

## G. The Rise of a New Enemy

1. The next to last piece of the puzzle in the making of the contemporary version of America as the world police power is the replacement of communism as the main perceived threat to democracy by Islamic terrorism.
2. The Berlin Wall fell in 1989, when Russia abandoned control of Eastern Europe, and by 1991, Russia itself had abandoned communism. This signaled the success of America's mission to protect Europe, and made possible the rise of the European Union.
3. Up to that point events in the Islamic world had been seen as less important, but a new strain of anti-Americanism had been growing there that would soon grab the headlines.
4. First, because of America's focus on anti-communism, a new enemy arose in Iran.
  - a) During the Cold War, the United States had supported the monarch of Iran (the "Shah") because of his anti-communism.
  - b) The people of Iran, however, had gravitated toward a charismatic elected official, prime minister Mohamed Mossadegh, who promised to *nationalize* the oil resources of the country that had been developed by British and American companies.
  - c) America's leaders saw in this program the specter of communism, so the CIA (Central Intelligence Agency) was tasked with conspiring with the Shah to remove Mossadegh from power. In **1953** Mossadegh was arrested and imprisoned, and from that point on the Shah was more aggressively supported with weapons and money by the CIA even though he was especially unpopular with the people.
  - d) Since elected officials had been neutralized by the Shah and America, the only champions of Iranian independence still to be found were among the religious caste. The most charismatic of these was the Ayatollah Khomeini.
  - e) In **1979** mass protests broke out against the Shah and in support of Khomeini, and the Shah decided he could no longer hold onto power and he fled the country.
  - f) As part of this **Iranian Revolution**, terrorists stormed the American embassy and took it staff hostage as a symbol of their uprising against the corrupt government and its superpower sponsor.
  - g) For 444 days, Americans were paraded on global television in blindfolds. The United States was humiliated, and the president, Jimmy Carter, refused to take action against Iran.
  - h) The result was the birth of a modern cultural trend called **Islamism**. Islamism had been brewing for a long time in Islamic culture, which resented being overpowered by cultures like Europe, Russia, and America, and in **1979** it erupted as a new threat. Islamism holds that a new deep commitment to Islam as the only true belief can fuel the overthrow of the world order with America at the top by means of "jihad" (holy war).
  - i) America's inaction against Iran in **1979** and since has made the religious government of Iran the leading champion of Islamism in the world.
5. The United States also made the mistake of fostering the rise of Islamism while fighting the spread of communism in Iran's neighbor Afghanistan.

- a) In **1979**, precisely when the United States was struggling to handle the situation in Iran, Russia invaded Afghanistan, where a new communist government was struggling to retain control of the country.
  - b) The United States did not want to fight Russia directly, so it opted to send money and weapons (again, via the CIA) to train the “mujahideen” fighters of Afghanistan. (President Ronald Reagan touted the mujahideen as “freedom fighters,” but the word literally means “jihadist” or “holy warrior of Islam.”)
  - c) Countless terrorists from around the Islamic world went to Afghanistan and received money and military training thanks to the United States, which believed they were focused on fighting communism.
  - d) One of these jihadists was Osama Bin Laden. Long after Russia limped home from its defeat in Afghanistan in **1989**, the jihadists trained and supplied in Afghanistan would become the infamous faces of Islamic terrorism. Osama Bin Laden himself was the organizer of the terrorist organization *Al Qaeda*, which was responsible for the terrorist attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001.
6. By focusing so exclusively and obsessively on anti-communism, the United States inadvertently created its own next enemy: an Islamic world permeated by Islamism.
  7. In response to the 9-11 Attacks, the United States launched the “War on Terror.” It invaded and occupied Afghanistan starting in 2001. It then invaded Iraq in 2003. The stated goal of these invasions was “regime change,” meaning that America wanted the people of the Islamic world to adopt democracy in place of their traditional governments, and especially in place of the many dictatorships throughout the Islamic cultural block.
  8. Instead of stopping terrorism, the War on Terror made it worse. In Iraq, the most destructive terrorist group known as ISIS (Islamic State of Iraq and Syria) rose up in 2014 and almost destroyed the governments of Iraq and Syria.
  9. After twenty years of trying to fight a “war” against terrorism, the United States has decided it cannot win. In 2021, president Biden ordered the withdrawal of all American troops from Afghanistan, allowing the Taliban, the exact same Islamist government that was in charge in 2001, to return to power.
  10. Perhaps the most ominous result of the *War on Terror* is the rise of a global surveillance state, whereby the United States and its allies literally record every conversation, e-mail and text that is sent on the planet, as was revealed by a government “whistleblower” named Edward Snowden, who had to flee the United States for showing the public what was going on. The goal is to use surveillance to stop terrorism, but it also means that privacy may no longer exist. It seems as though this power has not yet been widely abused, but it is literally the greatest power that has ever been taken upon itself by a collection of governments. Sadly, it can only be a matter of time.

## H. The Return of an Old Enemy (The Russia-Ukraine War Revisited)

1. When the *War on Terror* (2001-21) ended, it was not immediately clear what the next phase of America's policing of the world would take.
2. We no longer need to guess, however.
3. In 2014, the United States used the CIA in Ukraine in the same way it did in Iran in 1953—to overthrow an elected leader. This was because the leader of Ukraine, Victor Yanukovich, wanted to keep Ukraine in the Russo-sphere, while America wanted to bring Ukraine into the America-centric NATO alliance.
4. The overthrow of Yanukovich in the so-called “Maidan Revolution” was the last straw for Russia's leader Vladimir Putin, who knows that Russia's population is shrinking, and that it is in danger of no longer being a cardinal culture.
5. To try to stop this from happening, Putin ordered the occupation of part of Ukraine called Crimea, which had traditionally been a part of Russia, in 2014.
6. Ukraine then began waging a civil war against the Russian people in its own territory in the eastern regions of Ukraine known as Donetsk and Luhansk, which Russia warned could lead to a greater war.
7. A set of agreements was reached, known as the Minsk Agreements, in late 2014, to establish a cease-fire in Donetsk and Luhansk, but the United States was not part of the negotiations.
8. In addition to inviting Ukraine into NATO, the United States has since 2021 openly supplied weapons to Ukraine, which Russia has denounced and used as a basis for launching its “special military operation” to incorporate the eastern parts of Ukraine into Russia. Russia succeeded in this goal, but it is unclear how the conflict will now evolve.
9. What is obvious is that the United States has used the Ukraine conflict as a lever to separate Europe and Russia and increase its role in European politics. The war has led to the accession of Finland into NATO, and a proposal for Sweden to join as well. Russia has returned to the role of villain that it played during the Cold War.