6

Religious Terrorism

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Terrorism in the name of religion has become the predominant model for political violence in the modern world. This is not to suggest that it is the only model because nationalism and ideology remain as potent catalysts for extremist behavior. However, religious extremism has become a central issue for the global community.

In the modern era, religious terrorism has increased in its frequency, scale of violence, and global reach. At the same time, a relative decline has occurred in secular terrorism. The old ideologies of class conflict, anticolonial liberation, and secular nationalism have been challenged by a new and vigorous infusion of sectarian ideologies. Grassroots extremist support for religious violence has been most widespread among populations living in repressive societies that do not permit demands for reform or other expressions of dissent.

What is religious terrorism? What are its fundamental attributes? Religious terrorism is a type of political violence motivated by an absolute belief that an otherworldly power has sanctioned—and commanded—terrorist violence for the greater glory of the faith. Acts committed in the name of the faith will be forgiven by the otherworldly power and perhaps rewarded in an afterlife. In essence, one's religious faith legitimizes violence as long as such violence is an expression of the will of one's deity. Table 6.1 presents a model that compares the fundamental characteristics of religious and secular terrorism.

The discussion in this chapter will review the following:

- Historical perspectives on religious violence
- The practice of religious terrorism
- Trends and projections

❖ TABLE 6.1   Case Comparison: Religious and Secular Terrorism

Activity Profile Environment				
Environment	**Quality of Violence**[a]	**Scope of Violence**	**Constituency Profile**	**Relationship to Existing System**
Religious	Unconstrained scale of terrorist violence *Result:* Unconstrained choice of weapons and tactics	Expansive target definition *Result:* Indiscriminate use of violence	Narrow, insular, and isolated *Result:* No appeals to a broader audience	Alienated "true believers" *Result:* Completely reconfigured social order
Secular	Constrained scale of terrorist violence *Result:* Relative constraint in choice of weapons and tactics	Focused target definition *Result:* Relative discrimination in use of violence	Inclusive, for the championed group *Result:* Appeals to actual or potential supporters	Liberators *Result:* Restructured or rebuilt society

SOURCE: Bruce Hoffman, *Inside Terrorism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 94–95.

a. Communal terrorism is rarely constrained and is an example of convergence in the quality of violence used by religious and secular terrorism.

Historical Perspectives on Religious Violence

Terrorism carried out in the name of the faith has long been a feature of human affairs. The histories of people, civilizations, nations, and empires are replete with examples of extremist true believers who engage in violence to promote their belief system. Some religious terrorists are inspired by defensive motives, others seek to ensure the predominance of their faith, and others are motivated by an aggressive amalgam of these tendencies.

Religious terrorism can be communal, genocidal, nihilistic, or revolutionary. It can be committed by lone wolves, clandestine cells, large dissident movements, or governments. And, depending on one's perspective, there is often debate about whether the perpetrators should be classified as terrorists or religious freedom fighters. The following cases are historical examples of religious violence. This is a selective survey (by no means exhaustive) that will demonstrate how some examples of faith-based violence are clearly examples of terrorism, how others are not so clear, and how each example must be considered within its historical and cultural context.

❖ **Рното 6.1**   A ritualistic Ku Klux Klan (KKK) "cross lighting" ceremony in the United States. The KKK is a long-standing racist movement that lives according to a code of racial supremacy. Its ceremonies invoke mystical symbols such as hooded gowns and the burning cross, as well as the adoption of bizarre titles such as Imperial Wizard and Exalted Cyclops.

Judeo-Christian Antiquity

Within the Judeo-Christian belief system, references in the Bible are not only to assassinations and conquest but also to the complete annihilation of enemy nations in the name of the faith. One such campaign is described in the Book of Joshua.

The story of Joshua's conquest of Canaan is the story of the culmination of the ancient Hebrews' return to Canaan. To Joshua and his followers, this was the Promised Land of the covenant between God and the chosen people. According to the Bible, the Canaanite cities were destroyed and the Canaanites attacked until "there was no one left who breathed."[1] Assuming that Joshua and his army put to the sword all the inhabitants of the 31 cities mentioned in the Bible, and assuming that each city averaged 10,000 people, his conquest cost 310,000 lives.[2]

To the ancient Hebrews, the Promised Land had been occupied by enemy trespassers. To fulfill God's covenant, it was rational and necessary from their perspective to drive them from the land, exterminating them when necessary. Chapter Perspective 6.1 presents the passage that describes the conquest.

The Conquest of Canaan

When King Jabin of Hazor heard of this, he sent to [other kings in the region for assistance to defeat the Hebrews]. . . . They came out, with all their troops, a great army, in number like the sand on the seashore, with very many horses and chariots. All these kings joined their forces, and came and camped together at the waters of Merom, to fight with Israel.

And the Lord said to Joshua, "Do not be afraid of them, for tomorrow at this time I will hand over all of them, slain, to Israel. . . ." So Joshua came suddenly upon them with all his fighting force, by the waters of Merom, and fell upon them. And the Lord handed them over to Israel. . . . They struck them down, until they had left no one remaining.

Joshua turned back at that time, and took Hazor, and struck its king down with the sword. . . . And they put to the sword all who were in it, utterly destroying them; there was no one left who breathed, and he burned Hazor with fire. And all the towns of those kings, and all their kings, Joshua took, and struck them with the edge of the sword, utterly destroying them. . . . All the spoil of these towns, and the livestock, the Israelites took for their booty; but all the people they struck down with the edge of the sword, until they had destroyed them, and they did not leave any who breathed.

SOURCE: Joshua 11:1, 4–8, 10–14, in *The Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version.*

Other passages in the Bible are arguably examples of religious communal violence or terrorism, such as the following story from the Book of Numbers:

> While Israel was staying at Shittim, the people began to have sexual relations with the women of Moab. . . . Just then one of the Israelites came and brought a Midianite woman into his family. . . . When Phineas . . . saw it, he got up and left the Congregation. Taking a spear in his hand, he went after the Israelite man into the temple, and pierced the two of them, the Israelite and the woman, through the belly.[3]

Christian Crusades

During the Middle Ages, the Western Christian (i.e., Roman Catholic) church launched at least nine invasions of the Islamic east, the first one in 1095. These invasions were called the **Crusades** because they were conducted in the name of the Cross. The purpose of the Crusades was to capture the holy lands from the disunited Muslims, to whom they referred collectively as Saracens.

Christian knights and soldiers answered the call for many reasons. The promise of land, booty, and glory was certainly central. Another important reason was the spiritual promise, made by **Pope Urban II,** that fighting and dying in the name of the Cross would ensure **martyrdom** and thereby guarantee a place in heaven. Liberation of the holy lands would bring eternal salvation. Thus, a "knight" who with pious intent took the Cross would earn a remission from temporal penalties

for all his sins; if he died in battle he would earn remission of his sins."[4] This religious ideology was reflected in the war cry of the early Crusades: *Deus lo volt!* (God wills it!).

During the First Crusade, Western knights—primarily Frankish soldiers—captured a broad swath of biblical lands, including Jerusalem and Bethlehem. When cities and towns were captured, most of the Muslim and Jewish inhabitants were killed outright, a practice common in medieval warfare. When Jerusalem was captured in July 1099, Frankish knights massacred thousands of Muslim, Jewish, and Orthodox Christian residents. An embellished Crusader letter sent to Pope Urban II in Rome boasted that the blood of the Saracens reached the bridles of the Crusaders' horses.

Not all Christian Crusades were fought in Muslim lands. The Western Church also purged its territories of Jews and divergent religious beliefs that were denounced as heresies. The zealousness and violence of these purges became legendary. During the brutal **Albigensian Crusade** in southern France during the 13th century, the story was told that concerns were raised about loyal and innocent Catholics who were being killed along with targeted members of the enemy Cathar sect. The pope's representative, Arnaud Amaury, allegedly replied, "Kill them all; God will know his own!"

The Church-sanctioned invasions and atrocities were deemed to be in accordance with God's wishes and therefore perfectly acceptable. An extreme and unquestioning faith in the cause led to a series of campaigns of terror against the non-Christian (and sometimes the Orthodox Christian) residents of conquered cities and territories. In a typical and tragic irony of the time, the Greek Orthodox city of Constantinople, center of the Byzantine Empire and one of the great cities of the world, was captured and sacked by Western Crusaders in 1204 during the Fourth Crusade. The Crusaders looted the city and created a short-lived Latin Empire, which lasted until 1261.

The Assassins

The **Order of Assassins,**[5] sometimes referred to as the Brotherhood of Assassins, was founded by **Hasan ibn al-Sabbah** (d. 1124) in 11th-century Persia. Al-Sabbah was a caliph (religious head) of the Ismaili sect of Islam. He espoused a radical version of Ismaili Islam and founded the Order of Assassins to defend this interpretation of the faith. Beginning in 1090, he and his followers seized a string of fortresses in the mountains of northern Persia, the first of which was the strong fortress of Alamut near Qazvin. Because of these origins, al-Sabbah was called The Old Man of the Mountain.

The word *assassin* was allegedly derived from the drug hashish, which some commentators believe al-Sabbah's followers ate before committing acts of violence in the name of the faith.[6] They referred to themselves as *hashashins* or *hashishis,* reputedly meaning hashish eaters. During the early years of the movement, Assassin followers spread out of the mountains to the cities of Persia, modern Iraq, Syria, and the Christian Crusader–occupied areas of Palestine. The Assassins killed many people, including fellow Muslims who were Sunnis and Christians. Suicide

❖ Рното **6.2**   The conquest of Bethlehem. A romanticized depiction of victorious Christian Crusaders, who seized Bethlehem in June 1099 during the First Crusade. The Crusaders subsequently killed virtually all of the town's inhabitants.

missions were common, and some Crusader leaders went so far as to pay tribute to the Assassins so that the Assassins would leave them alone.

The Assassins were very adept at disguise, stealth, and surprise killings, and thus the word *assassination* was coined. A key component of the Assassins' beliefs was the righteousness of their cause and methodology. To kill or be killed was a good thing, because it was done in the name of the faith and ensured a place in paradise after death. This belief is practiced by many of today's religious terrorists.

Although their political impact was negligible and the organization was eliminated in 1256, the Assassins left a profound psychological mark on their era and in many ways on ours.

A Secret Cult of Murder

In India during the 13th through the 19th centuries, the **Thuggee** cult existed among worshippers of the Hindu goddess Kali, the destroyer. Members were called

by various names, including Phansigars (noose operators), Dacoits (members of a gang of robbers), and Thuggees (from which the English word *thug* is derived). They would strangle sacrificial victims—usually travelers—with a noose called a *phansi* in the name of Kali and then rob and ritually mutilate and bury them. Offerings would then be made to Kali.

The British eventually destroyed the movement during the 19th century, but the death toll of Thuggee victims was staggering: "This secretive cult is believed to have murdered 20,000 victims a year . . . perhaps dispatching as many as several million victims altogether before it was broken up by British officials."[7] There are few debatable counterpoints about this cult—the Thuggees waged a campaign of religious terror for centuries.

Modern Arab Islamist Extremism

The Arab world passed through several important political phases during the 20th century. Overlordship by the Ottoman Empire ended in 1918 after World War I. It was followed by European domination, which ended in the aftermath of World War II. New Arab and North African states were initially ruled primarily by monarchs or civilians who were always authoritarian and frequently despotic. A series of military coups and other political upheavals led to the modern era of governance. These phases had a significant influence on activism among Arab nationalists and intellectuals, culminating in the late 1940s, when the chief symbol of Western encroachment became the state of Israel. Postwar activism in the Arab Muslim world likewise progressed through several intellectual phases, most of them secular expressions of nationalism and socialism. The secular phases included the following:

- Anticolonial nationalism, during which Arab nationalists resisted the presence of European administrators and armed forces
- Pan-Arab nationalism (Nasserism), led by Egyptian president Gamel Abdel-Nasser, which advocated the creation of a single dynamic United Arab Republic
- Secular leftist radicalism, which activists often adopted to promote Marxist or other socialist principles of governance, sometimes in opposition to their own governments

Many activists and intellectuals became disenchanted with these movements when they failed to deliver political reforms, economic prosperity, and the desired degree of respect from the international community. In particular, several humiliating military defeats at the hands of the Israelis—and the seemingly intractable plight of the Palestinians—diminished the esteem and deference the secular movements had once enjoyed. Arab nationalists—both secular and sectarian—had struggled since the end of World War II to resist what they perceived as Western domination and exploitation, and some tradition-oriented nationalists began to interpret Western culture and values as alien to Muslim morality and values.

As a result, new movements promoting Islamist extremism began to over-shadow the ideologies of the previous generation. This has placed many Islamists at odds with existing Arab governments, many of which are administered under the principles of the older ideologies.

In the post–Cold War political environment, adopting Islam as a vehicle for liberation is a logical progression. When radical secular ideologies and movements made little progress in resisting the West and Israel, and when secular Arab governments repressed any expressions of domestic dissent, many activists and intellectuals turned to radical interpretations of Islam.

There is a sense of collegiality and comradeship among many Islamists, but there are also differences within the ideologies of many leaders, as well as between the Sunni and Shi'a traditions. The Islamist movement, however, has transcended most ethnic and cultural differences and is a global phenomenon.

Cult Case: Mysticism and Rebellion in Uganda[8]

Phase 1: The Holy Spirit Mobile Force. Uganda in 1987 was a hotbed of rebellion, with several rebel groups opposing the new government of President Yoweri Museveni. One such group was the **Holy Spirit Mobile Force,** inspired and led by the mystical **Alice Auma Lakwena.** Lakwena claimed to be possessed by a spirit called Lakwena and preached that her movement would defeat Museveni's forces and purge Uganda of witchcraft and superstition. Because her followers championed the Acholi tribe, the Holy Spirit Mobile Force attracted thousands of followers, many of whom were former soldiers from previous Ugandan government armies. In late 1987, she led thousands of her followers against Museveni's army. To protect themselves from death, Holy Spirit Mobile Force fighters anointed themselves with holy oil, which they believed would ward off bullets. When they met Museveni's forces, thousands of Lakwena's followers were slaughtered in the face of automatic weapons and artillery fire. Alice Lakwena fled the country to Kenya, where she lived until her death in January 2007.

Phase 2: The Lord's Resistance Army. **Josef Kony,** either a cousin or nephew of Alice Lakwena, reorganized the Holy Spirit Mobile Force into the **Lord's Resistance Army.** Kony blended Christianity, Islam, and witchcraft into a bizarre mystical foundation for his movement. Kony proclaimed to his followers that he would overthrow the government, purify the Acholi people, and seize power and reign in accordance with the principles of the biblical Ten Commandments.

From its inception, the Lord's Resistance Army was exceptionally brutal and waged near-genocidal terrorist campaigns—largely against the Acholi people it claimed to champion. The movement destroyed villages and towns, killed thousands of people, drove hundreds of thousands more from the land, abducted thousands of children, and routinely committed acts of mass rape and banditry. With bases in southern Sudan, the Lord's Resistance Army proved extremely difficult for the Ugandan government to defeat in the field.

An estimated 30,000 children became kidnap victims, and 1.6 million Ugandans were displaced into refugee camps. These camps became regular targets of the Lord's Resistance Army, which raided them for supplies, to terrorize the refugees, and to kidnap children. Among the kidnapped children, boys were forced to become soldiers and girls became sex slaves known as bush wives. There has been some hope of ending the conflict. In 2005, a top Lord's Resistance Army commander surrendered, the government claimed a temporary cease-fire, and Sudan began to stabilize its border with Uganda after its own southern civil war ended. Unfortunately, the Lord's Resistance Army continued its pattern of violence and abductions, and in 2008 and 2009, the group conducted destructive raids into the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo.

Like the Thuggees, the Lord's Resistance Army is unquestionably an example of a cultic movement that waged a campaign of religious terrorism.

Religious Scapegoating Case: The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion

Extremist ideologies have historically scapegoated undesirable groups. Many conspiracy theories have been invented to denigrate these groups and to implicate them in nefarious plans to destroy an existing order. Some of these conspiracy theories possess quasi-religious elements that in effect classify the scapegoated group as being in opposition to a natural and sacred order.

Among right-wing nationalists and racists, a convergence is often seen between scapegoating and mysticism. Just as it is common for rightists to assert their natural and sacred superiority, it is also common for them to demonize a scapegoated group, essentially declaring that it is inherently evil. One quasi-religious conspiracy theory is the promulgation of a document titled the *Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion*.[9]

The *Protocols* originated in czarist Russia and were allegedly the true proceedings of a meeting of a mysterious committee of the Jewish faith, during which a plot to rule the world was hatched—in league with the Freemasons. They are a detailed record of this alleged conspiracy for world domination but were, in fact, a forgery written by the secret police (**Okhrana**) of Czar Nicholas II around 1895 and later published by Professor Sergyei Nilus. Many anti-Semitic groups have used this document to justify the repression of European Jews, and it was an ideological foundation for the outbreak of anti-Jewish violence in Europe, including massacres and **pogroms** (violent anti-Jewish campaigns in eastern Europe).

The National Socialist (Nazi) movement and Adolf Hitler used the *Protocols* extensively. Modern Eurocentric neo-Nazis and Middle Eastern extremists, both secular and religious, continue to publish and circulate the *Protocols* as anti-Semitic propaganda. In this regard, neo-Nazis and Middle Eastern extremists have found common cause in quasi-religious anti-Semitism. In 1993, a Russian court formally ruled that the *Protocols* are a forgery.[10]

Assault on Mumbai

Mumbai (formerly Bombay) is India's largest city, the country's financial hub, and home to the famous and lucrative "Bollywood" Hindi-language film industry. Its reputation is one of prosperous cosmopolitanism, and Western tourists are drawn to reputable hotels, an active nightlife, and rich cultural history. Unfortunately, in recent years, the port city has experienced a series of lethal terrorist attacks. These incidents include the detonation of two car bombs in August 2003 that killed approximately 50 people and seven bombs aboard passenger trains that killed more than 200 in July 2006.

On November 26–29, 2008, Mumbai was attacked by 10 determined terrorists who entered the city from the sea aboard dinghies. The attackers spread out to assault high-profile targets throughout Mumbai's urban center, firing at victims randomly and throwing explosives. Tourist sites, hotels, and a Jewish center were specifically selected for their symbolic value and to inflict maximum casualties. The ferocity of the assault is reflected in the following events:

- More than 50 people were killed at the Taj Mahal Palace and Tower hotel. During the initial assault on the night and early morning of November 26–27, terrorists seized and killed hostages. A large fire broke out as they fought National Security Guard commandos and police officers when the troops and officers conducted room-to-room searches. Dozens of hostages were rescued during the operation. Firefights continued for days as the terrorists evaded the security sweep, finally ending on the morning of November 29.
- More than 30 people were killed at the Oberoi Hotel, which was attacked at the same time and in a similar manner as the Taj Mahal Palace and Tower. Terrorists at the Oberoi seized and killed hostages on November 26–27 and began hide-and-seek gun battles with members of the National Security Guard. The Guard restored order during the afternoon of November 28.
- Eight people were killed at Nariman House, an ultra-orthodox Jewish Lubavitch-Chabad center. On the night of November 26–27, terrorists attacked the center and seized hostages, including the center's rabbi and his wife. As gunshots were intermittently heard inside Nariman House, commandos assaulted the building on the morning of November 28 and secured the center by nighttime. Although many hostages were freed, others were killed by the terrorists. Victims included the rabbi and his wife.
- Members of the terrorist unit struck several other targets around the city, including the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus (where dozens were killed), the popular Leopald Café (frequented by tourists), and the Cama and GT Hospitals.

Indian security forces were caught off guard by the scope and violence of the assault. By the time order was restored, more than 160 people had been killed and hundreds more injured. Nine terrorists and approximately 20 police officers and soldiers were killed. The lone survivor among the terrorists signed a seven-page confession approximately 2 weeks after the attack, in which he confirmed that the men were members of Lashkar-e-Taiba (Army of the Pure), a Pakistan-based

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Islamist organization. He described his weapons training at several Lashkar camps in Pakistan and his indoctrination on alleged Indian atrocities against Muslims. Training in Karachi, Pakistan, included how to operate fast boats. When he and nine others embarked on a ship in late November, each man was issued an AK-47 assault rifle, hand grenades, and ammunition. They were ordered to maximize casualties on their mission.

The involvement of Lashkar-e-Taiba resulted in an escalation in tensions between India and Pakistan. Distrust was exacerbated because of Lashkar's long affiliation with Pakistan's Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI). This affiliation was instrumental in the group's rise to prominence and viability within the Islamist movement, largely because ISI allowed the group to engage in recruitment, training, logistical support, and networking. In fact, ISI patronage allowed the group to operate rather openly in Pakistan. Lashkar's initial role as a Pakistani proxy against India in Kashmir eventually grew into a sizable movement with wealthy patrons from Saudi Arabia and other countries. Their sophisticated use of the Internet permitted the group to communicate with fellow Islamists in Asia and the Middle East, thus enhancing its international image and contacts. Significantly, Lashkar operatives fought in Iraq against the American-led occupation.

Chapter Perspective 6.3 describes Holocaust denial, a conspiracy belief that claims to debunk the **Nazi Holocaust.** It is an example of how ideological and religious extremists perpetuate conspiratorial worldviews.

CHAPTER PERSPECTIVE 6.3

Holocaust Denial[a]

Among the many conspiracy theories found on the far and fringe right wing and among Middle Eastern extremists is the argument that the Nazi Holocaust (genocide against European Jews) never occurred. The underlying belief is that the Holocaust is a hoax, that the Nazis never systematically murdered any ethnic group, and that death camps such as Auschwitz were merely detention or work facilities. Holocaust denial has become a fundamental tenet for many tendencies on the reactionary right and has been repeated by fairly high-profile individuals. There have been publications and Web sites dedicated to this theory.

In the United States, this is an anti-Semitic conspiracy theory that was promulgated by two right-wing organizations—the Liberty Lobby and the Institute for Historical Review—beginning in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Neo-Nazi groups, Ku Klux Klan factions, and Patriot survivalists have all been known to cite the "hoax" of the Holocaust to justify their anti-Semitic conspiracy theories. Although Holocaust denial is mostly a white racial supremacist phenomenon in the United States, it has been endorsed by other domestic groups such as the Nation of Islam, which has historically promoted African American racial supremacy.

The conspiracy theory has found an international audience among Western neofascists, anti-Zionists, and extremist groups in the Middle East. In December 2006, a major international conference was convened in Tehran, Iran, to promote Holocaust denial.[b] It drew scholars, researchers, and anti-Semitic activists from many countries, including anti-Semitic writer Georges Thiel from France and racial supremacist David Duke from the United States. The 2-day conference was sponsored by the Iranian government at the behest of President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, who publicly called the Holocaust a myth in 2005. The United Nations General Assembly passed a resolution condemning Holocaust denial in January 2007.[c]

Holocaust denial should be considered to be a facet of broader anti-Semitic tendencies, such as the promulgation of *The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion.*

a. For an excellent discussion of Holocaust denial, see Deborah E. Lipstadt, *Denying the Holocaust: The Growing Assault on Truth and Memory* (New York: Plume, 1994).

b. Nazila Fathi, "Holocaust Deniers and Skeptics Gather in Iran," *New York Times,* December 11, 2006.

c. The Associated Press, "U.N. Condemns Holocaust Denial," *Los Angeles Times,* January 27, 2007.

The Practice of Religious Terrorism

Understanding Jihad as a Primary Religious Motive: An Observation and Caveat

Keeping the idiosyncratic quality of religious terrorism in mind, it is arguably necessary to make a sensitive observation—and caveat—about the study of religious terrorism in the modern era. The observation is that today, the incidence of religious terrorism is disproportionately committed by radical Islamists:

> Popular Western perception equates radical Islam with terrorism. . . . There is, of course, no Muslim or Arab monopoly in the field of religious fanaticism; it exists and leads to acts of violence in the United States, India, Israel, and many other countries. But the frequency of Muslim- and Arab-inspired terrorism is still striking. . . . A discussion of religion-inspired terrorism cannot possibly confine itself to radical Islam, but it has to take into account the Muslim countries' preeminent position in this field.[11]

The caveat is the degree of misunderstanding in the West about the historical and cultural origins of the growth of radical interpretations of Islam. One is the common belief that the concept of holy war is an underlying principle of the Islamic faith. Another is that Muslims are united in supporting jihad. This is simplistic and fundamentally incorrect. Although the term *jihad* is widely presumed in the West to refer exclusively to waging war against nonbelievers, an **Islamic jihad** is not the equivalent of a Christian Crusade. Chapter Perspective 6.4 provides some clarification of the concept of jihad.

Jihad: Struggling in the Way of God

The concept of jihad is a central tenet in Islam. Contrary to misinterpretations common in the West, the term literally means a sacred struggle or effort rather than an armed conflict or fanatical holy war.[a] Although a jihad can certainly be manifested as a holy war, it more correctly refers to the duty of Muslims to personally strive "in the way of God."[b]

This is the primary meaning of the term as used in the Quran, which refers to an internal effort to reform bad habits in the Islamic community or within the individual Muslim. The term is also used more specifically to denote a war waged in the service of religion.[c]

Regarding how one should wage jihad,

> The **greater jihad** refers to the struggle each person has within him or herself to do what is right. Because of human pride, selfishness, and sinfulness, people of faith must constantly wrestle with themselves and strive to do what is right and good. The **lesser jihad** involves the outward defense of Islam. Muslims should be prepared to defend Islam, including military defense, when the community of faith is under attack.[d] [boldface added]

Thus, waging an Islamic jihad is not the same as waging a Christian crusade—it has a broader and more intricate meaning. Nevertheless, it is permissible—and even a duty—to wage war to defend the faith against aggressors. Under it, warfare is conceptually defensive; by contrast, the Crusades were conceptually offensive. Those who engage in armed jihad are known as *mujahideen*, or holy warriors. Mujahideen who receive martyrdom by being killed in the name of the faith will find that

> awaiting them in paradise are rivers of milk and honey, and beautiful young women. Those entering paradise are eventually reunited with their families and as martyrs stand in front of God as innocent as a newborn baby.[e]

The precipitating causes for the modern resurgence of the armed and radical jihadi movement are twofold: the revolutionary ideals and ideology of the 1979 Iranian Revolution and the practical application of jihad against the Soviet Union's occupation of Afghanistan.

Some radical Muslim clerics and scholars have concluded that the Afghan jihad brought God's judgment against the Soviet Union, leading to the collapse of its empire. As a consequence, radical jihadis fervently believe that they are fighting in the name of an inexorable force that will end in total victory and guarantee them a place in paradise.[f]

a. Karen Armstrong, *Islam: A Short History* (New York: Modern Library, 2000), 201.

b. Josh Burek and James Norton, "Q&A: Islamic Fundamentalism: A World-Renowned Scholar Explains Key Points of Islam," *Christian Science Monitor,* October 4, 2001.

c. Armstrong, *Islam,* 201.

d. Burek and Norton, "Q&A: Islamic Fundamentalism."

e. Walter Laqueur, *The New Terrorism: Fanaticism and the Arms of Mass Destruction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 100.

f. See Evan R. Goldstein, "How Just Is Islam's Just-War Tradition?" *The Chronicle Review,* April 18, 2008.

State-Sponsored Religious Terrorism

Government sponsorship of terrorism is not limited to providing support for ideological or ethno-national movements. It also incorporates state sponsorship of religious revolutionary movements.

National Case: Iran

Iran became a preeminent state sponsor of religious terrorism after the overthrow of the monarchy of **Shah Muhammed Reza Pahlavi** in 1979 and the creation of the theocratic Islamic Republic of Iran soon thereafter.

Iran has been implicated in the sponsorship of a number of groups known to have engaged in terrorist violence, making it a perennial entry on the Department of State's list of state sponsors of terrorism. The Iranian **Revolutionary Guards Corps** has a unit—the **Qods** (**Jerusalem**) **Force**—that promotes Islamic revolution abroad and the liberation of Jerusalem from non-Muslims. Members of the Revolutionary Guards have appeared in Lebanon and Sudan, and the United States designated the entire corps as a terrorist group in August 2007.[12] Significantly, Iranian officials have repeatedly announced the formation of Iranian "martyrdom" units who are prepared to engage in suicide attacks against American and Israeli targets.[13]

Case: Iranian Support for Lebanon's Hezbollah

An important example of Iranian support for politically sympathetic groups is the patronage and assistance Iran gives to Lebanon's **Hezbollah** movement. The Iran-Hezbollah relationship is important because of the central role Hezbollah has played in the region's political environment.

Hezbollah (Party of God) is a Shi'a movement in Lebanon that arose to champion the country's Shi'a population. The organization emerged during the Lebanese civil war and Israel's 1982 invasion as a strongly symbolic champion for Lebanese independence and justice for Lebanese Shi'a. It was responsible for hundreds of incidents of political violence during the 1980s and 1990s, which included kidnappings of Westerners in Beirut, suicide bombings, attacks against Israeli interests in South Lebanon, and attacks against Israel proper. Hezbollah operated under various names, such as Islamic Jihad and **Revolutionary Justice Organization.**

Hezbollah has for some time been closely linked to Iran. Hezbollah's leadership, although sometimes guarded about their identification with Iran, has said publicly that they support the ideals of the Iranian Revolution. Their ultimate goal is to create an Islamic republic in Lebanon, and they consider Israel an enemy of all Muslims. Hezbollah tends to consider Iran a "big brother" for its movement. At their root, the ideological bonds between the movement and the Iranian Revolution are strong. These bonds allowed Iran's support to extend beyond ideological identification toward overt sponsorship. Beginning in the 1980s, Iran deployed members of its Revolutionary Guards Corps into Lebanon's **Beka'a Valley**—then under Syrian occupation—to organize Hezbollah into an effective fighting force. Iran provided training, funding, and other logistical support. This

was done with the acquiescence of Syria, so that Hezbollah would also become a pro-Syrian movement.

Case: Iranian Support for Palestinian Islamists

Iran has also promoted movements that directly confront the Israelis in Gaza, in the West Bank, and inside Israel's borders. Since the early days of the Iranian Revolution, the Iranian regime has never been guarded about its goal to liberate Jerusalem. To achieve it, Iran has likewise never been guarded about its support for Palestinian organizations that reject dialogue and negotiations with the Israelis. Iran has, in fact, helped the Palestinian cause significantly by promoting the operations of religious movements. For example, two militant Islamic organizations—Palestine Islamic Jihad (PIJ) and Hamas (Islamic Resistance Movement)—are Palestinian extremist groups that have received important support from Iran. Both groups have perpetrated many acts of terrorism, including suicide attacks, bombings, shootings, and other violent assaults.

PIJ is not a single organization but instead a loose affiliation of factions, an Islamic revolutionary movement that advocates violent jihad to form a Palestinian state. Iranian support for PIJ includes military instruction and logistical support. PIJ members have appeared in Hezbollah camps in Lebanon's Beka'a Valley and in Iran, and planning for terrorist attacks has apparently taken place in these locations. Members who received this training were infiltrated back into Gaza and the West Bank to wage jihad against Israel.

Hamas's roots lie in the Palestinian branch of the Muslim Brotherhood. It operates as both a social service organization and an armed resistance group that promotes jihad. Because of its social service component, Iran's **Fund for the Martyrs** has disbursed millions of dollars to Hamas. Hamas posted a representative to Iran who held a number of meetings with top Iranian officials. Iran has also provided Hamas with the same type of support that it provides PIJ, including military instruction, logistical support, training in Hezbollah's Beka'a Valley camps (before the Syrian withdrawal), and training in Iran. Hamas operatives have returned from these facilities to Gaza and the West Bank.

Regional Case: Pakistan and India

India and Pakistan are seemingly implacable rivals. Much of this rivalry is grounded in religious animosity between the Hindu and Muslim communities of the subcontinent, but sponsorship of terrorist proxies has kept the region in a state of nearly constant tension. Hindus and Muslims in Southwest Asia have engaged in sectarian violence since 1947, when British colonial rule ended. During and after the British withdrawal, communal fighting and terrorism between Hindus and Muslims led to the partition of British India into mostly Muslim East Pakistan and West Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and mostly Hindu India. Since independence, conflict has been ongoing between Pakistan and India over many issues, including Indian support for Bangladesh's war of independence from Pakistan, disputed borders,

support for religious nationalist terrorist organizations, the development of nuclear arsenals, and the disputed northern region of Jammu and Kashmir.

Pakistan, through its intelligence agency, the **Directorate for Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI),** has a long history of supporting insurgent groups fighting against Indian interests. Religious terrorist groups in the Indian state of Punjab and in Jammu and Kashmir have received Pakistani aid in what has become a high-stakes conflict between two nuclear powers that can also field large conventional armies. The Pakistan-India conflict is arguably as volatile as the Arab-Israeli rivalry but with many times the manpower and firepower. This is especially noteworthy because both countries have nuclear arsenals.

Dissident Religious Terrorism in the Modern Era

Dissident religious terrorism is political violence conducted by groups of fervent religious true believers with faith in the sacred righteousness of their cause. Any behavior in the defense of this cause is considered not only justifiable but also blessed. As discussed, most major religions—in particular, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, and Hinduism—have extremist adherents, some of whom have engaged in terrorist violence. Smaller religions and cults have similar adherents. Among the ubiquitous principles are the convictions that they are defending their faith from attack by nonbelievers or that their faith as indisputable and a universal guiding principle must be advanced for the salvation of the faithful. These principles are manifested in various ways and to varying degrees by religious extremists but are usually at the core of the belief system.

From the perspective of religious radicals in the Middle East, violence done in the name of God is perfectly rational behavior because God is on their side. Many of the holy sites in the region are sacred to more than one faith, such as Jerusalem, where a convergence of claims exists among Muslims, Jews, and Christians. When these convergences occur, some extremists believe that the claims of other faiths are inherently blasphemous. Because of this sort of indisputable truth, some extremists believe that God wishes for nonbelievers to be driven from sacred sites or otherwise barred from legitimizing their claims.

Case: The Grand Mosque Incident

The framework for Muslim life is based on the Five Pillars of Islam. The Five Pillars are faith, prayer, charity (*zakat*), fasting during the month of Ramadan, and the hajj (pilgrimage) to the holy city of Mecca, Saudi Arabia. In November 1979, during their hajj, 300 radicals occupied the Grand Mosque in Mecca. Their objective was to foment a popular Islamic uprising against the ruling Saud royal family. After nearly 2 weeks of fighting, the Grand Mosque was reoccupied by the Saudi army, but not before the Saudis called in French counterterrorist commandos to complete the operation. More than 100 radicals were killed, and scores were later executed by the Saudi government. During the fighting, Iranian radio accused the

United States and Israel of plotting the takeover, and a Pakistani mob attacked the U.S. embassy, killing two Americans.

Case: The Hebron Mosque Massacre

On February 25, 1994, a New York–born physician, **Baruch Goldstein,** fired on worshippers inside the Ibrahim Mosque at the Cave of the Patriarchs holy site in the city of Hebron, Israel. As worshippers performed their morning prayer ritual, Goldstein methodically shot them with an Israel Defense Forces Galil assault rifle. He fired approximately 108 rounds in about 10 minutes before a crowd of worshippers rushed him and killed him. According to official government estimates, he killed 29 people and wounded another 125;[14] according to unofficial estimates, approximately 50 people died.[15] In reprisal for the Hebron massacre, the Palestinian Islamic fundamentalist movement Hamas launched a bombing campaign that included the first wave of human suicide bombers.

Case: The Rabin Assassination

On November 4, 1995, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated by **Yigal Amir,** who had stalked Rabin for about a year[16] and shot him in the back with hollow-point bullets in full view of Israeli security officers. Amir was a Jewish extremist who said that he acted fully within the requirements of Halacha, the Jewish code.[17]

Case: Sectarian Violence in Iraq

Iraq is a multicultural nation with significant but varying strong ethno-national, tribal, and religious identities. The demography consists of the following subpopulations:[18]

Arab: 75% to 80%

Kurdish: 15% to 20%

Turkoman, Assyrian, or other: 5%

Shi'a Muslim: 60% to 65%

Sunni Muslim: 32% to 37%

Christian or other: 3%

Tensions that had simmered during the Hussein years led to difficulty in fully integrating all groups into accepting a single national identity. For example, many Arabs who had moved into northern Kurdish regions after native Kurds were forced out became pariahs when Kurds returned to reclaim their homes and land. Some violence was directed against the Arab migrants. More ominously, the Sunni minority—which had dominated the country under Hussein—found itself recast

as a political minority when the country began to move toward democracy when an interim government was established in June 2004. Sunnis expressed their dissatisfaction when large numbers refused to participate in elections to form a Transitional National Assembly in January 2005.

Also in Iraq, religious extremists—it is unclear whether they are Sunnis or Shi'a—conducted a series of attacks on non-Muslim cultural institutions. These included liquor stores (often owned by Christians) and barber shops (that offered Western-style haircuts).[19]

Readers should be familiar with the essential distinctions between the Sunni and Shi'a Islamic traditions, which Table 6.2 summarizes.

These examples confirm that religious terrorism in the Middle East occurs between, and within, local religious groups. Radical true believers of many faiths attack not only those of other religions but also "fallen" members of their own. Attacks against proclaimed apostates can be quite violent.

❖ **TABLE 6.2**   Two Traditions, One Religion

Sunni and Shi'a Muslims represent the two predominant traditions in Islam. Demographically, Sunni Islam represents about 85% to 90% of all Muslims, and Shi'a Islam represents about 10% to 15%. They are distinct practices that arise from, and worship within, a core system of belief.

Unlike Christian denominations, which can diverge markedly, Sunnis and Shi'a differ less on divergent interpretations of religious faith and more on historical sources of religious authority. The split arose from the death of the prophet Muhammed and the question of who among his successors represented true authority within the faith.

Sunni Muslims	Shi'a Muslims
Historically accept all four caliphs as successors to Muhammed, including the caliph Ali, Muhammed's son-in-law and cousin.	Historically reject the first three caliphs before Ali as being illegitimate successors to Muhammed.
Only the prophet Muhammed and the holy Quran are authorities on questions of religion. The Shi'a succession of imams is rejected.	As the first legitimate caliph, Ali was also the first in a historical line of imams, or leaders within Muslim communities.
Historically, leaders within the Islamic world have been political leaders and heads of governments rather than religious leaders.	Imams serve as both political and religious leaders.
There is no strictly organized clergy. For example, no single religious leader can claim ultimate authority, and nonclergy may lead prayers.	Imams have strict authority, and their pronouncements must be obeyed. Imams are without sin and appoint their successors.

*Movement Case: The International
Mujahideen (Holy Warriors for the Faith)*

The mujahideen are Islamic fighters who have sworn a vow to take up arms to defend the faith. They tend to be believers in fundamentalist interpretations of Islam that have defined their jihad, or personal struggle, to be one of fighting and dying on behalf of the faith.

The modern conceptualization of the mujahideen began during the Soviet war in Afghanistan, which dated from the Soviet invasion of the country in December 1979 to its withdrawal in February 1989. Although several Afghan rebel groups (mostly ethnically based) fought the Soviets, they collectively referred to themselves as mujahideen. To them, their war of resistance was a holy jihad. Significantly, Muslim volunteers from around the world served alongside them. These **Afghan Arabs** played an important role in spreading the modern jihadi ideology throughout the Muslim world.

Reasons for taking up arms as a jihadi[20] vary. Some recruits answer calls for holy war from religious scholars who might declare, for example, that Islam is being repressed by the West. Others respond to clear and identifiable threats to their people or country, such as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, the U.S.-led occupation of Iraq, or the Israeli occupation of Gaza and the West Bank. Others may join on behalf of the cause of other Muslims, such as the wars fought by Bosnian Muslims or Algerian rebels. Regardless of the precipitating event, mujahideen are characterized by their faith in several basic values.

❖ **Pʜᴏᴛᴏ 6.3**   Holy war against Communist invaders. Afghan mujahideen during their jihad against occupying Soviet troops.

The ideology of the modern mujahideen requires selfless sacrifice in defense of the faith. Accepting the title of mujahideen means that one must live, fight, and die in accordance with religious teachings. Mujahideen believe in the inevitability of victory; because the cause is being waged on behalf of the faith and in the name of God, both the faith and God will prevail. In this defense of the faith, trials and ordeals should be endured without complaint because the pain suffered in this world will be rewarded after death in paradise. If one lives a righteous and holy life, for example, by obeying the moral proscriptions of the Quran, one can enjoy these proscribed pleasures in the afterlife.

As applied by the mujahideen, the defensive ideology of jihad holds that when one defends the faith against the unfaithful, death is martyrdom, and through death paradise is ensured.[21]

Organization Case: Al Qaeda's Religious Foundation

The most prominent pan-Islamic revolutionary organization of this era is Saudi national **Osama bin Laden**'s cell-based Al Qaeda (the Base), which seeks to unite Muslims throughout the world in a holy war. Al Qaeda is not a traditional hierarchical revolutionary organization, nor does it call for its followers to do much more than engage in terrorist violence in the name of the faith. It is best described as a loose network of like-minded Islamic revolutionaries. Al Qaeda is different because it

- Holds no territory
- Has virtually no state sponsorship
- Does not champion the aspirations of an ethno-national group
- Promulgates vague political demands
- Has no top-down organizational structure
- Has a completely religious worldview

Al Qaeda's religious orientation is a reflection of Osama bin Laden's sectarian ideological point of view. Bin Laden's worldview was created by his exposure to Islam-motivated armed resistance. As a boy, he inherited between $20 million and $80 million, with estimates ranging as high as $300 million, from his father. When the Soviets invaded Afghanistan in 1979, bin Laden eventually joined with thousands of other non-Afghan Muslims who traveled to Peshawar, Pakistan, to prepare to wage jihad. However, his main contribution to the holy war was to solicit financial and matériel (military hardware) contributions from wealthy Arab sources. He apparently excelled at this. The final leg on his journey toward international Islamic terrorism occurred when he and thousands of other Afghan veterans—the Afghan Arabs—returned to their countries to carry on their struggle in the name of Islam. Beginning in 1986, bin Laden organized a training camp that grew in 1988 into the Al Qaeda group. While in his home country of Saudi Arabia, bin Laden "became enraged when King Fahd let American forces, with their rock music and Christian and Jewish troops, wage the Persian Gulf war from Saudi soil in 1991."[22]

❖ **PHOTO 6.4** Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. From a video of the Jordanian-born leader of Al Qaeda in Iraq. Al-Zarqawi was accused of leading a campaign of kidnappings and beheadings of foreign workers as well as for scores of bombings that killed hundreds of Shi'as and U.S. troops. He was killed in a U.S. air strike in June 2006.

After the Gulf War, bin Laden and a reinvigorated Al Qaeda moved to its new home in Sudan for 5 years. It was there that the Al Qaeda network began to grow into a self-sustaining financial and training base for promulgating jihad. Bin Laden and his followers configured the Al Qaeda network with one underlying purpose: "launching and leading a holy war against the Western infidels he could now see camped out in his homeland, near the holiest shrines in the Muslim world."[23]

Al Qaeda has inspired Islamic fundamentalist revolutionaries and terrorists in a number of countries. It became a significant source of financing and training for thousands of jihadis. The network is essentially a nonstate catalyst for transnational religious radicalism and violence.

When Al Qaeda moved to Afghanistan, its reputation as a financial and training center attracted many new recruits and led to the creation of a loose network of cells and sleepers in dozens of countries. Significantly, aboveground radical Islamic groups with links to Al Qaeda—such as **Abu Sayyaf** in the Philippines and **Laskar Jihad** (**Militia of the Holy War**) in Indonesia—took root in some nations and overtly challenged authority through acts of terrorism.
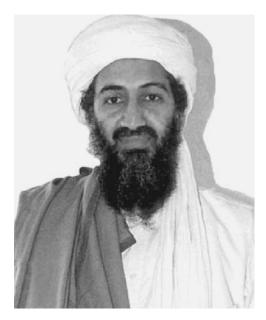
Cult Case: Aum Shinrikyō (Supreme Truth)

Aum Shinrikyō is a Japan-based cult founded by **Shoko Asahara** in 1987. Its goal under Asahara's leadership was to seize control of Japan and then the world. The core belief is that Armageddon is imminent. One component is that the United

States will wage World War III against Japan.[24] As one top member of the cult explained, "This evil [of the modern age] will be shed in a 'catastrophic discharge' . . . [and only those who] repent their evil deeds . . . [will survive]."[25]

At its peak membership, Aum Shinrikyō had perhaps 9,000 members in Japan and 40,000 members around the world, thousands of them in Russia.[26] Asahara claimed to be the reincarnation of Jesus Christ and Buddha and urged his followers to arm themselves if they were to survive Armageddon. This apocalyptic creed led to the stockpiling of chemical and biological weapons, including nerve gas, anthrax, and Q-fever.[27] One report indicated that Aum Shinrikyō members had traveled to Africa to acquire the deadly Ebola virus. Several mysterious biochemical incidents occurred in Japan, including one in June 1994 in the city of Matsumoto, where 7 people died and 264 were injured from a release of gas into an apartment building.[28]

The Tokyo Subway Nerve Gas Attack. On March 20, 1995, members of Aum Shinrikyō positioned several packages containing sarin nerve gas on five trains in the Tokyo subway system scheduled to travel through Tokyo's Kasumigaseki train station. The containers were simultaneously punctured with umbrellas, thus releasing the gas into the subway system. Twelve people were killed and an estimated 5,000 to 6,000 were injured.[29] Tokyo's emergency medical system was unable to adequately respond to the attack, so that only about 500 victims were evacuated and the remaining victims had to make their own way to local hospitals.

❖ **Photo 6.5** The United States **Rewards for Justice** poster for Osama bin Laden, founder of the Al Qaeda terrorist organization.

The police seized tons of chemicals the cult had stockpiled. Asahara was arrested and charged with 17 counts of murder and attempted murder, kidnapping, and drug trafficking. A new leader, Fumihiro Joyu, assumed control of Aum Shinrikyō in 2000 and renamed the group Aleph (the first letter in the Hebrew and Arabic alphabets). He has publicly renounced violence, and the cult has enjoyed new growth in membership. A Japanese court sentenced Shoko Asahara to death by hanging on February 27, 2004.

Aum Shinrikyō is an example of the potential terrorist threat from apocalyptic cults and sects that are completely insular, segregated from mainstream society. Some cults are content to simply prepare for the End of Days, but others—like Aum Shinrikyō—are not averse to giving the apocalypse a violent push. The threat from chemical and other weapons of mass destruction will be explored further in Chapter 10.

Table 6.3 summarizes the activity profiles of several of the terrorist groups and movements discussed in this chapter.

❖ **TABLE 6.3** Religious Terrorism

Although religious terrorist groups and movements share the general profile of religious identity and often are rooted in similar belief systems, they arise out of unique historical, political, and cultural environments that are peculiar to their respective countries. With few exceptions, most religious movements are grounded in these idiosyncratic influences.

Activity Profile		
Group	**Constituency**	**Adversary**
Aum Shinrikyō	Fellow believers	The existing world order
Lord's Resistance Army	Fellow believers and members of the Acholi tribe	Ugandan government and "nonpurified" Acholis
Palestine Islamic Jihad	Palestinian Muslims	Israel
Hamas	Palestinian Muslims	Israel
Al Qaeda	Faithful Muslims, as defined by Al Qaeda	Secular governments, nonbelievers, the West
Abu Sayyaf	Filipino Muslims	Filipino government, Western influence
Laskar Jihad	Moluccan Muslims	Moluccan Christians
Jammu-Kashmir groups	Jammu-Kashmir Muslims	India
Sikh groups	Punjabi Sikhs	India
Algerian/North African cells	Algerian Muslims and Muslims worldwide	Secular Algerian government, the West

Trends and Projections

Religion is a central feature of the New Terrorism, which is characterized by asymmetrical tactics, cell-based networks, indiscriminate attacks against soft targets, and the threatened use of high-yield weapons technologies. Al Qaeda and its Islamist allies pioneered this strategy, and it serves as a model for similarly motivated individuals and groups. Religious extremists understand that if they take on these characteristics, their agendas and grievances will receive extensive attention and their adversaries will be sorely challenged to defeat them. It is therefore reasonable to presume that religious terrorists will practice this strategy for the near future.

Having made this observation, it is important to critically assess the following questions: What trends are likely to challenge the global community in the immediate

future? Who will enlist as new cadres in extremist religious movements? Who will artic-ulate the principles of their guiding ideologies? The following patterns, trends, and events are offered for critical consideration:

- *Extremist religious propaganda cannot be prevented.* All religious extremists—Christian, Islamic, Jewish, and others—have discovered the utility of the Internet and the global media. They readily communicate with each other through the Internet, and their Web sites have become forums for propa-ganda and information.[30] Cable television and other members of the globalized media frequently broadcast interviews and communiqués.

- *A new generation of Islamist extremists has been primed.* In a study reported in January 2005, the Central Intelligence Agency's National Intelligence Council concluded that the war in Iraq created a new training and recruit-ment ground for potential terrorists, replacing Afghanistan in this respect. As one official suggested, "There is even, under the best scenario . . . the like-lihood that some of the jihadists [will go home], and will therefore disperse to various other countries."[31]

- *Al Qaeda has become more than an organization—it evolved to become a symbol and ideology.* Osama bin Laden, founder and leader of Al Qaeda, pre-sented himself in a series of communiqués as an elder statesman and intel-lectual of Islam. He recast himself as a symbolic mentor for the next generation of fighters.[32]

- *The jihadi movement has become a globalized phenomenon.* The dissemina-tion of information and images through the media and the Internet created a global sense of solidarity among Islamists. Potential recruits easily access information, and many new volunteers are young people who live in the West, often in Europe.[33]

- Christian extremists continue to promote a religious motivation for the war on terrorism. Postings on some Christian Web sites and comments from some Christian leaders, usually in the United States, suggest that the Islamic faith is wrong or evil or both, and the war on terrorism is part of a divine plan pitting the true faith against Islam.[34]

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Religious movements are motivated by a belief that an otherworldly power sanc-tions and commands their behavior. Some terrorists are motivated primarily by faith, whereas others use religion secondarily. The latter movements are motivated by nationalism or other ideology as a primary inspiration but are united by an underlying religious identity. The goals of both primary and secondary religious terrorism are to construct a new society based on a religious or ethno-national identity. The terrorist behavior of both tendencies is active and public.

State-sponsored religious terrorism arises in governments that pursue inter-national agendas by mentoring and encouraging religious proxies. The case of

Iranian support for religious dissident terrorists is an example of a theocracy promoting its own revolutionary agenda. Syria is an example of a secular government that supports religious movements from a sense of common cause against a mutual enemy. Dissident religious terrorism involves attacks by self-proclaimed true believers against members of other faiths and perceived apostasies within their own faith. Some dissident groups espouse mystical or cult-like doctrines outside the belief systems of major religions.

DISCUSSION BOX

This chapter's Discussion Box is intended to stimulate critical debate about faith-motivated terrorism within major religions.

The One True Faith

Most religious traditions have produced extremist movements whose members believe that their faith and value system is superior. This concept of the one true faith has been used by many fundamentalists to justify violent religious intolerance. Religious terrorists are modern manifestations of historical traditions of extremism within the world's major faiths. For example,

- Within Christianity, the medieval Crusades were a series of exceptionally violent military campaigns against Muslims, Jews, and heretical Christian sects. Later, during the 16th and 17th centuries, Catholic and Protestant Christians waged relentless brutal wars against each other. In the modern era, Christian terrorists and extremists have participated in communal fighting in numerous countries and, in the United States, have bombed abortion clinics and committed other acts of violence.
- Within Judaism, the Old Testament is replete with references to the ancient Hebrews' faith-based mandate to wage war against non-Jewish occupiers of the Promised Land. In the modern era, the late **Rabbi Meir Kahane's** Kach (Kahane Chai) movement in Israel has likewise advocated the expulsion of all Arabs from Israel. Two members of the **Jewish Defense League (JDL)** were arrested in the United States in December 2001 on charges of conspiring to bomb Muslim mosques and the offices of a U.S. congressman in Los Angeles.
- Within Islam, the relative tolerance of the 15th and 16th centuries is counterbalanced by intolerance today among movements such as Afghanistan's Taliban, Palestine's Hamas, and Lebanon's Hezbollah. Examples of political and communal violence waged in the name of Islam are numerous. Overt official repression has also been imposed in the name of the Islamic faith, as in Saudi Arabia's policy of relegating women to second-class status.

Modern religious extremism is arguably rooted in faith-based natural law. Natural law is a so-called philosophical higher law theoretically discoverable through human reason and references to moral traditions and religious texts. In fact, most religious texts have passages that can be selectively interpreted to encourage extremist intolerance. To religious extremists, it is God's law that has been revealed to—and properly interpreted by—the extremist movement.

Discussion Questions

1. Is faith-motivated activism a constructive force for change?

2. At what point does the character of faith-motivated activism become extremist and terrorist?

3. Does faith-based natural law justify acts of violence?

4. Why do religious traditions that supposedly promote peace, justice, and rewards for spiritual devotion have so many followers who piously engage in violence, repression, and intolerance?

5. What is the future of faith-based terrorism?

KEY TERMS AND CONCEPTS

The following topics were discussed in this chapter and can be found in the glossary:

Abu Sayyaf

Afghan Arabs

Albigensian Crusade

al-Sabbah, Hasan ibn

Amir, Yigal

Asahara, Shoko

Aum Shinrikyō

Beka'a Valley

Bin Laden, Osama

Crusades

Directorate for Inter-
  Services Intelligence (ISI)

Fund for the Martyrs

Goldstein, Baruch

Greater jihad

Hezbollah

Holy Spirit Mobile Force

Islamic jihad

Jewish Defense League (JDL)

Jihad

Kahane, Rabbi Meir

Kony, Josef

Lakwena, Alice Auma

Laskar Jihad (Militia of the
  Holy War)

Lesser jihad

Lord's Resistance Army

Martyrdom

Nazi Holocaust

Okhrana

Order of Assassins

Pahlavi, Shah Muhammed
  Reza

Phansi

Pogroms

Pope Urban II

*Protocols of the Learned
  Elders of Zion*

Qods (Jerusalem) Force

Revolutionary Guards Corps

Revolutionary Justice
  Organization

Rewards for Justice

Thuggees

TERRORISM ON THE WEB

Log on to the Web-based student study site at www.sagepub.com/martiness2e for additional Web sources and study resources.

Web Exercise

Using this chapter's recommended Web sites, conduct an online investigation of religious extremism.

1. What commonalities can you find among the religious Web sites? What basic values are similar? In what ways do they differ?

2. Are the religious sites effective propaganda? How would you advise the site designers to appeal to different constituencies?

For an online search of historical and cultural issues pertaining to religious extremism, readers should activate the search engine on their Web browser and enter the following keywords:

"Christian Crusades"

"Jihad"

Recommended Readings

The following publications discuss the motives, goals, and characteristics of religious extremism.

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