational prayer in the Mosque of the Patriarch in Hebron. In response, HAMAS (Islamic Resistance Movement) promised swift revenge for the Hebron massacre; its militia, the Qassem Brigade, undertook suicide bombing operations within Israel itself, in Galilee, in Jerusalem, and in Tel Aviv. The use of suicide bombing increased exponentially during the second (al-Aqsa) *intifada* (uprising) that began in September 2000. It was employed both by HAMAS and the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigade, the militia associated with Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement.

Historically, both Sunni and Shii Muslims have generally forbidden "sacrificial religious suicide" and acts of terrorism. The Nizari Ismailis, popularly called the Assassins, who in the eleventh and twelfth centuries were notorious for sending suicidal assassins against their enemies, were rejected by mainstream Islam as fanatics. However, in the late twentieth century the issue resurfaced as many, Shii and Sunni alike, came to equate suicide bombing with martyrdom, relinquishing one's life for the faith. Although usually associated with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in fact, suicide bombings have also occurred in Lebanon, Indonesia, and elsewhere. In Lebanon they were used by Hizbullah and al-Jihad in attacks such as those against the U.S. Marine barracks and French military headquarters in Beirut in 1983, in which several hundred were killed.

Traditionally, suicide is unconditionally forbidden in Islam, because only God has the right to take the life he has granted. One verse in the Quran may be relevant to suicide: "O you who believe! Do not consume your wealth in the wrong way—rather only through trade mutually agreed to, and do not kill yourselves. Surely God is Merciful toward you" (4:29). However, many Muslim exegetes have believed that "do not kill yourselves" can mean "do not kill each other," since it fits the context of the verse. The subject of suicide is therefore little discussed in exegetical literature. The Prophetic traditions (*hadith*), however, frequently, clearly, and absolutely prohibit suicide.

In Israel-Palestine, increased violence and targeted killings or assassinations by the Israeli government reinforced the belief among many Palestinians and Muslims that so-called suicide bombers were committing not an act of suicide but one of self-sacrifice, engaged in resistance and retaliation against Israeli occupation and oppression. Student posters at universities in the West Bank and Gaza declared: "Israel has nuclear bombs, we have human bombs."

The targeting of innocent civilians and noncombatants by suicide bombings precipitated a sharp debate in the Muslim world, garnering both support and condemnation on religious grounds. Prominent

religious leaders have differed greatly in their legal opinions (*fatwas*). Sheikh Ahmad Yasin, the religious leader and founder of HAMAS, and Akram Sabri, the mufti of Jerusalem, as well as many other Arab and Palestinian religious leaders, argued that suicide bombing is necessary and justified.

Others religious leaders and scholars condemn suicide bombings, in particular those that target civilians, as terrorism. Sheikh Abdulaziz bin Abdallah al-Sheikh, grand mufti of Saudi Arabia, condemned all suicide bombings as un-Islamic and forbidden by Islam. However, Sheikh Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi, the former grand mufti of Egypt (as well as the current grand mufti, Sheikh Ahmad al-Tayyeb), drew a sharp distinction between suicide bombings that are acts of self-sacrifice and self-defense and the killing of noncombatants, women, and children, which he has consistently condemned. Sheikh Yusuf al-Qardawi, among the most influential religious authorities in the world, has given fatwas that recognize suicide bombing in Israel-Palestine as an act of self-defense, the giving of one's life for God with the hope that God will grant one Paradise. Qardawi has legitimated the killing of civilians, arguing that Israel is a militant and military society in which both men and women serve in the military and reserves, and that if an elderly person or a child is killed in such acts, it is an involuntary killing. At the same time, he has denounced acts of terrorism elsewhere as un-Islamic, or against the teachings of Islam.

The politicization of Islam in Muslim societies has enabled militants to use religion to legitimate the use of violence, warfare, and terrorism. However different, militant groups share a common worldview, a theology of hate that sees the world in mutually exclusive, black-and-white categories: the world of belief and unbelief, the land of Islam and of warfare, the forces of good against the forces of evil. Those who are not with them, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, are the enemy and are to be fought and destroyed in a war with no limits and no proportionality of goals or means. Extremists legitimated their acts of violence and terror by appealing to and reinterpreting the Islamic doctrine of jihad, creating a jihadi culture taught in mosques, schools, and seminaries. Most militants and movements have been directly or indirectly influenced by the most prominent and influential ideologue of modern Muslim extremism, Sayyid Qutb. In the late twentieth century, Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda became the most visible symbol of the new global jihad. Bin Laden's upbringing and exposure to Wahhabi Islam coupled with his exposure to Qutb's ideas and disciples at university and in Afghanistan transformed this somewhat shy, serious, devout, polite young man into a godfather of global terrorism.

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Sayyid Qutb: Martyr of Islamic Radicalism

Sayyid Qutb's (1906–66) journey took him from educated intellectual to government official to militant ideologue and activist. Qutb influenced and inspired many militants, from the assassins of Anwar Sadat to the followers of Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda.

Sayyid Qutb had a modern education and was a great admirer of Western literature. After graduation from university, he became an official in Egypt's Ministry of Public Instruction in Cairo as well as a poet and literary critic. Qutb's visit to America in the late 1940s proved a turning point in his life, transforming him from an admirer into a severe critic of the West. His observations and experiences produced a culture shock that both made him more religious and convinced him of the moral decadence of the West, from its materialism and sexual permissiveness to its use and abuse of alcohol to its racism. In addition, Qutb's stay in America coincided with the creation of the modern state of Israel. He felt betrayed by what he considered America's anti-Arab bias in government and the media.

Returning to Egypt, Qutb joined the Muslim Brotherhood. He quickly emerged as a major voice in the organization and its most influential ideologue amid the growing confrontation with the Egyptian regime. Imprisoned and tortured for alleged involvement in a failed attempt to assassinate President Gamal Abd al-Nasser, he became increasingly militant and radicalized, convinced that the Egyptian government was un-Islamic and had to be overthrown. Qutb's revolutionary vision is set forth in his most influential tract, *Milestones*.

Qutb sharply divided Muslim societies into two diametrically opposed camps, the forces of good and of evil, those committed to the rule of God and those opposed, the party of God and the party of Satan. There was no middle ground. He emphasized the need to develop a special group of true Muslims, a righteous vanguard, within a corrupt and faithless society. Since the creation of an Islamic government was a divine commandment, it was an imperative that Muslims strive to implement or impose it immediately. Given the authoritarian and repressive nature of the Egyptian and many other Muslim governments, Qutb concluded that change from within the system was impossible. Islam was on the brink of disaster; jihad as armed struggle was the only way to implement a new Islamic order.

Qutb regarded the West as the historic enemy of Islam and Muslims as demonstrated by the Crusades, European colonialism, and the cold war. The Western threat was political, economic, and religiocultural. Equally insidious, he believed, were the elites of the Muslim world, who

ruled and governed according to Western secular principles and values that threatened the faith, identity, and values of their own Islamic societies. Qutb denounced governments and Western secular-oriented elites as atheists against whom all true believers must wage holy war. Sayyid Qutb's radicalized worldview became a source for militant extremists from the founders of Egypt's Islamic Jihad to Osama bin Laden and others who call for a global jihad.

Wahhabi Islam

After Sayyid Qutb's execution in 1966 and the suppression of the Muslim Brotherhood, Muslim Brothers including Muhammad Qutb, Sayyid Qutb's brother, fled to Saudi Arabia, where they were employed as professors in universities, such as the one attended by Osama bin Laden, King Abdulaziz University in Jeddah, and other sectors of society.

Among Osama's teachers at King Abdulaziz University was Dr. Abdullah Azzam, who would later become prominent in Afghanistan. Azzam, a Jordanian member of the Palestinian Muslim Brotherhood and reportedly a founder of HAMAS, had strong academic and Islamic activist credentials.[136] Azzam was an advocate of a militant global jihad ideology and culture, seeing it as a duty incumbent on all Muslims. Sometimes described as the Emir of Jihad or "Godfather" of global jihad, he said: "This duty will not end with victory in Afghanistan; jihad will remain an individual obligation until all other lands that were Muslim are returned to us so that Islam will reign again; before us lie Palestine, Bokhara, Lebanon, Chad, Eritrea, Somalia, the Philippines, Burma, Southern Yemen, Tashkent and Andalusia [southern Spain]."[137]

Qutb's thought found fertile ground among Saudi religious militants, who advocated a more extremist brand of Wahhabi Islam that they preached in mosques and disseminated in universities. Although he majored in civil engineering, bin Laden was also a keen student of Islamic studies. As a result, he was exposed to the more militant theological interpretations of Islam present among Saudi and foreign Muslim professors. These influences would come to fruition later. They are important for understanding the religious worldview that produced the majority of the September 11 hijackers who were from Saudi Arabia, a theology of hate that fostered Saudi support for militant Islamic groups and madrasas (seminaries) in Afghanistan and Pakistan that trained global terrorists.

Wahhabi Islam, the official form of Islam in Saudi Arabia, is among the most ultraconservative interpretations of Islam. As we have seen, the Wahhabi movement takes its name from Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab

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(1703–92), a scholar of Islamic law and theology, and his revivalist movement. The House of Saud has relied on its appeal to Islam and the descendents of ibn Abd al-Wahhab for its legitimacy. Although *Wahhabi* is the common term used to identify his movement, followers refer to themselves as *al-muwahiddun*, those who follow and uphold the doctrine of the uniqueness and "unity" of God, or absolute monotheism.

Wahhabi Islam over the years has itself been subject to multiple interpretations, including the ultraconservative exclusivist theology of the religious establishment and more militant and radical theologies of hate and violence. Many of its preachers and followers tend to be literalist, rigid, puritanical, and intolerant, believing that they are right and all others (Muslims as well as people of other faiths) are wrong. Presenting their version of Islam as the pristine, pure, unadulterated message of the Prophet, Wahhabis have sought to propagate and impose their strict beliefs and interpretations throughout the Muslim world as well as Europe and America. Their brand of Islam is not shared by many other Sunni or Shii Muslims, whom many Wahhabis would condemn as unbelievers or religious hypocrites.

In the last half of the twentieth century, the world saw the more radical, violent interpretations of Islam put into action in the 1979 seizure of the Grand Mosque in Mecca by militants who called for the overthrow of the monarchy. Both internal as well as external forces (political and religious) fed the development of religious extremism. Islamic activists from other countries, mainstream and extremist, often fleeing their home governments, found refuge in Saudi Arabia. They found jobs teaching in universities and religious schools as well as working in government ministries and organizations. As a result, alongside the Wahhabi Islam of the establishment, a militant brand of Islam found a home in many of Saudi Arabia's mosques, schools, and society at large. Their theology and worldview was one of militant jihad, domestic and global.

Internationally, Saudis, both government-sponsored organizations and wealthy individuals, have funded the export of Wahhabi Islam, in its mainstream and extremist forms, to other countries and communities in the Muslim world and the West. They have offered development aid; built mosques, libraries, and other institutions; funded the publication and distribution of religious tracts; and commissioned imams and religious scholars to preach and teach abroad. Wealthy businessmen as well as private and government organizations in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf region provided financial support to extremist groups who spread a militant brand of Islam (commonly referred to as Wahhabi or Salafi) with its "jihadi" culture. As with forms of religious fundamentalism in all

faiths, there often seemed to be a fine line between those who propa-gated an ultraconservative, exclusivist theology and militant religious extremists such as Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda.

A Manifesto for Global Jihad

Osama bin Laden was the multimillionaire, seemingly devout, well-ed-ucated son of a prominent Saudi family.[138] Bin Laden had fought against the Soviets in Afghanistan, a struggle that allied him with a cause sup-ported by the United States, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and many other na-tions. However, after the war he became alienated from the House of Saud and radicalized by the prospect that an American-led coalition coming to oust Saddam Hussein from his occupation of Kuwait in the Gulf War of 1991 would lead to the increased presence and influence of America in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf. Bin Laden and others like him are driven by political and economic grievances but draw on a tradition of religious extremism, past and present, to religiously justify and legiti-mate their path of violence and warfare.

Osama bin Laden was regarded as an inspiration to and major funder of terrorist groups suspected in the bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993, the slaughter of 18 American soldiers in Somalia, bombings in Riyadh in 1995 and in Dhahran in 1996, the killing of 58 tourists at Luxor, Egypt, in 1997, as well as the embassy bombings in Tanzania and Kenya. He threatened attacks against Americans who remained on Saudi soil and promised retaliation internationally for cruise missile attacks.[139]

In February 1998 bin Laden and other militant leaders announced the creation of a transnational coalition of extremist groups, the Islamic Front for Jihad against Jews and Crusaders. Al-Qaeda was linked to a se-ries of acts of terrorism: the truck bombings of American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania on August 7, 1998, that killed 263 people and in-jured more than 5,000, followed on October 12, 2000, by a suicide bomb-ing attack against the USS *Cole*, which killed 17 American sailors.

The attacks of September 11 brought to a head and into sharp relief the magnitude of the threat of global terrorism. Jihad has been waged not only against unjust rulers and governments but also against a broad spectrum of civilians. Terrorists such as Osama bin Laden and others have gone beyond classical Islam's criteria for a just war. They recognize no limits but their own, employing any weapons or means. Like those who seek to justify preemptive strikes, they often argue that today's cir-cumstances are so dangerous and unjust that extraordinary measures are

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justified. Thus, they reject Islamic law's regulations regarding the goals and means of a valid jihad (that violence must be proportional and that only the necessary amount of force should be used to repel the enemy), that noncombatants should not be targeted, and that jihad must be declared by a legitimate religious or political authority. Their targets include civilians, women and children, Jews, Christians, people of all faiths, and other Muslims who do not agree with them.

At the same time, many prominent Islamic scholars and religious leaders across the Muslim world have denounced this hijacking of Islam by terrorists. The Islamic Research Council at al-Azhar University, one of the oldest universities in the world and a leading center of Islamic learning regarded by many as the highest moral authority in Islam, issued strong, authoritative declarations against bin Laden's initiatives: "Islam provides clear rules and ethical norms that forbid the killing of non-combatants, as well as women, children, and the elderly, and also forbids the pursuit of the enemy in defeat, the execution of those who surrender, the infliction of harm on prisoners of war, and the destruction of property that is not being used in the hostilities."[140]

Islam and Democracy

As in many other parts of the world, including the former Soviet Union, eastern Europe, Latin America, and Africa until recently, the history of the modern Muslim world reveals a majority of authoritarian regimes. The Muslim experience has been one of kings, military, and ex-military rulers possessing tenuous legitimacy and propped up by their military and security forces. Many have been authoritarian states with democratic facades: parliamentary institutions and political parties that existed at the sufferance of rulers. At the same time, militant Islamic movements have often projected a religious authoritarianism and political intolerance of divergent viewpoints that parallels that of secular authoritarianism.

Yet, at the same time, in recent years the call for greater liberalization and democratization has become more common and widespread. Throughout much of the Muslim world, diverse sectors of society, secular and religious, leftist and rightist, educated and uneducated, increasingly use greater political participation or democratization as the litmus test by which to judge the legitimacy of governments and political movements alike.

The absence of democracy in numerous Muslim countries has led many to ask whether this is due to peculiar characteristics of Arab and Muslim culture. Some maintain that Arab culture and/or Islam are