

The Challenge of Fundamentalism

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Religious fundamentalism

- Meaning the politicization of religion
- The term applied for the first time during the Iranian revolution of the Ayatollahs in 1979
- Nowadays fundamentalism is related with the “clash of civilization” being both an expression and a response to it.
- Mostly quoted is Islamic fundamentalism

Why Islamic fundamentalism?

- Because after the fall of the Berlin wall the West had lost its arch-enemy
- Because after the Cold war the West needed to identify a new enemy to ensure the continuity of its hegemony
- Islam is a world religion and a major civilization, embodying one fifth of the world pop.
- The secular nation states are perceived to be a Western invention, not an universal achievement
- Because Islam is a universal religion in its claims and its outlook

Islamic fundamentalism as a global threat??

- Islamic movements are weak and divided
- They are not able to impose a new world order, they lack economic, political and military forces
- But they can create disorder in their own countries, in order to lead to a regional and global disorder
- *Caricatures of Mohammed*

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Fundamentalism is the term for any religion being a political ideology.

Islam as a religion is definitely not a threat, but Islamic fundamentalism is.

Islam Vs West

- The question of the leadership
- Crusades Vs Jihad???
- The “Jihad doctrine” only as a response to a powerful external threat
- The Gulf war and war in Bosnia are perceived in the Muslim world as “crusades” of the West
- Secularized nation state – Western invention
- Mixing religion and politics: Orthodox Greater Serbia, Hindustan as a Hindu state in India

Culture in World Politics

- Cultural and sociological background of modernity
- **Science and technology** were transmitted to other civilizations without Western values and norms
- The notion of “**The Islamic dream of semi-modernity**”: embracing technological modernity and rejecting cultural modernity
- The more structurally globalized our world has become, the more culturally fragmented it has come to be
- De-Westernization is occurring now (Raymond Aaron)

Questions:

- Are Islam and terrorism connected?
- Is secularization of the nation-state (western in origin) a “good” and fundamentalism a “bad” solution?
- Why?

Thank you for your attention