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**Modern Middle East**

**Arab National States and the Problem of Palestine** (pp. 1103-1106)

1. How did independence movements in Southwest Asia differ from those in Africa and South Asia?
2. Why did the superpowers interfere in the region, even after they receive independence?
3. How is Zionism a nationalist movement? How did the Balfour Declaration impact the Zionist movements?

1. How did Arab Palestinians view the Jewish settlers in the region? What did they do?

1. What happened after WWII on both sides of the conflict?
2. Why did the British turn the issue over to the United Nations? What did they decide?
3. What happened once Israel was declared? How did Israel’s territory change (see map on p. 1105)?
4. What were characteristics of Arab nationalism? How did the Cold War influence this? What did Nasser do to rid the Arab world of European influence?
5. What led to the Suez Crisis? How did Egypt emerge from this struggle?

**Islamic Resurgence in Southwest Asia and North Africa** (pp. 1116-1118)

1. Why was there disunity in the Arab world (3 types of divisions)?
2. Describe the following events in the Arab-Israeli conflict:
   1. Yom Kippur War
   2. Assassination of Sadat
   3. Palestinian Liberation Organization
   4. Assassination of Yitzhak Rabin
3. According to Islamists, why was the Muslim world in decline? What are the solutions that Islamists propose?
4. Why were some Iranians opposed to Shah Reza Pahlavi? Why was there anti-U.S. sentiment?

1. What sparked the Iran-Iraq War? What were the results?

**Article on Islamic Fundamentalism**

1. What events have led to the rise of Islamic fundamentalism?
2. How is Islamic fundamentalism a complex issue in the Islamic world?

Islamic Fundamentalism

*Islamic Fundamentalism* includes diverse political and social movements in Muslim countries of North Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia, which have as their goal national government based on the principles and values of Islam. Although these movements all seek to restore social justice based on *sharia* (Islamic law), they differ in the form of government they seek and in how strictly they believe the government should interpret the law.

For many people in the West, the term “Islamic fundamentalism” evokes images of hostage crises, embassies under siege, hijackings, and suicide bombers. But these images hardly present a comprehensive picture. The ranks of Islamic fundamentalists include Muslims who provide much-needed services to the poor through Islamic schools, medical clinics, social welfare agencies, and other institutions. While some Islamic militants try to reach their goals through violence, the majority of Islamic activists work through political parties within the electoral process. At the fringes are those like Saudi-born millionaire Osama bin Laden and his al-Qaeda network that engage in a global war of terrorism.

The reassertion of Islam and Islamic values in Muslim politics and society over the past 30 years is often referred to in the West as the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. However, the word *fundamentalism* can be misleading when it is used to describe Islam or Muslim countries. The conservative monarchy of Saudi Arabia, the radical socialist state of Libya, and clerically governed Iran have all been described as “fundamentalist,” but this description fails to take into account vast differences in their governments and policies. Political analysts prefer to use the expressions “political Islam” or “Islamism” when discussing Islam’s many-faceted roles in current social and political movements.

The causes of Islam's resurgence vary by country and region, but there are several common threads. Among these is a widespread feeling of failure and loss of self-esteem in many Muslim societies following independence in the 20th century. The expectations that accompanied independence were shattered by failed political systems and economies and the negative effects of modernization. Modernization also led to a breakdown of traditional family, religious, and social values.

Many Muslims blamed Western models of political and economic development for these failures. Once enthusiastically pursued as symbols of modernity, these models increasingly came under criticism as sources of moral decline and spiritual malaise. Consequently, many countries became disillusioned with the West, and in particular with the United States. United States support for authoritarian Muslim rulers who backed Westernization, as well as America’s pro-Israel policy, strengthened anti-Western feelings

The Islamic revival has affected both the private and public lives of Muslims. Many Muslims have recommitted themselves to Islam's basic tenets by attending mosque, fasting, wearing Islamic dress, emphasizing family values, and abstaining from alcohol and gambling. Publicly, the revival has manifested itself in the form of Islamic banks, religious programming in the media, a proliferation of religious literature, and the emergence of new Islamic associations dedicated to political and social reform.

A number of beliefs and assumptions lie at the heart of the Islamic political revival. The first of these is that the Muslim world is in a state of decline, and the cause of this decline is departure from the straight path of Islam. The cure, therefore, is a return to Islam in personal and public life, which will ensure the restoration of Islamic identity, values, and power. Moreover, Islam is a total or comprehensive way of life as stipulated in the Qur’an, and embodied in the comprehensive nature of the sharia. Thus, the renewal and revitalization of Muslim governments and societies require the restoration or reimplementation of Islamic law, which provides the blueprint for an Islamically guided and socially just state and society.

Although political Islam condemns the Westernization and secularization of society, it does not condemn modernization as such. Science and technology are accepted, but the pace, direction, and extent of change are to be subordinated to Islamic belief and values in order to guard against the penetration of and excessive dependence on Western values.

While the majority of Islamic activists seek to work within the system and bring about change from within society, a relatively small but significant radical extremist minority believe they have a mandate from God to carry out God’s will. This extremist minority further believes that because the rulers in the Muslim world are authoritarian and anti-Islamic, violent change is necessary. They seek to topple governments, seize power, and impose their vision or interpretation of Islam upon society.