

The New Cold War?

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Suddenly and without debate, the United States got a new foreign policy on September 11, 2001. In place of the Cold War, Washington promised a long struggle against terrorism. Quickly America found it had new and unexpected allies: Russia, China, and India, all of which face Islamic terrorists. The new struggle resembles the Cold War: long, ideological, and focused on gaining and keeping allies.

This last-mentioned will not be easy, as all Muslim countries have sizeable Islamist movements. In some cases--Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, two countries that had sponsored Muslim fundamentalism--these movements could overthrow wobbly governments with devastating consequences. If Saudi Arabia falls to Islamists, it could disrupt world oil supplies and plunge the globe into a new Great Depression. If Pakistan falls, it would deliver nuclear weapons into the hands of the same people who destroyed New York's World Trade Center.

The "war on terrorism" is probably not a good name. No one suggested doing anything about Irish, Basque, or Sri Lankan terrorists. There is no general wave of terrorism washing over the world or the United States. There are specific Islamic extremist groups with specific goals: Get the United States out of the Middle East, destroy Israel, and take over Muslim lands. Islamists have already taken over Iran, Sudan, and Afghanistan. Terrorists are not crazy. Osama bin Laden and his organization, Al Qaeda (The Base), is composed of militantly

committed people, not psychopaths.

The struggle is really over the future of Muslim countries, whether they become modern and moderate or traditional and fanatic. A better name might be the "war over Islamic modernization." If we fail, if these lands fall to hate and violence, we may speak of the "Islamic Wars," and they could be quite nasty.

Success in this war will come if Muslim lands reject bin Laden and his message of hatred and grant him and his kind no succor. Stability will come when Muslim countries discover how to combine Islam with modernity, a feasible project. Failure in this war will come if Muslim governments fall into the hands of religious extremists, which is exactly their goal. Then Huntington's "clash of civilizations" could become a ghastly "war of civilizations." We must tread carefully; pushing too hard on a shaky Muslim government could topple it.

The search for terrorists in the United States is interesting for what it did not turn up. It found no network of Arab or Muslim Americans supporting the plotters, all of whom were inserted from abroad. Muslim Americans showed strong solidarity with their fellow Americans. None of the terrorists appeared to be Palestinian, the group with the biggest grudge, or Afghan. Most seemed to be Egyptian or Saudi Arabia. Some describe Al Qaeda as a Saudi organization with Egyptian members. Earlier profiles of terrorists--taken from Israeli composites--no longer fit. These suicide hijackers were not poor and ignorant; many were middle class and educated.

To get a handle on this complex, confusing situation, let us divide our

consideration into past, present, and future.

THE PAST

Islam exploded out of Arabia in the seventh century, converting whole countries by sword and word. In 711, a Muslim army crossed into Spain, quickly conquered most of it, and moved into France until beaten by Charles Martel in 732. The First Crusade returned the favor in the late eleventh century and held Jerusalem until 1291. For Arabs, "crusade" still connotes European attempts to conquer them. In the fourteenth century the Ottoman Turks conquered the Balkans and kept parts of them for five centuries. Europe got its revenge by breaking up the Ottoman Empire after World War I and seizing Ottoman provinces in the Fertile Crescent. Historically, Muslim-Western relations have been characterized by conquest and reconquest.

The great problem inherited from the past is that the great Islamic civilization was brought low, partly by outside forces, and never recovered. Remembering the glories of bygone centuries, some Muslims look at the West as the force that brought them down and keeps them down--an exaggeration but not without some foundation. Next to oil, resentment could be the Middle East's greatest export product.

Historically, Islamic civilization was for centuries far advanced over Christian Europe in science, philosophy, medicine, sanitation, architecture, steelmaking, and just about anything you can name. It was through translations

from the Arabic that Europe got reacquainted with classic Greco-Roman thought, especially Aristotle, which helped trigger the Renaissance and Europe's modernization. Go back a millennium and you would find Muslims wondering if it wasn't Christianity that kept Europe backward.

But Islamic civilization stalled and European civilization modernized. By the sixteenth century, when European merchant ships arrived in the Persian Gulf, the West was ahead of Islam. Why did Islam get stuck? First, there are some specific historical causes. The Mongol invaders of the thirteenth century massacred the inhabitants of Baghdad and destroyed the region's irrigation systems, something the Arab empire never recovered from. (The Mongols' impact on Russia was also devastating.) Possibly because of the Mongol devastation, Islam turned to mysticism. Instead of an open, flexible, and tolerant faith that was fascinated by learning and science, Islam turned rigid. When the Portuguese first rounded the southern tip of Africa in 1488, they opened up direct trade routes between Europe and Asia, bypassing the Islamic middlemen. Trade through the Middle East declined sharply and with it the region's economy.

But more important was the domination of European (chiefly British) imperialists starting in the nineteenth century. Between the two world wars, Britain ruled (through League of Nations mandates) a broad swath from Palestine (now Israel and Jordan) and Iraq and had major influence all around the Persian Gulf. Pakistan (then part of India) was a British colony. Imperialism created the same resentment we see in China, the resentment of a proud civilization brought

low by upstart foreigners: "You push in here with your guns, your railroads, and your commerce and act superior to us. Well, culturally and morally we are superior to you, and eventually we'll kick you out and restore our civilization."

With this type of thinking comes hatred of anything Western and therefore opposition to modernity, because that means admitting the West is superior.

One consistent pattern emerges from helping Islamist groups: They turn on their sponsors. Israel thought it would be clever in the 1980s to help Hamas, a relatively harmless religious group that was supposed to offset Yassir Arafat's secular Palestine Liberation Army. Now Hamas is a terrorist and has upstaged Arafat. Saudi Arabia, founded in 1932 on the puritanical Wahhabi brand of Islam, used its oil wealth to spread this rigid creed through religious schools in poor Muslim lands, including Pakistan. Now its adherents want to overthrow the House of Saud for drifting away from true Islam and depending on the Americans. Pakistani intelligence services actually invented the Taliban out of the Afghan refugee students in these fundamentalist Koranic academies. Pakistan, with U.S. approval, promoted a Taliban government in Afghanistan to overcome the chaos and lawlessness on its northern border. It also used Islamist fighters in its own terror campaign to wrest Kashmir from India. Now the Taliban vows a jihad against both the Pakistani and U.S. governments. Careful whom you help in this part of the world.

THE PRESENT

To oversimplify:

Islam + imperialism + unemployment + corruption = Islamism.

A subset of the equation is:

fast population growth + slow economic growth = unemployment

A Muslim country that has tasted Western imperialism and has many unemployed and a corrupt government will likely develop a Muslim fundamentalist movement. Unemployment is predictable from the extremely high birthrate amid an economy that is growing only slowly, the case in virtually every Muslim country. Middle Eastern women bear three times as many children as European women. Unemployed or underemployed young men are often drawn to extremist politics. The ruling elites' vast corruption demonstrates to the poor masses that the government is illegitimate. Islamists take full advantage of this. The long-term solution is to get these countries modern, with growing economies, jobs, education, moderate population growth, and clean government. It won't be easy, but the alternative is a "zone of chaos" that threatens the entire world.

Most Middle East experts deny there is anything inherent in Islamic doctrine that keeps Muslim societies from modernizing. Looking at cases, though, one finds no Islamic countries that have fully modernized. Under Ataturk, Turkey made great strides between the two World Wars, but Islamic militants still try to undo his reforms. The shah tried to modernize Iran but was overthrown by Islamists. Sadat tried to modernize Egypt but was assassinated by Islamists. Oil brought some Muslim countries outside revenues; they are rich

but not modern.

Does Islam cause backwardness? By itself, probably not. Islamic cultural antipathy toward the West - emphasized by Samuel Huntington - and modernity in general slows and often reverses progress in Muslim lands. But there are currents stirring in Islam that could reorient Islam to modernity. As is often the case with religious reforms, going back to the original source can produce a major spring forward.

Some Muslim scholars note that there is nothing in the Koran about suppressing women or denying progress. The Koran, to be sure, prohibits loaning money at interest, but Muslims already work around that by taking equity positions--stocks instead of loans. Eventually, we could see societies that are both modern and Muslim. One of the best ways to promote this: Educate women.

In Huntington's terms, most Muslim lands are "torn" countries, pulled between Western and Islamic cultures. Most of the educated elite are open to Western values, but the poor masses cling to traditional and even fundamentalist Islamic values. Pakistan's military president Pervez Musharraf, a man who knows and understands the West and modernization, took a big chance in supporting America and opposing Afghanistan. Most Pakistanis wanted it the other way around; some vowed to join a jihad if U.S. forces fought Afghanistan's Taliban regime. The governments of Algeria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and other Muslim lands are sitting atop rumbling volcanoes of Islamic

fundamentalism; they could be overthrown.

Two specific and ongoing causes inflame many Muslims: (1) The existence of Israel and U.S. support for it; and (2) the presence of U.S. forces in Saudi Arabia. They see Israel as a new type of Western crusader state that seized holy land and must be expelled. They are not interested in compromise. Jerusalem is also holy to Muslims. Israel, however, is but a step to the bigger goal. If Israel didn't exist, the region would still be a zone of chaos.

This brings us to Osama bin Laden, seventeenth of fifty-two children (by multiple wives) of a Saudi Arabian construction billionaire. Osama bin Laden served the Muslim cause in expelling the Soviets from Afghanistan in the 1980s and had no objection to working with Americans there. But he strongly opposed U.S. forces in his homeland to defend it against Iraq in 1990. Saudi Arabia is sacred Muslim ground that was defiled by the U.S. troops. He became furious when a small U.S. force stayed after the 1991 war and denounced the House of Saud for allowing it. Saudi Arabia revoked his citizenship, but he had earlier cashed out his estimated inheritance of \$300 million and hid it in many places. He also continues to get money from relatives, supporters, and Muslim charities in Saudi Arabia. Reputedly ill, bin Laden could be replaced by any of several trusted lieutenants. Just killing bin Laden won't be enough. And bin Laden may not be the only force at work here; there is some evidence that he is linked to Iraq, whose dictator Saddam Hussein has thought of little but revenge since his 1991 defeat.

THE FUTURE

What should we do in the face of this? First, we must remember that Osama bin Laden wants us to overreact, to use our strengths against us, just as his hijackers used our technology against us. If we persecute American Muslims or use indiscriminate force against Muslim lands, he will be able to tilt many Muslims against us. His biggest prize is his homeland of Saudi Arabia. The fall of the House of Saud could give him limitless wealth and power.

This is the real danger we face. Not just the United States but the world depends on the flow of oil from the Persian Gulf. Recalling how retreating Iraqis set Kuwait's oilfields afire in 1991, we must be able to quickly restore damaged Saudi oil production. One of the unstated purposes of the fleet dispatched by President Bush in September 2001 was to prop up frightened regimes in the Persian Gulf. Some object that oil is a selfish or greedy cause, but if it is seriously disrupted the entire world would suffer.

How then to retaliate? Afghanistan, already in ruin from two decades of war and four years of drought, offers no good targets. (Iraq does.) Besides, who wants to harm starving Afghan civilians who dislike their Taliban government? Millions have already fled. The only way we can operate in the region is through existing, local forces. Most of these governments are scared of the extremists and have let them operate on their soil. We must make allies out of moderate Muslim governments by offering them a choice: us or the Islamists. Many will tilt our way, especially if we show we intend to stay in and stabilize the region.

U.S. isolationism or unilateralism are not options. Nothing will be quick; it will be a long, hard slog.

Some fear a resumption of the military draft, which would take an act of Congress. Unlikely. The armed forces may expand, but there are already plenty of volunteers. In terms of force configuration, we now need light and agile, not heavy and slow. A national missile defense will not protect us against terrorist attacks. At least three areas do need greatly increased spending. The State Department (especially consular officers who scrutinize visa applicants), the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and the Coast Guard are underfunded and understaffed. After much talk of tax cuts, Americans remembered why we need a federal government.

Domestically, we have much work to do. U.S. computer networks, oil refineries, and nuclear power plants are serious vulnerabilities. We leak like a sieve; our lack of border and internal checks lets millions sneak in. The hijackers had no trouble getting U.S. visas with disguised identities and fake or stolen passports. They lived for months with no one asking them what they were up to or how they got their money. They laughed at how open and easy everything is here. Some of this openness has got to be tightened.

A national identification card should be considered. Both civil libertarians and gun nuts cry "police state," but you already carry the equivalent: a photo driver's license with bar code plus a social security card. Let's just combine the two. (Students object, fearing it would be used by bartenders.) Too complex?

Just such a national ID card has been issued to thousands of Mexicans who routinely cross the U.S. border.

And finally, this is not the end of the world. There was a tendency toward panicked overreaction and a human need to "do something, anything!" not always to good effect. Some Americans bought gas masks or dubious pills. To give in to excessive fear means to give one round to the terrorists, exactly what they want. America's enemies have always assumed we are a weak and decadent society, one with no spiritual values, dedicated only to money-grubbing and luxuries but unwilling to sacrifice or take casualties. They got us wrong.

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The New Cold War is also to a significant degree the product of the decreasing weight of the US within the world economy. With China set to overtake the US as the world's largest economy within the next few years, international relations are clearly moving away from US-led unipolarity and towards a multipolar world order. Rather than developing a coherent strategy to represent US interests within such a system, the US administration seems intent on trying to prevent it from emerging. US, Chinese and other experts opposing a New Cold War will analyse the consequences of the outcome of the US presidential election. The event is organised jointly by No Cold War, the Tricontinental Institute for Social Research, and Chongyang Institute, Renmin University of China. This article is part of a series on the New Cold War.

From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an "iron curtain" has descended across the continent. Winston Churchill's speech in Fulton, Missouri, in March 1946 is remembered as a key moment in the outbreak of the cold war. If future historians are ever looking for a speech that marked the beginning of a second cold war – this time between America and China – they may point to an address by Mike Pence delivered at Washington's Hudson Institute in October 2018.

China wants nothing less than to push the United States of America f

The Second Cold War, also called Cold War II or the New Cold War, is a term used to describe a post-Cold-War era of political and military tension between Western powers (mostly the United States) and Eastern Powers (Russia or China). Past sources, such as academics Fred Halliday, Alan M. Wald, and David S. Painter, used the interchangeable terms to refer to the 1979–1985 and/or 1985–1991 phases of the Cold War. Some other sources used similar terms to refer to the Cold War of the mid-1970s.

Columnist Thus, this new Cold War between China and the United States is a major geopolitical risk of the 21st century. Events Signaling a New Cold War. China has come out with alternative governance mechanisms to the U.S.-dominated International Monetary Fund, World Bank and World Trade Organization with its all-encompassing Belt and Road Initiative and institutions like Asia infrastructure investment bank, contingency reserve agreement (CRA) of New Development Bank.

No proxy conflicts: Previous Cold War was full of proxy conflicts between the US and Soviet Union like in Cuban missile crisis 1962, Soviet afghan war 1979-89, etc. However, till now there are no proxy wars between the U.S. and China. Multi-polar world: Today, the world is also not bipolar anymore.