Daniel Pipes

Miniatures

Views of Islamic and
Middle Eastern Politics

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Middle Eastern Politics

Daniel Pipes

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For Nina Rosenwald, in Friendship

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INTRODUCTION

The German philosopher Georg W. F. Hegel wrote in 1837 about Muslim states: “In its spread Mahometanism founded many kingdoms and dynasties. On this boundless sea there is a continual onward movement, nothing abides firm.”^{*} This emphasis on the volatility of Muslim politics is as true for the twenty-first century as it was in the seventh or the nineteenth. Indeed, at present, Hegel’s perception of “continual onward movement” has become *the* preoccupation of world politics—and at the central concern of the roughly hundred essays that follow.

These essays represent a crossover: I have a Ph.D. in the medieval history of Islam, yet much of my writing in recent years takes the shape of a weekly column that appears in newspapers and on websites. I endeavor to bring my specialized knowledge to a general audience via miniature research essays; thus the name of this volume.

This undertaking is made possible by the acute interest in the topics I cover; indeed, no single region of the world has quite dominated American and Western public discourse as does the Middle East today. This results mainly but not exclusively from the attacks of September 11 and the ensuing war on terrorism. Other prominent topics include militant Islam, Muslims in the West, the Arab-Israeli conflict, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the price of oil and gas, and intra-Western debates over these issues.

Miniatures’ sections closely reflect those themes.

Part 1 covers the war on terror. I argue (in chapter 1) that terror’s war against Americans began not with the destruction of the World Trade Center in 2001 but with the double assault on U.S. embassies in November 1979. Many of the pre-9/11 essays manifest my frustration that so few Westerners recognized the state of war that ex-

^{*}Georg W.F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Geschichte*, trans. J. Sibree as *Philosophy of History* (New York: Dover, 1956), p. 358.

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isted. Over this twenty-two-year period, from November 1979 to September 2001, my writings leveled four main criticisms at U.S. government policy: its insistence that militant Islamic attacks on Americans were criminal incidents, not war; its unwillingness to destroy the enemy forces; its ignoring the ideology of militant Islam that motivated these attacks; and its reluctance to make the policy changes required to win the war.

After 9/11 (chapter 2), I gave the Bush administration mixed grades, praising it for addressing the first two mistakes and protesting against the continuation of the latter two. On the positive side, Washington did instantly shunt aside the criminal paradigm in favor of the military one (“war on terrorism”); the expeditionary force to Afghanistan, plus troops in such locations as the Philippines, Georgia, and Yemen, evidenced an intent to root out enemy forces.* On the negative side, with a few exceptions, officials continued to ignore the militant Islamic ideology that motivates the attacks (“war on terrorism”). And while some policy changes did occur (for example, in the areas of immigration, airline security, and police surveillance of places of worship), I found these inadequate. Two out of four is not good enough; I worry that unless politicians summon the courage to make all the necessary changes, there will be a heavy price to pay.

The politically correct interpretation of the Muslim world by the U.S. government, leading media, and academic specialists holds that militant Islamic violence is a “fringe form of Islamic extremism” repudiated by the overwhelmingly moderate Muslim majority, or even that it has nothing to do with Islam at all (“killers whose only faith is hate” was how the president described those behind a series of murderous attacks in Riyadh in May 2003).** In chapter 3, I report on developments in the Muslim world after 9/11—joy at the death of thousands of Americans, wide Muslim support for bin Laden and dismay at the fall of the Taliban regime, a Taliban-like movement growing in Saudi Arabia, the spread of militant Islam to areas far beyond the Middle East—by way of demonstrating that the establishment position offers political bromides, not serious analysis.

*I do not include the overthrow of Saddam Hussein as part of this undertaking, seeing his regime as basically unconnected to militant Islam.

***Wall Street Journal*, 14 May 2003.

Shifting focus, part 2 looks at some general issues concerning Islam and Muslims. I begin (in chapter 4) with a basic point, that today's international crisis concerns not Islam the religion but militant Islam the ideology. This argument has three happy implications:

- This is not a religious war between Christendom and the *umma* (community of Muslims);
- Moderate Muslims have a vital role in the fight against militant Islam; and
- It is possible to devise policy goals to defeat and marginalize militant Islam.

I then focus on some details of militant Islam, noting the moral failings of Islamists, establishing the terrible reality of *jihad*, and noting the near-absence of religious freedom in the Middle East.

In addition to the traditional regions of Muslim habitation, Islam has, in the past four decades, developed a presence in the West. These immigrants, converts, and their descendants have vast implications for both sides, the Muslim and the Western (chapter 5). I take up various questions about American Islam—the number of American Muslims, their division into moderates and militants, and the acute tensions between those two groups that come out most evidently when atheistic or even secular Muslims express themselves. Looking further away, I note some major developments in Australia and Denmark.

The growth of militant Islamic institutions in the United States and their bullying their way into the public square (chapter 6) is a particular concern of mine. The Islamists demand special consideration in everything from school textbooks to university commencement speeches to government-subsidized television—and often they get it. These organizations do so well in large part because they succeed at presenting themselves as moderates, letting their true views come out only behind closed doors or by implication. I show some aspects of their real, extremist nature.

Part 3 looks at various political conflicts in the Middle East, especially the Arab war against Israel. Chapters 7 and 8 look at the eras of “Oslo Diplomacy” (1993-2000) and “Oslo War” (2000-03). The reader can see the evolution of my writing, from a mild concern in the early years to an ever-increasing agitation that peaks in late 2000 and then, as the folly of the Oslo presumptions become more widely recognized, a return to relative calm.

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Syria (chapter 9) has been a specialty of mine since 1985, with an emphasis on several themes: (1) how the sense of truncation gives Syrian politics a deep-seated expansionist edge; (2) how Westerners tend to reduce Syria to its relations with Israel, thereby missing the many other internal and external facets of that country; and (3) how Hafez al-Assad, ruler of Syria from 1970 until 2000, never intended to sign a peace treaty with Israel. I have devoted entire books to the first two subjects; here I provide interpretations over a seven-year period of Assad's policy vis-à-vis Israel, followed by a couple of posthumous reviews. I can claim to be the only analyst who predicted in January-March 2000 that Assad would not sign an agreement with Israel.

Iraq (chapter 10) has been a major problem since Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990, but a problem many that Americans preferred to ignore after their victory of early 1991. I offer one provocation (arguing for Washington to pull back until asked by others to take on the Iraqi dictator) but otherwise support the view that the U.S. government has no choice but to take on this foul aggressor, and the sooner the better. I strongly supported the campaign to overthrow Saddam Hussein when it finally came in March-April 2003.

Part 4 deals with the American interpretation of the Middle East, concentrating on government and scholars. The section on policy (chapter 11) takes a running start by reviewing the nearly two-century-history of the Arabists who have so deeply affected U.S. government attitudes, then looks at such specifics as the rationale for the U.S. subvention of Israel, the fact that Republicans support Israel more consistently than Democrats, strange moments in U.S. relations with Israel and with Egypt, and the case for holding the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia accountable for 9/11. (The two articles urging the victims and victims' families to sue the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia had a key role in inspiring the \$1 trillion case against Riyadh currently in preparation to go to trial.)

The final chapter (12) reports on scholarship, with an emphasis on revisionism. I report on the scholars who are turning early Islamic history upside down by throwing out the standard sources; on a historian who reverses the accepted understanding of the Ottoman Empire as a passive force; and an analyst (admittedly French, not American) who bucks all evidence to declare militant Islam a dying movement. The book rounds out with a review of the ironic role of

nineteenth-century Jewish scholars and a remarkable study of contemporary Arab thought.

As these writings imply, I believe it useful for a specialist like myself to peer ahead, going on the record with predictions, and warning of dangers. In the past I took three stands that were then controversial and now widely accepted: warning of militant Islam's assault on the West, predicting Hafez al-Assad would not sign a peace treaty with Israel, and anticipating that the Oslo process would end in disaster.

I continue to make such statements, two in particular: the "war on terror" can be won only when militant Islam, not terrorism, is recognized as the enemy; and the Arab-Israeli conflict will wind down only after the Palestinians accept the existence of Israel.

Making such statements has rewards and costs. On the positive side, there is the after-the-fact recognition that comes with getting it right. Two days after 9/11, for example, the *Boston Globe* said I "saw what lay ahead and tried to sound the alarm"* and the *National Post* of Canada observed in 2002 that "If the world had acted on [my] warnings, September 11 might never have happened."** The experience of predicting is less pleasant, however, before vindication arrives, when one finds oneself the object of hostile op-eds and editorials, insults on national television, and websites detailing one's alleged phobias and unsavory motivations. It can, in short, be painful to foresee developments, and then endure the waiting period for the world to catch up.

I thank Irving Louis Horowitz, editorial chairman and president emeritus of Transaction Publishers, for suggesting that I bring together in book form what I consider my best and most enduring short essays of recent years. I likewise thank those others on the Transaction staff—Mary Curtis especially—for turning this idea into the reality of cloth, paper, and ink.

I was not a columnist born, and I wish to thank those individuals who helped me become one. David Makovsky gave me my start as columnist in 1999, during his tenure as editor-in-chief of the *Jerusalem Post*, when he came to me with the unexpected and slightly

*Jeff Jacoby, "Our Enemies Mean What They Say," *Boston Globe*, 13 September 2001.

**Jonathan Kay, "Has Islamism Hit Its High-Water Mark?" *National Post*, 31 December 2002.

intoxicating invitation to write a column every two weeks. Thomas A. Rose, publisher and CEO of the *Jerusalem Post*, then urged me to take the column weekly, which I did in mid-2001. Robert McManus and Mark Cunningham invited me to write for the *New York Post* shortly after 9/11. I would also like to thank those editors at other papers—especially Natasha Hassan of the *National Post*, Steven Huntley of the *Chicago Sun-Times*, Thomas Winter of *Human Events*, and N. Richard Greenfield of the *Connecticut Jewish Ledger*—who see fit to publish my columns with some frequency.

My columns benefit from the help of many others. My co-authors (Steven Emerson, Lars Hedegaard, Zachary Rentz, Jonathan Schanzer, Alexander T. Stillman, Mimi Stillman, Tonya Ugoretz) helped make the articles here worth reading. Cynthia Dachowitz provides fast, focused research that gives many of my columns a factual base they would otherwise lack. Patrick Chisholm capably handles the column's syndication. Grayson Levy spurred me in early 2001 to put together a personal website, www.DanielPipes.org, maintains it for me, and sends out my writings to the wide world. Jane Maestro and the staff at the Middle East Forum run the organization so well that I can play hooky each week long enough to write a column. The Forum's board and donors provide the perch from which I can opine. Nina Rosenwald took on a leadership role when the Forum was yet fledgling, helping us through some tough spots. And my family has graciously tolerated my absences since 9/11.

Daniel Pipes
Philadelphia
June 2003

PART 1
WAR ON TERRORISM

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1

BEFORE 9/11

“DEATH TO AMERICA”

Terrorism’s war on America did not begin in September 2001. It began in November 1979, not long after Ayatollah Khomeini rode the slogan “Death to America” to power—and sure enough, the attacks on Americans soon began. Militant Islamic mobs besieged two U.S. embassies that month.

- In Iran, a militant Islamic mob took over the U.S. embassy in the capital Tehran and held fifty-two Americans hostage for the next 444 days. The rescue team sent to free those hostages in April 1980 suffered eight fatalities.
- In Pakistan, false rumors that U.S. troops had helped seize the Great Mosque in Mecca led to an attack on the embassy in Islamabad and the American Cultural Center in Lahore. The Pakistani authorities’ slow response gave the mobs time to burn both buildings, killing four persons in Islamabad, two of them Americans.

These were the first of what are by now nearly four thousand fatalities at the hands of militant Islam’s assault on Americans.

The Islamists’ initial major act of violence against Americans, killing sixty-three, took place in April 1983 when they attacked the U.S. Embassy in Beirut. As the analyst David Makovsky notes, Washington “beat a hasty exit, and Islamic militants saw this as a vindication that suicide bombing was... deadly effective.”

Other attacks included:

October 1983: 241 dead at the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut.

December 1983: five dead at the U.S. embassy in Kuwait.

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January 1984: the president of the American University of Beirut killed.

April 1984: eighteen dead near a U.S. airbase in Spain.

September 1984: sixteen dead at the U.S. embassy in Beirut (again).

December 1984: Two dead on a plane hijacked to Tehran.

June 1985: One dead on a plane hijacked to Beirut.

After a let-up, the attacks then restarted: Five and nineteen dead in Saudi Arabia in 1995 and 1996, 224 dead at the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in August 1998 and seventeen dead on the *USS Cole* in Yemen in October 2000.

Simultaneously, the murderous assault of militant Islam also took place on U.S. soil:

July 1980: an Iranian dissident killed in the Washington, D.C. area.

August 1983: a leader of the Ahmadiyya sect of Islam killed in Canton, Mich.

August 1984: three Indians killed in a suburb of Tacoma, Wash.

September 1986: a doctor killed in Augusta, Ga.

January 1990: an Egyptian freethinker killed in Tucson, Ariz.

November 1990: a Jewish leader killed in New York.

February 1991: an Egyptian Islamist killed in New York.

January 1993: two CIA staff killed outside agency headquarters in Langley, Va.

February 1993: six people killed at the World Trade Center.

March 1994: an Orthodox Jewish boy killed on the Brooklyn Bridge.

February 1997: a Danish tourist killed on the Empire State building.

October 1999: 217 passengers killed on an EgyptAir flight near New York City.

In all, 800 persons lost their lives in the course of attacks by militant Islam on Americans before September 2001—more than killed by any other enemy since the Vietnam War. (Further, this listing does not include the dozens more Americans in Israel killed by militant Islamic forces as well as further afield yet, including Americans killed in Pakistan, Kashmir, and the Philippines.)

And yet, these murders hardly registered. Washington threatened retribution (“You can run but you can’t hide”) for attacks against Americans, but hardly ever carried through. “Scandal” is how one Israeli pilot correctly describes the military’s inability to protect the World Trade Center or the Pentagon. Only with the events of September 11, 2001, did Americans finally realize that “Death to America” truly is the battle cry of this era’s most dangerous foe, militant Islam.

In retrospect, the mistake began when Iranians assaulted the U.S. embassy in Tehran and met with no resistance. Interestingly, a Marine sergeant present at the embassy that fateful day in November 1979 agrees with this assessment. As the militant Islamic mob invaded the embassy, Rodney V. Sickmann followed orders and protected neither himself nor the embassy. As a result, he was taken hostage and lived to tell the tale. (He now works for Anheuser-Busch.)

Looking back, he believes that passivity was a mistake. The Marines should have done their assigned duty, even if it cost their lives: “Had we opened fire on them, maybe we would only have lasted an hour.” But had they done that, they “could have changed history.” Standing their ground would have sent a powerful signal that the United States of America cannot be attacked with impunity. In contrast, the embassy’s surrender sent the opposite signal—that it’s open season on Americans. “If you look back, it started in 1979; it’s just escalated,” Sickmann correctly concludes.

To which one of the century’s great geostrategist thinkers, Robert Strausz-Hupé, adds his assent. Just before passing away early in 2002 at the age of ninety-eight, Strausz-Hupé wrote his final words, and they were about the war on terrorism: “I have lived long enough to see good repeatedly win over evil, although at a much higher cost than need have been paid. This time we have already paid the price of victory. It remains for us to win it.”

(8 September 2002)

KHOMEINI, BETWEEN THE S.U. AND U.S.

A year after the revolution of 1979, Iran appears to be drifting into the Soviet orbit. While the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini has

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fulminated often and loudly against a satanic United States, he has rarely condemned the Soviet assault on Afghanistan. His support of the continued holding of the fifty-two American hostages has led Western countries to cut some economic ties with Iran, forcing that country to depend more on trade with the Soviet Union.

Why does Khomeini alienate the United States, the one country that can protect him from the Soviet Union? Westerners, unable to answer this question, throw up their hands in despair and declare Khomeini irrational. But this is glib. Khomeini is not crazy; rather, he represents the Islamic tradition in Iranian culture and his actions make sense in the context of that tradition.

In the Western view, the Soviet Union threatens Iran far more than does the United States: It looms across a long common border and espouses an atheistic doctrine incompatible with Islam and many other institutions of Iranian life, such as private property and the family unit as an ideal.

But for the Ayatollah, it is America that is more threatening. He believes that after 1953, the United States government controlled the Shah and his regime and the Iranian people; further, he believes that Washington is trying to overthrow him and regain its old power. The failed rescue mission confirmed this fear.

It is American, not Soviet culture, that pervades Iran and horrifies Ayatollah Khomeini by, in his view, endangering the Islamic way of life with its loose ways (alcohol, jeans, pop music, nightclubs, movies, dancing, mixed bathing, pornography), with its conspicuous consumption, and with foreign ideologies (such as nationalism and liberalism). He and his followers fervently want an Iran free of foreign domination. So long as they perceive America as the greatest threat to Iran, nothing prevents them from relying on the Soviet Union. Although we share with the Iranians a respect for religion, private property and the family unit, the Ayatollah's regime also shares much with the Marxists against the West.

For one thing, they both feel considerable antipathy toward the West. The Soviet government, like Khomeini, worries about the allure of Western culture and tries desperately to contain it.

In an odd parallel, Islam claims to replace Christianity as the final revelation from God, and communism claims to succeed capitalism

as the final stage of economic evolution. The West infuriates both its would-be successors with its continued wealth and power. They respond by presenting the West with its most sustained opposition. Just as earlier in this century they led the attack on European imperialism, today the Soviet Union and Muslim members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries are mounting the main challenge to Western political and economic power. Both have revolutionary temperaments; claiming a monopoly on truth, why should either allow imperfect or evil ways to exist for another day? Each propagates its message with rhetorical shrillness, indoctrination, biased law courts, and firing squads. Both tend not to tolerate dissent and regard nonbelievers with suspicion, emphasizing the deep gulf between themselves and outsiders.

Activist Islam and Marxism emphasize international solidarity over nationalism, community needs over those of the individual, egalitarianism over freedom.

Both engage in social engineering—this is the most important consideration. Scorning the modest goals and realistic expectations of liberalism, activist Muslims and Marxists pursue noble-sounding yet unattainable standards for society. For example, Islam forbids interest on money, and communism denounces profits, yet commercial life requires both.

Finally, because activist Islam and Marxism touch on every aspect of life, their governments incline toward totalitarianism.

While Khomeini shares ideological elements with *both* the United States and the Soviet Union, as a devout Muslim he believes in the superiority of his own creed and execrates both alternatives.

In the end, however, ideologies cancel out and Khomeini aligns Iranian foreign relations in accordance with his hopes and fears, not on the basis of theoretical affinities.

At present, Khomeini fears the United States more than the Soviet Union: The Russians are near but for him America is already within Iran. Our culture, not the Russians', has been undermining the Muslim way of life in Iran for decades. So long as these fears remain paramount, Ayatollah Khomeini and his followers can be expected to veer Iran toward the Soviet Union, for its ideology appears no worse to him than does our own.

(27 May 1980)

THE NEW ENEMY

On their way to power in Iran in 1978 Islamists shouted “Death to America,” and they haven’t stopped in the twenty years since. With this cry they declared war on the United States. Now, in August 1998, in a stunning development, the U.S. finally responded. Let’s hope that the missile attacks on Sudan and Afghanistan truly mark a turning point, as President Bill Clinton and his aides have promised.

By Islamists I don’t mean traditional, pious Muslims who attend mosque and do their best to live by Islam’s many laws. The Islamists are Muslims who practice a distinctly twentieth-century, politicized version of Islam. They have turned an ancient faith into a modern-style ideology. Rejecting the “isms” that have come out of the West, such as liberalism and communism, they have declared that their version of Islam is an all-encompassing political outlook superior to anything the West can produce.

A state of war exists between them and the West, mainly America, not because of the American response but because Islamists see themselves in a long-term conflict with Western values. When Hasan at-Turabi, the effective leader of Sudan and a leading Islamist thinker, explicitly states that the Muslim world is currently at war, “Against its attackers, led by the imperialist powers—chiefly the U.S. and Israel,” it’s not hard to miss the point.

A closer look reveals that these Islamists, despite their viciously anti-Western views, have in fact imbibed some Western ways wholesale, and often right at the source. It’s hardly accidental that so many of them, whether leaders or terrorist operatives, are engineers. They pride themselves on having mastered some of the West’s most privileged knowledge.

Why, then, do they see themselves in battle with the United States? To understand, it is best to see them in the framework of other twentieth-century revolutionaries that upheld totalitarian causes. Like fascists or Marxist-Leninists, they are absolutely convinced that they know how to achieve the just society (in this case, through the minute application of Islam’s many laws in all spheres of life, including the political); they rely on the state to remake human beings; and they are prepared to destroy anyone who obstructs their path.

Also, like fascists and communists, they viscerally hate the United States. Americans—individualistic, hedonistic, and democratic—

challenge all they represent, and the United States stands as the single greatest obstacle to fulfilling their vision. They hate Americans for who they are, not for what they do; short of giving up the American way of life, the United States cannot please or appease them.

This is why "Death to America" is not empty rhetoric. Time and again, Islamists have assaulted American citizens and institutions; the total death toll from all these and dozens of other attacks numbers over 600. In other words, more Americans have been killed and injured by Middle Eastern-related terrorism than by any other hostile force since the end of the Vietnam War.

What to do about this threat? Unfortunately, the U.S. government until now has seen this violence not as the ideological war it is, but as a sequence of discrete criminal incidents. This approach turns the U.S. military into a sort of global police force and requires it to have an unrealistically high level of certainty before it can go into action. Basically, it must have proof of the sort that can stand up in a U.S. court of justice. When such evidence is lacking, as is usually the case, the terrorists get away with their savagery. This explains why last Thursday's retaliations against sites in Afghanistan and Sudan were only the second such action in twenty years, the last one being the April 1986 bombing of Libya. In the vast majority of cases, the criminal paradigm assures that the U.S. government does not respond and killers of Americans pay little or no price.

The paradigm needs to be shifted. Seeing acts of terror as battles, not crimes, changes and improves the whole approach. As in a conventional war, America's military should not need to know the names and specific actions of enemy soldiers before fighting them. When reasonable evidence points to Middle Eastern terrorists having harmed Americans, U.S. military force should be deployed. If the perpetrator is not precisely known, then punish those who are known to harbor terrorists. Go after governments and organizations that support terrorism, not just individuals.

What to target? Missile installations, airfields, navy ships, and terrorist camps. In every case, the punishment should be disproportionately greater than the attack, so that it stings. The U.S. has a military force far more powerful than any other in the world; why spend hundreds of billions of dollars a year on it and not deploy it to defend Americans, or spend tens of billions for intelligence services if they're not able to finger suspects?

The missile attacks on Sudanese and Afghan targets will have long-term significance only if they are not a one-time event, but the start of a new era in which the U.S. government establishes a newly fearsome reputation. From now on, anyone who harms Americans should know that retribution will be certain and nasty. This means that Washington must retaliate every single time terrorism harms an American.

To those who say this would start a cycle of violence, the answer is simple: That cycle already exists; Americans are murdered in acts of terrorism every few months. Further, American retaliation is far more likely to stop it than to spur it on. The Islamists and others, such as Saddam Hussein, despise Americans as morally flabby and militarily incompetent ("paper tigers" is what Osama bin Ladin calls them, borrowing Mao's words). Showing their teeth, Americans are far more likely to intimidate their enemies than to instigate further violence.

It will be a happy day when American embassies are again built in busy downtown intersections out of normal materials—and not, as they are now, bunkers located in distant lots surrounded by high fences. Such a change will only be possible when the safety of Americans depends not on walls, metal detectors, and Marine guards, but on the deterrence established by years of terrible retribution against anyone who so much as harms a single American citizen.

(27 August 1998)

A NEW WAY TO FIGHT TERRORISM

On May 13, 1996, seventeen-year-old David Boim, an American, was standing at a bus stop in the West Bank with fellow yeshiva students when two Palestinian terrorists drove by in a car, shot him in the head, and killed him.

This tragic event led to a sequence of legal moves which culminated with the filing of a \$600 million civil suit in a Chicago federal court in May 2000 against several alleged U.S.-based Hamas front organizations. Here is the complex link between those two events, exactly four years apart:

- It all began in October 1992, with the passing of a U.S. law enabling victims of terrorism to sue for civil damages against their aggressors.

- In January 1995, the Clinton administration declared Hamas a terrorist group whose assets could be seized.
- In April 1996, a U.S. law passed deeming it illegal for Americans to send any money to terrorist groups—even if that money is ostensibly sent to support the “humanitarian” works (hospitals, schools) supported by those groups.
- One of Boim’s two killers died in September 1997, in the course of a suicide attack in Jerusalem that killed five civilians and injured 192.
- In February 1998, the other killer confessed to murdering Boim and a Palestinian Authority court sentenced him to ten years in prison at hard labor.
- In June 1998, the FBI seized \$1.4 million in assets (including bank accounts, a house, and a van) from Mohammad Salah, a Palestinian living in Bridgeview, Illinois, from someone already arrested for money-running for Hamas, and from the Quranic Literacy Institute (QLI), a Muslim organization based in Oak Lawn, Illinois. An FBI affidavit explained that Salah and QLI were suspected of having laundered money for Hamas: “QLI and QLI-related entities or individuals likely were a source of funds for Salah’s Hamas-related expenditures.” For example, bank records revealed that QLI’s president made out three checks for \$6,000 each to Salah on three consecutive days in October, 1991.

Putting all these elements together, Stanley and Joyce Boim, the parents of David, filed a civil suit on May 12, 2000, against their son’s killers, Salah, QLI, a high-ranking official of Hamas named Mousa Abu Marzook, and “a network of front organizations” in the U.S. whom they identified as Hamas affiliates. These included:

- the United Association for Studies and Research, a think tank in Annandale, Virginia;
- the Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development, a charity in Richardson, Texas; and
- the Islamic Association for Palestine, a nonprofit group also in Richardson, plus two of its affiliates.

The plaintiffs’ intend to establish the existence only of a financial and communications link between the American organizations and the killers—not that those organizations specifically bought the weapons used to kill David Boim. The defendants deny any con-

necession: Dalell Mohammed of the Holy Land Foundation asserts that HLF “is in the business of helping refugees and people in need. We don’t condone any sort of violence as we are a humanitarian organization.”

The plaintiffs have two goals. The more modest of them is simply to establish a precedent that any support for a designated terrorist organization makes a person legally liable for that group’s actions. This could have a major effect deterring support for such organizations. Nathan Lewin, the celebrated lawyer who is handling the case for the Boims, says that a victory in this case “would put teeth into the anti-terrorism laws that the Clinton administration has so far been loath to apply.”

The more ambitious goal is to win a judgment against the named organizations. If David’s parents succeed at this, terrorism expert Steven Emerson points out, it would “potentially result in the defendants exposed as agents of terrorism, marginalizing them. Even more important, Hamas raises about one third of its funds in the United States, and this funding would pretty certainly dry up, reducing Hamas’s terrorism capabilities.”

Defunding QLI and the other groups has precedents and is not a quixotic dream: the Southern Poverty Law Center some years ago won a comparable civil judgment against the Ku Klux Klan, impoverishing that organization, thereby severely reducing its reach and appeal.

But were the Boims to lose on both scores, the defendants will be vindicated, Hamas will have had its American base legally certified, and the anti-terrorism legislation will be shown as hollow.

Much, therefore, hangs on this case in Chicago.*

(26 May 2000)

THE NEW GLOBAL THREAT

On April 6, 2001, a thirty-three-year-old Algerian Islamist named Ahmed Ressay achieved the possibly unique distinction of being sentenced on the same day in two courtrooms in two countries for roughly the same crime.

Early in the day, a court in Paris convicted Ressay in absentia for belonging to a network of Islamist terrorists and sentenced him to five years in prison. Hours later, a court in Los Angeles convicted him for an act of terror for which he could be sentenced to 130 years in prison.

*Which, as of September 2003, remains unresolved.

Ressam is hardly the only Islamist in trouble with the law. Some other prominent cases, all of which had major developments the same week as Ressam's two convictions, include the following:

- The government of Yemen announced the arrest of three Islamists in Aden in connection with last October's bombing of the destroyer *USS Cole* that left seventeen American sailors dead and thirty-nine wounded. These arrests brought the total charged with that crime to fifteen.
- The Jordanian military prosecutor named two Islamist suspects in a foiled plot to attack U.S. and Israeli installations; twenty-two other persons had already been sentenced for this attempt, six of them to death.
- A Turkish court sentenced an Islamist to death on charges of "attempting to change the constitutional order by use of arms"—that is, overthrowing the government.
- The Italian police arrested five Islamists from North Africa, all suspected of links to Osama bin Laden, and announced that it had thereby smashed the "nerve center" of a militant Islamic terrorist group intent on carrying out operations across Europe.
- An Islamist of Algerian origin was detained by police in Berlin following raids across Germany that led to the discovery of firearms and bomb materials.
- In New York, the prosecution rested its case against the four alleged perpetrators of the 1998 Kenya and Tanzania embassy bombings.

The news that same week also concerned actual terrorism.

- In Algeria, Islamist rebels on one day killed twelve people, including six government soldiers and five shepherds (the latter executed by having their throats slashed). The next day, the Islamists fired on a military convoy and over thirty soldiers were killed.
- In Kashmir, the Indian police announced seven deaths on one day and ten more two days later—just an average week in this militant Islamic insurgency.
- In Bangladesh, the local militant Islamic party killed two men from another faction during a gun battle.
- In the southern Philippines, the Abu Sayyaf terrorist group threatened to kill an American hostage (and send his head to the Filipino president) but let the deadline slip, hoping the hostage's American mother would pressure the government to call off military attacks against Abu

Sayyaf. The ploy failed; instead, government troops killed three Islamists in its declared "all-out war" on the rebels.

- Islamic extremists last week also resorted to violence in Nigeria, Sudan, Afghanistan, and Indonesia.

Militant Islamic terrorism has a worldwide reach. Eleven of the twenty-nine groups deemed by the U.S. Department of State to be "foreign terrorist organizations" are militant Islamic. Likewise, fourteen of twenty-one groups outlawed by the British Home Office for links to terrorist activity abroad are militant Islamic.

Moreover, what once was the tool of rogue states is now a deeply rooted phenomenon, drawing most of its funding from ordinary Muslims. Stefano Dambruoso, an Italian magistrate who uncovered militant Islamic networks in his country, notes that "It may seem strange, but apart from proceeds from illegal activity such as drug trafficking, one of the main sources of income for the groups is contributions."

This means, Dambruoso explains, that "Islamic terrorism in Europe is a deeply rooted phenomenon that regenerates itself continuously." This far-reaching sponsorship adds greatly to the reach of militant Islamic violence.

A danger exists that Islamists will acquire weapons of mass destruction, with incalculably dangerous results. Indeed, Osama bin Laden may already possess enriched uranium, a vital component for exploding nuclear bombs.

Ironically, Muslim governments are far ahead of their non-Muslim counterparts in understanding the profound menace of radical action in the name of Islam. Leaders in Tunisia, Turkey, and elsewhere have taken serious steps to combat this latter-day totalitarianism.

The time has come for Westerners also to understand that militant Islam presents a truly global threat, and to devote the mental energy and material resources required to fight it.

(11 April 2001)

TERRORISM ON TRIAL

with Steven Emerson

On May 29, 2001, a federal jury in New York returned a guilty verdict against four defendants accused of plotting the terrorist bomb-

ing in August 1998 of the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. The successful prosecution of these murderers represents a great victory for the United States, for the principle of justice, and for the rule of law. We are all in debt to the brave and capable prosecutors.

Unfortunately, the trial does almost nothing to enhance the safety of Americans. The Qaeda group, headed by the notorious Osama bin Laden, which perpetrated the outrages in East Africa, will barely notice the loss of four operatives. Indeed, recent information shows that Al-Qaeda is not only planning new attacks on the U.S. but is also expanding its operational range to countries such as Jordan and Israel.

In Israel, for example, bin Laden has begun to develop a network among the terrorists of the Hamas organization. Last year, Israel arrested a Hamas member named Nabil Aukel who was trained in Pakistan and then moved to Afghanistan and Kashmir to put that training into practice. He returned to Israel with well-honed skills in the remote detonation of bombs using cellular phones, and was detailed to carry out terrorist attacks in Israel.

Perhaps the real importance of the New York trial lies not in the guilty verdicts but in the extraordinary information made public through court exhibits and trial proceedings. These have given us a riveting view into the shadowy world of Al-Qaeda—though you'd never know from following the news media, for this information was barely reported. Tens of thousands of pages from the trial transcript provide a full and revealing picture of Al-Qaeda, showing it to be the most lethal terrorist organization anywhere in the world.

They demonstrate that Al-Qaeda sees the West in general, and the United States in particular, as the ultimate enemy of Islam. Inspired by their victory over the Soviet Union in Afghanistan in the 1980s, the leaders of Al-Qaeda aspire to a similar victory over America, hoping ultimately to bring militant Islamic rule here. Toward this end, they engaged in many attacks on American targets from 1993 to 1998.

One striking piece of information that came out in the trial was bin Laden's possible connection to the World Trade Center bombing in New York in 1993. A terrorist manual introduced as evidence was just an updated version of an earlier manual found in the possession of the World Trade Center defendants.

The court evidence shows how Al-Qaeda is an umbrella organization that includes a wide range of militant Islamic groups, includ-

ing Hezbollah (Lebanon), Islamic Jihad (Egypt), the Armed Islamic Group (Algeria), as well as a raft of Iraqis, Sudanese, Pakistanis, Afghans, and Jordanians. Each of its constituent groups has the capability to carry out its own independent recruiting and operations.

The groups coordinate through Al-Qaeda's "Shura Council," a kind of board of directors that includes representatives from the many groups. These meet on a regular basis in Afghanistan to review and approve proposed operations. Most of them have maintained close relationships with each other since the end of the war in Afghanistan against the Soviets. They know each other well and work together efficiently.

We learned from the trial that when operations in one place are shut down, the rest of the network soldiers on, virtually unaffected. Even if bin Laden himself were to be killed, this militant Islamic network would survive and continue to expand, sustained by its ideological adhesion. Militant Islam is the glue that keeps these groups together, and fired up.

The court documents also revealed that although bin Laden has had a leading role in formulating and paying for Al-Qaeda, the organization did rely heavily on state sponsorship as well. For example, Sudanese President Omar Bashir himself authorized Al-Qaeda activities in his country and gave it special authority to avoid paying taxes or import duties. More remarkably, he exempted the organization from local law enforcement. Officials of the Iranian government helped arrange advanced weapons and explosives training for Al-Qaeda personnel in Lebanon where they learned, for example, how to destroy large buildings.

Perhaps the most disconcerting revelations from the trial concern Al-Qaeda's entrenchment in the West. For example, its procurement network for such materiel as night vision goggles, construction equipment, cell phones, and satellite telephones was based mostly in the U.S., Britain, France, Germany, Denmark, Bosnia, and Croatia. The chemicals purchased for use in the manufacture of chemical weapons came from the Czech Republic.

In the often-long waits between terrorist attacks, Al-Qaeda's member organizations maintained operational readiness by acting under the cover of front-company businesses and nonprofit, tax-deductible religious charities. These nongovernmental groups, many of them still operating, are based mainly in the U.S. and Britain, as well as in the Middle East. The Qatar Charitable Society, for example, has served as one of bin Laden's *de facto* banks for raising and transferring funds.

Osama bin Laden also set up a tightly organized system of cells in an array of American cities, including Brooklyn, New York; Orlando, Florida; Dallas, Texas; Santa Clara, California; Columbia, Missouri, and Herndon, Virginia.

Several conclusions follow from this information.

First, we should think of Al-Qaeda not as an organization dominated by one man but as a global militant Islamic “Internet” with gateways and access points around the world.

Second, Al-Qaeda has a worldwide operational reach. Especially noteworthy is its success in the U.S. and Europe, where it recruits primarily (as this trial showed) among Muslim immigrants. The legal implications of this fact are as serious as they are delicate. Clearly, this is a major new area for law enforcement to grapple with.

Finally, this trial shows that trials alone are not enough. In conceptualizing the Al-Qaeda problem only in terms of law enforcement, the U.S. government misses the larger point: Yes, the operatives engage in crimes, but they are better thought of as soldiers, not criminals. To fight Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups requires an understanding that they (along with some states) have silently declared war on the U.S.; in turn, we must fight them as we would in a war.

Seeing acts of terror as battles, not crimes, improves the U.S. approach to this problem. It means that, as in a conventional war, America’s armed forces, not its policemen and lawyers, are primarily deployed to protect Americans. Rather than drag low-level operatives into American courtrooms, the military will defend us overseas. If a perpetrator is not precisely known, then those who are known to harbor terrorists will be punished. This way, governments and organizations that support terrorism will pay the price, not just the individuals who carry it out.

This way, too, Americans will gain a safety that presently eludes them, no matter how many high-profile courtroom victories prosecutors win.

(31 May 2001)

BIN LADEN AND HERNDON, VIRGINIA

Militant Islamic terrorism has afflicted nearly every Western country and is likely to get worse. One reason is the radicals’ aggressive-

ness; another is the feeble Western response. I have just personally experienced both of these problems.

The story begins in early 1998, when John Miller of ABC News sought an interview with Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan. Needing an intermediary, his producers found Tarik Hamdi of Herndon, Virginia, a self-described journalist who helped make contacts and then accompanied the ABC news team to Afghanistan.

Hamdi, it turned out, had his own purposes for traveling to Afghanistan; he was entrusted with bringing bin Laden a replacement battery for his vital link with the outside world, his satellite telephone. From the remoteness of Afghanistan, bin Laden could not simply order a battery himself and have it overnighted to him. He needed someone unsuspected to bring it. So, one of his top aides ordered a replacement battery on May 11, 1998, and arranged for it to be shipped to Hamdi at his home in Herndon. Hamdi took off for Afghanistan with Miller on May 17 and shortly afterward personally delivered the battery.

Just over two months later, two bombs went off nearly simultaneously at the U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, killing 224 and wounding thousands.

When the U.S. government brought four of the embassy bombers to trial in New York City in 2001, it focused on the phone powered by the battery from Herndon; assistant U.S. attorney Kenneth Karas called it “the phone that Bin Laden and the others will use to carry out their war against the United States.” The trial also established Hamdi’s centrality to Bin Laden’s logistics. After five months, a jury found all four bombers guilty of all 302 charges against them, validating the prosecutor’s interpretation of Hamdi’s role.

Which is where I come in.

Explaining this guilty verdict in the *Wall Street Journal* on May 31, I co-authored an article with Steven Emerson arguing in favor of this outcome, but pointing out that it did little to protect American lives; defeating Bin Laden and his murderous gang will require the U.S. government to deploy armed forces, not policemen and lawyers.

The article then focused on the huge body of evidence made public in the trial proceedings, noting that Bin Laden had “set up a tightly organized system of cells” in six American cities, including the small town of Herndon—an allusion to Hamdi.

Picking up on this reference, Jeannie Baumann, a reporter at the *Herndon Observer*, contacted us to learn more. Emerson explained to her Hamdi's role and several times referred her to the complete court transcripts available on the Internet. But Baumann spurned his offers, replying that her newspaper is "not equipped to handle such information." Instead of doing research, Baumann turned to Herndon's police chief, Toussaint E. Summers, Jr., for an opinion. He in turn called the FBI, which told him nothing. From this lack of information, Summers blithely concluded that "there appears to be no truth ... at all" to a bin Laden-Herndon connection.

Baumann then cited this opinion to the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), for a statement. Ibrahim Hooper, the spokesman for this militant Islamic organization (and a sometime bin Laden apologist), pounced on the police chief's statement and declared our *Wall Street Journal* article inaccurate and prejudicial against Muslims. Baumann's article, published on June 15, 2001, then carried the title "Police, Muslims Refute Herndon Link to Terrorism."

This episode clearly demonstrates three problematic Western responses to militant Islamic violence: Law enforcement officials resist the fact that this scourge exists in their jurisdictions. Reporters fail to do the spadework needed to dig out stories in their own backyards. And the most prominent Islamic organizations shamelessly talk away militant Islamic terrorism and smear anyone who points out the realities of this hideous phenomenon.

If bin Laden and his band of killers are to be stopped, it will take more vigilance from law enforcement officers like Summers, better journalism from reporters like Baumann, and the rise of moderate Muslims who will take the microphone out of the hands of extremists like Hooper.

(20 June 2001)

ROLLING BACK THE FORCES OF TERROR

with Steven Emerson

The pizzeria is located on one of the busiest pedestrian intersections in Israel and it was bustling with families when the Palestinian terrorist

inconspicuously walked in on August 9, 2001. Deliberately positioning himself among the children and babies, he detonated an explosive pack full of nails and ball bearings, shredding to death himself and sixteen Israelis, as well as mutilating more than 100 others.

Less than two hours later, both the Islamic Jihad and Hamas terrorist groups had claimed credit for the massacre. And later in the day, thousands of Palestinians joyously demonstrated in Ramallah in celebration of the carnage. To prove its sponsorship, Hamas released a photo of the bomber brandishing a Kalashnikov rifle in one hand and a Koran in the other.

That massacre follows about eighty suicide bombings or attempted suicide bombings by Palestinians against Israeli (and American) civilians in the nearly eight years since the signing of the Oslo accords in 1993. The pizzeria killings pushed the total of Israeli deaths by Palestinian terrorists since September 1993 to more than 450.

This violence blatantly contravenes the Oslo accords—in which the Palestinians renounced the use of force and promised to use only political means to achieve their goals. Worse, the Palestinian Authority has sponsored a terrorist infrastructure of frightening proportions, where appeals to suicide bombers are a regular feature on the television programming and an arsenal of automatic weapons, hand grenades, mortars, Katyusha rockets and anti-tank missiles is in place.

Recent months have shown that the PA's own forces (Tanzim, Force 17, and Fatah fighters) are targeting Israeli civilians right alongside such illegal organizations as Hamas, Islamic Jihad, Hezbollah, Osama bin Laden, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

Despite this surge in violence, most Israelis have continued to hope they could make a deal. Indeed, as recently as May 2001—when the last large-scale suicide bombing took place, killing twenty-one Israeli teenagers—the authorities in Jerusalem did nothing in response, still hoping to reach a settlement. Even the Israeli actions last Friday—closing down some Palestinian buildings in Jerusalem and destroying a completely empty police station—were more symbolic than they were a serious effort to rebuild the country's security.

One has to admire the Israel government's restraint, then and over the past eight years. But one also has to wonder: When is it going to begin more actively to defend its citizens?

The U.S. government, for its part, should stop repeating the old mantra about going back to the bargaining table (as Colin Powell did in response to the Jerusalem suicide bombing). Instead, it should give Israel a green light to protect its citizens, encouraging it to take steps against terrorist savagery.

The time has also come for the U.S. to support Israel in rolling back the forces of terror. The U.S. has other connections to the pizza parlor bombing. It's not just that the restaurant was part of a New York based chain. Nor that at least two victims are American, including a pregnant schoolteacher from Passaic, New Jersey. The American connection goes much deeper: The very existence of both Hamas and Islamic Jihad is largely attributable to organizing and funding from individuals living in the U.S.

This may sound shocking or unbelievable. But here are several aspects of the Islamic Jihad and Hamas American connections:

- *www.qudscall.com*. Like other militant Islamic terror groups, Islamic Jihad has set up Web sites from the safety of the West. Its two primary sites are registered and hosted in Houston, Texas (by an outfit called Web Site Source, Inc.) and Toronto, Canada. The U.S.-based site provides the group's military communiqués, including those taking responsibility for terrorist operations. In addition, *www.qudscall.com* includes a call to arms: "Our struggle with the sons of Israel in Palestine is on civilization, ideology, history, and existence. Our war with them is long and difficult. Our base is the Koran; our way is the Jihad." Other sections are more explicit, calling for killing Jews and attacking Americans.

Most brazenly, Islamic Jihad solicits donations on this Web site for its violent jihad (sacred war) against Israel. In user-friendly fashion, it provides three addresses for donations to be sent in towns controlled by the PA—the Charity Association in Gaza, the Charity Association in Jenin, and the Charity Association in Bethlehem. In each case, bank numbers and other details are helpfully provided. A top PA official has testified in an American court that the Charity Association is a front for Islamic Jihad. The Web site explicitly states the purpose of the donation: "Donate money for the military Jihad."

- *www.palestine-info.net*. This is the official Web site of Hamas, maintained and operated from Florida, although officially hosted from Lebanon. It contains claims of credit for terrorist attacks, detailed listings of Hamas's "glorious record" of terrorist attacks, fatwas approving suicide bombings, interviews with Hamas leaders, bios of suicide bombers, and virulent calls to attack Jews.

- *Islamic Association for Palestine*, and the *Holy Land Foundation for Relief and Development*. These two U.S.-based organizations (with offices in Texas, Illinois, and New Jersey) support Hamas politically.
- *Islamic Committee for Palestine*, and the *World and Islam Studies Enterprise*. ICP was one of several U.S.-based “charities” directly connected to Islamic Jihad. (On this basis, it was closed down by the FBI in 1995). A tape made public by the Immigration and Naturalization Service shows Fawwaz Damra, an imam from Cleveland, proudly announcing that ICP “is the active arm of the Islamic Jihad Movement in Palestine.” He added that in the U.S., “for security reasons,” it is called the Islamic Committee for Palestine. William West of the INS describes the ICP, along with another organization, the World and Islam Studies Enterprise, as “fronts for the purpose of fund-raising activities for the Islamic Jihad and the Hamas terrorist organizations.” West also notes that these two organizations have another role: to bring foreigners “into the United States who are leaders and/or operatives of the Islamic Jihad, Hamas and other terrorist organizations.” He is referring to the fact that ICP and WISE arranged for entry visas into the U.S. for the entire three-man leadership of Islamic Jihad.

Of special note is Ramadan Abdullah Shallah, who for several years worked as a professor at the University of South Florida in Tampa, but since 1995 has lived and served in Damascus as none other than the top leader of Islamic Jihad.

Meanwhile, the person in charge of ICP and WISE was also a tenured professor at the University of South Florida named Sami Al-Arian. Despite what has been known for years about the ICP and WISE, he remains in good standing at his university and has even attended four White House events in the past four years.

It doesn’t take a genius to figure out what the U.S. government should do, starting with excluding the leaders of terror front groups from the White House. Once that’s done, the federal authorities should use the tools it already has for closing down these websites and organizations. A 1995 executive order signed by the president authorizes them to prohibit any financial transactions in the United States by twelve groups, two of which are Islamic Jihad and Hamas. A 1996 law gives Washington the power to freeze the assets of such groups.

Despite these laws, almost nothing has been done to shut down the front organizations of Hamas and Islamic Jihad. The reason is embarrassingly simple: Both groups are smart enough not to register under their own names. This trivial camouflage works; the U.S. government finds itself stymied and leaves the groups alone.

The time has come to close down terrorist organizations in the United States, even if they don't conveniently carry their full, formal names.

(13 August 2001)

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