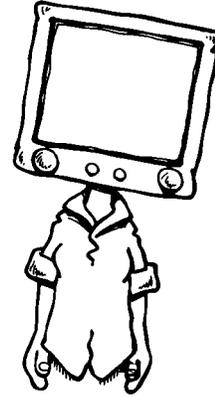


*Western technology and material things are insufficient, and that a deeper meaning to life lies elsewhere in the essence of Islamic belief." (Prince Charles, "Islam and the West".)*



**2. Demographic Implications** of population explosion and resulting poverty. The demographic explosion, with resultant problems associated with overpopulation, contributes to the sense of estrangement. The straining of national resources and accompanying destitution experienced by the masses drives some to seek solace in traditional Islamic belief.

**3. Populist Appeal** The Islamic revolution in Iran, coupled with successes by Mujahedin in Afghanistan, empower many to seek a renewed identity within their traditional faith.

#### **4. Response to Perceived Western Manipulation**

*"The West appears to selectively support Middle Eastern nations out of self-interest, particularly in terms of oil and defense contracts, while condemning other countries for poor human rights records..."*



*Western policy is often not about human rights issues at all, but about economic self-interests." (Kibble, p. 44.)*

## Unit 8: Fundamentalisms

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Pakistani journalist Mushahid Hussain elaborates. *"...the West applies different standards to Muslim and non-Muslim countries in the areas of religion, democracy, military power, terrorism and human rights. So-called Islamic fundamentalism has replaced communism as the West's bugbear."* ("Cold War against Islam", Far Eastern Economic Review, 2 Jul 1992, p. 22)

**5. Reaction to Oil Dollars** Related to the perception of Western manipulation is the theory expounded by Egyptian intellectual Muhammad Sid Ahmed. As referred to in God Has Ninety-Nine Names, oil dollars *"'corrupted politically and intellectually an entire generation and produced, in reaction, a cynical, puritanical Islamic generation.'"* (p. 468)

**6. Political Expediency** This is practiced by some rulers who legitimize themselves through Islam. General Khalid Bin Sultan, in his description of Saddam Hussein, identifies this leader as someone who uses religion out of self-interest. (See Desert Warrior, p. 230)

**7. Political Opposition** These are factions who use Islam to unite against the majority.



Fundamentalist Islam can provide a rallying point--a voice for the disinherited--for opposition parties in some Middle Eastern countries.

In addition to reasons listed above, Judith Miller, (p. 468), in describing the many factors contributing to the Islamic revival, identifies the following as also aiding militant Islam's rise.



- Collapse of Arab nationalism after the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.
- Fall of the Soviet Union/Marxist dream of the late 1980s.
- Failure of most Middle Eastern governments to deliver on ambitious promises made after independence.
- Cold war Western support to Muslim groups as insurance against Communist encroachment.

## V. Selected Islamic Views on Fundamentalism

Offering a different perspective from the above, Pakistan-based columnist Mushahid Hussain sees the recent Islamic reassertion as "quite normal and should not be a cause for concern in the West." ('Cold War Against the Islam,' Far Eastern Economic Review, 2 Jul 1992, p. 22, NS 3300, p. 70.) According to Mushahid, Iran and Afghanistan bolstered Islamic self-confidence and debunked the myth of superpower invincibility.

Mushahid Hussain sees three areas where the resurgence of Islam can be seen in a positive light.

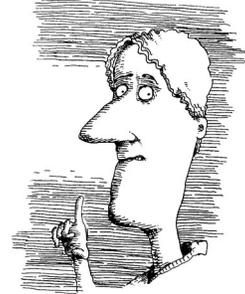
**1. Politics** Islam helps reassert and represent forces opposing the West or corrupt, "puppet" monarchies.

**2. Culture** The mosque becomes a symbol for reassertion of uniting, traditional values.

**3. Foreign Affairs** Fundamentalist Islam can serve as a voice for unification in the arena of international affairs.

#### 4. Extremism

What receives even less attention in our Western press is the condemnation--by Islamic leaders themselves--of Muslim extremist practices.



Afghanistan's Taliban (tahl-ee-BAHN) interpretation and implementation of Islamic law draws harsh criticism.

## VI. Islam and the West



Many areas of the Middle East do not prize our affluent culture. "[P]eople in the Islamic world genuinely fear...Western materialism and mass culture as a deadly challenge to their Islamic culture and way of life...

*The fact is that our form of materialism can be offensive to devout Muslims--and I do not just mean the extremists among them.*" (Prince of Wales, "Islam and the West," p. 19.)

Some Islamists do not reject Western technology, industrial strength and advancement in art and science. Rather, it is when Western consumer values run counter to the purer teachings of Muslim faith that conflict arises.

*"Values rejected include excessive consumerism; stress on material gain over moral enrichment; permissive and immoral manifestations, as in pornography, sexual irregularities, abuse of children, lurid enticements of the excessive display of the flesh masquerading as chic or vogue." (Farah, p. 2)*



Dr. Robert Crane accentuates this distinction, applying it to American political ideals.

*"[It] is not the real America that is despised in the Arab or Muslim World. America's republican institutions and traditional values, political freedom and material prosperity, equality of rights and technical proficiency, are all admired.*



*What is hated is the ugly face that modernism and post-modernism present: the pornography, crime, narcotics, public indecency, polluted culture, ...insulting attitude toward religion." (NS 3300, p. 71.)*

## Vocabulary List: Fundamentalisms

**Consumer values** Negative Western values often imported to the Middle East by new communications technology. Moral permissiveness, crime, narcotics, indecency, polluted culture and secularized attitudes towards religion are often seen as manifestations of consumer values.

**Disinherited** The poor, dispossessed, unemployed of a society. Often young, this sub-class seems to have little future. In some Middle East countries, the disinherited are educated but have no jobs available.

**Extremists** Fanatics who use their religion for political ends, often advocating terrorism and violence in the process

**Fundamentalism** Emotive label, often categorizing those who would return to the basic, traditional, fundamental elements of their belief or practice. Some fundamentalists can be nonviolent, conservative individuals who seek peaceful change. Others are extremists who advocate violent change.

**Militant fundamentalists** Those who see their religion as bringing about revolutionary change in their societies-- often through violent means. Also called fanatical extremists, radicals, or renegades.

**Modernist Muslims** Those who interpret their faith in terms of modern knowledge. These adherents often accept many Western scientific ideas.

**Modernization** Using the scientific and technological methods of the contemporary world to bring about change in society. Within Muslim circles, many accept modernization but reject the Western values which often accompany such change.

**Monotheism** Belief in one god

**Political expediency** Those who use any means available to accomplish their political ends. Some Middle East leaders use Islam in a pragmatic sense--only to bring about their intended political objectives.

