

V. America and the War on Terror (1947-)

A. America decides to police the Middle East.

1. The United States came to act as an international police power in the Middle East for three main reasons.
 - a) to stop the spread of communism
 - b) to help the newly formed nation of Israel
 - c) to secure access to the oil of the region
2. Middle Eastern Countries like Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan were chosen as temporary allies because they were neighbors of Russia and did not want communism.
3. Following the Holocaust in World War II, many Jewish people had come to America for religious freedom. Others settled in their ancient homeland of Israel. When Israel become a country in 1948, the United States decided to support it.
4. In order to be a *world* police power, the United States needed the ability to transport people and supplies to any point in the world. This meant having a large supply of oil for its ships and planes. Since the Middle East had huge amounts of oil, the United States chose to become temporary allies of monarchies such as Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

B. American Support of Israel

1. Middle Eastern countries that accepted American aid against communism tended to appreciate America's help in keeping them safe, but they were still angry with America for helping Israel.
2. Israel had been an ancient kingdom in the region, but its Jewish people had been forced away by wars with Romans and Muslim conquerors. Most went to Europe.
3. With the advent of the World Wars, however, violence against Jews by Christians in Europe reached its highest level. The Holocaust involved the murder of over 6 *million* Jews.
4. Some Jews began to dream of a restored homeland where they could live without fear of persecution.
5. When Britain and France conquered the Middle East in World War I and brought an end to the last Muslim empire there (the Ottoman Empire), the British rulers of the region agreed to allow Jewish settlement in the area they called Palestine.
6. The Palestinian Arabs believed the British would eventually transfer control of Palestine over to them, but instead found the Jews arriving in larger and larger numbers and finally declaring their own state in 1948.
7. Over the next generations, Israel's Arab neighbors launched multiple wars to try to destroy Israel, but because of America's support Israel was the most powerful country in the region and they could not defeat it.
8. In 1979, under American influence, Egypt's leader Anwar Sadat agreed to an Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty. American police power had brought peace to the region.

C. Modern Terrorism

1. On 9-11-2001, Muslim terrorists from the Middle East attacked the United States by taking over commercial airplanes and flying them into buildings including the World Trade Center in New York.
2. In order to understand the rise of terrorism as a problem in the modern world, we must understand first what terrorism is, and why it is connected so strongly to the Middle East and to the religion of Islam.

3. Terrorism is a tactic of war. It is a method of fighting where attackers from one side direct violence against regular people. The goal of this tactic is to strike fear in them, because when people are afraid, they try to avoid that which makes them afraid.
4. Terrorists from the Middle East hope to cause Americans to fear them so that Americans will want to stop policing their region.
5. We have seen that the people of the Middle East did not want communism, so America's aid as a temporary ally against communism could not be the cause of terrorism.
6. We have also seen that America's aid of Israel led to peace between Israel and Egypt in 1979.
7. Why then is terrorism so common in the modern world?

D. The Iranian Revolution and the Rise of Terrorism

1. In 1979, America helped Israel and Egypt to achieve peace. Later that year, however, terrorism was used against the United States in Iran, showing enemies of America that the tactic of terrorism could be successfully used against even the world police power.
2. The monarchy of Iran had been an ally of the United States against communist Russia, but Iran's religious leaders believed that even though Russia was the "lesser Satan" (i.e. a religious enemy) the United States was the "Great Satan."
3. In 1979, the Iranian religious leader Ayatollah Khomeini took over Iran after a revolution against the monarchy. Iran became a *theocracy*—a government controlled by religious leaders.
4. Then Iranian terrorists attacked the American embassy in Iran and took American hostages (prisoners).
5. American president Jimmy Carter did not know what to do. The hostages were held for 444 days, and America did not attack Iran.
6. The Iranian hostage crisis became the first great success story of terrorism encouraged by religious leaders of Middle Eastern countries against America.