

G. The Rise of a New Enemy

1. In 1991, Russia abandoned communism. It was the end of the Cold War. Soon, however, a new enemy arose to force America continue to make the world “safe for democracy.” The new enemy was Islamic terrorism.
2. The main reason why this new problem arose is because of America’s political entanglement with Iran.
 - a) During the Cold War, the United States had supported the ruler of Iran (the “Shah”) because of his anti-communism.
 - b) The people of Iran, however, believed that the Shah’s prime minister, named Mohamed Mossadegh, was the real hero of their country, because he wanted to take control of Iran’s oil away from European companies and give it to the Iranian government.
 - c) America’s leaders were worried that this would lead to communism, so America helped the Shah to arrest Mossadegh and put him in prison.
 - d) The Iranian people then turned to another champion of Iranian independence, a charismatic religious leader named Ayatollah Khomeini. 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.
 - e) 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 ally America.
 - f) The United States was humiliated by this act of terrorism, but the president, Jimmy Carter, refused to take action against Iran.
 - g) The result was the birth of a modern cultural trend called **Islamism** in Islamic culture. 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 terrorism.
 - h) America’s inaction against Iran in **1979** and since has made the religious government of Iran the leading champion of Islamism in the world.
3. 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 sent money and weapons to train the “mujahideen” fighters of Afghanistan. (President Ronald Reagan said the mujahideen were “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**, Osama Bin Laden organized the terrorist organization *Al Qaeda*, which was responsible for the terrorist attacks against the United States on September 11, 2001.
4. By focusing so much on anti-communism, the United States helped create its own next enemy: Islamism and Islamic terrorism.
5. 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 goal of these invasions was to force those countries to become democracies.
6. Instead of stopping terrorism, however, 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.
7. 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 return of the same Islamist government that was in charge before 2001, called the Taliban.

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, but we don’t have to guess now...
2. In 2014, the United States used the CIA in Ukraine in the same way it did in Iran in 1953: to get rid of a leader they did not like.
3. Vladimir Putin decided that he would not let America control the future of Ukraine, so he ordered the occupation of part of Ukraine called Crimea, which had traditionally been a part of Russia.
4. 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.
5. When the United States started sending weapons to Ukraine in 2021, Russia decided to invade Ukraine and protect Donetsk and Luhansk. Russia succeeded in this goal, but it is unclear what will happen next.
6. Because of the war, Finland has joined NATO, and Sweden wants to join as well. Russia has gone back to being the villain that America protects Europe from, just like in the Cold War.