THE PERCEPTION OF ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM AND VIOLENCE: ANTI-MUSLIM BIAS OR REALITY?

BY
PEARL ANSA A KWAKYE
(10184341)

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LEGON JU LY 2015
DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of an original research conducted by me under the supervision of Dr. Emmanuel Ken Ahorsu and that apart from other works, which are duly acknowledged, no part of it has been submitted anywhere else for any purpose.

PEARL ANSAA KWAKYE
(STUDENT)

DR. EMMANUEL KEN AHORSU
(SUPERVISOR)

DATE: .......................................................... DATE: ..........................................................
DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to God Almighty and my family and friends whose support and efforts made this work a success and a reality.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AQIM - Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
CBS - Columbia Broadcasting Systems
CIA - Central Intelligence Agency
EU - European Union
FBI - Federal Bureau of Investigations
IAEA - International Atomic Energy Agency
IDF - Israel Defense Force
ISIL - Islamic State of Iraq and Levant
ISIS - Islamic State
NATO - North Atlantic Treaty Organization
PLO - Palestinian Liberation Organization
UN - United Nations
US - United States
USA - United States of American
WMD - Weapons of Mass Destruction
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION ............................................................ i
DEDICATION ........................................................... ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ............................................... iii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS ............................................ iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS ................................................ v
ABSTRACT ............................................................. ix

## CHAPTER ONE: RESEARCH DESIGN

1.1 Background of Study ........................................... 1
1.2 Statement of the Research Problem .......................... 2
1.3 Research Questions ............................................. 2
1.4 Objective of the Study .......................................... 2
1.5 Scope of Study .................................................. 3
1.6 Conceptual Definitions ......................................... 3
1.7 Rationale of Study ............................................. 3
1.8 Hypothesis of Study ........................................... 4
1.9 Theoretical Framework ......................................... 4
1.10 Literature Review ............................................. 4
1.11 Sources of Data and Research Methodology .......... 14
  1.11.1 Research Methodology .................................. 15
1.11 Arrangement of Chapters ................................. 16
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.0 Introduction</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 The Decline of the Ottoman Empire</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.1 The McMahon-Hussein Agreement</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.2 The Sykes-Picot Agreement</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.3 Allocation of Territories</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.4 British–Zionist Discussions During the Negotiations</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.5 Conflicting Agreements</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.6 Incidents that Took Place After the Public Release of the Plan</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.7 Release of Confidential Archives on Palestine</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1.8 The Consequences of the Agreement</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 The Creation of Israel</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1 Arab Rule in Israel in the Middle Ages (636–1099)</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2 The Rule of the Crusaders and Ayyubid (1099-1291)</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.3 Palestine and the British Mandate</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.4 The White Paper and the Arab Revolt</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.5 Legal Issues surrounding the State of Israel</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.6 Status of Jerusalem under International Law</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.7 International Law and Israeli Settlements</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER THREE:
THE WEST AND ISLAMIC RELATIONS AND THE PERCEPTION OF ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM

3.0 Introduction ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 52
3.1 What is Islamic Fundamentalism? ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 52
3.2 Israeli-Palestinian Conflicts ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 53
3.3 September 11, 2001 and Al-Qaeda ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 62
3.4 Political Violence and Islam ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 67
3.5 Islamic Fundamentalism and Fundamental Cultural Differences ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 71
3.6 Why Holy War? ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 72
3.7 The Narrative of Intercultural Confrontation of Islam and the West ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 73
3.8 United States Policy Against Islam ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 78
3.9 Libya - 2011 Civil War: The Aftermath of the Arab Spring ... ... ... ... 82
3.10 Drone Policy ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 83
Endnotes ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 86

CHAPTER FOUR
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.0 Introduction ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... ... 89
4.1 Summary of Findings … … … … … … … … 89
4.2 Conclusion … … … … … … … … … 92
4.3 Recommendations … … … … … … … … … 93
Endnote … … … … … … … … … 94
Bibliography … … … … … … … … … 95
Appendix … … … … … … … … … 101
ABSTRACT

This study examines the perception of Islamic fundamentalism and violence and whether it is a Muslim bias or reality. The study is structured into four main chapters. Chapter one looks at the research design and literature review. Chapter Two Historical Overview of the Relations between the West and the Islamic World. Chapter Three makes analyses of the West and Islamic relations and the perception of Islamic fundamentalism. Finally, Chapter Four presents a summary of the research findings, draws conclusions and makes recommendations. The study is purely qualitative and relies primarily on both primary and secondary sources of data collection. The primary sources include interviews of distinguished persons such as Sheik Usman Braimah Bare, Retired Diplomat, Organization of African Unity, Author in Islamic Studies, Historian in African, Arab and Middle East, Sheik Mohammed Hussein Baganya, Islamic Scholar, TV Presenter on the Iqra show TV3 Networks, Public Relations Officer, Madina Institute of Science and Technology and Dr. Sahmudeen Saleh Harun, Islamic Scholar, Imam and counselor at the Kuwait Embassy, whiles the secondary sources includes books and published articles as well as relevant internet sites where relevant data pertinent to the topic under study were obtained. From the study, findings reveal that, perceptions of Islam as a violent religion by the West is misplaced in that, it is rather the politics of the Middle East that has ascribed to violent means as a way of promoting their political agendas. The study therefore concludes that, the main political and economic policies of the Western world towards the Muslim world have contributed largely to Islamic fundamentalism and militancy as a reaction towards these policies. Therefore, the study recommends that, there should be a high level of tolerance by the West to the cultural and political values and practices of states in the Middle East rather than imposing democratic values and practices on them.
CHAPTER ONE

RESEARCH DESIGN

1.1 Background of Study

There has been a consistent trend of religious violence by militant Islamist groups in the name of Jihad. The view that Islamic fundamentalism has been the greatest threat to the West especially in terms of their global normative values, has been the perception of many since the end of the cold war. This argument has taken various turns as Huntington describes this as “The Clash of Civilization”. The quest of the West for global supremacy is confronted by Islamic civilization which largely ascribes to a theocratic and Qur’an inspired sharia and values. These perceptions have assumed serious dimensions since the devastating 9-11 attacks on the United States in 2001. Unfortunately, the U.S invasion of Iraq in 2003 and the resultant demise of Saddam Hussein did not help matters. Other events such as the recent Arab spring and the overthrow of Gadhafi and his subsequent demise has also heightened tensions between the West and militants in the Middle East. An example is the Syrian crises, which saw the West supporting the rebel faction and which consequently attracted jihadists from all over the world. This trend of events and militant political display of Islam and the brutal activities by ISIS, coupled with the political uprising in Yemen and Libya (radical militancy), have made people to believe that Islam is a violent religion which is against any form of modernization. However, it is important to note that others view Islam as a peaceful religion and only a few radical militant Islamists are perpetuating the radicalization of Islam. Some others are also of the view that, it is rather the imperialist tendencies imposed on the Muslim world by the West that has led to the creation of militant Islamic factions. My work will seek to understand whether the perception of Islamic fundamentalism and violence is an anti-Muslim bias or a reality.
1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

Giving the facts on the ground, my work will seek to examine whether there is an independent natural Islamic militancy aimed at ascertaining Islamic supremacy or it is a reaction to the oppressions and imperialist tendencies of the Western world.

1.3 Research Questions

- What brought about the emergence of Islamic fundamentalism and violence?
- What are the main political and economic policies of the western world towards the Muslim world and are fundamentalism and militancy a reaction towards these policies?
- What are the dominant discourses between the Western world and the Islamic divides?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

- Give an overview of the emergence of Islam fundamentalism and violence
- Give a general outlook on the main political and economic policies of the western world towards the Muslim world and deduce if fundamentalism and militancy are reactions towards these policies.
- Give a general overview of the dominant discourse between the western world and the Islamic divides.
1.5 Scope of Study

The scope of this study is from the September 11\textsuperscript{th} 2001 terrorist attacks in the United States and the retaliation of the world in response to these acts of terror from then till 2014.

1.6 Conceptual Definitions

Terrorism: Is defined as political violence in an asymmetrical conflict that is designed to induce terror and psychic fear (sometimes indiscriminate) through the violent victimization and destruction of noncombatant targets (sometimes iconic symbols). Such acts are meant to send a message from an illicit clandestine organization. According to Bockstette, Carsten the purpose of terrorism is to exploit the media in order to achieve maximum attainable publicity as an amplifying force multiplier in order to influence the targeted audience(s) in order to reach short- and midterm political goals and/or desired long-term end states.

Islam: Churchill, Buntzie says that in a religious context means “voluntary submission to God.”

Lewis, Barnard;

Muslim: L. Gardet states that Muslim is the word for an adherent of Islam.

Global Security: Barry Buzan states that global security is viewed as the study of international security as more than a study of threats, but also a study of which threats that can be tolerated and which require immediate action.

1.7 Rationale of Study

It is imperative that the perception of western imperialism and Islamic violence be looked at from a dispassionate point of view as to help find a lasting solution to the problem. This work will also contribute to the body of the knowledge on the subject matter.
1.8 Hypothesis of Study

The main political and economic policies of the Western world towards the Muslim world have contributed largely to Islamic fundamentalism and military as reaction towards these policies.

1.9 Theoretical Framework

I have selected discourse analysis as my theoretical framework. It simply states that, every word or statement reflects power relations and reality and it argues that when something is written or being said, the text must be deconstructed to know who is speaking, position held and his/her relative power standing versus his opponent. Often, the dominant actor has his/her perception or viewpoint adopted as a natural fact. Some proponents of the theory are Jabri Vienne, “Discourse on Violence, 1996” and James Paul Gee, “Discourse Analysis Theory and Methods, 1999”. This theory has been criticized. Maley (1994) states that the theory is centered on a struggle against hegemony. Widdowson (1995) also states that the argument of Discourse Analysts is often reductive, as the arguments are themselves partial. However, this theory is relevant to my work in that, it will help with the deconstruction of notions and views put out by the actors relevant to this work.

1.10 Literature Review

Samuel P. Huntington, in his book the Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order argues that the last part of the twentieth century with its unique civilization has brought about a dynamic increase in local participation and rebirth of religion as a global phenomenon. The evidence of these is in the way the strong culture of the West has been challenged by Islam and Confucian tradition found in Asia. According to Huntington, the challenge of Islam is seen in the
widespread of its social, political and cultural norms in the Muslim world and the additional
denunciation of Western ideals, customs or traditions.¹ Western scholars, including Samuel P.
Huntington, observed that the basic differences between Confucianism and Liberal democracy is
due to their customs and ideals, which places emphasis on the community or groups over the
individual.² Huntington asserts that the assertiveness of Muslims largely originates from social
organization or recruitment and increase in population. Islam and other religions such as
Confucianism vehemently express their culture as superior to the Western culture. Huntington
posits that the most powerful actors in world affairs will always be Nation states although the
primary cause of conflict will be between nations and the different groups of civilizations. Thus,
world politics will be dominated by the clash of civilizations.³ Huntington goes on to
demonstrate how the present world and a new world order is being influenced and shaped by the
different forms of civilizations both old and evolving. Culture and cultural identities, which are
central to Huntington’s argument according to him are determining the pattern of cohesion and
structure, disintegration and conflict in the post-Cold war era.⁴ The definition of civilization by
Huntington has been limited to social divides among humanity based on cultural identities and
religion. Therefore, nation states will continue to be the most powerful actors in world affairs,
but the main conflict of global politics will be between groups with different religious and
cultural identities and nations. World politics will be dominated by the clash of civilizations. The
mistakes of civilization will be the cause of conflict in the future. Argument raised by
Huntington is that, global politics of today is both multi polar and multi civilizational and that
the balance of power among different civilizations is changing because Islam is rapidly
expanding in terms of demography with threatening effects for Muslim countries, non-Western
civilizations are reasserting the importance of their own culture, Asian civilizations are
increasing their military, political and economic strength and the West is waning in relative influence.

Huntington posits that a change of symbols and identities of countries has led to religion taking on a cultural dimension and this in Islamic countries, has become a national identity. Religion may be very essential in determining how nations relate in the new world order because religion is more transitional than any other cultural factor. Huntington’s argument is important to this work because it identifies religion as significant in international relations. He states that Islam and western Christianity amongst others play a pivotal role in reshaping of the world order.

The objectives and means used to organize and mobilize groups are usually different ranging from publicity, social sustenance, political violence and ultimately terrorism however, all of them assert and state the importance to have a society which is grounded on the philosophies or ideologies of Islam. It is unclear however, to know if there is unity in the political message of Islam since these different groups have very strong and sometimes violent views about what an Islamic society should be. The Taliban of Afghanistan, for example, have their idea of an Islamic state or society being supported by most groups though all groups believe that the answer to all the problems they face in their society is Islam. The subjective view of Islam by the west seems to be based on the events that have ensued among Muslims. Muslims, however, denounce the perception of the West about Islam being a religion based on violence and not knowledge. According to Jame’I, Islam as a religion, civilization and culture have witnessed more movements, struggle and conflict than any other faith. He states that no other religion has reacted to such an extent against full-fledged hegemony of the western culture. According to Mawdudi,
morality forms the ideals of the Islamic state. Therefore all affairs of the state should be run as a duty to God for which one must give an account on the day of reckoning.\(^5\)

Realists’ view on the nature of man is selfless and that peace is solely dependent on the type of government that exists in states. Idealists argue that law, morality, agreements and organization of the international system should exist to serve as a shield against the anarchic nature of the international system. The significance of the arguments above shows that Islam can be perceived from the position of the Idealists viewpoint on politics being, the issues of world politics can be traced to God. One can also trace the position of the western view of politics from the realists’ perspective, which views the international system as what is and not what should be. These conflicting theories complicate the concept and practice of world politics, which is made up of nation states with like goals but pursue their interests differently.

A critique of Samuel Huntington’s Clash of Civilization is that it talks more of culture being the source of conflict. The buildup of his work is based on the notion that the most salient differences between people are cultural and not political, ideological or economic. If cultural differences are the underlying factor, then it should follow that they account for conflicts in the world. Huntington’s Clash of Civilizations argues that the Cold War, which was characterized by the clash of ideologies, was a deviation or a peculiarity. He posits that the new post-Cold War era will be along the fault lines of civilizations. Even though he makes mention of nine contemporary civilizations, he dominantly talks about three which are the Sinic civilization, Islam and the West. The critical conflicts in the coming years will happen due to challenges from China and Islam to the West. This is a political ideology that is stemmed at best from social
sciences. The Clash of Civilization mystifies the realities of imbalanced power, speaking to in this case, the most widening, and deepest division between countries with vast wealth and those without. This notion can be said to be sloppy and contradictory on his part and also contradicted by historical evidence. However, Huntington’s Clash of Civilization has directed public discussions since 1993. Evidently, ideologies thrive by appealing to interests, not evidence or logic.

A further study of the main concept in Huntington’s Clash of Civilization shows some more shortcomings and inconsistencies. He defines civilization as “the highest cultural grouping of people and the broadest level of cultural identity people have short of that which distinguishes humans from other species.” Also, its core enduring “values, norms, institutions, and modes of thinking” defines each civilization. He follows up with a list of eight contemporary civilizations which are Hindu, Orthodox, Sinic, latin American, Japanese, African, Islamic and the West. This list of contemporary civilizations might have been convincing if He had acknowledged their main “values, norms, institutions and modes of thinking.” Unfortunately he doesn’t help in this regard. He leaves us thinking if truly these ‘civilizations’ can be defined by some set of unchanging core values and the vast differences in the core values of these civilizations.

Even though Samuel Huntington states that religion is “a central defining characteristic” of civilization, the connection between religion and his civilization is not strong enough. Orthodox Latin America and the Western civilizations are all Christian. However, Latin America is viewed separately because it is mostly Catholic. However, same can be said for France, Italy, Belgium,
Spain and Portugal. Therefore, is there can be three Christian civilizations, what stops him from dividing Islam along racial or sectarian lines (Sunni and Shiite).

Bernard Lewis in his book Islam and the West states that for more than 1,400 years, since the advent of Islam in Arabia and the incorporation into the Islamic empire and civilization of the formerly Christian eastern and southern shores of the Mediterranean, Islam and Christendom have lived side by side -- always as neighbors, often as rivals, sometimes as enemies. We are obliged to say that each of the two religions is delimited and defined by the other. Nevertheless, the customs and texts of Islam reveal in so many ways the overwhelming similarities that link Christianity with Islam. Lewis goes on to say that Christianity and Islam are sister religions with many common customs and traditions between them. Each religion viewed itself as the deliverer of God’s will to humanity carrying with them the duty of reaching others if not everyone in the world. Hence, each regarded the other as a rival in the propagation of their beliefs, consequently resulting in prolonged series of conflict evident in the early holy wars (Jihad) and the Crusades. This shared cause of the two civilizations have divided them far more than their differences have. According to Lewis, with the exception of historians, the term: "Christendom" is rarely used: the civilization formerly designated by that name has undergone a process of reform and secularization and has come to be known, in various contexts, as Europe, as the free world, and, nowadays, principally as the West. The Islamic world, or as Muslims call it, "the House of Islam," is still known, both at home and abroad, by that name, albeit with regional, national, and -- rarely -- sectarian subdivisions.

He goes further to explain that Islam is not a place; it is a religion. But for Muslims this word,
"religion," does not have the same connotation as the word "religion" has for Christians or even had for medieval Christians. "Religion" for Muslims means both more and less than the equivalent term for Christians. The different words used to designate them are indicative. The word "religion," now common to virtually all the languages of European Christendom, both Eastern and Western, derives from the Latin religio. This pre-Christian term for the cult and rituals of pagan Rome was first Christianized by Saint Jerome in his Latin translation of the Bible. The Islamic term is dīn, originally Arabic but adopted in all the many languages of Islam. The cognate word in other Semitic languages, notably Hebrew and Aramaic, means law. For Muslims, Islam is not merely a system of belief and worship, a compartment of life, so to speak, distinct from other compartments, which are the concern of nonreligious authorities administering nonreligious laws. It is rather the whole of life, and its rules include civil, criminal, and even what we would call constitutional law.⁸

Lewis argues that if the term "religion," in one sense, conveys much more to a Muslim than to a Christian, there is another sense in which it conveys much less.⁹ In his book, Lewis makes us understand that the church as a place of worship for Christians is equivalent to the mosque for Muslims. However, when it comes to power and institutions, the church is not comparable to Islam. Lewis posits that, Islam has no councils or synods, no prelates or hierarchies, no canon laws or canon courts. In classical Islamic history there could be no clash between pope and emperor, since the caliph, the titular head of the Islamic state and community, combined in himself both political and religious though not spiritual authority. There could be neither conflict nor cooperation, neither separation nor association between church and state, since the governing institution of Islam combined both functions.¹⁰ Islamic allegiance and political identity
transcends all others. The Caliph was sovereign. Even though there was a decline in the central power that the caliph held; the model of a single Islamic state was still very strong. The longing for a single Islamic state still holds a considerable appeal for Muslims as recent events have so clearly demonstrated.

In many ways, medieval Islam and medieval Christendom spoke the same language. To some extent and in some places this was true even in the literal sense. In many Mediterranean countries, Muslims and Christians shared not only the local vernaculars but also a knowledge of Arabic. Shared concepts, and shared vocabularies to denote them, made it possible not only to argue, but to translate religious texts. Those medieval monks who translated the Qur‘ān into Latin in order to refute it were able to do so because Latin, by that time a Christian language, had the necessary terms. In contrast, when converts tried to translate the Qur‘ān from Arabic into Persian and Turkish and Indian languages, they had to take their Arabic vocabulary with them, because these languages, and the cultures of which they were the expression, did not possess either the concepts or the corresponding terms.

According to Lewis, speaking the same language at least in the figurative sense, using the same methods of argument and reasoning, and adhering to identical or similar notions of what religion is about, Islam and Christendom could disagree meaningfully. Disputations were possible between Christians and Muslims. When Christians and Muslims called each other infidels, each understood what the other meant, and both meant more or less the same thing. In so doing, they revealed their essential similarity. Muslims and Christians alike were convinced that theirs was not only the whole of God's truth it was also its final expression. Anything subsequent was
therefore necessarily false and harmful and could not be tolerated. There was no place for Muslims in the once lost and now conquered lands of Christendom. For Muslims, on the other hand, Christianity, like Judaism, was a predecessor, and deserving of the same degree of tolerance. Muslim theologians had difficulty with such Christian doctrines as the Trinity, and the son-ship and divinity of Christ, which in their eyes were blasphemous absurdities, and are explicitly rejected by the Qur'ān (5:75-76 and 112:1-4). But in general, they were willing to concede the tolerance to the earlier religions enjoined by Qur'ānic law, despite these perceived aberrations.\textsuperscript{11}

In this article, Sharp quotes President William J Clinton “Let our actions Today send this message loud and clear: There are no expendable American targets; there will be no sanctuary for terrorists; we will defend our people, our interests and our values; we will help people of all faiths in all parts of the world who want to live free of fear and violence; we will persist and we will prevail”.\textsuperscript{12} The United States defines Terrorism as "premeditated, politically motivated violence perpetrated against noncombatant targets by sub-national groups or clandestine agents," usually intended to influence an audience, and international terrorism as "terrorism Involving citizens or the territory of more than one country."\textsuperscript{13}

In this article, Silverman gives an account of the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the U.S. According to him, in the wake of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, the attention of many Americans both policymakers and ordinary citizens have been captured by a vision of Islam that appears to be militant, reactionary, and violent. Too often this face of Islam is the only face that many in the U.S actually perceive. We are deluged with nightly reports of “suicide
bombings” in Israel, hostage takings in the Philippines, harsh capital punishment in Afghanistan, and the slave trade between Sudan and Libya. The images shown on social media and television does not typically depict what actually goes on in reality in Islam. It does not represent the reality and entirety of the Islamic experience. Silverman argues that the events of 1 September 2001 have refocused American and world attention upon reactionary Islamic extremism. All nineteen of the hijackers were identified as Arab Muslims with ties to Islamic revivalist movements in Algeria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen. These hijackers represent just a margin of Muslims who want to have a world system where Islam is the dominant if not the only true religion. The west is seen as a hindrance to their goal with their propagation of liberalism where human rights and individualism is heralded as the way forward. However, this goes against the ideals of extremist Muslims who hold steadfast the ideals of a communal state where the will of the community or the many is greater than the will or need of the individual. In this civilization the individual is non-existent and individual human rights a very distant thought. According to Silverman, Americans have taken on a new interest in Islam as well as the religious and political histories of the Islamic world as a result of the terrorist attacks. It is imperative that the west has an open mind when looking at Islam to enable them view objectively the real ideals of Islam and not pay attention to extremists who misinterpret the holy text of the Quran to suit themselves and continue their selfish propagation of their kind of Islam.

Simbar argues in this article the different aspects of global Islamic movement and its impacts and implications. It brings out the theoretical background and different perspectives in Islamic ideology. Simbar also talks about the basis of inter-state relations between a Muslim state and
other Muslim or non-Muslim states that can be found in traditional and neo-traditional literatures. Simbar argues that peace is the original basis in Islam and rejects the idea of perpetual war between Islamic and non-Islamic polity as espoused by Jihadist groups that have raised concerns among security agencies and non-Muslim political and community leaders. Political Islam is undergoing a transformation from being an opposition and marginalised political project to becoming a counter-hegemonic movement fighting at the front line between the West and the rest of the world. The strength of Islamism is shaped not only by its Islamic discourse and rhetoric, but also by its social components and political programs. This paper argues that the West must in one way or another understand, recognize and accommodate Islamism's political motivations and visions. Religious re-awakening, often in the form of fundamental revivalism, is a major phenomenon in the international relations today, especially in the Islamic regions.

1.11 Sources of Data and Research Methodology

This study relies basically on data from both primary and secondary sources. With the secondary sources, data was obtained from books and published journal articles. In addition, secondary data was obtained from Qur’an, Bible and Internet sites where information relevant to the topic was obtained. Also, secondary data was obtained from the American Corner Library and the LEClAD main library; all in the University of Ghana-Legon.

Primary data was obtained through unstructured interviews from some key personalities well vested in the topic under study. These included Sheik Usman Braimah Bare (a retired diplomat of AU and also a scholar in Islamic Studies, Historian in African, Arab and the Middle East), Sheik Mohammed Hussein Baganya (Islamic Scholar, TV Presenter on Iqra show on TV3 and
PRO Madina Institute of Science and Technology) and Dr. Sahmudeen Saleh Harun, (Islamic Scholar, Imam and Counselor at the Kuwait Embassy).

1.12 Research Methodology

In the case of methodology, the study relies purely on qualitative research method for data collection and analysis. Based on the secondary sources for data collection, the study relies on Purposive sampling method for selecting key informants for the interview. This is because the study has a purpose which is stipulated in the Problem Statement and Research Objectives. Therefore there is a need to get relevant information only from people who are well vested in the topic under study, rather than relying on rhetoric and speculation from making waves in the media or information from just anyone from the general public.

For data analysis, the study employs exploratory and descriptive design to present already existing information about the topic and also show gaps where limited information exists in literature. For exploratory design, the study explores and utilizes both primary and secondary sources of data without any restrictions as observed mostly in some quantitative researches. In view of this, the study presents a precise problem statement and developed a good hypothesis. The descriptive design synchronizes and complements information obtained from interviews with that of existing literature to establish facts and relationships about the Western World and the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. This helps to provide a more holistic and in-depth analysis about the topic.
1.13  **Arrangement of Chapters**

Chapter one: Research Design

Chapter two: Overview of the West and Islamic world relations

Chapter three: The West and Islamic relations and the perception of Islamic fundamentalism.

Chapter four: Summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations.
ENDNOTES

2 Ibid.
3 Ibid.
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
10 Ibid.
11 Ibid.
13 Ibid.
15 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
CHAPTER TWO

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE WEST AND THE ISLAMIC WORLD

2.0 Introduction

This chapter seeks to explore the historical events and decisions that have shaped relations between the West and the Islamic/Arab world. While relations between the two go as far back as ancient times and reached confrontational heights during the crusades, this chapter would only touch on these ancient events in the light of more contemporary historical events. It will therefore take the 20th century as its starting point with particular focus on the decline of the Ottoman Empire and the various related agreements connected to this period and how they shaped relations between the Islamic World and the West. It goes on to detail the origins of Western colonization of the Middle East after World War I, the Zionist movement and subsequent creation of a Jewish state in the Middle East. It moves on from there to contemporary events in the Islamic world such as the Iranian revolution, the Iran-Iraq War, the September 11 terrorist attack on the US, the subsequent US invasion of Iraq, and the rise of terrorism within the region, detailing both Western and Arab roles in the unfolding of these events.

2.1 The Decline of the Ottoman Empire

The Ottoman Empire; formed by Oghuz Turks in July 27, 1299 was a Turkish empire which adhered to the concept of a Caliphate (Islamic doctrines and practices). The Ottoman Empire wielded so much power, influence and prestige in the 16th and 17th centuries and its sphere of influence covered large swathes of Western Asia, the Horn of Africa, Southeastern Europe, the Caucasus, and North Africa. At the beginning of the 17th Century, the Ottoman Empire had
about 32 provinces and numerous vassal states. The Ottoman Empire “was at the center of interactions between the Eastern and Western worlds for six centuries.”

However, the influence and control of the Ottoman Empire began to subside in the nineteenth century following persistent pressures and attacks from European powers. This led the empire to join an alliance with Germany at the beginning of the twentieth century in order not to lose its territories but it collapsed and was broken up by the Allied Powers (the United Kingdom, France, Serbia, United States, Italy, Belgium and Russia) in the aftermath of World War I. This resulted “in the emergence of the new state of Turkey in the Ottoman Anatolian heartland, as well as the founding of the modern Balkan and Middle Eastern states.”

2.1.1 The McMahon-Hussein Agreement

With the entry of the Ottoman Empire on Germany’s side in Nov., 1914, many English officers stationed in the Middle East believed that an Arab revolt against the Ottomans would be key to bringing down Britain’s Ottoman enemy. As a result, Sir Henry McMahon, Britain’s High Commissioner to Egypt, opened discussions with Sharif Hussein of Mecca – an influential Arab leader at the time. Throughout these discussions, McMahon promised an independent Arab state – between Iran and Egypt – to Hussein in return for an Arab revolt against the Ottomans. Thus began what is known as the McMahon-Hussein Correspondence, between Jul. 1915, and Jan. 1916, wherein the British bargained with Sharif Hussein over the terms under which the Arabs would revolt against the Turkish Ottoman Empire. It is in this correspondence, the Arabs assert, that the British conceded a future independent Arab state should include the territory of Palestine. The Arabs ultimately revolted against the Turks in 1916, and fought in a series of
campaigns which ended with the capture of Damascus in Sept., 1918. The British denial of any intent or promise to create an Arab state in Palestine is the source of much Arab bitterness.  

2.1.2 The Sykes-Picot Agreement

The Sykes-Picot agreement was a secret agreement between France and England to share and colonize these territories after defeating the empire which undermined the earlier agreements made by the British with the Arabs. This was viewed as a betrayal by the Arabs and is a major historical source of the bad blood and mistrust that has existed over the years. The Sykes-Picot Agreement, which is also officially known as the Asia Minor Agreement, was a secret agreement between the government of the United Kingdom and France with the approval of Russia; defining their proposed spheres of influence and control in the Middle East should the Triple Entente succeed in defeating the Ottoman Empire during World War I. The treaty was negotiated between November 1915 and March 1916 and the agreement was concluded on the 16th of May 1916. The outcome of the agreement was the division of the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire outside the Arabian Peninsula into areas of future colonies of France and Britain. Francois Georges-Picot a French diplomat negotiated the terms of agreement of the treaty together with Sir Mark Sykes, a British diplomat hence the name “Sykes-Picot”. The Tsarist government of Russia played a minor role in the making of the Sykes-Picot agreement. The October 1917 Russian Revolution led to the Bolsheviks exposing the agreement leaving the British embarrassed, the Arabs in dismay and the Turks delighted.

2.1.3 Allocation of Territories

France was to be given control of southeastern Turkey, northern Iraq, Syria and Lebanon. Britain
was also apportioned control of areas generally making up the coastal strip between the sea and the River Jordan, Jordan, southern Iraq and a small area including the ports of Haifa and Acre, which allowed access to the Mediterranean. While Russia was to be given Istanbul, the Turkish Straits and the Ottoman Armenian vilayets. The controlling powers were given the freedom to decide on state boundaries within these areas. Additional discussions were expected to go on to determine international administration awaiting consultations with Russia and other powers, including the Sharif of Mecca.  

The original agreement the British made with the Arabs was made to the Sharif of Mecca. The Arabs were to start an internal revolt that would cause the Ottoman Empire to collapse from within and aid in its eventual defeat as it will be forced to fight on two fronts. In exchange the Arabs were to be granted independence and an Arab State with the Sharif of Mecca believed to be descended from Mohammed as King. The Sykes-Picot secret agreement however exposed the British as double dealers and led to Arab resentment of the West after the Bolshevik government of Russia exposed the deal.

2.1.4 British –Zionist discussions during the negotiations

Zionism was first talked about at the British Cabinet level on the 9th of November 1914 four days after Britain declared war on the Ottoman Empire after World War I broke out. David Lloyd George was the Chancellor of the Exchequer and in a discussion with Zionist Herbert Samuel, who had a seat in the Cabinet as president of the Local Government Board, Samuel was assured by Lloyd George that “he was very keen to see a Jewish state established in Palestine.”  

This meeting took place on November 9, 1914. Lloyd George wanted to make the destruction of the Ottoman Empire a major British war aim, and two days after taking office stated that he wanted a major victory preferably the capture of Jerusalem to impress British public opinion.  

21
conversation with Edward Grey, the British Foreign Secretary, Samuel touched on the Zionist aspirations for the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine and the importance of its geographical position to the British Empire. In Samuel’s memoirs there are a couple of things that would be very important to note. First is that the state should be neutral since it would be too small to defend itself, while the free access of Christian pilgrims should be guaranteed as well. Secondly, he stated that it would be of huge benefit if what was left of Syria were seized by France, as it would be a lot better for the state to have a European power as a neighbor rather than Turkey.

It was stated in a letter to Samuel from Sykes that if Belgium should assume the administration of Palestine it might be more acceptable to France as an alternative to the international administration, which France wanted and the Zionists did not. He wrote on the boundaries marked on a map attached to the memorandum that:  

"By excluding Hebron and the East of the Jordan there is less to discuss with the Moslems, as the Mosque of Omar then becomes the only matter of vital importance to discuss with them and further does away with any contact with the Bedouins, who never cross the river except on business. I imagine that the principal object of Zionism is the realization of the ideal of an existing centre of nationality rather than boundaries or extent of territory. The moment I return I will let you know how things stand at Pd." 

2.1.5 Conflicting Agreements

Lord Curzon said that Great Powers were still committed to the Reglement Oranique Agreement regarding the Lebanon Vilayet of June 1861 and Septemebr 1864, and that the rights granted to
France in the blue area under the Sykes-Picot Agreement were not compatible with that agreement.\textsuperscript{21} The Reglement Organic was an international agreement regarding governance and non-intervention in the affairs of the Maronite, Orthodox Christian, Druz and Muslim communities. In May 1917, W. Ormsby-Gore wrote

\begin{quote}
"French intentions in Syria are surely incompatible with the war aims of the Allies as defined to the Russian Government. If the self-determination of nationalities is to be the principle, the interference of France in the selection of advisers by the Arab Government and the suggestion by France of the Emirs to be selected by the Arabs in Mosul, Aleppo, and Damascus would seem utterly incompatible with our ideas of liberating the Arab nation and of establishing a free and independent Arab State. The British Government, in authorizing the letters dispatched to King Hussein [Sharif of Mecca] before the outbreak of the revolt by Sir Henry McMahon, would seem to raise a doubt as to whether our pledges to King Hussein as head of the Arab nation are consistent with French intentions to make not only Syria but Upper Mesopotamia another Tunis. If our support of King Hussein and the other Arabian leaders of less distinguished origin and prestige mean anything it means that we are prepared to recognize the full sovereign independence of the Arabs of Arabia and Syria. It would seem time to acquaint the French Government with our detailed pledges to King Hussein, and to make it clear to the latter whether he or someone else is to be the ruler of Damascus, which is the one possible capital for an Arab State, which could command the obedience of the other Arabian Emirs."\textsuperscript{22}
\end{quote}

The Sykes-Picot plan also described how France and Great Britain were prepared to acknowledge and defend an independent Arab State or confederation of Arab States, under the suzerainty of an Arab chief within the zones marked A and B on the map which was used for the demarcation.\textsuperscript{23} There was nothing in the plan that prohibited the rule of an Arab Suzerainty through the remaining areas. The post-war Anglo-French settlement of 1-4 December 1918 brought about conflicts in the region. Negotiations were made between the British Prime Minister Lloyd George and his French counterpart Georges Clemenceau that rendered many of the guarantees in the Hussein-McMahon agreement invalid. This settlement was not part of the Sykes-Picot Agreement, but Sykes and Picot visited Hejaz (the holy land of Islam, which is centered on the two holiest Muslim cities Mecca and Medina), in 1917 to discuss the agreement with Hussein. In that same year, Lloyd George together with representatives of the French
Ministry of Foreign Affairs delivered a public speech to the Central Syrian Congress in Paris. He spoke on liberated Jerusalem and also on the non-Turkish elements of the Ottoman Empire. He stated that the accomplished fact of the independence of the Hejaz rendered it almost impossible that an effective and real autonomy should be refused to Syria.\textsuperscript{24} The Balfour Declaration was however the greatest source of conflict. Lord Balfour wrote a memorandum in 1917 from the Paris Peace Conference in which he declared that Britain’s rights implied that other allies had unreservedly rejected the Sykes-Picot agreement by adopting the system of mandates that did not allow trade preferences or annexations including other advantages. According to him, all the allies had no intention of honoring their promise to the Arabs since they were committed to Zionism.\textsuperscript{25}

In an interview with The New Statesman in 2002, Jack Straw, who was the British Foreign Minister (2001 - 2006), stated, “A lot of the problems we are having to deal with now, I have to deal with now, are a consequence of our colonial past. ... The Balfour Declaration and the contradictory assurances which were being given to Palestinians in private at the same time as they were being given to the Israelis—again, an interesting history for us but not an entirely honorable one.”\textsuperscript{26}
Figure 1: Map of the blue area under the Sykes-Picot Agreement.²⁷

Source: https://www.google.com.gh/search?q=map+of+the+blue+area+under+the+Sykes-Picot+agreement&biw, accessed on 13 August 2015

2.1.6 Incidents that took place after the public release of the plan

The Russian claims in the Ottoman Empire was rejected after the Bolsheviks released a copy of the Sykes-Picot Agreement following the Bolshevik Revolution. The release of the agreement brought great embarrassment to the allies and increased mistrust between them and the Arabs.

The November 1918 pledge by Great Britain and France, which was called the Anglo-French Declaration, stated that France and Britain would “assist in the establishment of indigenous Governments and administrations in Syria and Mesopotamia by "setting up of national governments and administrations deriving their authority from the free exercise of the initiative and choice of the indigenous populations.”²⁸ The French at the insistence of the British reluctantly agreed to issue the declaration. However, British War Cabinet Minutes from a meeting showed that the British had quoted laws of conquest and military occupation to avoid
sharing the administration with the French under a civilian regime. The British emphasized that
the terms of the Anglo-French declaration had surpassed the Sykes-Picot Agreement. This was
done so that Britain could justify fresh negotiations over the allocation of the territories of Syria,
Mesopotamia and Palestine.  

Followers of the Arab Revolt on the 30th of September 1918 in Damascus declared an
administration devoted to the Sharif of Mecca. The Sharif had been declared ‘King of the Arabs’
by a minority of religious leaders and other personalities in Mecca. 

An independent state of Syria was declared at a Pan-Syrian Congress meeting in Damascus on
the 8th of March 1920. The new state was to be made up of portions of Syria, northern
Mesopotamia and Palestine with King Faisal as Head of State and Prince Zeid who was Faisal’s
brother, as Regent of Mesopotamia.

At the San Remo conference held at Villa Devachan in Sanremo, Italy from 19 to 26 April 1920,
Britain, Belgium and France concurred to acknowledge the provisional independence of
Mesopotamia and Syria. They however, claimed mandates for the administration of Syria and
Mesopotamia. At this time, Palestine was made up of the Ottoman administrative districts of
Southern Syria.

France had decided to directly rule Syria and as such took the necessary action to implement the
French Mandate of Syria before the Council of the League of Nations had agreed to the terms of
the mandate. In June 1920, France issued an ultimatum and militarily intervened in the Battle of
Maysalun. In August of the same year, the native Arab government was unseated and King
Faisal removed from Damascus. Also, Great Britain founded a mandatory regime in Palestine and appointed a High Commissioner. Britain did this without first obtaining approval from the Council of the League of Nations, and not just that, but also failed to obtain the formal cession of the territory from Turkey the previous sovereign. These actions largely seemed at odds with earlier engagements with the Arabs described in earlier sections and showed these territories were largely viewed as conquests/prizes of war. A development that greatly displeased the Arab population and their leaders.

2.1.7 Release of Confidential Archives on Palestine

Speaking in the House of Lords on the 27th of March 1923, Lord Grey who had been the Foreign Secretary during the McMahon-Hussein negotiations declared that he had real doubts about the validity of the British Government’s interpretation of the pledges, which he, during his time as Foreign Secretary in 1915, had caused to be given to the Sharif, Hussein. He asked that all classified engagements that involved Palestine be declassified and made available to the public. A lot of important documents in the National Archives were thereafter released and published. Some of the documents included various assurances of Arab independence provided by Secretary of War, Lord Kitchener, the Viceroy of India, and others in the War Cabinet. On the 5th of December 1918, minutes from a Cabinet Eastern Committee meeting, which was chaired by Lord Curzon (1859-1925) who was the Viceroy of India and the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, talked about diverse issues on Palestine. These minutes throw light on the inclusion of Palestine in the agreement with Hussein. According to the minutes Lord Curzon elucidated:

“The Palestine position is this. If we deal with our commitments, there is first the general pledge to Hussein in October 1915, under which Palestine was included in the areas as to which Great Britain pledged itself that they should be Arab and independent in the future ... Great Britain and France – Italy subsequently agreeing—committed themselves to an international administration of Palestine in consultation with Russia, who was an ally at
that time ... A new feature was brought into the case in November 1917, when Mr Balfour, with the authority of the War Cabinet, issued his famous declaration to the Zionists that Palestine 'should be the national home of the Jewish people, but that nothing should be done—and this, of course, was a most important proviso—to prejudice the civil and religious rights of the existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine. Those, as far as I know, are the only actual engagements into which we entered with regard to Palestine.’\(^{33}\)

The Times of London on 17\(^{th}\) of April 1964, published extracts from a secret document that had been prepared by the Political Intelligence Department of the British Foreign Office for the British delegation to the Paris peace conference. The reference made to Palestine said:

“With regard to Palestine, H.M.G. are committed by Sir Henry McMahon's letter to the Sherif on October 24, 1915, to its inclusion in the boundaries of Arab independence ... but they have stated their policy regarding the Palestine Holy Place and Zionist colonization in their message to him of January 4, 1918.”\(^{34}\)

Yet another document for submission to the peace conference was a draft statement, which was never submitted. It noted that, “The whole of Palestine ... lies within the limits which H.M.G. have pledged themselves to Sherif Hussein that they will recognize and uphold the independence of the Arabs”\(^{35}\)

\subsection*{2.1.8 The Consequences of the Agreement}

The Sykes-Picot Agreement has left various consequences in its wake. Many view the Agreement as a turning point with regards to the relations between the West and Arab world. This is due to the fact that the agreement came to contradict all promises made to the Arabs.\(^{36}\)

The Inter-Allied San Remo Conference of 19-26 April 1920 and the ratification of the resulting League of Nations mandates by the Council of the League of Nations on the 24th of July 1922 reaffirmed the principal terms of the agreement. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)
states that one of the goals of its insurgency is to reverse the effects of the Sykes-Picot Agreement. A jihadist from the ISIL warned in the video called End of Sykes-Picot, “this is not the first border we will break, we will break other borders.” In a July 2014 speech by the leader of ISIL, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi at the Great Mosque of al-Nuri in Mosul, he vowed, “this blessed advance will not stop until we hit the last nail in the coffin of the Sykes-Picot conspiracy.” It has been used as an example of the unreliability of the West in order to galvanize support for and recruit Islamic Fundamentalists bent on restructuring the modern boundaries that exist in the Middle East.

Christophe Neff, in July 2014 wrote that the geographical architecture founded by the Sykes-Picot Agreement has disappeared and with it the relative protection of religious and ethnic minorities in the Middle East. Christophe further claimed in the summer of 2014 that Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant has in some way restructured the geographical structure of the Middle East particularly in Syria and Iraq.

2.2 The Creation of Israel

Israel’s history embodies the history of the Jews in the Land of Israel, including the history of the modern State of Israel. It is located around the site of the ancient kingdoms of Israel and Judah. These ancient kingdoms were also a part of what is known today as the West Bank. The land contains sites that are sacred to various faiths such as Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Baha’i and Druze. Even though this territory has been dominated by various empires and has been home to a number of different ethnicities, it was predominantly Jewish until the 3rd century.
After the 3rd century, the area became largely Christian and then changed to have a larger Muslim population some centuries later following the 7th century Muslim conquest of Syria till the middle of the 20th century. It was a main source of conflict between Christians and Muslims between 1096 and 1291 known as the Crusades, and also from the end of the Crusades up until the British conquest in 1917. It was also ruled as part of the Syrian provinces of the Mamluke Sultanate of Egypt and later, the Ottoman Empire from 1517.

The persecution of the Jews in the late 19th century, especially in Europe, resulted in the establishment of the Zionist movement. Following the Balfour Declaration during World War I, the British conquest of Syria, and the establishment of the Mandate of Palestine, the Jewish immigration to the Land of Israel increased and brought about Arab-Jewish tensions and a clash of the Arab and Jewish nationalist movements. Following the independence of Israel in 1948, there has been an influx of huge throngs of Jewish migrants from Europe and other predominantly Muslim countries to Israel. This has resulted in Arabs being forced to leave Israel and contributed to the extensive Arab-Israeli conflict.42

The United States since the 1970s has been the foremost ally of Israel. Israel has signed numerous treaties all with the aim of bringing peace to the region especially between itself and Palestine. Treaties such as the 1979 Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty was signed based on the Camp David Accord, the 1993 Oslo 1 Accord with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the 1994 Israel-Jordan Treaty of Peace. Despite all efforts made to bring about peace between Israel and the Palestinians, the majority of whom live in Israel or in Israeli-occupied territories, the conflict remains a major factor in Israeli and international economics, political and social life.
The following sections look at the historical background and various issues surrounding the establishment of the Jewish state of Israel in more detail.

2.2.1 Arab Rule in Israel in the Middle Ages (636 – 1099)

According to Muslim tradition, Muhammad in 620 was taken on a spiritual journey from Mecca to the “farthest mosque”, whose location has been considered by many to be the Temple of Mount. It is said that Muhammad returned the same night. The Arabs conquered Palaestina Prima and renamed it Jund Filastin from 634-636. This ended the Byzantine ban on Jews living in Jerusalem. Islam came to replace Christianity over the next few centuries as the major religion of the region. From 636 up until the start of the Crusades, Jund Filastin was ruled by Rashidun Caliphs based in Medinah, then by Umayyad Caliphs based in Damascus and there after the Abbasid Caliphs who were based in Baghdad. An Umayyad Caliph, Abd al-Malik (685-705) in 691 constructed the Dome of the Rock shrine on the Temple Mount. It is considered by the Jews to contain the Foundation Stone, which is the holiest site in Judaism. Another building, the Al-Aqsa Mosque, was also built on the Temple Mount in 705. The claim to Holy lands and sites by both Jews, Christians Muslims has also been a source of conflict between them.

2.2.2 The Rule of the Crusaders and Ayyubid (1099-1291)

The first crusaders in 1099 took Jerusalem and created a Catholic Kingdom, which was known as the Kingdom of Jerusalem. During the conquest, Jews and Muslims were indiscriminately murdered or sold into slavery. Ashkenazi orthodox Jews till date recite a prayer in memory of those who died and of the destruction caused by the crusaders.
The Crusaders were defeated in the Battle of Hattin by the Ayyubid Sultan Saladin in 1187. They took most of the former Kingdom of Jerusalem and Jerusalem. There were several invasions, which took place after the Ayyubid dynasty. From 1260 to 1291 the area became the frontier between the Mongol invaders who were allies to the crusaders and the Mamluks of Egypt. The consequences of the conflicts impoverished the country and drastically reduced the population. Sultan Qutuz of Egypt eventually defeated the Mongols in the Battle of Ain Jalut and his successor Baibars ultimately eliminated the last Crusader Kingdom of Acre in 1291, thereby ending the Crusades.  

The dislike for the West and their religion (Catholicism) can also be traced from the period of their invasion of Jerusalem and the bondage and murder of both Jews and Muslims suffered during this period.

2.2.3 Palestine and the British Mandate

The British rule of Palestine, and also the Balfour Declaration, were confirmed in 1922 by the League of Nations and came into effect in 1923. The Palestinian boundaries before this included modern Jordan, which was removed from the territory a few years later by Churchill. The United States and Britain signed a treaty in which the United States endorsed the terms of the mandate. 40,000 Jews arrived in Palestine between 1919 and 1923. These Jews were mostly escaping the post revolutionary chaos in Russia which saw over 100,000 Jews massacred during this period in Russia and Ukraine.  

The victory of the French over the Arab Kingdom of Syria and the Balfour Declaration led to the
formation of Palestinian Nationalism and Arab rioting in 1920 and 1921. In response to this, the British authorities imposed immigration quotas for Jews. The Jewish Agency issued the British entry permits and distributed funds donated by Jews Abroad. During the period of internal wars, the British, upholding the terms of the Mandate, refused the principle of majority rule or any other measure that would give the Arabs who were the majority compared to the Jews, control over Palestinian land.

2.2.4 The White Paper and the Arab Revolt

Major contributing factors which led to the 1936-1939 Arab revolt in Palestine are the Nazi propaganda and the Jewish immigration. The revolt was a nationalist uprising aimed at ending British rule. Ben-Gurion who was the head of the Jewish Agency, responded to the Arab Revolt with a policy of “Havlagah”- self-restraint and a refusal to be provoked by Arab attacks in order to prevent polarization. The Peel Commission (1936-1937) was the response of the British to the revolt. This was a public inquiry that recommended that an exclusively Jewish territory be created in the Galilee and western coast, which included the population transfer of 225,000 Arabs; the rest becoming an exclusive Arab area. Chaim Weizmann and David Ben-Gurion, who were the two main Jewish leaders, had convinced the Zionist Congress to approve unequivocally the Peel recommendations as a basis for future negotiations. However, the Palestinian Arab leadership immediately rejected the plan and the revolt was renewed. This caused the British to appease the Arabs, and to abandon the plan as unworkable.

The White Paper of 1939, recommended that an independent Palestine, governed jointly by
Arabs and the Jews, be established within 10 years. It agreed that 75,000 Jewish immigrants be allowed into Palestine over the period of 1940-1944, after which migration would require Arab approval. Both Jewish and Arab leadership rejected the White Paper. The British High Commissioner for Palestine issued an edict that banned Jews from purchasing land in 95% of Palestine.\(^{51}\)

According to Henry Cattan, on the 29 of November 1947, the United Nations general assembly adopted a resolution for the creation of Arab and Jewish states in Palestine and for the internationalization of Jerusalem. After the Mandate was terminated, the Jews claimed a Jewish state under the name of Israel however; no Arab state was formed because the Arabs were opposed to the partitioning of Palestine.\(^{52}\)

The creation of a Jewish state proved to be a contentious issue right from when it was first suggested. The British colonial government faced with agitations from both the Arab and Jewish populations were forced to maintain a careful balancing act of appeasement in order to avoid any confrontations.

### 2.2.5 Legal Issues surrounding the State of Israel

The Geneva Conventions and other international treaties recognize that land; a) conquered in the course of a war; and b) the disposition of which is unresolved through subsequent peace treaties is "occupied" and subject to international laws of war and international humanitarian law. This includes special protection of individuals in those territories, limitations on the use of land in those territories, and access by international relief agencies. The following sections look at Israel’s actions in the light of these conventions and the treatment of the Arab population in
Palestine. It looks at Israel’s occupation of occupied territory, the building of settlements and the humanitarian conditions that Palestinians face as a result.

2.2.6 Status of Jerusalem under International Law

Recognizing the controversial nature of sovereignty over Jerusalem, UNSCOP recommended that the city be placed under United Nations administration in the partition plan. This was approved by the General Assembly in November 1947, accepted by the Jews and rejected by the Arabs. However, the 1948-1949 war resulted in Israel occupying the western portion of the city. Israel made Jerusalem its capital in 1950, establishing governmental offices in areas it controlled. Soon afterwards in 1950, Jordan annexed the eastern part along with the remainder of the West Bank.

After the 1967 war, Israel put the parts of Jerusalem that had been captured during the war under its jurisdiction and civilian administration, establishing new municipal borders. Arguing that this did not amount to annexation at the time, subsequent legal actions have been interpreted as consistent with an annexation.

On July 30, 1980, the Knesset passed a basic law making "Jerusalem, complete and united…the capital of Israel." Since then Israel has extended the municipal boundaries several times.

On October 6, 2002, Yasser Arafat signed the Palestinian Legislative Council’s law making Al Quds "the eternal capital of Palestine." International bodies such as the United Nations have condemned Israel's Basic Law concerning Jerusalem as a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention and therefore hold that the establishment of the city as Israel's capital is against
international law. Consequently, countries have established embassies to Israel's government outside of Jerusalem. Similarly, missions to the Palestinian National Authority are at the insistence of Israel's government located outside of Jerusalem.

### 2.2.7 International Law and Israeli Settlements

Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention states in paragraph 1:

*Individual or mass forcible transfers, as well as deportations of protected persons from occupied territory to the territory of the Occupying Power or to that of any other country, occupied or not, are prohibited, regardless of their motive.* It also states in paragraph 6,

*The Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.*

Although the International laws governing the occupation of territories have been breached by Israel, the Israelis are adamant about the fact that the land being fought over belongs to the Palestinians. For instance, the West bank, which was given to the Arab state under the United Nations Partition plan of 1947 was occupied after the 1948 war by Trans-Jordan. Trans-Jordan annexed the West Bank, which was recognized by the United Kingdom and Pakistan only. However, in 1967, Israeli military brought West Bank under its administration. King Hussein of Jordan on the 31 of July 1988 gave all Jordanian claims to the West Bank to the PLO. Israel however began to build the Israeli West Bank barrier within the West Bank. This barrier, which was constructed, separated Israel and many of its settlements as well as a huge number of Palestinians from what was left of the West Bank. The international Court of Justice in 2004 issued an advisory opinion, which stated that the barrier violates international law. It stated,
“Israel cannot rely on the right to self-defense or on a state of necessity in order to preclude the
wrongfulness of the construction of the wall.” However, Israel’s Prime Minister at the time,
Ehud Barak justified the construction of the wall stating that it is “essential to the Palestinian
nation in order to foster its national identity and independence without being dependent on the
State of Israel.” The barrier has caused restricted access to water sources and has had an
economic effect on the people and violating the freedom of Palestinians. In a United Nations
report in 2005, the UN stated that it not easy to overstate the impact that the barrier has had on
the humanitarian rights of the Palestinians living there. Communities within the West Bank have
been separated as well as people’s access to religious and cultural amenities and services. The
area is currently home to about 49,400 West Bank Palestinians living in 38 towns and villages.
The support that Israel gets from the United States regarding their territorial issues with Palestine
makes it easy for them to get away with occupying these lands. Palestine naturally retaliates. The
backing that the United States gives to Israel has become a source of outrage and a reason for
militant uprising in the Middle East. According to Jeremy M. Sharp, Israel benefits from being
the largest cumulative recipient of American foreign assistance since WWII. The U.S has
provided $124.3 billion in bilateral assistance. The bilateral aid is in the form of military aid and
economic assistance. Strong support in the United States Congress has resulted in Israel
receiving benefits not available to any other country.

2.3 The Iranian Revolution
The Shah(king), Muhammad Reza Pahlavi at the age of 21 became King in 1941. He became an
absolute monarch after the overthrow of the Mossadegh regime with the help of the United
States. The support given by the United States was returned in kind by the signing of agreements
with an oil consortium. Pahlavi’s ties with the United States and the presence of Americans in the country was greatly disliked by many Iranians. The Iranian citizens saw the United States as taking the place of the British. Pahlavi owned huge scores of land together with the Shia Clerical establishment. The gap between the rich and the poor in Iran between 1953 and 1963 had widened. However, during the reign of Pahlavi, the influence and power of the Shia scholars diminished while the monarchy formed alliances with secularists, which was in conflict with the practice of Islam which is against the use/practice of secular items/activities such as alcohol, tobacco, watching of movies, wearing of foreign clothing and gambling. The discontent towards the actions of Pahlavi led to the formation of an underground group known as the Fedaiyan-e Islam. This group tried to assassinate the Shah’s prime minister but failed. The group was repressed by the Shah and had some of its members executed. Among those who were displeased with the Shah was a cleric named Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. His discontent was also with the barring of clerics from acting as judges in state courts by Pahlavi’s father in 1936.

The discontentment worsened when in 1960, Pahlavi gave himself the authority to initiate legislation. After Pahlavi overthrew the Mossadegh regime, he began efforts to socially and economically modernize Iran. However, his reforms were vehemently opposed by some clerics including Ayatollah Khomeini. Ayatollah Khomeini issued a fatwa (religious edict) against the reforms. The upheaval began when the Shah fearing the opposition attacked theological students in the holy city of Qom in 1963. The students were protesting against the opening of a liquor store. Students in the city of Tabriz who caught wind of what was happening in Qom also took to the streets. In a speech he gave to honor those who were killed during the protests in Tabriz and Qom, the Ayatollah Khomeini called the Shah’s rule tyrannical. Many Iranians hailed
Ayatollah Khomeini as an anti-Shah hero. This attracted the attention of the government and the Ayatollah Khomeini was arrested on June 5, 1963. His arrest sparked anti-government riots and demonstrations in various cities in Iran. However, within two days the rioting was crushed with the arrest of several rioters and the death of thousands as estimated by a Western academic in Iran. Ayatollah Khomeini was sent into exile where he settled in a Shiite community in the south of Iraq. Although in exile, Ayatollah Khomeini continued his attacks on the Shah. He described the “King of Kings” used by the Shah Pahlavi as “the most hated of titles in the sight of God.” He said “Monarchy was shameful, disgraceful and reactionary.”

The tyrannical rule of Pahlavi became so much that President Jimmy Carter after becoming president of the United States in 1977, suggested that Iran improves its human rights record otherwise aid from the US, which included military assistance, would be terminated. The Shah complied by releasing a good number of political prisoners. This intervention came a little too late as protests continued. The unexplained death of Ayatollah’s son, Mustapha, spurred further protests and calls for the death of the Shah. Although the Shah tried to contain the riots and protests it was a little too late. The atrocities committed by his government had reached its tipping point. In exile, Ayatollah Khomeini continued to attack the Shah by calling for people to stop working and helping get people ready to overthrow the Shah. The Shah retaliated by managing to expel Ayatollah Khomeini from Iraq, which was under the rule of Saddam Hussein. Ayatollah Khomeini travelled to Paris where he had room to freely operate. The demonstrations in Iran continued with workers going on strike. Calls for better wages, the end of martial law and the dissolution of the SAVAK (Shah’s security agency), which was a special task force charged with committing all the atrocities against those who opposed the Shah. The Shah who did not want to let go of power was faced with reality and in 1979 he handed over to a new government led by an old
opponent, the head of the dissident National Front, Shahpour Bakhtiar. The Shah and his family left for Egypt in the same year. From exile in France, Khomeini spoke against the Prime Minister Bakhtiar for accepting an appointment as head of the new government, succeeding the Shah. Khomeini was bent on sabotaging Bakhtiar’s government. He called on his followers to go against Bakhtiar’s government. Despite Ayatollah’s actions, Bakhtiar allowed for his return from exile. In 1979, on February 1st, Ayatollah Khomeini returned to Iran. Although Bakhtiar tried to bring some peace and order in Iran by freeing political prisoners, easing up on the martial law, ordering the SAVAK to be dissolved and requesting three months to be able to hold elections, Ayatollah Khomeini did not collaborate with him. Ayatollah Khomeini labeled Bakhtiar a traitor for being allied with the Shah and advocated for an end to the monarchy in Iran. In August 1991, Bakhtiar and his secretary Soroush Katibeh were murdered after he fled to Paris. He was succeeded by Mahdi Bazargan but that was very short lived as followers of Khomeini took over the streets of Iran forcing numerous Americans to return home in fear for their safety. Ayatollah Khomeini gained many allies both clerics and civilians. Ayatollah Khomeini and his allies wanted a judiciary government, which was governed by Islamic law (Sharia). This had never been heard of in the history of Islam. Noah Feldman of Harvard University wrote that “scholars had traditionally functioned as a balance against the executive authority of the ruler and now the scholars for the first time actually were the ruling class.” Feldman wrote of a structure called the Council of Guardians, scholars who would “review all legislation for its Islamic content” and eventually “play a key role in vetting candidates for office and even selecting a new supreme leader after Ayatollah Khomeini’s death.” Ayatollah Khomeini formed an Islamic republic. On the 4th of November 1979, students seized the US embassy in Tehran which sent a symbolic message to the West of how the new leaders in Iran would not take kindly to any interference.
from the West. American hostages were taken and a demand for the release of an Iranian Shah in exchange for the hostages was made. Attempts by America to rescue the hostages failed and the Shah died. New negotiations for the hostages began and Iran agreed to release the hostages in exchange for $8 billion in frozen assets and the lifting of trade sanctions by the United States. 69

According to Kenneth R. Timmerman, the “Islamic revolution in Iran upset the entire strategic equation in the region. America’s principal ally in the Persian Gulf, the Shah, was swept aside overnight, and no one else on the horizon could replace him as the guarantor of U.S interests in the region.” 70 Ayatollah Khomeini and the Shia clerics reveled in the victory of what they saw as the return to Islamic fundamentalism. The wave of the revolution began to spread in the Middle East. Yasser Arafat who was PLO (Palestinian Liberation Organization) chairman was the first foreign dignitary to visit Ayatollah Khomeini in 1979. Libya’s Gaddafi drew inspiration from and was supportive of the Iranian Islamic revolution. At the beginning of 1980, the Mujahadeen, an Islamist militant group in Afghanistan were fighting Russian forces termed to be atheist. However in Iraq, Saddam Hussein who was afraid of the Iranian influence reaching his country and destabilizing his secular but strict Sunni rule started a war with Iran in 1980 covered in the section below. 71 The attacks on several western installations particularly diplomatic buildings protected by international conventions during the Iranian revolution are indicative of the deep seated resentment of the West by the local populations and Islamic Clerics who believed the West was negatively influencing their way of life in order to secure access to crucial resources such as Oil.
2.3.1 The Iran-Iraq War

The Iran–Iraq War was an armed conflict between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Republic of Iraq lasting from September 1980 to August 1988, making it the 20th century's longest conventional war. It was initially referred to in English as the Gulf War prior to the Persian Gulf War of the early 1990s.

The Iran–Iraq War began when Iraq invaded Iran via air and land on 22 September 1980. It followed a long history of border disputes, and was motivated by fears that the Iranian Revolution in 1979 would inspire insurgency among Iraq's long-suppressed Shia majority, as well as Iraq's desire to replace Iran as the dominant Persian Gulf state. Although Iraq hoped to take advantage of Iran's revolutionary chaos and attacked without formal warning, it made only limited progress into Iran and was quickly repelled; Iran regained virtually all lost territory by June 1982. For the next six years, Iran was on the offensive. A number of proxy forces participated in the war, most notably the Iranian Mujahedin-e-Khalq siding with Ba’athist Iraq and Iraqi Kurdish militias of the Kurdistan Democratic Party and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan siding with Iran—all suffering major blows by the end of the conflict. Despite calls for a ceasefire by the United Nations Security Council, hostilities continued until 20 August 1988. The war finally ended with Resolution 598, a U.N.-brokered ceasefire that was accepted by both sides.

America became hostile to Iran and supportive of Saddam Hussein’s fight against the Iranian influence. America proceeded to support Iraq with materials and started friendly relations with Saddam Hussein. The support came in the form of several billion dollars’ worth of economic
aid, the sale of dual-use technology, non-U.S. origin weaponry, military intelligence, Special Operations training and direct involvement in warfare against Iran. Devils call Saddam Hussein also allowed the CIA to open an office in Baghdad. Zbigniew Brzezinski, National security Advisor to President Jimmy Carter, “began to look more favorably towards Saddam Hussein as a potential counterweight to the Ayatollah Khomeini and as a force to contain Soviet expansion in the region.” In October 1989, President George Bush Snr. signed National Security Directive 26, which begins, "Access to Persian Gulf oil and the security of key friendly states in the area are vital to U.S. national security." With respect to Iraq, the directive stated, "Normal relations between the United States and Iraq would serve our longer term interests and promote stability in both the Persian Gulf and the Middle East.” Relations with Saddam Hussein however turned sour over time and following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attack on the US, Iraq was invaded and defeated by the US in 2003.

2.3.2 The Overthrow of Saddam Hussein

The United States especially, viewed Saddam as a bellicose tyrant who was a threat to the stability of the region. After the September 11 2001 attacks, Russia began to tell the United States that Iraq was preparing terrorist attacks against the United States. In his January 2002 state of the union address to Congress, President George W. Bush spoke of an “axis of evil” consisting of Iran, North Korea, and Iraq. Moreover, Bush announced that he would possibly take action to topple the Iraqi government, because of the threat posed by its alleged possession of weapons of mass destruction. Bush stated "The Iraqi regime has plotted to develop anthrax, nerve gas and nuclear weapons for over a decade ... Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility toward America and to support terror.”
After the passing of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1141, which demanded that Iraq give "immediate, unconditional and active cooperation" with UN and IAEA inspections. Saddam allowed U.N. weapons inspectors led by Hans Blix to return to Iraq. During the renewed inspections beginning in November 2002, Blix found no stockpiles of WMD and noted "proactive" but not always the "immediate" Iraqi cooperation as called for by UN Security Council Resolution 1141. With war still looming on 24 February 2003, Saddam Hussein took part in an interview with CBS News reporter Dan Rather. Talking for more than three hours, he denied possessing any weapons of mass destruction, or any other weapons prohibited by U.N guidelines. He also expressed a wish to have a live televised debate with George W. Bush, which was declined. It was his first interview with a U.S. reporter in over a decade. CBS aired the taped interview later that week. Saddam Hussein later told an FBI interviewer that he once left open the possibility that Iraq possessed weapons of mass destruction in order to appear strong against Iran.

The Iraqi government and military collapsed within three weeks of the beginning of the U.S.-led 2003 invasion of Iraq on 20 March. By the beginning of April, U.S.-led forces occupied much of Iraq. The resistance of the much-weakened Iraqi Army either crumbled or shifted to guerrilla tactics, and it appeared that Saddam had lost control of Iraq. He was last seen in a video, which purported to show him in the Baghdad suburbs surrounded by supporters. When Baghdad fell to U.S-led forces on 9 April, marked symbolically by the toppling of his statue by iconoclasts, Saddam was nowhere to be found.

The spectacular turn from supporting the Saddam Hussein regime during the Iran-Iraq War to
becoming hostile towards it after Iraq defied the US in invading Kuwait and sparking the Gulf War, further represented to most Arabs the duplicity and unending interference of Western States in the affairs of the predominantly Islamic middle East region.

2.4 The Re-Emergence of Religion in World Politics in the Post-Cold War Era

The importance of religion to world politics according to Falk has always been a controversial subject until after the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Centre. The Post-Cold War period saw Islam emerge as a great threat to the kind of world order that the West was advocating for. The Western world order hinged on a domestic governance model of a strong private sector economy and constitutionalism. Government institutions were to become more facilitative in their role particularly with regards to the uninterrupted operations of the world economy.

There are different views on religion being important in world religion before and after the Cold War. Governments took the approach of looking at their future based on human rights and liberal values as a way to boost their economies. This approach was thought to be the best way to achieve development and prosperity. This chosen path of governments did not face any resistance from Marxist/Leninist ideology or even by states dominated by nuclear super power. Falk states that following the fall of the Soviet Union, the acceptance of liberal views by the states that took over and the alarming rate at which capitalism in China spread and chalked successes during the 90s appeared to confirm the historical weight of a post Marxist/Leninist material approach to world politics. As liberal democracy was considered as not being a source of conflict in world politics and also recognized and accepted as a standard of governance by
states and governments, religion may seem to have taken the back seat in the affairs of world politics. However, the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11, 2001 again brought religion to the fore. Falk raises the argument that “in retrospect, it is evident that such an outlook was a mixture of wishful thinking and blinkered perception. He states that, there were clear signs which were ignored even before the curtain was pulled on the Cold War, which pointed out that the western standards which are based on democratic governance, the rule of law, and human rights were not universally acceptable, especially in countries of the south. The Iranian Revolution in 1978-79 against the Shah’s White Revolution was one sign of trouble. The emergence on the world stage of Ayatollah Khomeini suggested the potency of another way of envisioning governance and human destiny that rested on traditional values and the primacy of religious leaders and institutions in shaping the society. Beyond this, Khomeini enunciated what amounted to a declaration of war against the United States and its worldview, calling America “the Great Satan.”

According to Falk, Ayatollah Khomeini managed to have his message heard by some of the Islamic world. His message also incited radical Islamic youth towards the end of 1979 to seize the American embassy in Tehran, shaking up secular leaders in the Middle East and beyond. This brought about a perceived notion that political Islam saw America as its prime enemy. The two main goals of the revolution in Iran was first to make Islam the structure by which the state’s domestic affairs was governed and secondly, to define the past conditions which made reference to the struggle against American-led globalization by post-colonial third world countries. There were other similar events or circumstances during this time such as China’s anti metaphysical values being challenged by the Fulan Gong religious movement and also by the Uigur which was a Muslim separatist movement in Xinjiang province that was looking to build an independent East Turkistan and that was also alleged to have close ties with

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Al Qaeda and its leader Osama bin Laden. Other countries such as Pakistan, Turkey, Russia, the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia, according to Falk, had extremist opposition and separatist movements, which were inspired by Islam and posed a core challenge to public order. The perception of Islam and the hatred that Osama bin Laden had for Jews and Americans made the grievous acts of terrorism on his part seem like it was based on religion which to some extent was inevitable because those who committed the terrorist attacks were Muslim militants who were ready to give up their lives through these acts of terrorism. The United States government has been good at making it known that the enemy they are fighting is not Islam but terrorism and that Muslims and Arab Americans should not be discriminated against.\(^9^2\) Osama bin Laden also during this time criticized the U.S for its violation of the most scared Islamic sites, its continuous sanctions against Iran and its policies towards Palestine. This made the risk of engaging in a war of civilization and the importance of religion to it all the more evident. Unfortunately today, the world does not see the importance of religion to world politics. There are some who view religion as extreme and even alluding to terrorism when it goes of its role as relating to matters of personal faith and is brought into the public domain especially into governance. There are others who have opposing views when it comes to religion in governance. They believe that religion is important to governance because it helps to keep its integrity. Another viewpoint of religion is that it looks at world politics differently. It puts forward the argument that all great religions have two main tendencies, which make up their traditions. First of which is to be universalistic and tolerant towards fundamentalists and secondly to be persistent in its insistence on the existence of one true way to salvation and which if not adhered to leads to vainness and failure.\(^9^3\)
From the above, it can be deduced that two basic factors that were non-existent in the way world politics viewed during the post-Cold War period were that first of all some religions like Islam and Christianity are universal in nature an example is the Qur’an which states that “(The message of the Quran) is nothing but a reminder to the world.” Al-Qalam: 52 and the Baptism in the Holy Bible which states that “therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and Son and of the Holy Spirit” Mathew 28:19. Secondly, the exclusivist nature of these major religions, makes them adhere to their convictions on the existence of a true path to salvation and that staying true to it will lead to success and good. What is worrying about these religions that vehemently uphold such views is the problem of their tolerance towards those who have opposing views to theirs.
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CHAPTER THREE
THE WEST AND ISLAMIC RELATIONS AND THE PERCEPTION OF ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISM

3.0 Introduction

This chapter seeks to bring out what Islamic fundamentalism is and why it has been perceived by the west as pertaining to all of Islam. We will look at what Islamic fundamentalism is said to be, that is, its definition and then delve into the fundamental cause of fundamentalism and perceptions from both the Islamic world and the West such as the Israeli-Palestine conflict, al-Qaeda and September 11, political violence and Islam, Libya after the Arab Spring and U.S drone policy, United States policy against Islam, the Holy war, the narrative of intercultural confrontation of Islam and the West and Islamic fundamentalism and fundamental cultural differences.

3.1 What is Islamic Fundamentalism?

According to Sheik Usman Braimah Bare, fundamentalism in actual fact is not a bad thing. To him if you are a fundamentalist it means you are upholding the code of belief of your religion and there is nothing wrong with that. However, he argues that there is a difference between a fundamentalist and an extremist. He explains that with extremism, one goes beyond the necessary requirements of his religion.¹ According to Sheik Hussein Bagnya, the world has an interesting way of playing with terminologies. He states that the suffixes of extremism and terrorism means that one is practicing one thing or another to the very core of its understanding. For example, there is nothing wrong with a Muslim who will go to the farthest extreme to practice their faith if, indeed, the extreme meaning of the faith represents the core principles of

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the religion. Now the main issue for him is how extremism has been defines particularly by non-Muslims. Non-Muslims view Muslims that practice the principles of the faith to its very extreme as extremist or in very extreme cases terrorists because the non-Muslims do not have a true understanding of Islam. To him, terrorism when it comes to Islam is when a group of Muslims have an agenda particularly against a principle that is anti-Islam and would want to take up arms to liberate themselves from these principles. Such Muslims are labeled as terrorists. Islam’s core understanding is far from terrorism. Anything that represents fear, war and violence does not represent Islam. This also applies to extremism. Islam teaches its followers to be moderate in everything. Islam is a religion that stands in between issues. That is, Islam is not too extreme and not too lenient either.\(^2\) Also according to Dr. Sahmudeen, a lot of people use the words extremism and terrorism interchangeably. However, Islam does not condone extremism or terrorism. He further goes on to say that those (Muslims) who engage in extremism or terrorism are ignorant of the Islamic teachings. Those who engage in these acts are fully aware that it has nothing to do with Islam and everything to do with politics. It is also the misinterpretation of the verses in the Qur’an. One has to be well versed in the teachings of Qur’an and in Arabic to fully grasp the meanings of the verses.\(^3\)

### 3.2 Israeli-Palestinian Conflicts

A contributing factor that influenced Islam in World politics is the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The conflict between the Jews and Palestinian Arabs is still an ongoing phenomenon, which started around the turn of the twentieth century. The cause of the conflict between the two cannot mainly be based on religion although both have different religions. The Palestinians are both Christians and Muslims and Israelis being Jews. The conflict is as a result of the struggle over
land. The area under dispute was known worldwide as Palestine before 1948. However, after the 1948-1949 war, this area or land was divided into three parts namely the state of Israel, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. 

Although there has been a long ongoing peace process and reconciliation of Egypt with Israel and Jordan, Palestinians and Israelis have been unsuccessful in reaching a definite peace agreement. The issues remaining are of the matter of Israeli settlements, Palestinian freedom of movement, sovereignty, borders, mutual recognition, security, control of Jerusalem and finding a resolution to the refugee question. The conflict between the two is mainly over land and a solution can be reached through the application of international law. The ongoing conflict has seen a lot of roles being played by Islam. In other words, fanatic groups in Islam such as Al-Qaeda, Mujahideen, states such as Iran and Hezbollah exploit and hide behind religion to instigate and promote conflict while on the other hand, regional and international stakeholders employ the use of other mechanisms to ask for peace and stability. Jeeun states that, there are four very important players, based on five present day Islamic fundamentalist groups who play a key role in the Palestinian-Israeli crisis. They are the Palestinian Hamas, the Iranian conservatives, the Egyptian Brotherhood and the Lebanese Hezbollah. There is high-level cooperation and support among these Islamic organizations as well as non-state and state actors. Upon gaining power, the Iranian conservatives have given political support to increase the control of Egyptian Brotherhood, Hezbollah and also aided Hamas to finally seize power. Their foreign policies which are radical at best, were meant to put an end to the Israeli occupation of Palestinian territories. The conflict has generated two predictions, which are a secure cooperative bloc and strong political power, which act as a stumbling block to having peace and democracy.
in the Middle East region. Let’s get a brief history of the four actors starting with the Muslim Brotherhood and their take on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The Muslim Brotherhood is a mass movement of followers that have the belief that “Islam is the solution” and also based on the aim of instituting world order (a caliphate) based on Islamic religious law (Sharia) on the relics of Western liberalism. It was founded in 1928 by Hassan al-Banna. Their views on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is guided by its central ideological principles, transformed and shaped by historical circumstances. It does not support the right of Israel’s existence in the Middle East, their reason, based on their ideologies also stresses that its strive is to create a Palestinian state on the whole territory of “Palestine”. Since 1979, they have vehemently been against the peace treaty between Egypt and Israel and fought to put an end to it. Nonetheless, it is towing a more realistic line, according to which it is important to “examine” the peace treaty and its future will be decided in a referendum. Another reason why the Muslim Brotherhood is against Israel as political body is based on religious or Ideological sentiments: First, the claim that is attributed to the Qur’an is that it is unthinkable for a portion of the Muslim nation to be governed by non nationals (Israel). Secondly, the claim that Palestine is a “land of Islam”, and as part of the “land of Islam”, must not be ruled by foreigners and so has to be taken from them. The strong position on Israel that the Muslim Brotherhood holds has directly influenced their political relations with the various regimes of Arab countries. An example of this was when the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood decided to halt its political cooperation with the regime, boycott the parliamentary elections in 1977 and pull out of government following the signing of the peace treaty with Israel in 1994. Although the Muslim Brotherhood stresses on making their views clearly know concerning the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, it is afraid to move
away from the known policy of boycotting Israel, and most often than not has a difficult time merging its main position with its political goals. This reason is because; the Islamic worldview may isolate prospective followers who know the benefits of peace with Israel. Due to this reason, the existence of Israel, take the back row in the general scope of things that concern the movement. Emphasis has been made on a statement by the Muslim brotherhood that states that when it comes into power, the treaties that have being signed with Israel will be put to a referendum.\textsuperscript{11} The Muslim Brotherhood party has turned such self-serving statements that have been witnessed in the recent events in Egypt into a political apparatus.

Owing to the basic ideological hostility towards Israel and the support for Hamas, if the Muslim Brotherhood is able to attain influential positions in government or able to form an Islamic regime in Egypt then it will be extremely questionable if they would stick to their earlier statement above concerning a move for a referendum on the treaties with Israel.

Next is Hamas. It came from the Al–Mujamma’al-Islamic Association, which is the Gaza Strip branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. Its philosophy is based on the teachings of Hassan al-Banna. Hassan al –Banna is hailed as a role model by Hamas and his photograph is featured on its posters. It bases its preaching, educational system, welfare and mosques as well as the importance it places on them on the model of the Muslim Brotherhood.\textsuperscript{12}

Philosophical similarity between Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood is reflected in the Hamas Charter. When it comes to Israel, the charter takes a non-compromising stance, which sees the conflict it has with the Jews as a battle between Islam and the Jewish so called “infidels” and
“Palestinian problem” as an Islamic one. The charter portrays the Palestinian territory as an Islamic legacy and as such, no part of it should be given up because no one (which includes both Arabs and Muslim rulers) has the requisite mandate to do so.\(^{13}\)

There is a quotation at the beginning of the charter credited to Hassan Al-Banna that says “Israel will arise and continue to exist until Islam wipes it out, as it wiped out what went before”\(^{14}\)

In adhering to this quote in the charter, Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood is intensely involved in convoys and flotillas coming into the Gaza Strip to back Hamas. The Muslim brotherhood networks in Europe play an integral role in supporting Hamas. \(^{15}\)

Hamas also receives financial aid from the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. An interview with Issam al-Aryan a senior Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood activist in 2006 revealed the Brotherhood’s goal to give financial aid to Hamas and emphasized its commitment to support the Palestinians. It was reported by the Egyptian media that following the Operation Cast Lead, the Brotherhood established a “Gaza Strip rehabilitation fund” to raise 50 million dollars for Hamas. It is not certain as to what point the agreement was fulfilled.\(^{16}\)

An effort was made by the Egyptian government to keep the connection between Hamas and the Muslim Brotherhood to a minimum. In the bid to contain this bond between the two, he Egyptian government detained Muslim Brotherhood fundamentals believed to be holding actual financial and working contact with Hamas, and warned Hamas against making contact with the Muslim Brotherhood. It also thwarted the Muslim Brotherhood’s effort to assist Hamas during sensitive times. They were able to do this by denying the Muslim Brotherhood’s aid convoys the ability to
cross into the Gaza Strip, for example, shortly after the Operation Cast Lead. It also waged an ongoing operation to delegitimize the association between Egypt and the Gaza Strip movements, exposing them as a “conspiracy” to destabilize the region and Egypt in particular.  

Mohammed Morsi was charged by the Egyptian Supreme Court in 2013 of conspiring with Hamas during the revolution that overthrew Hosni Mubarak in 2011. The investigations carried out on Morsi claims that he collaborated with the Palestinian group to carry out “anti-state acts,” which include attacks on the prisons and police stations. During the revolution in 2011, Morsi was detained in Wadi Natroun Prison where he and lots of other inmates including hi-ranking members of the Muslim Brotherhood escaped on January 30, 2011. Morsi was accused of plotting his escape with the help of Hamas.  

Next on the list is Hezbollah. It is a militia group and a political party that first came about as a group in Lebanon following the Israeli invasion of that country in 1982. Hezbollah in Arabic means “Party of God”. It was created to fight against the Israeli occupation in Lebanon. In February 1985, Sheik Sayyid Fadlalah of Lebanon announced the official formation this resistant group (Hezbollah). Although the Israelis withdrew almost all their troops, Hezbollah was opposed to the soldiers stationed in a “security zone” in southern Lebanon. Hezbollah fought guerrilla warfare against the Israeli Defense Force (IDF), kidnapping and attacking soldiers between 1982 and 2000.  

The teachings of Ayatollah Khomeini form the bases of the philosophy of Hezbollah. Because of the closeness between Iran and Hezbollah, Iran donates an incredible amount of weapons, aids
and money to Hezbollah. Hezbollah also gains from the Syrian government as well as from religious institutions around the world. It has become a well-funded, highly organized terrorist group, advancing from a primitive group to a group with highly sophisticated weapons and missiles. The political wing of Hezbollah is very powerful in Lebanese politics. It has a wide support base among the Lebanese people but more significantly with the Shiite community. Some of the brutalities committed in the history of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict have been attributed to the group. For example, the 1980s upsurge of kidnappings of Westerners which came to be known as the Lebanese hostage crisis, the hijacking of TWA flight 847 in 1985, the 1983 suicide truck bombings of the United States embassy and the US Marine barracks in Beirut, the 1992 attack on the Israeli embassy in Argentina and other numerous attacks on Israeli civilians and soldiers.²¹

Hezbollah is now known as a terrorist organization by many countries such as the United States. The European Union (EU) put Hezbollah on its list of terrorist organizations in 2013. The group deemed this move by the EU unjust and antagonistic. The leader of the group, Hassan Nasrallah has held this position since 1992. He is characterized as a skilful and captivating leader who unwavering in his approach when it comes to Israel. He is said to be behind most of the propaganda and military operation during the withdrawal of Israel from Lebanon. His ingenuity made him very popular and helped him to make substantial gains in the Lebanese parliament. He is one of the most well-known personalities in the Arab world.²²

The elimination of the Jewish state is the main goal of Hezbollah. Israel is not recognized by any of the leaders within the group and is known to have accused fellow Arabs and the Palestinian
authority of betrayal for agreeing to move forward with the peace process. The attacks on Israel are justified by Hezbollah as retaliation for Israel unjustly occupying some of their land and for holding Lebanese citizens as prisoners. Hezbollah, like its terrorist counterpart Hamas, claim that they are not anti-Semitic but are anti-Zionist. However, they have most of the time issued statements, which reek of anti-Semitism such as conspiracy theories and Holocaust denial.23

The relationship between Hezbollah and Lebanon is far from an easy one. The group is currently the most influential political party within Lebanon. This puts Lebanon in a very precarious position because even though Lebanon denies any involvement with Hezbollah by way of support or encouragement, it has also done very little to stop them. Due to the power that Hezbollah wields in Lebanon, an attempt by the Lebanese government to reduce the influence of Hezbollah was met with strong resistance, during which Lebanese citizens were harmed although Hezbollah had promised not to harm any Lebanese citizen. In the end, Hezbollah was given veto power in the Lebanese government and controls eleven out of the thirty seats in parliament in 2008. The agreement was reached just on the brink of another civil war. Nevertheless, it is hoped by many that the friction between Hezbollah and the Lebanese government will one day take away the power that Hezbollah wields.24

In recent times, Hezbollah has been providing military support to the Syrian president, Bashar al-Assad in the civil war, which has engulfed Syria. Hezbollah, in the wake of their attacks and their support for the Assad regime has faced sanctions from the European Union (EU). Other countries such as the Netherlands, Australia, Canada, Britain and the United States had all previously blacklisted Hezbollah as a terrorist group. Lebanon, however, had requested of
Brussels not to blacklist Hezbollah with the reason being that the group is an important part of the Lebanese society.25

Iran is yet another player that needs talking about. They have made it clear, and as part of their foreign policy, that they seriously support Palestinian armed force-fighting Israel. It took responsibility for the Hamas rockets that were fired at Jerusalem and Tel Aviv during the 2012 Gaza war. This move went against their earlier foreign policy of no military support for its allies in the region so as not be labelled by the world as supporting terrorism. It, however, on this occasion, boldly came out to say that they gave Hamas military support and considered the outcome of the war as an “Iranian victory.”26

Private meetings within Hamas, which were later leaked, suggest that Iran continues to be committed to the relationship it has with Hamas although Hamas would rather not be in a relationship with Iran to their own detriment since Iran provides major support to Hamas. Iran’s reason for staying committed to its relationship with Hamas is that it is of the view that if it cuts ties with Hamas it will leave it with the unpleasant image of a Shiite state with Persian nationalism, who has its slogans of “resistance” and “support for Palestine” as a mask to hide its evils and shortcomings in the Arab world. 27

The military support that was provided to the Islamic Jihad another militant group from Iran before the March 2012 Israeli war on Gaza was according to Israeli intelligence, either at par or exceeding that of Hamas. Not too long ago, rocket attacks on Israel during the visit of President Obama of the United States to the region, showed the inability of Hamas to keep Gaza under its control.
control. Hamas denied any involvement in the attacks; as such an attack was not in their favor, as it will trigger a fierce counter attack from Israel. Various Palestinian factions also denied any involvement in the attacks. According to Adnan, the timing of the attack also coincided with threats from Ayatollah Khomeini the supreme leader of Iran to destroy the Israeli city, Tel Aviv. 

In conclusion, the Palestine-Israeli conflict has more often than not been presented as a conflict between the Arabs and Israel. This has metamorphosed its initial conflict of fighting over territory to an Arab-Israeli religious conflict, which puts Muslims against the Jews. The Arab countries at war, have taken advantage of this to hide behind the Islamic religion to rally support from both Muslim and non-Muslim Arab nations against Israel. It has become apparent to others that the Palestine-Israel conflict in the Middle East is experiencing a new phase in that it is not so much about a war for territory or nationalism, it has now become a war between Islam and Judaism.

3.3 September 11, 2001 and Al-Qaeda

Al-Qaeda takes its meaning from the Arabic word which means “the base” or “the camp” therefore translating into the base or camp from which all Islamic revolutions will be fought. According to Hoffman, al-Qaeda is an international terrorist network, which was founded by Osama bin Laden. The influence that Islam has in world politics today may be looked at from a number of political activities of militant organizations like al-Qaeda. Al-Qaeda’s activities and its attack on the United States on September 11, 2001 have influenced the character of world politics today. According to Hoffman, al-Qaeda seeks to eradicate Western and especially United
States influence from Muslim countries and install fundamentalist Islamic rule.\textsuperscript{30}

Radical Islamic organizations in present times such as al-Qaeda are established around two main concepts. These notions are Jihad and salafism. According to Peter Mandaville, “the term ‘salafi’ refers to the salaf al-salih, or ‘pious ancestors’- a designation for the companions of the Prophet Muhammad and the first three generations of Muslim scholars like Imam Abu Hanifa, Malik and Imam Shafi`i. Many Islamic radicals including Osama bin Laden consider themselves as “salafis” and are influenced by the salafi teachings. Additionally, jihad is an Islamic concept that is interpreted by the salafi militants as a means to justify their violent struggle against the West.”\textsuperscript{31}

John C. Adamson on the other hand states that, the formation of al-Qaeda was to counter the possession of holy the Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem which has a deep meaning and importance in Islam because Muhammed is said to have completed his night journey from al-masjid al-haram in Mecca to al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem at this point and also to counter the economic sanctions on Iraq.\textsuperscript{32} Osama bin Laden has also accused the West for the on going Palestinian-Israeli conflict. He states that, “The creation and continuation of Israel is one of the greatest crimes, and you [the United States] are the leaders of its criminals.”\textsuperscript{33} The al-Qaeda movement has developed into several different factions over the period of time since its inception. These players have, however, played a crucial part in the philosophical or formation phase of al-Qaeda in present world affairs.\textsuperscript{34} The transnational nature of al-Qaeda makes it possible for the movement to not only work out of Pakistan and Afghanistan but from all over the world. Prominent examples are the Al-Nusra in Syria and Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) to
mention a few. After the death of Osama bin Laden in 2011, it has been said that he was succeeded by Ayman al-Zawahiri.\footnote{35}

Today, al-Qaeda is looked at as being an ideology for radical Islamists who even might not be linked to the al-Qaeda movement. Jason Burke finally states that “it is important to avoid seeing al-Qaeda as a coherent and structured terrorist organization with cells everywhere…This would be profoundly to misconceive the nature of modern Islamic militancy.”\footnote{36} Al-Qaeda can be defined as being more than just an organization; it is a well-known local brand and an ideology that has a heroic narrative to it and that has been able to couple that with an idealized version of Islamic Jihad. It has, however, become a recognized symbol and a brand for militants all over the world.\footnote{37}

Al-Qaeda has several reasons why it has attacked the West and its allies. Peter Mandaville states that, radical Islamism is defined by two categories. First of all, an idea of an Islamic political order that does not recognize the legitimacy of the modern sovereign nation-state and looks to establish a pan-Islamic state or reintroduce caliphate. Secondly, stress on the use of violent struggle (jihad) as the main or only sure method for the pursuit of political transformation.\footnote{38} The main goal behind the al-Qaeda attacks is mostly geared towards the removal of foreign soldiers from Muslim countries than the formation of an Islamic caliphate. Nevertheless, bin Laden’s 2001 statement to the world stated, “Our concern is that our umma unites either under the Words of the Book of God (Qur’an) or His Prophet (Sunnah), and that this nation should establish the righteous caliphate.”\footnote{39} Even though the establishment of the Islamic caliphate is not the driving force behind their jihad, it is reported by Al-Jazeera “Al-Aqaeda Islamic jihadist movement led
by Osama bin Laden is planning to adopt the idea of jihad against infidel governments and the liberalization of the Muslim countries of the foreign presence, or Western governments. To al-Qaeda, the removal of Western forces from the holy lands of Saudi Arabia and the whole of the Muslim world is crucial. In several statements made by Osama bin Laden, he has said that the cause for jihad is augmented by Western troops on Muslim lands, the treatment of Muslims by the Western world and the infidel (non believer) or “puppet” governments that the West has installed in the Islamic world such as Hosni Mubarak, the Saudi Monarchy, Ali Zainul Abideen bin Ali and so on.

Lawrence cited Bin Laden during his Bin Laden’s global campaign against the West saying “the greatest disaster to befall Muslims since the death of Muhammad is the occupation of Saudi Arabia, the cornerstone of the Islamic world.” Lawrence states, Osama bin Laden pointed to that the original sources of Islam in his statements to the world in order to inspire Muslims to follow the call to jihad. He relied heavily on the Qur’an and the hadith, or the sayings and doings of Muhammad from these sources. In one of his several statements to the world, he proclaimed, “Expel the Polytheists from the Arabian peninsula.” He is reported to have said, “I say that the battle isn’t between the al-Qaeda organization and the global Crusaders. Rather, the battle is between Muslims-the people of Islam and the global Crusaders.”  The occupation of western soldiers in the holy lands of Islam, even if for the sake of security, for al-Qaeda, was enough to declare a defensive jihad. In order to fully grasp Osama bin Laden’s call for jihad, one must take a look back to the first Gulf war in the early 90’s when Iraq invaded Kuwait. Immediately after winning against the world’s superpower, bin Laden sought to provide his services to protect Islam from the infidel government of Iraq. However, to his utter shock and dismay, the Saudi Arabian government turned to the United States military in the Gulf war. This provoked Osama bin Laden and led to him declaring war against the West in a 1996 message.
Osama bin Laden and several other militants considered it an act of blasphemy for non-Arabs (America) to protect the holy lands. They considered Saudi Arabia to be a symbolic and political oasis for Islamic radicals everywhere since it is the land of Mecca and the birthplace of the Prophet Muhammad. Osama bin Laden viewed the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as betraying Muslims and had compromised its reputation. A US State Department report states, “Bin Laden’s terrorism represents an extreme rejection of the increased U.S strategic and military domination of the Middle East- especially Saudi Arabia and the Gulf- that resulted from the Gulf War.” It followed from this that Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda lost its trust in the Saudi Arabian government and pointed to the Americans as the Crusaders.46

Ayman al-Zawahiri states that the three main objectives of al-Qaeda were to first overthrow corrupt regimes in the Muslim world, secondly to establish sharia in these lands, and lastly to cause significant casualties on the ‘Western Crusaders’ and get the Crusaders out of the land of Islam especially from Afghanistan, Palestine and Iraq.47 According to bin Laden, so far as the United States will be the enemy of Islam if it continues to pursues its agenda of controlling the Middle East.48 The Qur’an verse “Permission to fight (against disbelieve) is given to those (believers) who are fought against because they have been wronged; and surely, Allah is able to give them (believers) victory” (Qur’an, 22:39) was quoted by Osama bin Laden to back his statement. The militant groups such as al-Qaeda and its mujahidin and its sub organizations in the world, justify their use of violence as a way to protect their fellow Muslims. In almost every statement made by bin Laden, he stated that the United States and its allies are the true terrorists. He asserts that, the actions taken by the United States and its allies against Muslims in Palestine, Bosnia, Iraq, Afghanistan and Lebanon, just to mention a few, have led to the reactions that are
being experienced today. \textsuperscript{49}

World politics of today has been influenced by al-Qaeda by its radical view and interpretation of Islamic political order. This order rejects the validity of modern sovereign nation-state and looks to establish a transformed caliphate. It has also played a role in shaping world politics through its insistence on the use of violent struggle (jihad) as the main and only true way to pursue political transformation. It has also influenced world politics by increasing the intensity of the already existing cultural tensions between Islam and the West, which has also been added on by the United States led global war on terror. The consequence of this is the increasing tension and widespread fear in the international system.

3.4 Political Violence and Islam

Despite historical evidence to the contrary, popular notion associates Islam with violence and terrorism by scholars and the United States media. Historically, Muslims have been mostly tolerant and peaceful. Twenty years ago, nationalist and secular ideologies were far more popular than the religious ones in the Middle East and suicide terror in the name of jihad was very rare. \textsuperscript{50} However, some scholars argue that the fundamental principles of Islam include intolerant views towards nonbelievers and that Islam is inherently prone to violence. The scholars who attribute violence of Muslims to Islam essentially rely on the concept of jihad and some selective verses from the Qur’an to buttress their point. \textsuperscript{51} Laquer argues that violence is hailed in Islam if it is carried out against nonbelievers (infidels) and there is no place for them in the Islamic faith. Likewise, Pipes (2003) states that Muslims being prone to violence comes from the very nature of Islam that is the obligation of jihad. \textsuperscript{52} Jihad, which has become a highly controversial
concept, can be interpreted in different ways. A small group of fundamentalist Muslims thinks jihad justifies physical violence against “unbelievers” whereas the vast majority regards it as an internal struggle to help one be a morally better person. According to Roy (2004), jihadist Islam is a product of sociological changes. Jihad is usually understood as a collective, defense duty, but modern radicals view it as an individual permanent duty to fight against the West. Islam is also depicted as a totalitarian and politically oriented religion (Zaidise et al 2007). Islam has not been through reformation like Christianity, which separated the religious and political spheres; religiously oriented violence is attributed to the lack of secular state systems in the Muslim world (Appleby 200; Toft 2007). Toft (2007) states that in Abrahamic traditions, violent conflict is regarded as a manifestation of God’s will. These traditions tend to be adamant and urge people to sacrifice in this world to defend their faith for an eternal reward in the afterlife. So negotiating and discouraging proves futile owing to the indivisibility of religious doctrines and the promise of martyrdom. The promise of paradise to ignorant individuals by radical Islamist groups also accounts for the high numbers in terrorist attacks that involve the martyrdom. The non-differentiation of radical Muslim groups from other Muslims by some scholars has led to violence and war being always ascribed to Islam. Muslims are very diverse just like any other religion and just like other religions there are always extremists who will justify their violent actions by quoting selected portions of their Holy Book. It is observed that Islam is not the main factor in propagating civil war once the need to control other factors such as oil dependency, ethnic diversity and economic development to mention a few. Fish et al. (2010) observe Islam’s proneness to conflict by studying ample significant political violence, which occurred during 1946-2007. They came to find that there is no substantial link between the Muslim ratio living in a country and the number of deaths in political violence episodes. Toft
explains Islam’s overrepresentation in civil wars with historical (lack of Thirty Years’ War and the Peace of Westphalia in Islam), geographic (proximity of Israel, oil reserves, and Islam’s holiest sites), and particularly ideological (jihad) factors. The geographic proximity of oil reserves and Islam’s holiest sites, Western industrial states’ interest in the Middle East, and colonial experience also contributed to the rise of Islamic identity and radicalization. Finally, Toft lays emphasis on the concept of jihad to explain the prevalence of civil wars in the Muslim world and argues that violence is justified in Islam to defend the faith from nonbelievers. Toft manages to provide some historical examples to buttress her point. For example, Muslim fighters who came from Pakistan, Iran and Saudi Arabia to support the Afghan mujahedeen fight during the Soviet invasion in 1979. Nevertheless, Toft’s discoveries suffer from numerous methodological weaknesses. First of all, Toft bases her findings on just descriptive statistics that prevent any inferences from being drawn about those who spear headed the civil war. Next, she does not seem to quite speak to the possibility of false relationships through the use of multivariate statistical model. Toft also only looks at just the parts of civil wars in which Islam in someway is involved. She also does not provide enough data about the coding of religious civil wars, specifically those that are related with Islam. Toft however presents detailed information about the criteria to be coded as a civil war but on the other hand does not give any explanation about the coding of “religious civil wars” or civil in which Islam is involved. Toft states for example “… of the forty two religious civil wars fought from 1940 to 2000, one or both parties adhered to Islam in a striking thirty four cases and thirty four of the civil wars had an Islamic component.” Here, Toft fails to elaborate or explain what he means by “Islamic component’ or “adherence to Islam”. Fox in recent study puts Samuel P. Huntington’s “Clash of Civilizations” to the test and discovers some support for Huntington’s argument about Islam being susceptible
to conflict. He employs the use of the State Failure dataset to operationalize domestic conflicts between 1960 and 2004. Fox analyzes inter and intra religious conflicts in which, at least, one of the parties involved implores religion. Fox concludes that, while one civilization is found to be prone to conflict more than others, the majority of conflicts, which involve Islamic countries, are with other Muslim-majority states (not with other civilizations). He also claims that at the start of 2002, religious conflict formed the majority of conflicts that were fought. Nevertheless, his study is very basic and fails to control factors that preempt wars.

According to Sahmudeen, workings and consequences of politics is misconstrued as jihad. For example, in the Middle East, specifically Saudi Arabia, Muslims in that country feel that the Monarchs have hijacked the wealth of the country and are not allowing for a democratic change of government. Muslims try to perpetrate acts that will destabilize the country. These acts have nothing to do with ‘holy war’ or Islam; it is pure politics. In Egypt, this was evident when Muhammad Morsi was overthrown and the Muslim Brotherhood and the military fought against each other on the grounds of who has the right to rule. Same is happening in Yemen between the Houthies(minority Shiite) and the Sunnis. Because those involved in these wars are Muslims, people think that it is a Muslim war. It has nothing to do with Islam. It is just pure politics. Also, people look at and misinterpret the text of the Qur’an saying that is not lawful in Islam to have a non-Muslim occupying Muslim land so they wage war against Western (American) interests in Islamic countries. In the same vain, Muslims feel like the West (America) is waging war against Muslims, for instance, the Guantanamo Bay incident in Cuba and Iraq, is used as a reason for terrorizing the West because those who take part in these acts see the actions of the West as a war against Islam.61
In a nutshell, it is evident that domestic armed conflicts are more prevalent among Muslim majority countries as compared to other countries. However, it is impossible to have a link in the relationship between Islam and the risk of domestic conflict without regulating the connections of domestic armed conflict.

3.5 Islamic Fundamentalism and Fundamental Cultural Differences

One cannot look to the Qur’an or a religion for explanation of fundamentalism. Trying to explain the reasons behind terrorist attacks such as that of September 11 2011 in the Qur’an would be like looking for a needle in a hay stack as well as misinforming the reader. The conflict between the United States as representative of the Western World and Iraq as the representative for Islam is a major example of a politically conflicting modern world. Also, the United States being labeled as a fighter for freedom and Islam as a combatant for justice represents the battle between normative and cognitive cultures. When we talk of justice, we are referring to a normative category which shows the social rules in a society, as well as individual needs and wants. The word “just” is associated with what is meant to be “right.” When we talk of freedom, we relate it to the possibilities of the individual. The cognitive potential of an individual evolves from the identity of the human being. In so doing, we identify with freedom; the liberty to perform independent actions without interference from anyone. The concept of justice and that of freedom cannot exist without each other. Both concepts make up culture even though cultures differ in how each of these concepts is viewed. Before, cultures were more reliant on the normative part of “justice” since it was fundamental in the establishment of old religions. However, as time went on, science as a cognitive part of everyday life became an integral part of our lives. The move from normative to cognitive can be seen in our legal system where before
being banished or ostracized was considered the worst form of punishment for a crime committed, today, taking away the freedom of an individual by locking them in prison is considered punishment. In today’s globalized world it is not difficult to imagine the clash of these two concepts. On one hand, one culture is focused on personal freedom that goes across boundaries in search of growth and the discovery of science and technology while another culture on the other hand is driven by social interaction and mainly by divine justice. Therefore, the normative view of the latter has informed their perception of western countries exploiting less developed countries which in itself is unjust and but be dealt with. These cultural differences result in conflicts such as the terrorist attacks on the United States on September 11 2001 and the Iraq war.

3.6 Why Holy War?
The ‘Holy War’ which I translated as ‘Jihad’ has severally been misunderstood. The question, however, still remains; why do Islamic extremists see the need to attack other cultures? As stated above, one cannot just look to justify their actions by looking to the Qur`an for justification. Also the branding of all Muslims as being terrorist is a totally misguided notion. Everyone interprets religious text differently based on his or her understanding of it. Therefore, Muslim extremists cannot justify their violent behavior by looking at passages in the Qur`an. This section deals with the relations between Islam and other religions as stated in the Qur`an. According to Islam, the world is divided into two parts. First part is the realm of peace and the state of God and the second part, the country nonbelievers. Muslims have the duty to defend their country and help to establish the law of God in other countries as well just as other religions do. The ultimate peace can only be achieved when the whole world and its people live in one Islamic society.
important to note that Islam does not reject Christianity and Judaism since they are considered as religions from God. Being the normative culture that Islam is, it is very difficult to come to terms with the western culture as they are seen as not living according to the rules of God. Muslims believe that Christians and Jews have the duty to live by the rules of God, if not, they are categorized as nonbelievers. Capitalistic governments like the United States who according to extremists have completely abandoned the norms preached in the bible, are to them considered by the Qur’an as the ‘prime evil’. Therefore, Islamic extremists see themselves in a defensive fight against the threat of losing their own values to the West. The roots of jihad can be traced in the Qur’an. Jihad refers to an act of an individual that is ‘to endeavor oneself’ and not the misinterpreted version of a ‘holy war’. It is supposed to describe an action that is in accordance with God’s purity and his will. Jihad comprises of the inner battle against ones own desires. Conclusively, Jihad does not necessarily involve an armed battle, so drawing conclusion just by what is propagated by the media can be misleading. However, since the 1960’s, Jihad has had its way into the world of fundamentalist movements. It actually is the foundation of an armed, revolutionary battle that involves terrorist methods.

3.7 The Narrative of Intercultural Confrontation of Islam and the West

Relation between America and Muslims in the Middle East are mediated by images that Americans hold of Muslims and images that Middle Eastern Muslims hold of America. These images are embedded within narratives of which Americans and Muslims share the same theme of cultural conflict between Islam and the West. When both sides interact, the importance of their interaction is not limited to the manifestation of external appearance of political discussion or an economic transaction. The importance of the event is a function of the meaning the
Prevailing American and Middle Eastern narratives about relations between Islam and the West center on the way in which their individual civilizations have defined themselves in opposition to each other. Although the narratives are not the same with respect to their invocation of historical facts, their central themes are so similar that we may refer to them as being made up of a single ‘story’ of intercultural confrontation. Despite centuries of relations that has been defined by trade in goods and ideas as also by intermittent conflict and strife, the West and Islam’s historical and imaginative views more often than not tends to pit each other in adversarial roles. More often than not, the West and Muslims view each other as not being able to integrate. The perception that one has of the other as being an inferior shadow of the self, has promoted the dehumanizing stereotypes as well as habits of selective perception which the negative interaction are remembered while the positive ones are forgotten. The resultant views are seen in the violent excesses of some low points in Islamic and Western relations such as the mass murder of Muslim and Jewish inhabitants of Jerusalem by the Crusader army in 1099 C.E. and the recent terrorist attacks that took thousands of lives at the World Trade Center in 2001 September 11. Stories of competition between the West and Islamic civilizations derive their subject matter both from the geopolitical tensions of the present and from the politicized cultural legacies of the past.

Although the term ‘Middle East’ is of quite recent origin, it suggests a rich and varied association in what may be referred to as the ‘collective imagination’ of the West. Even though the Middle East makes up a small portion of the Muslim population in the world, Western views of the Middle East in particular the Arab part of the Middle East and of Islam are deeply woven. These associations are loaded with intense and frequently contradictory images as such
peaceful desert oases and enormous oil refineries, fabulous newfound wealth and interminable religious conflicts, luxury vehicles and camel caravans, sword-bearing Arabs in traditional Bedouin dress and military leaders in starched khakis, inarticulate veiled women and immodest belly dancers, world-changing prophets and fanatical charismatic leaders, shrouded saints in sandals and tyrants in palatial estates. A more colourful and romantic picture was shown of the Middle East during the colonial period. However, these images have been cast in a darker hue owing to the return of Islamic discourse to the international political stage since the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the hiding of the Cold War ideological rivalries in the late ‘80s.

“Although different, images are brought together by the same idea of ‘otherness’ that has haunted Europe’s relations with the Eastern Mediterranean and North Africa in the past the Muslim Middle East and Westerners are made to believe is a land of harsh extremes. They are tempted to view it as part of the world that may justifiably be considered strange and even arbitrary that is a place that runs according to unfamiliar rules that only learned historians and foreign policy experts can understand, an exception to generally held principles and expectations.

“... Western view of Muslim Middle East as a way of also defining themselves in relation to all that they seemingly aren’t, then the Middle Eastern Muslims are also capable of showing like attitude toward the West. These attitudes are usually those that are not regarded as positive such as sexual morality, crime, family life and public safety.

The Cultural differences between both the Middle Eastern Muslims and the Westerners have been exaggerated and distorted by both these parties of each other. The reality of the two parties are only remotely experienced via media and unscrupulous political discussion that mediates the experiences of the other party by highlighting extraordinary, peculiar and the alarming, with
limited interpretive perspective. The Middle East, for example, usually just scratches the surface in their reportage of American foreign policy that they feel to be conspiratorial, while the Western media also down plays the complex discourse of Muslim issues such as the rights of non-Muslims and women to a mere moderate versus radical contrast, purposefully creating the impression that the strictest and unnerving interpretations of Islamic norms and values are what widely defines who they are. Arguments from both the West and the Middle East rejects any commonalities they might share and emphasize on the preconceive notions of vastly opposing cultural values. One party sees the other as being antagonistic and domineering while the other views itself as being placed in a defensive position due to the hostile actions of the other party. Westerners and Muslims who talk about hostility between the parties usually put Islamic-Western relations within the context of the United States versus the Middle East or Muslims. This implies the pre existence of hostility between the two parties from the rise of Islam dating back to the seventh century till date. They portray a world of long standing conflict between two civilizations whose religious affiliations; historical bonds and cultural values make them unable to coexist. To further explain the supposed violence-prone nature and the existing tensions between present-day Muslim movements and America, some incidences of conflict between the two groups have been highlighted. Some of these conflicts are, the Saracens versus the Franks during the period of the Crusades, the Arab tribes versus the Byzantines in the seventh century and in recent times, the Ottoman Turks versus European empires. To back rumours regarding the precariousness of future cross-cultural relationships, conflicts between groups identified with each civilization camp are highlighted at the expense of several conflicts within the civilization.77 The apolitical, which are largely the majority in both cultural camps distrust each other after viewing repulsive raw enemy images stemming from the conflicts. This has become more and
more evident in the wake of the September 11 attacks, the two Persian Gulf wars and the ever-rising Israeli-Palestinian conflict that was as a result of breakdown of the Oslo process. This has resulted in violence being perceived as part of how things are supposed to be instead of viewing and treating it as a problem that need to be thoroughly investigated. When conflicts escalate, possible areas of compromising become non-existent and the parties involve tend to take a stance of opposed values and essences. Both their values are seen to be mutually exclusive. The hegemony of the United States over the Middle East is compared to the Crusader occupation by Militant Muslim groups and they cite Western rumours concerning “the clash of civilization” as proof of antagonistic intent.  

American doubt of Muslims in the Middle East’s capability of governing themselves after about twenty-five years since the Iranian revolution, and the Muslim distrust of America seems to be interacting in a more precarious manner than ever before and the everlasting gap between the two seems to continuously widen.  

American critics view extremist groups like al-Qaeda as proof of cultural intolerance and an unwillingness or inability to integrate into the international system by adopting Western democracy. Middle Eastern Muslims experts, on the other hand, view Al Qaeda (a militant group) as a byproduct of foreign hegemony, and the defeat of secular Arab nationalist movements in the Arab-Israeli conflict. Muslims generally argue that cultural political change progresses best when people are given the freedom to learn from their own mistakes without external influence or manipulation. However, most of American experts advocate for stricter checks on governments and societies in the Middle East through a policy of forced regime change such as the case of Iraq. It is hoped by the West that such a policy is necessary in the Middle East because the Muslim population in this region lack the wherewithal
when it comes to Western democratic reforms. Therefore, this policy or reform must be forced on the region by fighting dissident regimes and movements and by urging authoritarian leaders in this region to adopt certain economic reforms that may ultimately lead to freedom of speech after a process of secularization and growth.81

3.8 United States Policy Against Islam

The United States has seen itself as world superpower since the end of the World War II. It has formed a biased foreign policy towards the Middle East that negatively portrays Islam. This has created a backlash from militant Muslim groups who believe that they are fighting for and in support of those who are affected by the U.S foreign policy towards the Middle East. Presently, the foreign policy of the United States have developed over the past five years is definitely questionable.

There seem to be an overwhelming sense of evangelism that has promoted the bias perception of Islam. An extreme example is the remarks made by General Jerry Boykin who addressed a church group that he was certain that the U.S would be victorious in the fight against Osama bin Laden because his God is bigger than the God of Bin Laden. He made his viewpoint public in order to get support for the war in Iraq. As a General in the U.S Army, he serves as an agent of the United States foreign policy. The main problem with the U.S foreign policy is that of the ‘War on Terror.’ The main idea of this policy is to fight for peace and to take lives in order to save more lives. This policy, however, is unfortunately repressing the Muslim world and moving it further away from democracy. The foreign policy of the United States empowered those it was intended to wipe out to legitimately fight for aggrieved Muslims around the world.
The main problem of the foreign policy, however, is that it forces their system of governance and ideologies such as capitalism which creates social pressure, weakened male authority and creates liberal sexual attitudes on the Muslim states and these ideologies are seen as immoral and clashes with the belief and culture of Islam.

The number of Muslims who have lost their lives from Crusaders through to the colonization period of the Europeans to the invasion of Iraq far exceeds Western casualties. From time in memorial, United States policy of military threats, sanctions, retractions from the United Nations and Americas support for governments in opposition has led to certain reactions from the Middle East that have been labeled as religious extremism. Also, the pro American style of reform does not allow Muslim analysts the space to criticize the American imposition for fear of being misinterpreted and their views seen as anti-West and thereby allowing the West to legitimize the ‘war on terror’.

These policies suppress the very people the West claim to be saving by allowing political extremist regimes to be labelled as religious extremists. The media and the American government in more ways than not have also played a detrimental role in all of this by over exaggerating certain reports of extremist groups such as al-Qaeda as being representative of all of Islam instead of showing that the majority of Muslims in the Middle East are mostly of moderate views and do not support the actions of these extremist groups. An example of the role the media plays in exaggerating issues when it comes to Muslims is the role the media played after the arrest of seventeen youths in Toronto. The adolescents were identified by the
international media as “Muslim Terrorists.” Gwynne Dyer, a Britain-based journalist, also pointed out that: "there is no shadowy but powerful network waging a terrorist war against the West: the whole thing is a fantasy." Europeans are well aware, of Baader-Meinhof Gang (German), Red Brigades (Italy), and Red Army (Japan), but no one calls them Christian or Buddhist terrorists. Why? Simply, because there are Christian or Buddhist, not Muslim. The "War on Terrorism" is a war against Muslims and to control their natural resources under the American Empire, and nothing else." 82 Nonetheless, the main concern of the United States policymakers with regards to political Islam is the spread of radical Islamic movements throughout the Middle East and beyond. The expansion of the militant Muslim groups and the atrocities that they leave in their wake has further entrenched the undesirable notions and stereotypes of Muslims in the West. According to Zunes “despite existence of more moderate groups and separate movements that are more influential as radicals in the political life of Islamic countries (Zunes). And despite the fact that the majority of Muslims oppose terrorism and the predisposed stereotypes of the media, such "popular misconceptions about Islam and Islamic movements—often exacerbated by the media, popular culture, and government officials—have made it particularly difficult to challenge U.S. policy," 83 However, the foreign policy of the United States can be reviewed and made adaptable to Islam. For the United States government to be able to effectively respond to the Middle East crises, they must have an in-depth understanding of the Middle Eastern culture and religion. When the loss of identity due to foreign occupation, forced relocation due to wars, the collapse of a national economy is perpetrated by the same people preaching peace and stability it is difficult for them to be trusted and therefore leads to uprisings of militant groups who self-elect as the voice of the people. These people see themselves as helping to some purpose for the lives of the masses and to help
them to rebuild their lives. Just like the rise the Nazi party in post-World War I in Germany, Muslim extremist groups have capitalized on the naivety of individuals who are working hard to restructure their lives particularly in places like Afghanistan. Stephen Zunes stated in an article prior to the September 11 attacks that “the roots of Islamic radicalism stems from economic inequality, military occupation and authoritarianism. Given that U.S policy in the Middle East and elsewhere has often perpetuated such injustices, responsibility for the rise of radical Islamic movements can often be traced to the U.S itself.” Also, there is no proper sustainable strategy put in place to confront religious extremism in the Muslim world. The United States policymakers fail to see that the challenge lies with both the West and the ideological shift within the Muslim world.

In order for the American government to tailor its policies to Islam, it must first move away from the use of totalitarian force and threats of violence to promote pluralism and democracy within the Muslim world. If this is achieved, America can support sustainable economic growth in the Islamic world and thereby encourage foreign investments and globalization without adverse social outrage. Furthermore, in order for American government to challenge the threat of radical Islamic movements, they must have a change in the focus of their foreign policy from the attempt to defeat extremist Islamic groups to rather engaging in policies that will discourage the establishment of such groups. The American government must also take note of the fact that not all Islamic movements are against the development of political pluralism or other initiatives that help to foster a good relationship with the United States government. It is indeed true that every actions brings about a reaction therefore in the case of Islamic extremists, their actions is as a result overbearing policies from the West. According to Maghraoui, “American policy could tip
the balance between extremist and modernist interpretations of Islam and seize a great opportunity for constructive engagement. The U.S. strategy should be to support the renewal movement, which could reform Islam and mobilize Muslim constituencies against religious extremism.”

If America were able to achieve this, it would lead to several other outcomes. For example, anti-American sentiments from the Middle East in the long run be non-existent and American worries about Islamic extremism would ease up.

If the United States is able to develop a foreign policy that works for both the objectives and goals of Islam and democracy, it will help to put an end to a lot of the problems facing Islam today. The current policy of “war on terror” limits the ability of the Muslim world within the Middle East to establish reformist groups and not stand the risk of being labeled as extremists or terrorists.

3.9 Libya - 2011 Civil War; The Aftermath of the Arab Spring

In the aftermath of the Arab Spring movement that upended the rulers of Egypt and Tunisia, Libya was thrown into a full-scale revolt which begun on February 17 2011. In the weeks that followed, American forces took over the NATO operations against Libya. A whooping 8,000 and over U.S soldiers in aircrafts and warships were deployed in the area. A minimum of 3,000 targets was hit in 14,202 raids with 716 of them in Tripoli and 492 in Brega. The U.S offensive included flights of B-2 Stealth bombers with each bomber armed with sixteen 2000-pound bombs, flying out and returning to their base in Missouri. The support provided by the NATO
air forces especially the United States played a crucial role in the final success of the revolution in Libya. Islamic militants who were not happy with the U.S involvement in the revolution mounted a surprise attack on the U.S consulate in Benghazi killing J. Christopher Stevens who was the U.S A ambassador to Libya and three other people.  

Libya has been afflicted by conflict between the rival parliaments since mid-2014. Tribal militias and jihadist groups have taken advantage of the power vacuum that has been left after the overthrow of Gadhafi by NATO U.S led forces. Most particularly, in 2014, radical Islamist combatants seized Derna and also Sirte in 2015 in the name of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). In early 2015, Egypt launched air strikes against ISIL in support of the Tobruk government.  

The rise of Islamist groups in Libya was made possible when the U.S led NATO forces got rid of Gadhafi who despite his autocratic rule had managed to keep the country in order and safe from these militant groups.  

3.10  Drone Policy

Countries like Somalia, Iraq, Yemen, Pakistan and Afghanistan have American drones patrolling their skies and on occasions have been used to launch deadly attacks against suspected terrorists. Drones have in recent years become a major military option and a policy tool for the United States in their counterterrorism policy. The United States has used drone attacks for several missions since 2002.
The first was targeted at a suspected terrorist in 2002. The U.S Predator Drone was used to kill six people travelling through the Mr’ib province of Yemen. One of those killed was an American citizen. Another dead was the country’s senior level al Qaeda operative who was wanted for the bombing of the USS Cole that killed 17 sailors in October 12, 2000. A couple of years later, a U.S drone was sent to eliminate Nek Muhammad Wazir who was accused of harboring al-Qaeda and Taliban figures. He was the leader of an insurgency in the Northwest of Pakistan. He had signed a ceasefire with the Pakistani government but there were several disagreements between the insurgents and the government over the terms of the agreement. A U.S drone killed Wazir whiles they were arguing over these terms.

Under the Bush administration, there were drone strikes once every forty days however, that increased during Obama’s administration to one drone strike every four days. Those who supported the drone strikes praised its effectiveness at killing al-Qaeda leaders.

However, increase in drone strikes has worsened relations between the United States and the countries affected. The drones’ kill suspected terrorists but does not directly influence the reduction in growth of these terrorists groups especially since some of these drones kill innocent people.  

Although the drone action has chalked certain successes in eliminating threats or leaders and members of terrorist groups, it has also killed innocent lives in the process. It is quite evident that the United States policy concerning drones is not well thought out. Some drone attacks have been so controversial that in 2013, President Obama announced the new “rule” for drone strikes.
This rule brought about stricter regulations and requirements to state when any government agency could attempt to launch a drone strike. One of the rules was that a target must be of “imminent threat” to America and there also had to be almost certainty that civilians would not be killed. But the problem with this now is how is one characterized as an “imminent threat”?  

There is no clear line between who a target is and who a civilian is when it comes to drone strikes. What might look like a terrorist activity might in fact not be that at all. The rate at which innocent civilians are killed as a result of drone strikes is doing more harm than good for the United States in its fight against terrorism. Now they are being looked at in these countries as perpetrating acts of terror. It is difficult under these circumstances to clearly say that the war on terror is being won when more extremist groups keep springing up with the view of protecting the innocent from the West. In this regard, the drone policy of the United States needs to be looked at again for better solutions in fighting insurgency.
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CHAPTER FOUR
SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.0 Introduction
This chapter provides the summary of findings, conclusions and recommendation that has been gathered from the study. In this chapter, I justify the hypothesis and theoretical framework of the study.

4.1 Summary of Findings
Per my research on this topic, I have come to the realization that perceptions of Islam as a violent religion by the west is misplaced in that, it is rather the politics of the Middle East that has ascribed to violent means as a way of promoting their political agendas. When it comes to the Middle Easterners, their culture and way of life is so intertwined with their religion that it becomes very easy to characterize their religion as violent. In actual fact, Islam in itself means peace in Arabic. A religion, which in itself propagates for peace and unity between mankind irrespective of religion, race, ethnicity and gender, is far away from indulging in the acts of violence. Unfortunately, Islamist groups and the west make Islam look as though it is a violent religion to those who know nothing about it hence, spreading the perception of violence in Islam as a modus operandi of the religion.

It is evident from the research done in chapters two and three that various factors have led to violent uprising since the time of the Ottomans and the Crusaders up until now. The fight for economic power and world dominance by the West ended in the Sykes-Picot treaty, which is one
of many treaties drawn up by the West to divide and share the rest of the world amongst them. The outcome of Sykes-Picot treaty was the division of the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire outside the Arabian Peninsula into areas of future colonies of France and Britain. The Middle East was of much interest because it holds the largest reserves of crude oil and whoever controlled this basically controlled the world. The Middle Easterners who wanted control over their own land and resources did not take the division kindly. The rise of militant groups in these parts was to fight against this injustice and not to propagate violence against non-Muslims as suggested by the West. Also, the occupation of Arab lands by Israel, with the support of the United States further sewed seeds of distrust towards the West and contributed to political militant Islamic uprisings.

Islamic militancy as compared to Islamic fundamentalism is not one and the same. From my research, it came to light that being a fundamentalist in any religion is to uphold the religion to its strictest cores and values and not compromise on anything the religion teaches. The fact that one is a fundamentalist does not necessarily mean that the person is an extremist or terrorist. These words need to be broken down into their basic meanings before being ascribed to a group. Per my research, the violence that is perpetrated by some Muslims is not part of the teachings of Islam as a religion. The religion is one of peace. Unfortunately, due to certain provocations since time immemorial by the West, towards the Middle East (Islamic States), as the overthrow of the Ottoman Empire, the Sykes-Picot agreement, certain alliances that only seek the interest of the West in the international system and the crave for political and economic power and dominance has led to the emergence of groups that are bent on fighting against these injustices. The Middle Eastern culture is entrenched in their religion, which is Islam. It is quite difficult to separate them
since the religion is an integral part of their life. Just like certain practices in Christianity has become part of the culture of the West. Indeed culture is the way of life of a people and this includes religion. Huntington’s ‘Clash of Civilization’ helps to unearth the difficulty in the coexistence of different civilization. Nonetheless, the link that the West has given and played into the minds of non-Muslims of the extremist and radical nature of Islam is false. In trying to cover up their mistakes and lust for world dominance and power, the card of the lesser evil has been played in their favour. That is, blame the religion as fanning the flames of radicalism and terrorism and do not blame us (the West), for destabilizing their region, taking away their oil and stealing their lands. The chronology of events from the First World War till present is basically the Middle Eastern fight for what is rightfully theirs. However, due to the fact that these fighters are Muslims, the West is quick to confer the title of religious terrorists unto them. Again to further fan the flames of propaganda in their favour. It should be noted that like any other system, there are those who try to take advantage and act unduly to satisfy their personal gain or interest.

In as much as the West tries to put the blame of extremists uprising on Islam, it is good to note that radicalism of the Middle Easterners was brought on by the actions of the West. Therefore their action is as a result of their reaction to the actions of the West. In my research as well, it is noted that, these fighters who fight for justice have in some way gone to the extreme and are preying on the emotions and minds of the innocent and ignorant Muslims to pursue their selfish interests. Groups like al-Qaeda, Hamas, Hezbollah, ISIS, just to mention a few have in their bid to right the wrong which was done against them by the West some of which are the inter and intra state wars in the Middle East and overthrow of regimes and governments which were all
funded by the West has led these groups to go on the extreme side of things and are now perpetrating acts of terror all over the world for justice in the name of Islam. Unfortunately, those who fall prey to their tactics are those who do not have a clear and in-depth understanding and knowledge of Islam and believe that whatever is being fed them by these radicalized Islamist groups is what the religion teaches.

4.2 Conclusion

Per my research, the perception of Islamic fundamentalism has been one sided and even misplaced. The main source of radicalism by the Middle East is not being talked about but rather; their reactions have dominated the world scene. The search for power and dominance in the international system has led the West into committing various blunders against the Middle Easterners who are majority Muslim. It has become easy to ascribe violence to Islam since radicalized political fighters in the Middle East are Muslims. Also, the misinterpretation of the teaching of Islam and the Qur`an by those who have little or no knowledge of what the religion really entails and use it as a reference point or as the foundation and basis if their insurgency, has fuelled perceptions of Islam as being violent.

If the religion was separated from the acts and the acts seen as politically motivated instead of religiously motivated, then the fault of insurgency will be attributed to the right source. However, if Islam is connoted to insurgency then it will always remain the violent religion in the minds of all who do not know the truth behind the cause for which they so passionately fight. The policies of the Western world towards the Middle East as discussed in the previous chapters have not at all been in favour of the latter and this is what has brought about the rise of violence...
against the West and even within the Middle East region. The fight for justice is not one of religion but of politics which has major and powerful players in the international system all seeking their best interests for the chance at world domination and power. This unfortunately has been at the doorstep of the Middle East because they hold the key to attaining this ambition of the West since they are sitting on the world’s largest oil reserve and it is said that he who controls the oil controls the world.

4.3 Recommendation

If the policies that the Western world has had towards the Middle East have been in favour of the Middle Easterners and not the West, then there might not be the problems of extremism and terrorism as have occurred over the years since World War I in order to stop the rippling effect of insurgency, although this might be farfetched. I recommend a reconciliation process to be initiated between the West and the Middle East. This, in my view, could lead the cause of erasing the perception of Islam or Islamic States as being violent. In a global system where there is high expectation for the protection and enforcing of human rights two schools of thought have been advanced to the realization of human rights. There should be a high level of tolerance by the West to the cultural and political values and practices of states in the Middle East rather than imposing democratic values and practices on them.
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APPENDIX

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Some of the questions asked during the research are as follows:

What is the difference between fundamentalism, extremism and terrorism?

Where and when did the misperception of Islam as a violent religion begin?

What are some of the Policies by the West that has influenced the emergence of extremism in Islam?

Are the perceptions of the West of Islam being a violent religion bias or true?

Is Islam a hate religion? And does the Qur`an support the killing of innocent lives as a means of protecting the integrity of Islam?

How can the negative perception of Muslims be changed in the West?