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THE CHALLENGE OF SEPTEMBER 11 TO SECULARISM IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

By DANIEL PHILPOTT*

THE greatest assault on the United States since the end of the cold war, perhaps since its very founding, had little plausible origin in the dynamics of alliances and polarity, in the rise and fall of great powers, in any state's quest for security, or even in the actions of any state at all. For this reason, it eludes the emphases of realism, traditionally the dominant school in international relations scholarship. Neither was it accomplished by a parliament or a voting public, a multinational corporation, labor union, or farm lobby, or by any of the other agents that liberals believe influence foreign policy. The attack had little to do with international organizations or international institutions or with trade, finance, or investment; it involved international development indirectly at best. Only in the loosest sense of the term was the attacker a non-governmental organization, still less one with an address near the United Nations. It was not an epistemic community. It was perhaps a transnational actor, but manifestly not a human rights organization or one of the issue networks familiar in the literature. It was motivated by ideas, but not economic, strategic, or politically liberal ones. It did not use nuclear weapons or biological or chemical ones—indeed it used nothing more sophisticated than box cutters, flying lessons, and some elaborate planning. Rather, those involved in crashing planes into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, were animated by a kind of conception, were organized around a kind of idea, and appraised the international system according to a kind of no-

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tion to which international relations scholars have paid relatively little attention: religion.

With few exceptions, international relations scholars have long assumed the absence of religion among the factors that influence states. Their inattention is not without its reasons. Like a watchman who nods off as the creature he surveils himself falls asleep, these scholars have been describing a structure of political authority that was forged centuries ago by a sharply secularizing set of events and that has endured in its secular guise ever since. This authority structure can be called the Westphalian synthesis. On September 11 the synthesis was shaken by the fitful rumblings of a Rip Van Winkle awakening from long centuries of slumber, a figure whose identity is public religion—religion that is not privatized within the cocoon of the individual or the family but that dares to refashion secular politics and culture. Of all the fits and starts in the arousal of public religion over the past generation, the most radical and volatile is a political theology—radical Islamic revivalism, it can be called—that directly challenges the authority structure of the international system. This radical revivalism is the tradition behind al-Qaeda's attacks. The attacks and the broader resurgence of public religion ought, then, to sound the alarm clock for international relations scholars, as a call to direct far more energy to understanding the impetuses behind movements across the globe that are reorienting purposes and policies, alignments and dilemmas.

THE SECULARIZATION OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The very term *religion* must be used provisionally and with care. Some scholars doubt whether it is even a meaningful concept, that is, an essential phenomenon of which there are different forms, a genus with different species. In the Middle Ages Christians used the term *religio*, but not very often and then usually to refer to the communal life of monastics. The medieval philosopher Thomas Aquinas used *religio* to mean the activity of giving proper reverence to God through worship. By contrast, the familiar, contemporary usage of religion, appearing first in early modern Europe, refers to a universal interior impulse toward God or to a system of propositional beliefs about the transcendent. It is this thinner concept of which there can be a plurality of forms, as infinite as the variety of propositions about God and gods.¹

¹ See Wilfred Cantwell Smith, *The Meaning and End of Religion* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978); William Cavanaugh, "A Fire Strong Enough to Consume the House": The Wars of Religion and the Rise of the State," *Modern Theology* 11 (October 1995); and Paul Griffiths, "The Very Idea of Religion," *First Things* 103 (May 2000).

A resulting problem is that the modern usage of the term religion, denoting private, propositional beliefs, fails to encompass traditional faiths. Practiced communally through worship and devotion, they regulate all realms of life and make no easy distinction between mundane and spiritual. Is a more embracing, open-ended definition of religion available? The difficulty then becomes finding one that includes Hinduism, Christianity, Buddhism, and other instances of what scholars mean by world religions but that excludes what they usually do not mean—Marxism, Nazism, nationalism, and witchcraft, all of which, after all, have also inspired feverish belief, ritual, and devotion. There is a provisional response, if not a resolution, to these dilemmas, a definition that brings attention to those religions that are newly relevant to international politics: religion is a set of beliefs about the ultimate ground of existence, that which is unconditioned, not itself created or caused, and the communities and practices that form around these beliefs.² The nation and Marxist political ideology, though they surely inspire people to worship, kill, die, idolize, and genuflect, do not in their essential forms encompass beliefs about the ultimate ground of existence.

If this is religion, secularization is the decline of it. The decline occurs in different forms and degrees, corresponding to the different valences of religious commitment.³ The first, most thorough form of secularization is the erosion of subjective belief in an ultimate ground of existence, a deity, God. In ceasing to believe in religious claims, people usually also cease to worship and pray in community, in churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples. They reject religion altogether. It is both possible and common, though, for people to drop community but retain their beliefs. This second form of secularization, captured in sociologist Grace Davie's phrase, "believing without belonging," is more partial.⁴ A third form, most pertinent here, is the one most distinctive to politics. It is sociologist David Martin's influential concept of secularization as "differentiation," which "denotes the process whereby each social sector becomes specialized."⁵ In the political realm religion interacts far less intimately with governing institutions than it once did, whether through its legitimizing influence, through the overlapping

² I have been influenced here by Roy Clouser, *Knowing with the Heart: Religious Experience and Belief in God* (Downers Grove, Ill.: InterVarsity Press, 1999), esp. 11–42.

³ For an assessment of secularization, the concept, the phenomenon, and the literature, see Rodney Stark, "Secularization, R.I.P.," *Sociology of Religion* 60, no. 3 (1999).

⁴ Davie, "Believing without Belonging: Is This the Future of Religion in Britain?" *Social Compass* 37 (1990), 455–69.

⁵ Martin, *A General Theory of Secularization* (New York: Harper and Row, 1978), 69.

prerogatives of religious and political authorities, or through its receipt of the state's direct and active support. Constitutions cease explicitly to direct the loyalties of citizens to God. Political ideologies—Marxism, liberalism, fascism, nationalism, and liberalism—channel loyalties toward an object other than God. International laws, institutions, and organizations advance purposes having little to do with religion. So do the parties, unions, lobbies, and armies through which people urge, advocate, and rebel against the state. The temporal is distinguished from the spiritual, politics from religion.

Secularization is not an ethical claim, for scholars can agree on its presence or absence or some gradation of either, while separately celebrating it, lamenting it, or expressing some gradation of either. Whether religious commitments are compatible with any secularly expressed political end is complex and contingent. Many religious believers, for instance, applaud the Western separation of church and state. Secularization is a rather descriptive statement, holding that the political ends of citizens, organizations, and societies themselves are no longer as explicitly religious as they once were or are no longer explicitly religious at all.

The discipline of political science and the field of international relations in turn become secularized when its scholars describe politics as secularized, that is, as if states, nations, international organizations, and the parties, lobbies, and businesses which seek to influence them pursue ends that include power, security, wealth, peace, stability, economic development, robust international law, a cleaner environment, and the alleviation of humanitarian disaster, but do not include the spread or promotion of a religion, or any of these other ends out of a religious motivation. By this definition, international relations scholarship is indeed secularized. A survey of articles in four leading international relations journals over the period 1980–99 finds that only six or so out of a total of about sixteen hundred featured religion as an important influence.⁶ There are important exceptions. *Orbis* and *Millennium* have each published special issues on religion and international organization within the last four years, the latter theorizing innovatively about the role of religion.⁷ More famously, Samuel Huntington's "clash of civi-

⁶ See Daniel Philpott, *Revolutions in Sovereignty: How Ideas Shaped Modern International Relations* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), 9. The journals are *International Organization*, *International Studies Quarterly*, *World Politics*, and *International Security*.

⁷ See *Orbis: A Journal of World Affairs* 42 (Spring 1998); and *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 29, no. 3 (2000). In the *Millennium* collection, a particularly strong perspective of religion's role in the discipline and the practice of international relations is Scott M. Thomas, "Taking Religious and Cultural Pluralism Seriously: The Global Resurgence of Religion and the Transformation of Interna-

lizations” thesis, forecasting that the major armed conflicts in the post-cold war era will be fought between representatives of religiously defined civilizations, has arguably become the most widely cited and debated thesis of the past decade on the character of contemporary international relations.⁸ Yet few international relations scholars, either in sympathy or criticism of Huntington’s thesis, have joined him in asserting religion’s role in relations between states. Journals and university presses in the field treat religion in scant proportion to its expanding space in newspaper headlines over the past few decades. Meanwhile, an accumulating group of historians, sociologists, and journalists are corroborating this increasing influence through claims about the “revenge of God,” the “desecularization of the world,” and the resurgence of “public religion in the modern world.”⁹ Inattention to these trends on the part of political scientists can have yielded only their deep surprise at September 11, not only in the predictive sense (who *did* predict it after all?), but also in the conceptual sense. Their concepts gave them little reason to think that an event like this could happen.

THE ROOTS OF SECULARIZATION IN THE PRACTICE OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The secularized mien of international relations scholarship is unsurprising. Deeply embedded in the international system itself is a secu-

tional Society.” See also the writings of Sohail Hashmi: Hashmi, “International Society and Its Islamic Malcontents,” *Fletcher Forum* 20 (Winter–Spring 1996); idem, “Interpreting the Islamic Ethics of War and Peace,” in Terry Nardin, ed., *The Ethics of War and Peace* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996); idem, “Islamic Ethics in International Society,” in David R. Mapel and Terry Nardin, eds., *International Society: Diverse Ethical Perspectives* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998); Jonathan Fox, “Religion as an Overlooked Element in International Relations,” *International Studies Review* 3, no. 3 (2001); *SAIS Review* 18 (Summer–Fall 1998); and Barry Rubin, “Religion and International Affairs,” *Washington Quarterly* 13, no. 2 (1990).

⁸ See Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996); idem, “The Clash of Civilizations?” *Foreign Affairs* 72 (Summer 1993). The fact that Huntington’s thesis was published in a semipopular journal (*Foreign Affairs*) and then by a trade press is indicative of how little attention international relations scholars in the field proper have accorded religion.

⁹ For scholarship that asserts the growing global role of religion in politics, see R. Scott Appleby, *The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Religion, Violence, and Reconciliation* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 2000); Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam: Clash of Cultures or Clash of Interests* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Shireen Hunter, *The Future of Islam and the West: Clash of Civilizations or Peaceful Coexistence?* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 1998); Peter L. Berger, *The Desecularization of the World: Resurgent Religion and World Politics* (Washington, D.C.: Eerdmans/Ethics and Public Policy Center, 1999); Mark Juergensmeyer, *The New Cold War? Religious Nationalism Confronts the Secular State* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993); Gilles Kepel, *The Revenge of God: The Resurgence of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism in the Modern World* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994); Benjamin Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld: How Globalism and*

larized authority structure whose origins lie in calamitous strife over the relationship between spiritual and temporal authority. The structure arises from a resolution to this strife that sharply differentiated the two kinds of authority and that subsequently expanded the terms of this resolution to a global dominion that still endures. In plumbing its workings, scholars readily and naturally assume the commitments embedded in it. The phenomenon shapes the thought.

This authority structure is the Westphalian synthesis, which weaves together four component norms of authority, all emblematic of the Peace of Westphalia of 1648. The norms did not emerge then and there *ex nihilo*. Some had begun to take shape centuries earlier only to be consolidated at Westphalia; some worked themselves out decades afterward. What is important is that they embodied the secularizing spirit of this settlement of the Thirty Years War, nay, of the previous century of strife over spiritual and temporal authority. Each strand of the synthesis arose from the struggles ignited by the Protestant Reformation, itself entailing a new set of ideas about authority. Each revolved around the rise and consolidation of the system of sovereign states. Each articulates aspects of an answer to the most fundamental question about political authority—its relationship to the ground of existence. Just as a dweller moving about his house takes for granted its architecture, so scholars, statespersons, or anyone else immersed in war, commerce, or other business among nations often take for granted the international authority structure. Take it for granted, that is, until the day that it is formidably defied.

The Peace of Westphalia marked a victory of the sovereign state as a form of political authority. This was the first strand of the Westphalian synthesis—a kind of political organization where a single locus of authority—a prince or, later, a junta or a people ruling through a constitution—is supreme within a territory. The sovereign state became virtually the only form of polity within Europe to practice substantive, not merely formal, constitutional authority. A continent of sovereign states—fighting, allying, trading, forming pacts and protocols over

Tribalism Are Reshaping the World (New York: Times Books, 1995); Thomas L. Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1999); Susanne Rudolph and James Piscatori, *Transnational Religion and Fading States* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1997); Jose Casanova, *Public Religions in the Modern World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994); and the essays in Scott Appleby and Martin Marty, eds., *The Fundamentalist Project* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1995). For an earlier exception to the general secularization of international relations scholarship, see also Adda Bozeman, *Politics and Culture in International History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960).

scores of matters—then formed a system characterized by anarchy, the defining feature of international relations.

The victory of a sovereign state system signaled at the same time the defeat of another scheme for organizing international authority, one in which religion had played a far more significant role. In this sense, the first strand of the Westphalian synthesis is a secularizing one. Westphalia was the culmination of a centuries-long metamorphosis, a gradual supplanting of one political order by another, that began with Europe in the High Middle Ages. In the *Respublica Christiania* there existed no sovereignty, no supreme authority within a territory. From the pope and the Holy Roman Emperor, down through kings to barons, bishops, dukes, counts, and peasants, authorities were united together in a single social entity, reflecting the unity of the church as the Body of Christ. With the exception of patches of Europe during short stretches of the Middle Ages, none of these authorities enjoyed supremacy within a territory; none enjoyed sovereignty. The vast majority were limited in their prerogatives by an outside authority or ruled over a vassal who had external fealties. Politics and religion were profoundly mingled, too, with the church exercising manifold prerogatives that were, by any modern definition, civil. Bishops and archbishops held large amounts of land, exercised legitimate coercive force, levied taxes, and served nobles, princes, and kings as chancellors, regents, and other officers. The pope exercised legislative, executive, and judicial powers.¹⁰

This portrait captured Europe best at the apogee of the Middle Ages, roughly between the eleventh and thirteenth centuries. But even as late as the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, much of Europe was still under the authority of a vast quasi-medieval conglomerate that linked together the Holy Roman Empire, the Habsburg monarchy, the Spanish king, and the Catholic church. Within this expanse, ecclesiasts continued to exercise civil functions. Most importantly, the emperor enforced religious uniformity. It was not until 1648 that these privileges would effectively disappear. By that time, ecclesiastical authorities held scant temporal powers within Europe's sovereign states and the emperor commanded virtually no authority within the territories of

¹⁰ See J. R. Strayer, *The Medieval Origins of the Modern State* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970); Susan Reynolds, *Kingdoms and Communities in Western Europe, 900–1300* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984); Michael Wilks, *The Problem of Sovereignty in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge, U.K.: At the University Press, 1964); Walter Ullman, *Principles of Government and Politics in the Middle Ages* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1966).

princes, particularly the authority to enforce the confessional character of the realm.¹¹

With the rise of the state system came the end of a political practice that had dominated European politics for 130 years—authorities' enforcement of religion outside their territory. This proscription of intervention is the second strand of the Westphalian synthesis. It was yet another restriction on what temporal authority would do on behalf of religion, another sense in which temporal and religious authority became differentiated. Since the Protestant Reformation had begun in Germany in 1517, princes, kings, nobles, the emperor, and the pope had striven to extend or preserve their faith with little respect for territorial limits, an armed contest that expanded eventually into the Thirty Years War. In 1555 it appeared that a settlement had been reached within the empire at the Peace of Augsburg. Its formula, *cuius regio, eius religio* (whose the region, his the religion), established sovereignty in matters of faith. But Augsburg did not last. The settlement's endless arcane clauses were symptomatic of the burning desire of political and ecclesiastical authorities alike to continue the fight to spread their faith. As late as 1629, riding the momentum of a political victory in the Thirty Years War, the emperor Ferdinand decreed the Edict of Restitution, calling for the restoration of Catholicism in all the lands that had become Protestant since Augsburg. Only with Westphalia did such contests end and did religion largely cease to be a *casus belli* in Europe—at least until the late twentieth century, when it became an issue in Northern Ireland and Yugoslavia. Kalevi Holsti notes that during the period 1648–1713, immediately following Westphalia, religion was a major issue in only three wars, all between Europeans and Muslims.¹²

The result of these trends for Europe was pluralism, though pluralism of a certain sort. Sovereign authorities, respecting one another's rights to govern religion in their territory as they please, would no longer take up arms to change it. Within the state, however, religious freedom for the individual was still rare; at best, a state might allow more than one sect or faith to exist, but only in certain regions and proportions as dictated by detailed provisions of the peace. Most importantly, states would refrain from seeking to define the relationship

¹¹ Jean Berenger, *History of the Habsburg Empire, 1273–1700* (London: Longman, 1994); Robert A. Kann, *A History of the Habsburg Empire* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1974), 1–24; H. G. Koenigsberger, *Estates and Revolutions: Essays in Early Modern European History* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1971).

¹² Holsti, *Peace and War: Armed Conflicts and International Order, 1648–1989* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 46–59.

between politics and religion within other states' borders. Noninterference in matters of religion would prove to be the prototype for a more generalized norm of nonintervention, one of the keystones of international society, the set of norms that states share in common.¹³

It was the Protestant Reformation that sparked the protracted conflict over religion and that led ultimately to the end of intervention for religion at Westphalia. Such conflict raged in Germany, the Netherlands, France, and Sweden, culminating in the continent-wide Thirty Years War, a conflagration that killed more than one-fourth of the German population alone. Westphalia served as a truce of exhaustion, a peace that would end the fighting of decades.

The Reformation's religious pluralism amounted to nothing deeper than a *modus vivendi*. Though it would persist in practice, a widely shared principled acceptance was long in coming. In particular, the Catholic church continued to hold that in principle the polity ought to promote the Catholic faith as the single religion of the realm. Upon hearing of the settlement at Westphalia, Pope Innocent X issued a bull, *Zel Domus*, that condemned the treaties as "null, void, invalid, iniquitous, unjust, damnable, reprobate, inane, empty of meaning and effect for all time."¹⁴ As late as the nineteenth century the Vatican continued to condemn international law as a Protestant science. Nonetheless, it was powerless to force any change in the Westphalian settlement, for a clause in the treaties had declared preemptively that papal protests would not nullify the treaties. The pope could do little more than lament its temporal impotence, which later came to be symbolized by the absurdity of the Vatican owning a submarine in the nineteenth century.

The third strand of the Westphalian synthesis complements the separation entailed in the first two. Not only would state authorities refrain from intervening abroad to shape the relationship between politics and religion, but they would increasingly refrain altogether from seeking actively to promote the work and welfare of churches and religion, even in their own realm. The most dramatic form of this differentiation was religious freedom.

At the time of Westphalia, religious freedom was largely a concept in the minds of European philosophers, as it had been already for more than a century. These thinkers offered different rationales for why an individual ought to have the right to choose his faith. The weakest

¹³ The locus classicus for the concept of international society is Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977). For a good discussion of religious pluralism in international society, see Thomas (fn. 7), 819–24.

¹⁴ Quoted in David Maland, *Europe in the Seventeenth Century* (London: Macmillan, 1966), 16.

form of the argument was voiced by the *politiques*, Catholics who persistently held to the ideal of a uniform faith in the political realm but who did not consider its sustenance worth a civil war. Other philosophers rooted religious freedom in deep or partial skepticism—the cloudiness of knowledge of religion yielded the individual's right to decide it for himself. The most robust form of the argument, though, was the claim that religious freedom is grounded in truth—the deliverance either of reason or of New Testament scriptures. Many of these proponents also held that aside from being a right, religious freedom would promote the health of religion itself. For them, secularization, at least this type of differentiation, did not constitute a setback for faith.

The practice of religious freedom came gradually, in pieces, in places. The American and French Revolutions declared it a fundamental “right of man,” even though the latter sought to suppress the structure of the Catholic church. In places like England religious freedom developed more gradually and always in partnership with a nationally established church. Catholic states like Spain, by contrast, sought to safeguard a confessional state where Catholic belief was espoused uniformly. Configurations of religious freedom and of relationships between church and state have been remarkably diverse. It was not until the Second Vatican Council of 1965 that the Catholic church embraced religious freedom, resting it on deep philosophical and theological foundations.¹⁵ Of course, the differentiation by which the state did not directly promote religion also found far more excessive—and brutal—forms. Especially in the twentieth century, states have actively sought to expunge religions, or even religion altogether—the most extreme cases being the Nazi genocide against the Jews and the attempts of communist regimes in the Soviet Union and elsewhere to cleanse religion entirely from their midst. It was religious freedom, though, that most characteristically extended the state's restraint in promoting religious practice and belief, deepening the differentiation that Westphalia had expanded.

Just as states came to promote religion less actively and directly, so religious authorities in Europe came to exercise ever fewer temporal prerogatives—holding temporal office, raising taxes, wielding control over large tracts of land. This fourth strand mirrors the third. It, too, was strongly influenced by the Protestant Reformation. The Reformation's influence was not exclusive. As demonstrated by an extensive literature, changes in economic organization, military technology and

¹⁵ “*Dignitatis Humanae* (Declaration on Religious Liberty),” in *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post Conciliar Documents* (Northport, N.Y.: Costello Publishing Company, 1975).

organization, and the ability of state bureaucracies to raise taxes and troops—all of which contributed to the gradual victory of the state over rival authorities, an evolution that long predated Protestantism.¹⁶ For its part, the Reformation had three broad effects that diminished the temporal power of prelates. First, its very doctrines held that such powers were corrupting and that they had little basis in Christian belief. Rather, these powers should be concentrated in the hands of princes and kings and legislatures, who, though still under obligation to rule according to Christian principles, were better suited to exercise them. Martin Luther's famous doctrine of Two Kingdoms was a call for the separation of spheres. Second, in their very removal of themselves from the authority of Catholic officials, Protestants diminished the influence of this authority considerably. Third, more indirectly, the concentration of temporal powers in the hands of state rulers was brought on by Protestants' need for protection from the enforcement efforts of the Holy Roman Emperor. To avoid being stamped out, Protestants placed their safety and, to a significant degree, the governance of their churches under the authority of princes.¹⁷ Through its very propositions and the effects of these propositions on their need for security, the Reformation elicited the transfer of temporal powers from ecclesiasts to secular rulers.

The relationship between spiritual and temporal authority known as the Westphalian synthesis remains robust to this day. The norms of authority entailed in each strand amount to a political theology, a doctrine of religion's role in society. States are the legitimate polity in the international system; states refrain from seeking to alter the relationship between religion and politics in other states; religious authorities exercise few if any temporal functions, still less any on a transnational level; and states seek far less vigorously to promote the welfare of religions than they did prior to Westphalia. These are its four strands, defining essential features of the authority structure of the modern international system.

Over the ensuing centuries, the synthesis would deepen in all of its strands. The purposes of many states strayed more than ever, coming to

¹⁶ For broadly material arguments, see Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London: N.L.B., 1974); Brian Downing, *The Military Revolution and Political Change* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); Douglass C. North and R. P. Thomas, *The Rise of the Western World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973); Hendrik Spruyt, *The Sovereign State and Its Competitors* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Charles Tilly, *Coercion, Capital, and European States, AD 990–1992* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1992). For my argument that material explanations are insufficient and that Protestant ideas were a central cause, see Philpott (fn. 6), 97–149.

¹⁷ More specifically, it was Protestants of the magisterial Reformation who took this course—Lutherans, Calvinists, the Church of England. In fact, the Reformation was a spate of diverse movements. Some, like the Anabaptists, separated themselves from temporal authority as far as they could.

include fascism, communism, Marxism, nationalism, secular versions of liberalism, and social democracy. The synthesis would also widen. In the generation after Westphalia its chief theological competitor, Islam, began to experience the long, slow decline of its political power. At the same time, European sovereign states continued the long slow division of the rest of the world into colonies that they had begun in the sixteenth century. Over the three centuries following Westphalia, Africa, Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America would be colonized. Then, in a reversal of momentum, the colonized gradually revolted against this domination and achieved independence, first in the Americas during the nineteenth century, then across the globe, as virtually every remaining empire crumbled during the twentieth century. Typically, their leaders acted out of nationalism, an idea inherited from their European rulers. The result was the global expansion of the Westphalian synthesis, making the sovereign state the only form of political authority ever to occupy the entire globe.

Like the Westphalian system in Europe, the global Westphalian system could accommodate a variety of relationships between religion and politics within states, some of which allow religion to play a much stronger, more public, more interventionist role than it does in the West. But prior to the past generation most states have respected the Westphalian synthesis—by virtue of the very fact that they are states, by their respect of other states' configuration of temporal and religious authority, and in terms of the relatively differentiated roles of religion and state. Of course, states have often violated the Westphalian rules of authority, too. During the cold war both the liberal democratic capitalist world and the communist world tried to extend their models of governance into other states, sometimes through military intervention. Yet most states on both sides continued to insist on nonintervention as the general rule, even as—toward their own infractions—they temporized, equivocated, and argued the legitimacy of exceptions.¹⁸

Though theological developments helped to bring about the Westphalian synthesis, it, like Max Weber's "iron cage," far outlasted these originating ideas. Plausibly, a challenge to this synthesis would require an organization motivated by a political theology that calls into question its tenets of authority. An organization like al-Qaeda.

¹⁸ See R. J. Vincent, *Nonintervention and International Order* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974).

THE ROOTS OF SECULARIZATION IN
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THOUGHT

The scholarship follows the phenomenon. Some early modern philosophers sought to understand the new set of institutions through old commitments. Theologians like Victoria, Suarez, Gentili, and Grotius tried to discover how a system of sovereign states could be placed on a theologically valid foundation. Another set of philosophers left theology largely behind. In depicting states as bereft of religious purposes, they thus adopted contemporary secularizing trends into their thought. Here were the beginnings of a tradition that rose quickly to prominence and that would in later centuries come to dominate international relations thought—the realist tradition. Its early modern articulators, Niccolò Machiavelli, Cardinal Richelieu, and Thomas Hobbes, all described the political changes of their day as a departure from classical Christianity and from its political embodiment in medieval Christendom. They held instead that states would flourish by affirming this departure in their actions. Realist voices perpetuated these commitments. At the beginning of the cold war, a fertile moment for the tradition, American realists deployed their forebears' ideas in laying the foundation for international relations as a social science and helping the United States forge a response to the challenge of Soviet power.¹⁹

Central to realism, both then and now, is the concept of the state as a distinct political entity with distinct interests—its own logic, its own reason, in Cardinal Richelieu's famous formulation, *raison d'état*.²⁰ The concept arose as kings evolved from regionally prominent rulers of private "estates" to sovereigns of "states," where they ruled supreme within a set of territorial borders. An understanding of the state as a discrete body politic also assumed its declaration of independence from the authority of Christendom, the encompassing body of emperor and ecclesiasts that constrained the authority of kings.

If the state had its own "reason," its own interests, then of what did these consist? Its telos was no longer Thomas Aquinas's "common good," a state of justice and peace in which a whole array of virtues were safeguarded. Rather, it was now the mere security of the body. As Hobbes described the situation, in a milieu of anarchy, where the state was now one of many bodies politic with no common Leviathan, secu-

¹⁹ See Stanley Hoffmann, "An American Social Science: International Relations," in *Janus and Minerva: Essays in the Theory and Practice of International Politics* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1987).

²⁰ See Friedrich Meinecke, *Machiavellianism: The Doctrine of Raison d'état and Its Place in Modern History* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1984).

rity was precarious, often threatened by war. Closely following Hobbes, Kenneth Waltz would later call this condition one of “self-help.”²¹ Here, states could afford to attend to little else but to preserve themselves.

And to preserve their security, states must make it their primary pursuit to possess relative military power—military forces and the population, technology, wealth, and taxation structure to support them. States’ fundamental interest in the pursuit of power is another key tenet of realism, what Hans Morgenthau called one of its six “signposts.” For realists like Hobbes, it was international anarchy that necessitated the drive for power. For other realists, like Machiavelli and Morgenthau, whom Michael Doyle calls “fundamentalists,” the will to power is rooted in human nature and pervades politics at all levels.²² Morgenthau’s intellectual *Bildung* involved an encounter—almost religious in fervor, but secularizing in substance—with the writings of Friedrich Nietzsche, whom he would later call a “kindred soul,” “the god of my youth.” From Nietzsche, Morgenthau learned that all social “reality” emanates from the person’s consuming urge to gain pleasure and avoid pain, resulting in a ubiquitous struggle for power. By contrast, all ideas and normative principles are limited, relative, and contingent. These commitments later shaped Morgenthau’s most famous books, *Scientific Man and Power Politics*, his excoriation of Anglo-American liberalism, and *Politics among Nations*, his classic of international politics. Here, he finds objective, empirically verifiable behavior in the realm of the political, where the struggle for power is all. Implied in Morgenthau’s Nietzscheanism is the death of religion, metaphysics, and the ability of reason to grasp objective, transcendent truth.²³ In international relations these would no longer be considered the ends of states.

It is not surprising, then, that theorists for whom power is primary also counsel statespersons to violate “Christian morality” if the interests of the state require it. Machiavelli notoriously considered Christian morality enfeebling and counseled the prince to be prepared not to be good.²⁴ As a churchman, Cardinal Richelieu could not renounce Christian morality outright, but he certainly thought that kings should

²¹ See Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (Lexington, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1979). Michael Doyle explains the similarity between Waltz and Hobbes, both “structural” realists, in Michael Doyle, *Ways of War and Peace* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1997), 111–36. On Hobbes, see also a section of an essay by Stanley Hoffmann on Rousseau; Hoffmann, “Rousseau on War and Peace,” in Hoffman (fn. 19), 25–36.

²² Doyle (fn. 21), 93–110.

²³ For an excellent recent study of Morgenthau’s early influences and intellectual formation, see Christoph Frei, *Hans J. Morgenthau: An Intellectual Biography* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2001), 98–102.

²⁴ Niccolò Machiavelli, *The Prince and the Discourses* (New York: Modern Library, 1950).

not be restricted by absolute norms in their pursuit of interests. Even twentieth-century “Christian realists” like Reinhold Niebuhr were skeptical that state action could be properly understood as motivated by deep religious concerns: in a world of power any attempt by states to pursue seriously a religious or transcendent ideal would ironically come to naught. He counseled leaders to act according to a calculation of the lesser of two evils.²⁵ Almost every realist in the tradition echoes this point, that states should place their own security and survival over compliance with any absolute moral obligation, even when such obligation is rooted in a rationally discernible common morality.²⁶

All of the above tenets of realism are now found in the thought of the tradition’s leading contemporary theorist, Kenneth Waltz, whose 1979 *Theories of International Politics* seeks to anchor realism in a more rigorous social scientific foundation and is the central reference point in contemporary realist discourse.²⁷ Realism’s essential secularism, it follows, is also found there. Waltz takes states to be motivated by power, the vital ingredient of security in an environment of anarchy—leaving little room for them to be motivated by anything else.

The major competition for realism over the last two centuries has come from liberalism. Liberals from Kant onward through the Anglo-American tradition have been united in their belief in the rational possibility that states could escape the iron grip of the competition for power and cooperate in pursuing peace and prosperity.²⁸ Cooperation occurs when certain conditions are present—democratic regimes, liberal ideas, economic interdependence, and effective international institutions. But rarely do liberals consider religion as a shaper of states’ ends. Rooted in the Enlightenment, most describe international politics as an almost wholly secular world, where states are consumed with the pursuit of stability, peace, and economic growth. Continuing the trend are contemporary liberal institutionalists, who, even in their criticism of realism, retain its rationalist assumptions that states are distinct unitary bodies whose primary pursuit is material power. Liberalism, whether classical or contemporary, has deservedly come to enjoy great prestige, as has realism, as an explanation of war, trade, and diverse

²⁵ Reinhold Niebuhr, *The Irony of American History* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1952); idem, *Christian Realism and Political Problems* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1953).

²⁶ See Jack Donnelly, “Twentieth-Century Realism,” in Terry Nardin and David Mapel, ed., *Traditions of International Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Steven Forde, “Classical Realism,” in Terry Nardin and David Mapel, eds., *Traditions of International Ethics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

²⁷ Waltz (fn. 21).

²⁸ See Doyle (fn. 21), 205–311; and Arnold Wolfers and Laurence Martin, *The Anglo-American Tradition: Readings from Thomas More to Woodrow Wilson* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1956).

forms of conflict and cooperation. But it does not help us to understand events seemingly wrought by religion.

Of course, there are other international relations scholars who dissent from realism and liberalism altogether—Marxists, constructivists, postmodernists. But they, too, deviate little from the secularist assumption. Constructivists, whose assertion of the malleability and plurality of state identities would seem to create the most room for religious purposes, rarely give them attention.²⁹

Broader trends in the social sciences over the past generation have further reinforced the secularism of international relations scholarship. Most important is the secularization thesis of the 1950s and 1960s. Rooted in the modernization narrative that grew out of the Enlightenment, the thesis held, quite simply, that as industrialization, urbanization, rationalization, and science marched forward, religion would correspondingly find itself in retreat. Proponents held that secularization would occur in all of its forms—in private belief, in outward practice, and in public expressions of religion. It would be irreversible, absorbing, and global, eviscerating beliefs in Jehovah, Allah, Christ, and the Hindu gods alike. Though entailing a far wider sociological enterprise than the description of international relations, the secularization thesis nicely corroborated the commitments of realism and liberalism.³⁰ Similarly, the behavioral revolution of the 1950s gave prestige and impetus to a form of social science that rarely took religious motivations seriously. Its emphasis on purely empirical explanation and its spare assumptions about motivation are quite compatible with the assumptions of Waltz. Together, all of these trends created the intellectual milieu in which commercial airplanes driven into the towers of the World Trade Center came as an utter conceptual surprise.

THE DESECULARIZATION OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Today, a growing number of analysts are finding that, in fact, religious beliefs, practices, and political ends are not in decline. One of secularism's original proponents during the 1960s, leading sociologist of religion Peter Berger, now writes:

[T]he assumption that we live in a secularized world is false. The world today, with some exceptions to which I will come presently, is as furiously religious as it ever was, and in some places more so than ever. This means that a whole body

²⁹ See Peter J. Katzenstein, ed., *The Culture of National Security: Norms and Identity in World Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

³⁰ For a survey description of the ambitions of the secularization thesis, see Stark (fn. 3).

of literature by historians and social scientists loosely labeled “secularization theory” is essentially mistaken. In my early work I contributed to this literature. I was in good company—most sociologists of religion had similar views, and we had good reasons for holding them. Some of the writings we produced still stand up. (As I like to tell my students, one advantage of being a social scientist, as against being, say, a philosopher or a theologian, is that you can have as much fun when your theories are falsified as when they are verified!)³¹

Another sociologist of religion, Rodney Stark, documents Berger’s claim through a broad survey of empirical trends found in recent writings on secularization. Most strikingly, in Western Europe, where secularization was argued to be strongest, no demonstrable decline in religious participation has taken place. Generally, participation rates remain low compared with America and elsewhere, while subjective religiosity remains high. But these trends have persisted for centuries. Stark questions the “myth of past piety,” drawing upon a body of scholarship to show that medieval and early modern Europe, widely thought to be a place and time of wide and thick religion, was characterized by low rates of participation and a surprising variety of beliefs. “As for the ordinary people,” he writes, “during the middle ages and during the Renaissance, the masses rarely entered a church, and their private worship was directed toward an array of spirits and supernatural agencies, only some of them Christian.” In America, little evidence of religious decline exists. Over the past century and a half the rate of church membership has increased by more than three times, while a range of other measures of commitment have either held steady or have risen modestly. In formerly communist Eastern Europe and Russia, Stark reports, church attendance has risen steadily during the 1980s and 1990s. Claimants of secularization have asserted their thesis less vigorously toward the non-Western world. Stark confirms that there, too, the case against secularization is strong. In Islam, he argues, “there is a profound compatibility of the Islamic faith and modernization.” Studies of Java, Pakistan, and Turkey show a positive correlation of Islamic faith and educational and occupational prestige, contrary to the predictions of modernization theory. In Taiwan, Hong Kong, Japan, and Chinese Malaysia, traditional folk religions are flourishing among the young. Although careful sociological studies capture only portions of a vast landscape of continents, the aggregate of these studies, along with more impressionistic perspectives, calls into question the core claims of the secularization thesis.³²

³¹ Berger (fn. 9), 2.

³² Stark (fn. 3), 253–60.

Most pertinently for the argument at hand, scholars have documented a rise in the influence of religion on politics. Three separate trends have been identified. First religious organizations are growing in their power to shape public debate and the policies of governments.³³ The Hindu nationalist parties in India, Muslim movements in Turkey, Orthodox Christians in Russia, conservative Christians in America, ultra-Orthodox Jews and Orthodox Jewish nationalists in Israel, and evangelicals in Latin America have all come to exercise increasing influence over laws governing marriage, education, foreign policy toward favored groups and states, religious minorities, and the relationship between religion and the institutions of the state. Second, religious organizations exercise a transnational influence upon the politics of outside states. Since its embrace of human rights and democracy at the Second Vatican Council, for instance, the Catholic church has fostered democratization in Poland, Spain, Portugal, the Philippines, and throughout Latin America. Jews in America provide strong direct support to Israel. Worldwide Islamic organizations like the Muslim Brotherhood provide social services in many nations, building loyal followings who then articulate Islamic politics, sometimes through violence. Third, even more powerfully, religion shapes not only the policies of states but also their very constitutions, thus becoming “the law of the land.” This is most dramatic in the Muslim world, where, in an “Islamic resurgence” over the past couple of decades, *sharia* has become public law in Iran, Sudan, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Malaysia, and twelve of Nigeria’s thirty-six states. In its own way, each of these trends challenges secularization as differentiation. Some challenge the Westphalian synthesis, especially the norms that prescribe state restraint in matters of religion and its reverse. Most radical of all, religiously motivated groups are questioning the very legitimacy of the international order, the Westphalian synthesis, in all of its stands. The most influential of these are networks of Muslims who act on behalf of the unity of the *umma*, or the people of Islam. Like al-Qaeda.

THE CHALLENGE OF RADICAL ISLAMIC REVIVALISM TO SECULARIZED INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The assault on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, the killing of some three thousand civilians on September 11, 2001, was motivated by a political theology that regards the Westphalian synthesis as despi-

³³ On this trend, see Casanova (fn. 9).

cably secularized. This political theology, which we can call “radical Islamic revivalism,” began in the early twentieth century as an internal moral critique of Islamic civilization, one that regards it as having decayed to a state of barbarism. Over decades the most ardent proponents of radical Islamic revivalism began to identify the sources of decline on the outside, too, and to advocate a violent antidote.

Popular misconceptions underline the importance of striving for clarity about what Islamic revivalism is not. Though theologically rooted, it represents only a small niche in the spectrum of Islamic views of political theology. Its beliefs and its actions fly in the face of doctrines of warfare that run widely and deeply in the Islamic tradition: a prohibition of the direct, intentional killing of innocents; the requirement of justly constituted authority; a restrictive understanding of who is an aggressor that would thoroughly reject Osama bin Laden’s assessment of the United States; and strong restraint toward enlisting Muslim civilians in warfare, a practice to be confined to cases of extreme emergency attack.³⁴ The Organization of the Islamic Conference unanimously condemned the attacks of September 11. Though anecdotal evidence exists of a more diffuse popular hostility to the West among Muslims, only a narrow minority of Muslims subscribes to the specific tenets of radical Islamic revivalism.³⁵ Its impact far outweighs its numbers.

Nor should the object of radical Islamic revivalism’s ire be misunderstood. It is not Christianity or the historic traditions of Western civilization that the movement rejects, though it may not be particularly friendly to either (and it is far more hostile to Judaism). What it primarily scorns, rather, is a secularized political order that challenges its own political theology of authority, along with the particular offenses perpetrated against Islam by the United States, the most powerful representative of this order. Part and parcel of this secularized order is the Westphalian synthesis.

Radical Islamic revivalism challenges every element of that synthesis. Against the norm that in the modern international system the legitimate polity is the sovereign state stands Osama bin Laden’s fatwa of February 1998:

In compliance with God’s order, we issue the following fatwa to all Muslims: the ruling to kill the Americans and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual duty for every Muslim who can do it in any country in which it is

³⁴ James Turner Johnson, “Jihad and Just War,” *First Things* (June–July 2002).

³⁵ See, for instance, Fouad Ajami, “What the Muslim World Is Watching,” *New York Times Magazine*, November 18, 2001. See also Zogby International’s “Impressions of America” poll of April 11, 2002.

possible to do it, in order to liberate the Al-Aqsa Mosque [Jerusalem] and the holy mosque [Mecca] from their grip, and in order for their armies to move out of the lands of Islam. . . . This is in accordance with the words of Almighty God, “and fight the pagans all together as they fight you all together,” and “fight them until there is no more tumult or oppression, and there prevail justice and faith in God.”

Unlike the state, radical revivalists like bin Laden are religiously constituted actors, bound together by a common political-theological outlook that claims authority to act on behalf of the *umma*—that is, all Muslims, in whatever state they may live—and even to order them into battle.³⁶ They are not a state themselves and they exercise authority in the name of a group that extends far beyond the confines of any state.

In the Westphalian order nonintervention is an ensconced norm of international society, and the tradition of noninterference in other states’ governance of religion dates back to the days of *cuius regio, eius religio*. Radical Islamic revivalism is dedicated precisely to the opposite position—crossing borders in order to influence how states treat religion. Revivalists aim to bring Islamic societies under the authority of divine law, *sharia*. All over the world they wage what they regard as defensive wars against defilements of Islam—on Palestinians at the hands of Israel, on Iraqi civilians at the hands of the United States, on holy ground in Saudi Arabia that is violated by the United States.

Against the trend of the decades surrounding Westphalia, when religious authorities, especially ones outside the state, ceased to exercise temporal powers, Islamic revivalists aim to have religious authorities play a far more powerful role than in secular states. Under *sharia* they would influence state officials far more, through their teachings, their directives, and their direct advice; in Shiite interpretations they would actually be the state officials, as are imams in Iran.

In the modern state system of the Westphalian model, state officials create and protect spheres where religious authority and norms do not govern strongly or are allowed to be chosen freely; sometimes they seek to suppress religion altogether. Radical Islamic revivalists, by contrast, envision government officials promoting *sharia* in every sector of society, with little concern for the religious freedom of non-Muslims. In all of these ways, Islamic revivalists unravel the Westphalian synthesis. Their blueprint for the relationship of religion to politics is reminiscent of medieval Europe; their methods and organization evoke those of transnational movements of Protestants and Catholics in early modern Europe.

³⁶ Hashmi (fn. 7, “International Society and Its Islamic Malcontents,” 1996), 21.

What are the intellectual roots of such thinking? What is the substance of its critique of modern politics? How does this critique translate into violence against outsiders? How did al-Qaeda in particular emerge from this critique?

Again, radical revivalists are but a small minority of Muslims and hold a minority position along the spectrum of Muslim political theology. Sohail Hashmi describes this spectrum as entailing three general competing Muslim views of the legitimacy of the international system. First, there are “statists,” who wholly accept the territorial state. They regard Islam as one important source of national identity in states where the vast majority of the population is Muslim but otherwise view it as an impediment to modernization and national integration. For statists, Islam is instrumental to the state-building enterprise. This view, he says, “remain[s] peripheral to the Islamic discourse.” Second, the broad middle is occupied by “Islamic internationalists,” who accept separate Muslim states, but assert pan-Islamic obligations that transcend the interests of individual states. Third, there are “Islamic cosmopolitans” for whom territorially delimited sovereign states are an illegitimate remnant of European imperialism, designed to weaken the Muslim world, who perpetuate the violation of Islamic tenets of universality and solidarity. Emblematic is Ayatollah Khomeini, who supported the spread of Islamic revolution far beyond Iran’s borders. He and the like-minded are the equivalent of what are here called radical revivalists.³⁷

How did radical revivalists come to their position? At the core of the tradition stands a theologically based view of Islam’s current historical condition, namely, that it is one of corruption and decrepitude or, more precisely, *jabiliyya*, the state of barbarism and ignorance that characterized the period prior to Muhammad. The critique is mainly an internal one, based on the view that Islam has veered alarmingly from its true meaning.³⁸ *Jabiliyya* even more strongly characterizes the Western world, whose superior power enables it to impose its corruption on Islam. State governments and the international order alike have fallen into secularism, where *sharia* governs only insufficiently and religion is wrongly confined to a private sphere. Against these evils, there is a need for intensive jihad, a holy struggle. This was the view of the first articulators of radical revivalism in the Sunni tradition, who began to write and organize in the first half of the twentieth century. Generally, their perspective goes under the name *Salafiyya*, a word derived from *al-Salaf al-Salih*, meaning the “venerable forefathers” and referring to the gen-

³⁷ Hashmi (fn. 7, “Interpreting the Islamic Ethics,” 1996), 223–24.

³⁸ Hashmi (fn. 7, “International Society and Its Islamic Malcontents,” 1996), 17.

eration of the Prophet.³⁹ They emerged in the wake of the abolition of the caliphate in 1924, this centuries-old entity of Muslims united under one political head. Until the late 1970s they exercised little systematic political influence, and were overshadowed by the more secularized and dominant pan-Arab nationalism.

Three articulators of the critique make it more vivid. Abu Ala Al-Mawdudi was one of the earliest voices of the radical revivalist critique and the founder of the Jama'at-i Islami Party in Pakistan. Just as the Prophet had fought the *jabiliyyah* of his time, Al-Mawdudi thought, so Muslims must now use all means at their disposal to resist the modern *jabiliyyah* spread by the West. Arguing that states are a westernized corruption, Al-Mawdudi actively campaigned against the creation of Pakistan, a position for which he received broad support among conservative Muslims in India.⁴⁰ Though he would later come to terms with reality and participate in Pakistani politics for three decades, he never became a nationalist or a strong supporter of the concept of the state. During the cold war he called for a universal jihad, though not a military or violent one, against the imperialist powers of the West and the Soviet Union.⁴¹

A second key figure in the rise of radical revivalism was Hasan al-Banna, who as a young schoolteacher founded the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928. For Al-Banna, as for Al-Mawdudi, secularism was unacceptable. Islam is a total way of life, he insisted, and could not be confined to the private sphere. A charismatic leader, he mobilized throngs of people to bring an Islamic solution to the ills of modernity. The Brotherhood ran night schools, established hospitals and clinics, built factories, and taught Muslims modern labor laws. At the same time, a "secret apparatus" of the Brotherhood began to organize violent operations against declared enemies of Islam. Al-Banna formally denounced the operations, but there is evidence to suggest that he knew of them. Today, the bulk of the party continues to fight its battles in the political arena, but its radical fringe persists in violence, targeting tourist buses and riverboats.⁴²

³⁹ Michael Scott Doran, "Somebody Else's Civil War: Ideology, Rage, and the Assault on America," in Gideon Rose and James F. Hoge, Jr., eds., *How Did This Happen? Terrorism and the New War* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2001), 34.

⁴⁰ Hashmi (fn. 7, "Interpreting the Islamic Ethics," 1996), 223.

⁴¹ Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God: A History of Fundamentalism* (New York: Ballantine Books, 2000), 236–38.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 220–23; Bassam Tibi, *The Challenge of Fundamentalism: Political Islam and the New World Order* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998), 58; Russell Watson, "An Army of Eternal Victims," *Newsweek*, March 15, 1993, 2.

A third figure, the Egyptian Sayyid Qutb, expanded on Al-Mawdudi's critique of secular modernity to become the most prominent voice of Sunni radical revivalism after World War II. "Every significant Sunni fundamentalist movement had been influenced by Qutb," writes Karen Armstrong.⁴³ When Qutb first joined the Muslim Brotherhood, (of which he would later become a leader), he was still a reformer who wanted to give Western democracy an Islamic dimension. He came to endorse violent military action only after he was imprisoned for his membership in the Brotherhood by Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser in 1956. It was in a concentration camp that he became convinced that religious and secular people could not coexist in peace. He took from the writings of Al-Mawdudi that *jabiliyyah* was relevant to modern conditions. In his last published work, *Milestones* (1964), Qutb "openly declared that the existing order in all countries, including so called 'Muslim' ones, was anti-Islamic, and called on Islamic activists to prepare themselves to replace the present *Jabili* (that is, barbaric and ignorant) order."⁴⁴ He was the first to extend Al-Mawdudi's use of the term *jabiliyyah* to societies of nominal Muslims not governed entirely by Islam. For him, non-Muslim Westerners and communists were not the only enemy; so, too, were "apostate" Muslims like Egypt's Nasser. Despite Islam's prohibition of Muslims taking up arms against one another, Qutb pronounced secular Muslims to be "corrupters of the faith" and thereby legitimate targets of a military form of jihad. "For Qutb, the modern *jabiliyyah* in both Egypt and the West was even worse than the *jabiliyyah* of the Prophet's time, because it was not based on 'ignorance' but was a principled rebellion against God," writes Armstrong.⁴⁵ The faithful must reject "all man-made laws and governments which are the foundations of the new paganism. The true believers, the elect, must organize themselves into vanguard groups apart from the new society of ignorance and repeat the original establishment of Islam through withdrawal/migration, jihad, and conquest of power."⁴⁶ Nasser's government executed Qutb in 1966.⁴⁷

⁴³ Karen Armstrong, *Islam: A Short History* (New York: Modern Library, 2000), 170.

⁴⁴ William E. Shepard, *Sayyid Qutb and Islamic Activism: A Translation and Critical Analysis of Social Justice in Islam* (New York: Brill, 1996), xl.

⁴⁵ Armstrong (fn. 41), 241.

⁴⁶ Said Amir Arjomand, "Unity and Diversity in Islamic Fundamentalism," in Martin Marty and Scott Appleby, eds., *Fundamentalisms Comprehended* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 184.

⁴⁷ For more on Qutb's thought, see Tibi (fn. 42), 56–63; Armstrong (fn. 41), 238–44; Shepard, (fn. 44), ix–lv; Ahmad S. Mousalli, *Radical Islamic Fundamentalism: The Ideological and Political Discourse of Sayyid Qutb* (Beirut: American University of Beirut, 1992); Kepel (fn. 9), 18–22.

How does this theologically based critique of modernity translate into a view of the international political order? The ultimate goal of radical revivalists is the Islamization of this order, replacing secular order with divine order, the nation-state with an Islamic system, democracy with an Islamic notion of consultation, positive law and human legislation with *sharia* and government of the people and by the people with God's rule.⁴⁸ Exactly what form of polity is supposed to emerge is ambiguous and varies among revivalists. After extensively analyzing the literature of contemporary radical revivalists, Bassam Tibi concludes that a restoration of the caliphate, the unity of Islam under a single head, the caliph, is no longer a widely shared goal.⁴⁹ Tibi writes that "although the current revival of political Islam" is an

expression of Islamic revolt against the prevailing international order of nation-states and its local configurations, it is not a revival of traditional Islamic political thought. Islamic fundamentalists do not speak about the restoration of the traditional Islamic order of the caliphate, but rather of the *nizam Islami*/Islamic order, with clearly modern implications.

He cites one major pamphlet that argues for the primary importance of *sharia* as the basis for political legitimacy, with the form of polity being a secondary issue.⁵⁰ The unity of the entire Muslim people, or the *umma*, is still a powerful concept in Islam. As long as the possibility of such unity in political form remains remote, it fails to translate into anything but a vague notion of polity. But this ambiguity does not detract from radical Islamic revivalism's challenge to the Westphalian synthesis. It is embodied by nonstate groups that claim authority for a people that is not itself confined to a state; its proponents engage in violence and other means of suasion across borders to change the temporal-spiritual ordering of authority within states; they advocate a greatly strengthened influence of religious authorities on state institutions; and they look to state institutions to promote Islam.

Revivalists' resistance to the Westphalian synthesis often takes the form of violence. "Islam's image of itself is to be the religion of peace," writes Tibi.⁵¹ But, he tells us, non-Muslims are seen as hindrances to this mission. Although in the classical doctrine, jihad is not to take the form of aggression, revivalists interpret the need to promote the spread of Islam in ways that can incorporate offensive revolutionary violence, as well as defensive combat.⁵² It was the second generation of revival-

⁴⁸ Tibi (fn. 42), 138, 152.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 144-46.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 101, 140-46.

⁵¹ Ibid., 55.

⁵² Kepel (fn. 9), 20.

ists, impatient with the lack of success of their moral revivalist fathers, who began to advocate violence. Qutb, the hinge of this turn, imagined an “Islamic world revolution.” In a pamphlet inspired by Qutb, Egyptian radical revivalist M. A. S. Faraj declared that “the idols of the world can only be made to disappear through the power of the sword.” Since the abolition of the caliphate in 1924, according to revivalists, Muslim rulers have replaced Islamic law with the laws of the infidels and forced believers to live under these laws, as the Mongols had done. Since they are apostates, they must suffer the punishment for apostasy—death.⁵³ Describing an example of the transformation of jihad from a defensive concept to an offensive one, Olivier Roy notes that in the war in Afghanistan, jihad was used by the traditional clerics (*ulama*) quite differently from how it was used by the lay religious radicals of the mujahadeen. “For the *ulama* it was understood as a defensive action designed to protect a threatened region from foreign encroachments or from secularization initiated by the state,” he explains, but “for the new fundamentalists it was interpreted as an offensive action designed to topple an illegitimate secular state, whatever its policy toward religion might be.”⁵⁴

Radical Islamic revivalists have in recent decades begun to turn their doctrines of violence toward outsiders, particularly the United States. *Salafi* writings portray the United States as an instrument of Satan, oppressing Muslims and threatening Islamic civilization with its secular culture and power. The U.S. is considered the leader of a “Zionist-Crusader” alliance dedicated to destroying Islam. More than just a pact between the United States and Israel, the alliance is seen to have oppressed Muslims not only in Palestine but also in Bosnia, Chechnya, Lebanon, and Iraq. Qutb, bin Laden, and many other radical revivalists have portrayed the United States as a sworn enemy of Islam that must be resisted by force. Drawing on the thirteenth-century philosopher ibn Taymiyya, the radical revivalists often analogize the United States to the Mongol barbarians who invaded the Islamic world during the Middle Ages.⁵⁵

A theologically based critique of the modern world, a call for violent attacks on the modern international political order, a focus on America as the primary enemy—all of these strands are woven together by the

⁵³ Arjomand (fn. 46), 185–86.

⁵⁴ Roy, “Afghanistan: An Islamic War of Resistance,” in Martin Marty and Scott Appleby, eds., *Fundamentalisms and the State*, no. 3 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993); idem, *Islam and Resistance in Afghanistan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

⁵⁵ Doran (fn. 39), 33–43.

al-Qaeda movement. The son of a billionaire Saudi owner of a construction company, Osama bin Laden underwent a conversion to theological radicalism in the early 1970s. It was in the war against the Soviet Union in Afghanistan that he honed his skills and developed his reputation as a military leader. Indeed, the war was a profound unifying event for radical revivalists all over the world, as they arrived to resist the imperialist invasion of 1979. In Afghanistan, bin Laden worked closely with Abdullah Azzam, a Palestinian member of the Muslim Brotherhood, helping him to recruit young Muslims for the Afghan front and to prevent outbursts of factional violence between Sunni and Shiite volunteers. Toward the end of the war, however, a rift grew between the two leaders over the proper way to carry out Islamic revival. While Azzam preferred to concentrate on building an Islamic state in Afghanistan, bin Laden and the Egyptians sought to conduct a fight against several *kafir* (infidel) countries at once, including apostate Muslim countries and Western nations such as the United States. Eventually bin Laden and the Egyptians parted company. In the late 1980s bin Laden established the al-Qaeda network to bring together and train Sunni Arab Muslims who had fought in Afghanistan against the Soviet invasion. Now they could expand outward to take on a broader array of enemies. Stripped of his Saudi citizenship for his advocacy of extremist views, he set up his operation in Afghanistan in the early 1990s.⁵⁶

In forming the ideology of the al-Qaeda movement, bin Laden drew from radical revivalist themes in both Qutb's thought and Saudi Wahhabism. Al-Qaeda is exceptional among revivalists in proclaiming the goal of establishing a pan-Islamic caliphate throughout the world. This only deepens its challenge to the Westphalian synthesis. It proposes to accomplish its goal by working with allied Islamic extremist groups to overthrow regimes it deems "non-Islamic" and expelling Westerners and non-Muslims from Muslim countries. In February 1998 it issued a statement under the banner of "The World Islamic Front for Jihad against the Jew and Crusaders," proclaiming it the duty of all Muslims to kill U.S. citizens—including civilians—and their allies everywhere. Al-Qaeda, then, translates radical Islamic revivalism into a notion of jihad that is more ambitious and more violent than that of almost any other radical revivalist group. On the basis of this notion, it has operated in Sudan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Somalia, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Bosnia, Croatia, Albania, Algeria, Tunisia, Lebanon, the Philippines, Tajikistan, Azer-

⁵⁶ Paul L. Williams, *Al Qaeda: Brotherhood of Terror* (Parsippany, N.J.: Alpha Books, 2002), 76, 78.

baijan, Kenya, Tanzania, Indian Kashmir, and Chechnya.⁵⁷ It was acting on this concept of the international system when it bombed the World Trade Center in 1993, American embassies in Kenya and Tanzania in August 1998, and the *U.S.S. Cole* in 2000, and when it sent planes crashing into the World Trade Center and Pentagon on September 11, 2001.

REDISCOVERING RELIGION IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS SCHOLARSHIP

If international relations scholars are to understand the violence of September 11, then they must come to understand how religious movements like radical Islamic revivalism, acting on their political theology, challenge the Westphalian synthesis, the fundamental authority structure of the international order. In fact, the field is not bereft of concepts that can assist the project. Constructivists show us that simply assuming state interests to be power will prevent us from understanding a whole variety of international phenomena.⁵⁸ Only a grasp of the variability of identity can help us to begin to understand acts motivated by radical Islamic revivalism. Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink's concept of transnational issue networks identifies nongovernmental groups whose members extend across borders, are held together by common ideas about justice, and seek to influence the politics of states accordingly.⁵⁹ Organizationally, radical Islamic revivalism fits this general definition. The concept of international society, from the English school, asserts the existence of common values and norms that are held across states.⁶⁰ It is rules of international society that radical revivalist groups protest; it is their own alternative set of rules that they propose to substitute. The clash between radical Islamic revivalism and Westphalian international society can be understood as dueling international societies.

But each of these concepts must be significantly extended if we are to understand the actions of radical revivalists. Most importantly, we must come to understand that these groups are defined, constituted, and motivated by religious beliefs, beliefs about the ultimate ground of existence. Out of these beliefs, they then construct a political theology

⁵⁷ Peter L. Bergen, *Holy War, Inc.: Inside the Secret World of Osama Bin Laden* (New York: Free Press, 2001), 196.

⁵⁸ The most prominent constructivist work is Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). See also the collection in Katzenstein (fn. 29).

⁵⁹ Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1998).

⁶⁰ The locus classicus here is Bull (fn. 13).

as well as a social critique that measures the distance between that theology and contemporary social conditions and prescribes action accordingly. That such beliefs constitute influential global networks and motivate their actions call into question the secularization of international relations, in both practice and theory.

The argument here, of course, is open to challenge. The strongest skeptic would doubt the independent role claimed here for political theological ideas, their vital influence in forming radical Islamic revivalism and in sustaining it over generations. In the spirit of modernist secularism, this critic's doubt would lie either in a reductionist view that ideas are nothing more than the product of underlying economic, organizational, technological, or other material forces and structures or that they are at best "focal points" that gather, channel, and coordinate independent ends, usually political or economic advancement.⁶¹

The debate is an old one, with many episodes, dating back at least as far as Max Weber and Karl Marx. What kind of alternative explanations might the skeptic muster? One is poverty. Economic hardships and a diagnosis of them as caused by international structures motivate ideologies that identify and urge attacks on these structures, the argument runs. A more sophisticated variant points not simply to poverty but to deprived expectations. It is those poor who have been educated or exposed to the world of wealth, power, and sophisticated culture but have no opportunity for advancement or enjoyment of it who are most likely to adopt radical religious ideologies. It is in locales where economic or political advancement is limited that such ideologies will be most prevalent. Other explanations would point to colonialism or Western influence: it is where these are or have been strongest that radical revivalism arises in reaction. Others might point to rapid social change or modernization as a cause.

Only careful research can sort out these causes. It is not clear at the outset that radical Islamic revivalism will reduce to any other factor or that it will prove a mere coordinator of separate preferences. Initial suspicion of a "deprived expectations alone" explanation, for instance, arises from the observation that out of tens of poor countries in the world where these expectations are likely to exist, radical political theology develops only in a few. Something else must be at work in these locales. The best explanations of radical Islamic revivalism are likely to identify complex patterns of causation. Some causes will consist of his-

⁶¹ See Geoffrey Garrett and Barry R. Weingast, "Ideas, Interests, and Institutions: Constructing the European Community's Internal Market," in Judith Goldstein and Robert O. Keohane, eds., *Ideas and Foreign Policy: Beliefs, Institutions, and Political Change* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1993).

torical circumstances that are not independent of radical ideas but that reinforce their propositions. The decline of the caliph and the collapse of political forms of Islam by the 1920s suggest that revivalism would develop. The failure of the first generation to achieve major reforms would suggest that a more radical second generation would arise. Broadly material factors may prove an important part of the story, too. Perhaps radical revivalists are most likely to arise from particular social or economic strata or to come from a particular political environment. Again, though, only careful empirical research can begin to sort out explanations, better and worse.

A new exploration of religion would formulate broad general questions that gauge religion's influence. What role do circumstantial factors play? To what extent does the development of political theology have an autonomous logic of its own? Are certain forms of ideas, certain propositions most likely to persuade? What are they? How influential is the historical embeddedness of religious ideas? Do traditional ones have a better chance of flourishing? Are religious identities largely the manipulations of political elites, as some theorists of nationalism would claim? What is the role of intellectuals and religious authorities? What factors determine the form that religious identities will take? And under what conditions does a radical Islamic revivalist movement turn from peaceful means to violence? The interesting questions will be not only causal but also descriptively empirical. How widely held are certain political theologies, of which radical Islamic revivalism is one? There is evidence, for instance, that the ill feelings toward the U.S. that motivated the attack are broadly articulated in newspapers throughout the Muslim world. Other interesting questions will call for an interpretation of doctrines themselves. Exactly what conception of international society is espoused by radical Islamic revivalists? As has been shown, al-Qaeda is exceptional for its advocacy of restoration of the caliphate. Other revivalists are content to expand governance by *sharia* within the framework of the existing system of sovereign states. How do theological conceptions inform political ones?

Over the past generation international relations scholars have devoted great effort and have achieved impressive successes in explaining how and whether states attain various goods for their citizens, including security, sometimes conquest, economic growth, sometimes great wealth, human rights, sometimes high levels of justice, environmental purity, and a world in which they can freely express themselves. They do all of this along with explaining states' pursuit or denial of goods for other states' citizens: security from weapons of mass destruction, pros-

perity, development out of poverty, and the alleviation of genocide and humanitarian disasters. But people across the globe seek other ends, too: to worship and submit to their God, to protect and defend their mosques, temples, shrines, synagogues, and churches, to convert others to their faith, to reside in a realm governed by *sharia*, to live under a government that promotes morality in many spheres of society, to draw on their faith to extend civil rights to minorities and women, and to practice forgiveness and reconciliation in the wake of decades of injustices. Is it any surprise that such ends spill into the realm of international politics? International relations scholars must become more aware of these sorts of ends if they are to plumb international politics today, particularly the poignant and surprising politics of September 11.