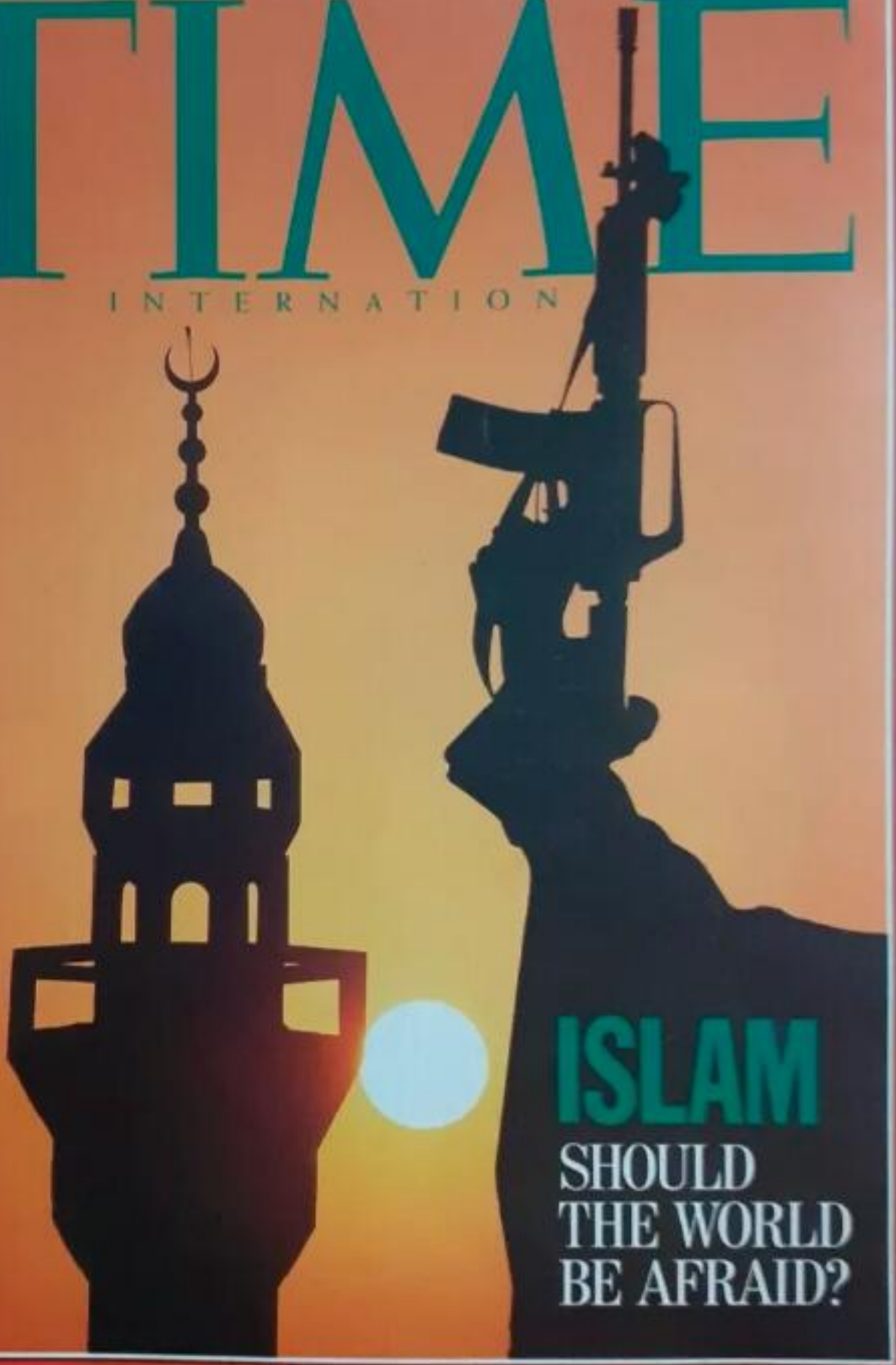
TIME

INTERNATION



ISLAM

SHOULD THE WORLD BE AFRAID?

THE SWORD OF ISLAM

By JAMES WALSH

Anti-Western rhetoric and impulses are part of the revolution remaking the Muslim world. Yet they do not mean immutable hostility.

Fourteen hundred years ago, a new faith burst out of the Arabian deserts and exploded like forked lightning onto three continents. Under the oasis-green banner of the Prophet Muhammad, the warriors of Islam converted whole civilizations to their holy book, their way of life and their world view. Today a reconstrued idea of Islam is spreading at what often appears to be the same speed over much the same territory. From the North African coast to the steppes of Central Asia, Muhammad's precepts interpreted as a code of earthly behavior are galvanizing Muslim societies with hope for renewal—and fear of upheaval.

The whole world, in fact, is watching and wondering about the impact of this tectonic shift, just as medieval Europe crouched when Islam reached the apogee of its power. With the death of the Soviet empire, some Western policymakers are concerned whether Islamic "fundamentalism"—a term rejected by Muslims as a misnomer—may shape up as the next millennial threat to liberal democracy.

Terrorism, intolerance and revolution for export—the revival movement's three scourges, in the view of many people on both sides of the cultural divide—are one concern. Apart from concern for lives and freedoms that might be in jeopardy, European nations fear that Islamists might destabilize Muslim societies, driving larger armies of emigrants on the march for lusher fields. Already France, for example, is convulsed by a political backlash against the many poor, socially unassimilated Arab immigrants who crowd high-rise tenement suburbs of industrial cities.

At gut level, though, the West's nervous response to the Islamic revival springs from the movement's anti-Western rhetoric and impulses. The single greatest catalytic event that supercharged Islam as a mass political jihad, or holy war, was the 1979 Iranian revolution, which was nakedly hostile toward "Great Satan" America and Europe. Today Islamic proselytizers vary widely in tone and emphasis; nonetheless, they tend to pay homage to the cause that toppled the Shah and inspired other Muslims to strive for a new cultural ascendancy. Iran's example and in some cases its active aid have reemerged as potent influences now that alienation from established regimes is deepening in step with economic hardships across the Islamic belt of Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, even into the Muslim desert reaches of western China.

At a time when Iran is rumored to be angling for the nuclear know-how and materials of ex-Soviet bombmakers, any international movement that strikes an antagonistic posture toward Western values is bound to be considered a potential archfoe. To some degree, no doubt, history magnifies this wariness. For centuries, most of the words associated in the Western mind with Islam have flashed and clanged like Damascene swords. Devout Muslims are always shocked to hear that the name of their faith, which means submission to God, can summon up such images of violence. Odd as it may sound, though, religious beliefs in the strict sense play only a supporting role in the present world drama, for despite all the past visions of Saracens battling Crusaders, today's momentous confrontation is not a devotional conflict but a clash between perceptions of reality.

How overblown are the fears of a new twilight struggle between Islam and the rest of the world? Many Islamic leaders seem exasperated to distraction over what they call a manufactured crisis. According to them, Muslims want only justice at home, not any cutthroat rivalry abroad. The U.S. and other Western powers, they argue, instigated tensions by backing repressive regimes in the Muslim world, not to mention supporting the creation of the Jewish state of Israel.

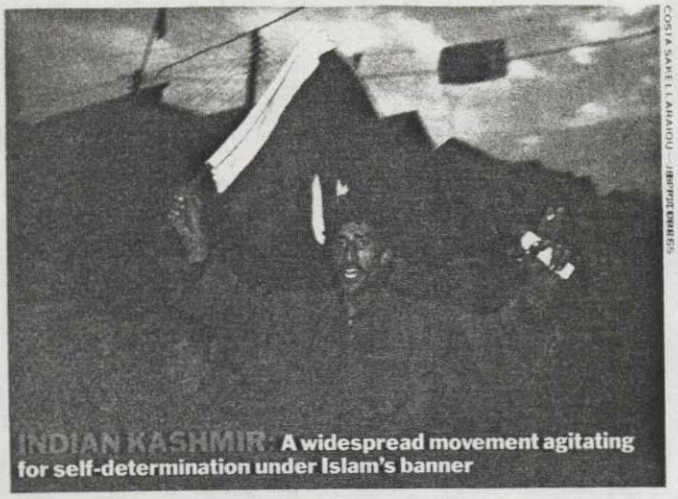
And yet the Islamizing movement at heart is a reaction, sometimes virulent, against simply the ways of modernity exemplified by Western culture. The West's "next confrontation is definitely going to come from the Muslim world," predicts M.J. Akbar, an Indian Muslim author and adviser to his country's Human Resources Minister. "It is in the sweep of the Islamic nations from the Maghreb to Pakistan that the struggle for a new world order will begin."

Sweeping prophecies are always debatable, of course. The Muslim world remains such a patchwork carpet of sectarian beliefs, ethnic loyalties and political structures that the struggle Akbar invokes is now for the most part within Muslim nations, or between them. By means of a thinly disguised military coup, Algeria suppressed the Islamic Salvation Front with a vengeance in January, when that movement was on the verge of a decisive victory in national elections. Secular Turkey and Islamist Iran today are jockeying intensely for influence in shaping the new Muslim republics that were born with the Soviet Union's breakup. Turkey is extending trade credits, promises of TV broadcasts and primers in the Roman alphabet. Iran is supplying its own commercial credits and literature in Arabic script.

Islamizers such as Sudan's new establishment, moreover, hardly invented the practice of militancy. Baathist Iraq and Syria, along with Muammar Gaddafi's radical-socialist Libya—all avowedly secular regimes—have produced their share of anti-Western propaganda and terrorism. Nor are all Muslims similarly susceptible to the revivalist movement. Though the religion is a widespread vehicle for dissent and opposition, in most countries large numbers of Muslims, if not majorities,

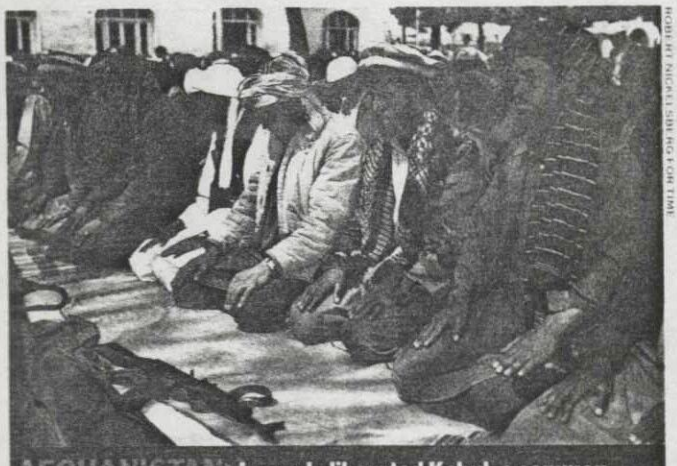
ELODIE GREGOIRE—REA/SABA

The Islamic Salvation Front rally earlier this year raised hope, anguish and anger



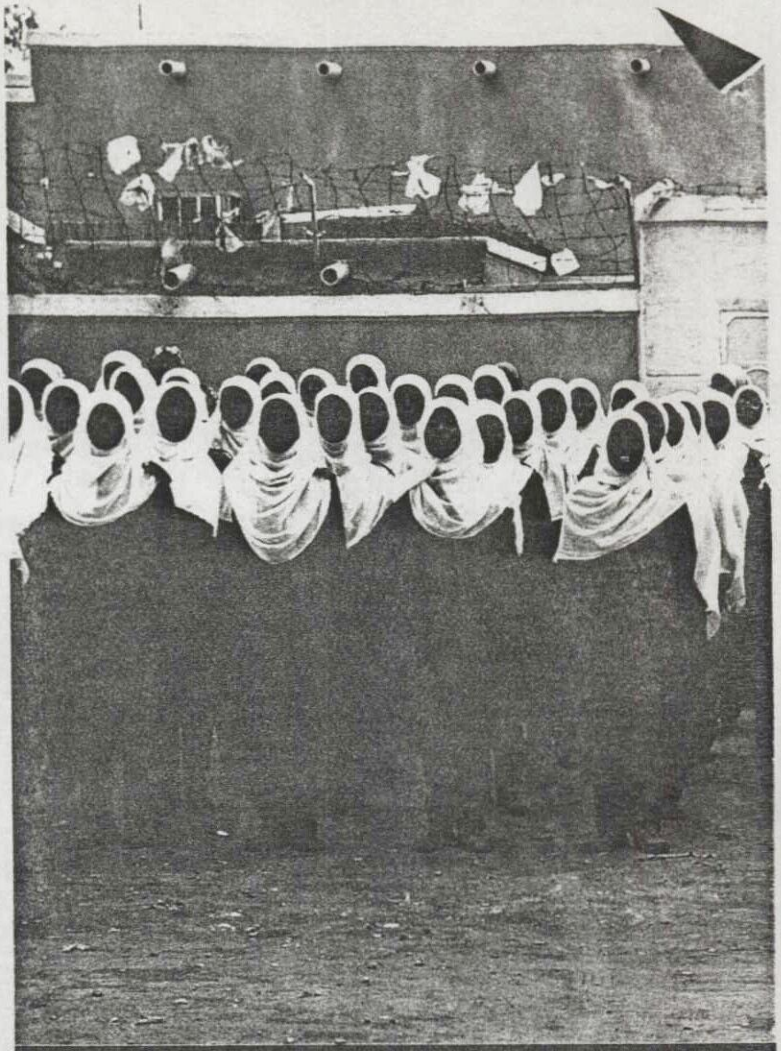
COSTA SAPELLARIOU—IMPACT VISUALS

INDIAN KASHMIR: A widespread movement agitating for self-determination under Islam's banner



ROBERT NICKELSBERG FOR TIME

AFGHANISTAN: In newly liberated Kabul, a common ground for rival factions in the establishment of Koranic law



OMDURMAN, SUDAN: A women's unit of the Popular

would be very uncomfortable living under a repressive, warlike Islamist regime. Islam in the tropics of Malaysia and Indonesia is quite another proposition than in a Bedouin tent or Tunis bazaar: though influenced by Middle Eastern political currents, Southeast Asia's mixed races and faiths have to live together if they want to sustain their formidable economic growth rates.

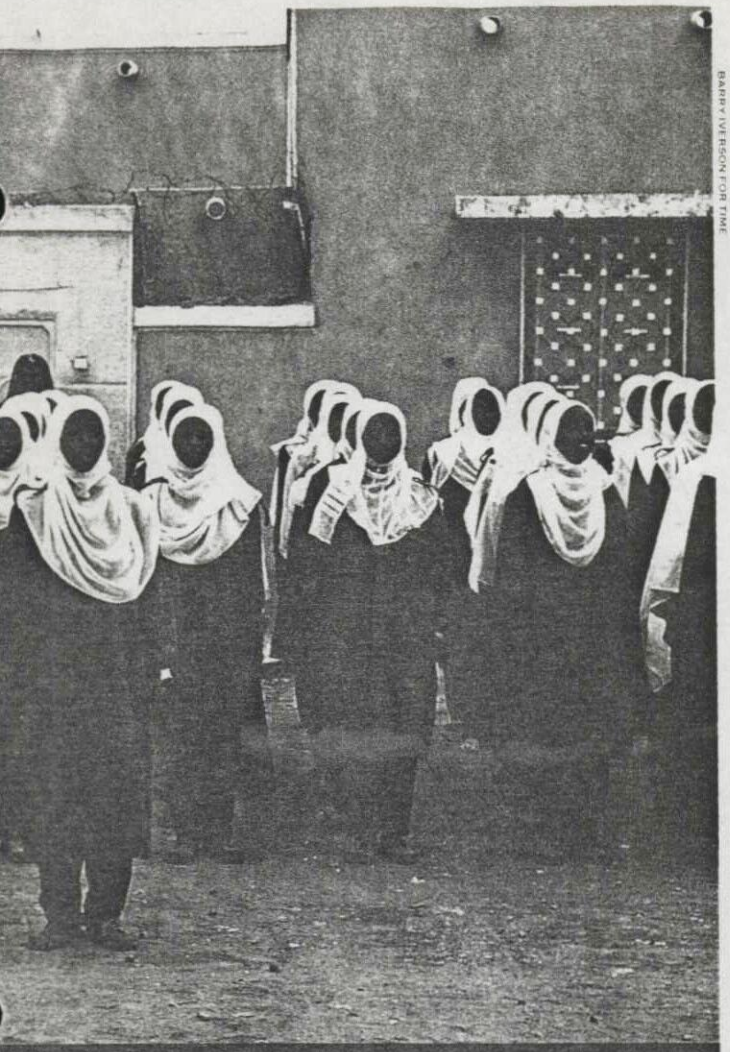
Still, the old political orders that have prevailed in Muslim societies for decades—in many cases, since independence from colonial rule—are incurring severe public disaffection. The leftist Baath parties, Egypt's khaki-colored nationalism, Jordan's monarchy—all have taken fright at the spectacle of agitators for political legitimacy founded in the Koran and in religious traditions. The main rival *mujahedin* factions that battle for power in liberated Afghanistan have agreed on little except the establishment of the Shari'a, or Islamic legal code, as a basis of law. Says Dr. Hassan Hanafi, professor of philosophy at Cairo University: "Islam is coming. The question is what type of Islam—liberal or fanatical."

Why should it be illiberal? At bottom, the Prophet Muhammad's revealed word is among the most egalitarian of religions. Certainly one of Islam's strongest appeals down the centuries was to people who felt victimized, and deprived of worth in God's eyes, under the social hierarchies sanctified by some other faiths. In theory, with an ethic that allows merit to be rewarded, Islam ought to serve as a solid platform for political flexibility and economic growth. In practice, however, any number of Muslims nurse a Gibraltar-size grudge against the inroads the West has made into their civilization over the past 200 years. Explains Ibrahim Ibrahim, professor of Arab studies at Washington's Georgetown University: "There are many reasons why Muslims are critical of the West. It is not theological. It is a grievance of colonialism. We have been humiliated. The West defined the world for Muslims."

Ibrahim is a courtly, learned Palestinian whose training was at Oxford University. Yet across the Atlantic in Tunisia, lawyer Abdelwahab Belwahi sounds the same theme: "Colonialism tried to deform all the cultural traditions of Islam. I am not an Islamist. I don't think there is a conflict between religions. There is a conflict between civilizations." Islamic militancy is "entirely political," he says, as Muslims reject regimes founded on transplanted ideologies.

Algerian-born Mohammed Arkoun, professor of Islamic thought at the Sorbonne in Paris and one of the most penetrating analysts of the Islamizing movement, underlines the extent to which social dislocations in the Muslim world have created a yearning for dignity. Fundamentalist activism is nothing if not youthful, and its young disciples are mostly urban, unemployed and profoundly unhappy with the politics they have known. They look back to Muhammad's temporal rule in Arabia in the 7th century, and the "Rightly Guided Caliphs," whose regimes ensued, as the perfect model for statecraft today—even though their societies have been uprooted from the agricultural, nomadic, tribal world of the Prophet.

To a great degree, Arkoun notes, Muslims are "a population completely detached from its traditions, its lands, its ethical codes and customs, thrust into shantytowns of large cities and forced to listen to slogans seeking to legitimize the power of a state with no legitimacy." Much variation occurs within this theme: Egypt, with a legacy of concentrated urban civilization dating back 5,000 years, is not so susceptible to appeals for radical change as, say, Algeria or the Nilotic uplands of Sudan. Saudi Arabia, though transformed on the margins by its oil wealth, remains

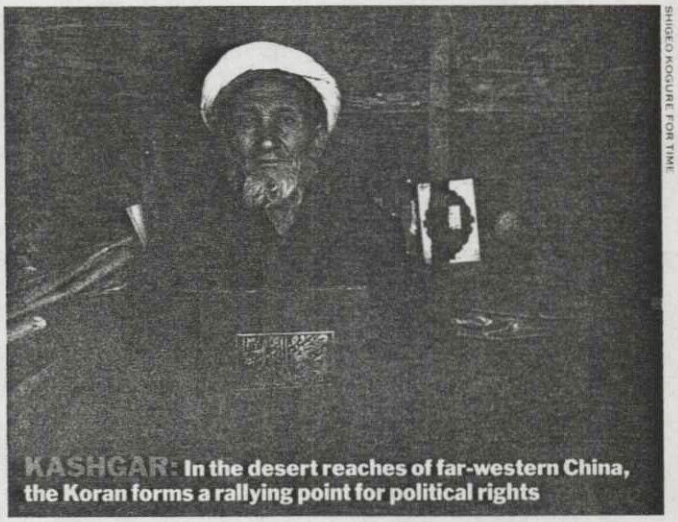


BARRY IVERSON FOR TIME

ense Forces now wears the upper Nile's newly Islamized look

VLADIMIR SICHOV—SIPA

TAJIKISTAN: Fists shaken at prayers show support for Islamizers who toppled ex-Soviet rulers



SHIGEO KOGURE FOR TIME

KASHGAR: In the desert reaches of far-western China, the Koran forms a rallying point for political rights

in spirit at least a Bedouin culture that adheres to the 18th century brand of Islamic puritanism founded by Wahhabi revivalists, in alliance with the House of Saud.

Increasingly, however, Muslims of many nations and all sects are rejecting postcolonial ruling élites, single-party establishments of "modern" men who have hitchhiked on Western models of governance—socialism and nationalism. As Islamists reason, their culture needs no alien influences if Muslim civilization was a leading light of the world in the past: the golden age of learning and political ascendancy that stretched about 5½ centuries. After taking power in the year 969, the Fatimid rulers of Egypt ushered in a brilliant era, in which Cairo was founded along with the city's Al Azhar mosque and university. This glorious period ended in the middle of the 13th century.

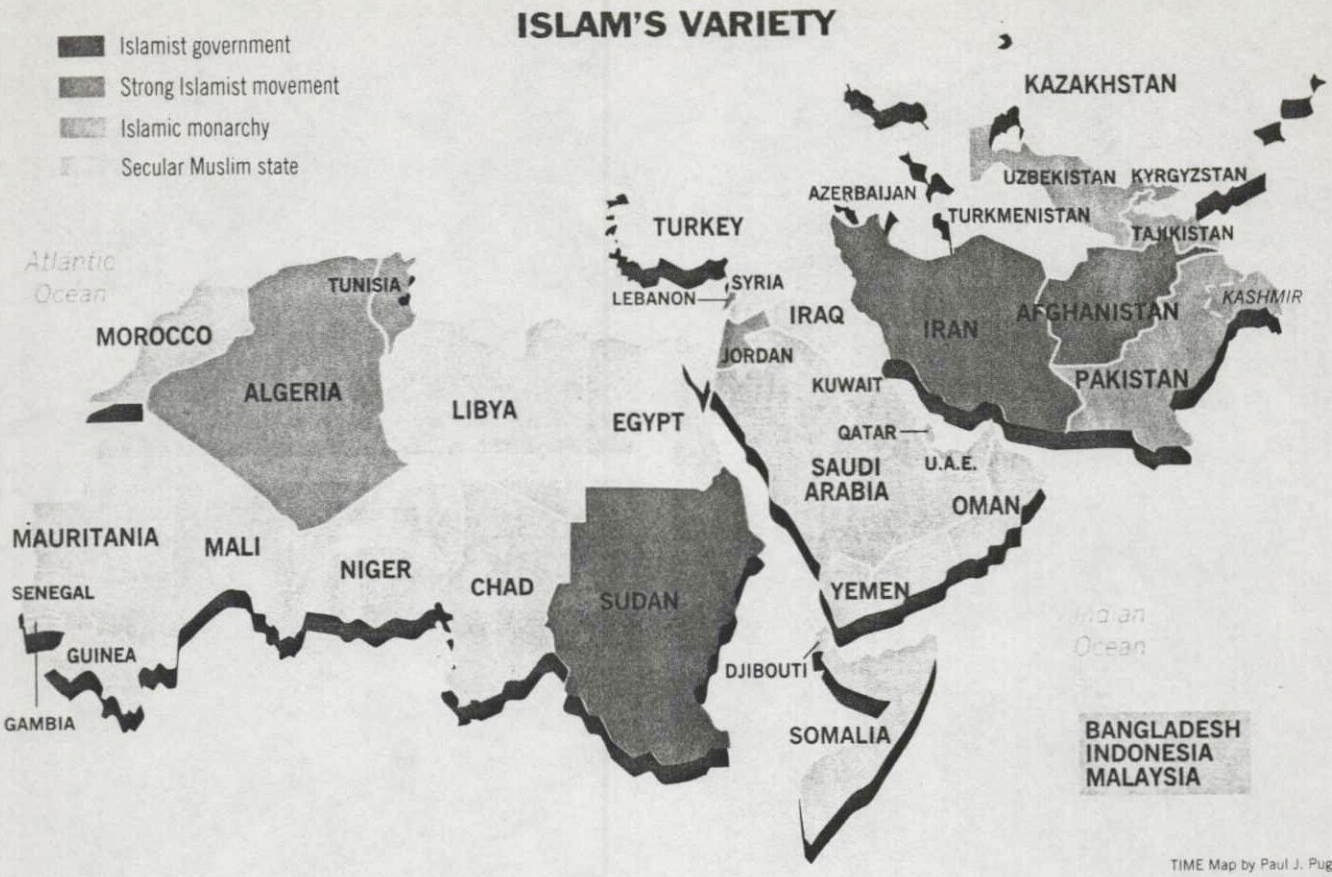
Yet if Muslims today see themselves as victimized by the West, for most of their history it was Christendom that felt under siege. Within a century of the Prophet's death in 632, the Moors had conquered Spain and were knocking on the doors of France. Charles Martel, father of the Frankish Emperor Charlemagne, stopped them at the Battle of Tours. By 1453, however, the Ottoman Turks had captured Constantinople and were marching through the Balkans toward the back door of Europe. The last, failed siege of Vienna in 1683 halted that expansion.

Despite their own imperial history, though, Muslims focus mainly on the past two centuries of encroachment by European powers armed with superior technology and weapons. Today, as then, the invader is not Christianity but the entire cultural, intellectual and political apparatus of modernity—that insidious notion of relentless, unguided progress that compels societies, whatever they secretly wish, to keep rolling with the most dynamic currents of change. Capitalism, discothèques and sexy films are only part of the onslaught. Far more threatening is the framework of rationalist suppositions, originating in 17th century Europe, that is inimical to all traditional ideas of Islamic culture. Says Moroccan professor Mohammed El-Jabry: "We Muslims live today in the cultural epoch of the 14th century. We need a Descartes, a Roger Bacon, an Ibn Khaldun, a Karl Popper."

Because Westerners have tagged the Islamizing movement as "fundamentalist," they tend to see bomb-throwing insurgents, amputations of hands, and stoning of adulterers as the faithful representation of Islam's roots. While these harsh practices do not reflect the full variety of Islamism's political views and are not limited to modern Islamists as such, the Koran in any case delivers mixed messages about their acceptability. As Arkoun sees it, many religions use "rhetorical figures, metaphors and images that can be interpreted in many ways. Religion does not function as a code of law. Even law itself gives rise to interpretation."

Part of the dilemma stems from the life of the Prophet, who was required to run a society in the desert town of Medina after he and his followers took flight from oppression in Mecca in the year 622—the Hegira. Muhammad had to mediate disputes between various tribes and respond to the everyday preoccupations of a few hundred men and women. Says Maxime Rodinson, a respected French scholar of Islamic affairs: "Unlike Christianity, which was a tiny sect born in a vast and well-organized [Roman] empire, Islam was born in a land with no state." The golden age of Medina was matched by no single larger political structure. Arkoun says, "No state has met the ideal requirements of Islam—and that is assuming that any one could."

To a large extent, however, Islamic thought today is a closed system that ad-



TIME Map by Paul J. Pugliese

mits no analysis, no debate of what are today common interpretations of the revealed word. That Indian-born author Salman Rushdie, a nominal Muslim, could write a novel called *The Satanic Verses*, calling into question the divine inspiration of the Koran and attacking Islam at its source, was an unforgivable sin even to middle-class urban Muslims who ordinarily do not traffic with ideology or religious obsequy. In their view, Rushdie committed blasphemy for seeming to confirm to the infidels that Islamic culture is inferior.

In fact, Islam is as universalist as Christianity, and as generous a consolation when it comes to finding purpose, a guide for the soul, in a confusing world. Imtiaz Ahmed, an Indian Muslim scholar at New Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University, attributes the more literalistic, even punitive and belligerent readings of the faith today to Islam's sense of being surrounded by threats. He says, "There are two views of Islamic law. They correspond to the two portions of the Koran revealed in Mecca and Medina." In Mecca, where the Prophet's religion was fighting for survival, the precepts were "more militant," he says, while in Medina, where Islam ruled, the messages became more tolerant of minority views and other faiths. Medina may be the Islamists' ideal state, but the stricter codes of Mecca are what they tend to consult for inspiration.

Even as it seems a monolithic ideology today, Islamism wears many faces. Most Sunni Muslims, for example, cannot accept Shi'ite Iran's allegiance to the principle of rule by the clergy—not only on doctrinal grounds but also because so many "official" clerics in Sunni nations have been compromised by ties with government. And while many of the Sunni faithful unwittingly hark back to the policies of the Ottoman caliphs as the touchstone of a unitary mosque and state, Arabs with longer historical memories recall that the Ottoman sultans resorted to this practice as a none-too-successful way of legitimating their imperialistic rule.

SYED SHAHABUDDIN, AN INDIAN member of Parliament and editor, argues that "although Islam is the wave of the future, in the long run what prevails will be a very moderate version of Islam." After all, he adds, "Islam and the West have interreacted for 1,400 years and have created a common civilization." Rached Ghannouchi, leader of the Tunisian Islamic party known as En-Nahda, voices what is probably the most acceptable face of the movement to Westerners. The exile sees religion as "a common cultural base" for multiform democracy and draws a parallel with the West. "Going from one party to another in Britain or the United States, you witness the same fundamental culture," he says. "You are dealing not with fundamentally opposed concepts but with a series of similarities. Forces external to this cultural family are marginalized by democracy, such as the Communist Party in the U.S."

Says the spokesman for En-Nahda, 35-year-old Ali Larayed: "We have just discovered that in Islam and in the Koran, the idea of liberty is fundamental." Lourmi Ajmi, a Tunisian philosophy teacher at a private school, says, "Ghannouchi has said that the closest political system to Islam is the democratic system of the West, especially the American Constitution." But what if a majority wants to impose Islamic law on religious minorities or on a sizable number of Muslims who don't want it? Ajmi replies somewhat plaintively, "What could we do about it?"

The Tunisian urban intellectuals who make up the leadership of En-Nahda thus realize that the liberties they seek might easily slip through their fingers, creating a dictatorship of the majority not unlike Leninism. This basic question—whether a newly assertive Islam can accommodate dissent, as well as approach other cultures with greater self-confidence—will continue to worry much of the world. The best that both sides can wish for is the realization that irreducible hostility is not the inevitable outcome of their renewed engagement. ***—Reported by David Aikman/Tunis, Dean Fischer/Cairo and Farah Nayeri/Paris, with other bureaus***

THE CONSEQUENCES OF POWER

Radical Islam calls for harsh codes of behavior, but in government it may be able to shed some extremes

By MICHAEL S. SERRILL

The recompense of those who war against God and his Apostle, and go about committing corruption on the earth, shall be that they shall be slain or crucified, or have their alternate hands and feet cut off, or be banished from the land.

—The Koran 5:36

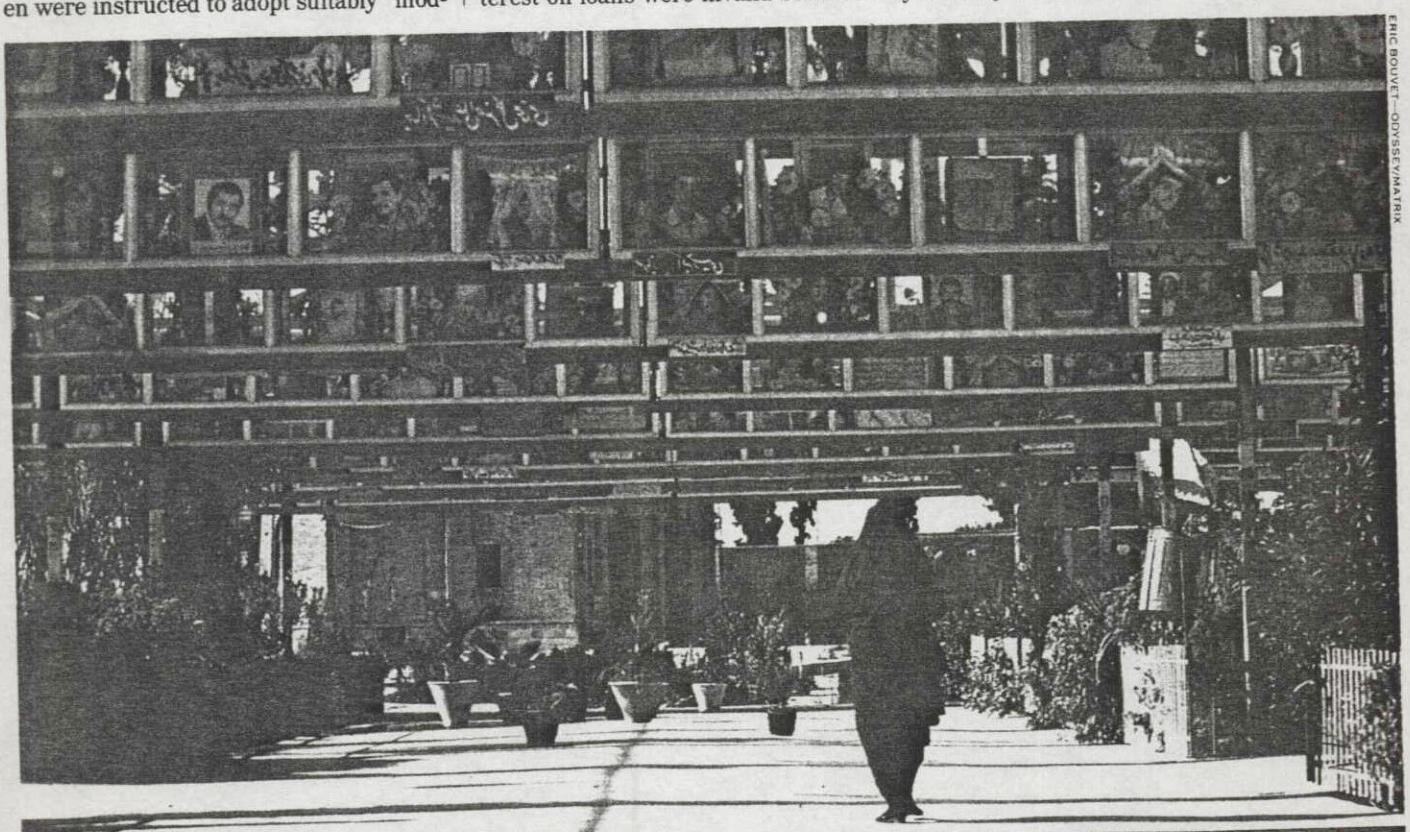
EVEN AS THEIR FIGHTERS BEGAN warring on one another, the victorious guerrilla leaders of Afghanistan agreed that the country would henceforth be governed by the austere dictates of Islamic law. Books that were deemed "anti-religion and anti-jihad" were burned. Western films were banned. Women were instructed to adopt suitably "modest" dress. One who flouted the new standard by wearing a skirt had her foot pierced by a bayonet as punishment.

In Iran some of the Islamic fervor stirred up by the Ayatullah Ruhollah Khomeini has faded since his death in 1989, but the regime of reformist President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani is still warring against earthly corruption. Some 750 government opponents, drug dealers and other criminals were put to death last year, and hundreds more were whipped, stoned or had limbs cut off for various offenses.

In Pakistan the nation's entire foreign and domestic trading and financial apparatus is threatened by a religious court decision. The Islamic judges ruled that a raft of laws that sanctioned the charging of interest on loans were invalid because they contradicted Koranic teachings against usury. The government is hoping that the secular Supreme Court will overturn the finding. In the meantime, the author of a children's book faces the possibility of death on the gallows for writing a parable seen as attacking Islamic law.

Across Africa, the Middle East and Central Asia, Islam is exciting millions—and when that translates into political power, the result can be harsh codes of behavior that so far have been moderated little, if at all. Only Iran and Sudan have established full-fledged Islamic governments. Elsewhere the same currents of radical change are causing governments either to pass new laws, ban alcohol and encourage the wearing of the *hijab* (veil)—or else to strike back at growing movements that see them as corrupt apostates. "In the Islamic countries," Egypt's Abdel Salam Faraj, an Islamist philosopher, has written, "the enemy is at home; indeed it is he who is in command."

What is happening in the Muslim world is nothing less than an Islamic Renaissance, claims Hassan Turabi, the man who is the power behind the government of Sudan. It is, he says, "a whole intellectual renewal that ultimately seeks to translate itself into active social reform, as opposed to the dormancy and dogmatism of traditional societies, which have become very decadent." Turabi depicts the movement as entirely benign, but in the early stages, at least, of the Islamic revolution, many would disagree. In Afghanistan, for



ERIC BOUVET—ODYSSEY/MATRIX

Portraits of Iran's war dead at the Martyrs' Cemetery in Qum

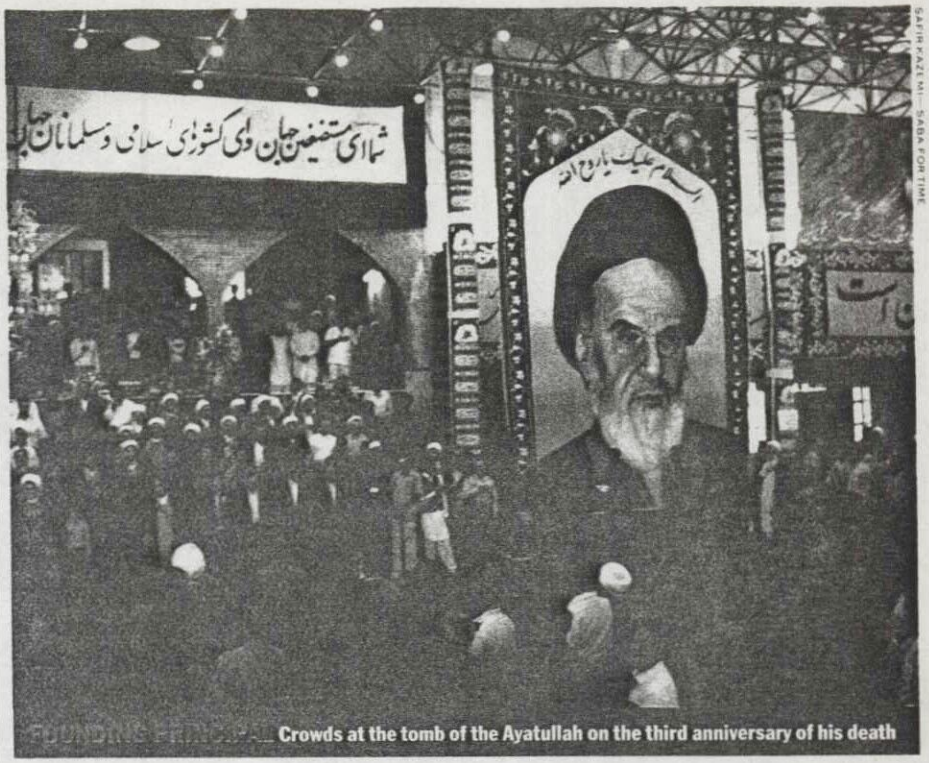
example, all laws conflicting with the Shari'a are to be rescinded, and all workers ordered to observe fixed prayer times. Women will lose their freedom of movement and, in some cases, their jobs.

Islamic extremists in the former Soviet states, though not yet in power, are eager to follow the Afghans' example. "We have a model of society to offer—the very model that has existed since the time of Prophet Muhammad himself," says Davlat Usmon, deputy chairman of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan, the main focus of the Muslim revival in the former Soviet republics. "Everything ought to be the way Allah ordered. No deviations are to be tolerated." Says Obidkhon Askarov, a leader of the Islamic movement in neighboring Uzbekistan: "We are not cutting off hands for thievery now, but we'll definitely be doing so once an Islamic state comes into being here."

That sort of rhetoric has led the U.S. and Europe to remain silent during the brutal suppression of the Islamic revival by many of the Middle East's secular governments. The latest victim was Algeria's Islamic Salvation Front (F.I.S.), which was repressed by the ruling military when it became clear that the Front would benefit from low voter turnout to become the first Islamic party to take power at the ballot box. The coup was applauded by Algeria's secular majority, and particularly by professional women. "They were little fascists just waiting for their moment," urban-studies professor Ouardia Ider told the New York *Times*. "Believe me, if the army had not acted, there would have been civil war."

In Tunisia the government keeps a strong Islamic movement in check with constant harassment and arrests; 6,500 Islamists are now in custody. In Syria and Iraq the determinedly secular governments of Hafez Assad and Saddam Hussein have crushed every manifestation of Islamist zeal. The governments of Egypt and Jordan have tried a dual strategy of appeasement and suppression. In 1989 Jordan's Islamists showed their strength when they were allowed participation in national elections and took 22 of the 80 seats in the lower house of parliament. In Egypt the Muslim Brotherhood holds 37 of 448 seats.

Do secular regimes have as much to fear from religious radicals as they sometimes seem to think? Some officials of Algeria's F.I.S. insist that if they had been given the chance to govern, they would have respected human rights. But Ali Benhadj, a prominent F.I.S. leader, has been quoted as saying, "Democracy is apostasy." Islamists from neighboring Tunisia advertise themselves as downright liberal. Rachid Ghannouchi, the exiled leader of the Tunisian Islamic movement En-Nahda, says that should his group take power, there would be free elections and freedom of the press. Women would have all the rights that men do. Asked in a 1990 interview whether he would close the topless beaches near Tunis that are popular with European visitors, Ghannouchi replied, "There could be beaches reserved for tourists." And might Muslim Tunisians go there? "Why not?"



SAFIR KAZEMI—SABA FOR TIME

Crowds at the tomb of the Ayatullah on the third anniversary of his death

What should the world expect from future Islamic governments? The only country to examine for answers is the 13-year-old Islamic Republic of Iran, where the record is far from clear, but hardly encouraging. Iran's relatively pragmatic President Rafsanjani has cooled down the overheated religious politics of the late Ayatullah. In recent legislative elections he engineered the defeat and ouster of most of the hard-liners left over from the Khomeini regime, and is now free to pursue his plans to sell off state-owned industries and attempt to revive an economy where per capita income is two-thirds of what it was under the Shah.

RAFSANJANI HAS RE-ESTABlished relations with formerly alien Sunni neighbors like Saudi Arabia and begun trading again with the West—with the notable exception of the U.S., which is still denounced as the Great Satan. His government has also begun wooing back members of the exile community, particularly industrialists whose skills are needed to get the country back on its feet.

In the realm of human rights, Rafsanjani has cut back on the number of jailings and executions for religious and political offenses. The feared Komiteh, the paramilitary force charged with enforcing moral standards, has been merged into the regular police. Women who wear a small amount of makeup or let a bob of hair, called a *kakol*, jut out of their head scarves are less frequently whipped or imprisoned. Generally, the eyes of the state do not penetrate the privacy of the home; as a result, in middle-class dwellings much illegal alcohol is imbibed and women can shrug off their heavy black chadors and don Western garb for socializing.

Rafsanjani's gestures have earned him the label of "moderate," but he is far from a Western-style liberal. He has refused to rescind the *fatwa* of death and the $1 million bounty that Khomeini decreed against author Salman Rushdie for his alleged blasphemies. Political opponents of the regime are routinely jailed, while dissidents charge that Iran's foreign agents continue to assassinate overseas exiles. One prominent victim was the Shah's last Prime Minister, Shahpur Bakhtiar, who was knifed to death last August in France, and there have been other killings in Europe. Iran is believed to have backed the extremist Lebanese Shi'ite cell Islamic Jihad, which took responsibility for the bombing of the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires March 17 that killed 29 people.

The Algerian-born French novelist Albert Camus once said that when politics meets religion, the outcome is the Inquisition. His reference point was, of course, Christianity. Some of the leaders of radical Islamic parties may evoke similar fears, but within its own frame of reference—not one common to West European democracies—radical Islam, once in power, may be capable of coming to grips with its own extremes. ***—Reported by Dean Fischer/Cairo and Farah Nayeri/Paris, with other bureaus***

REPRESSION WITHOUT FERVOR

A close-up look at Sudan, where the fundamentalist regime downplays the harshest elements of its beliefs. The result is still a police state.

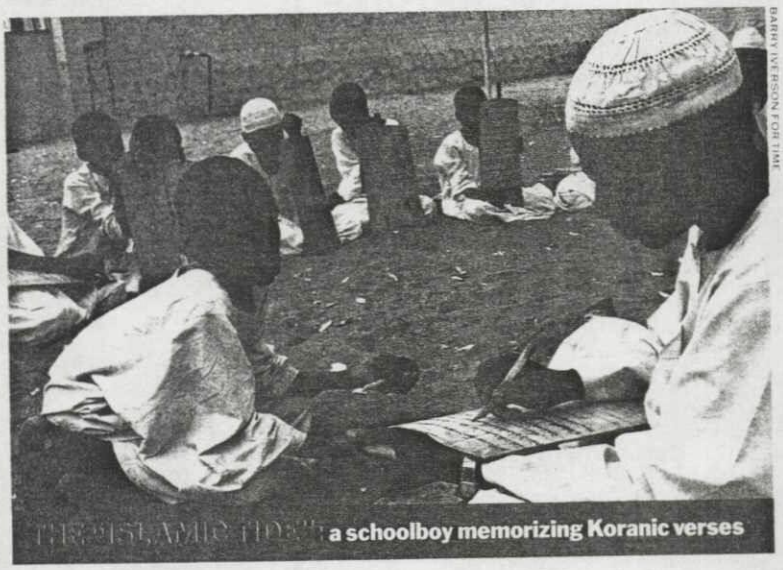
By DEAN FISCHER KHARTOUM

AT KHARTOUM AIRPORT LAST week, I was arrested and detained for nine hours in a military compound. No reason was given for my confinement. But the sullen expressions of the plainclothesmen as they read stories about Sudan in Western publications I had brought into the country were a kind of explanation: the articles had offended their sensitivities. The interrogation I anticipated was prevented by the arrival of U.S. Ambassador James Cheek, who drove into the compound with the sirens on his limousine screaming. Cheek told officials he would not leave without me. Five minutes later I was freed.

Dissenters from the Revolutionary Command Council for National Salvation, which seized power in a bloodless 1989 coup, are not so fortunate. There are few trappings of religious fervor in Khartoum, but under Islamic fundamentalist rulers, Sudan is a thoroughgoing police state. Human rights organizations have condemned the regime for the torture of political prisoners and the training of terrorists. The government rejects the charges, but there is no denying the suspension of the constitution, the dissolution of political parties, suppression of the press and the subservience of the judiciary. All but the truest believers are cowed.

Fear of arbitrary arrest is pervasive; purges of government offices to impose Islamic purity take place quietly and often. The regime has formed an 85,000-member Popular Defense Force patterned after Iran's Revolutionary Guards to protect key government officials and installations. Before enrolling at the University of Khartoum, males and females are required to complete a two-month course that combines physical training with indoctrination in fundamentalist theology. Women working in government offices have been threatened with dismissal if they fail to cover their hair and cloak their bodies.

Lieut. General Omar Hassan Ahmad Bashir is chairman of the Salvation Council, but the country is actually run by the National Islamic Front, Sudan's version of the Muslim Brotherhood, led by Hassan Turabi, 60. An urbane, Western-educated former Justice Minister, Turabi is the regime's strategist and ideologue, and author of its shari'a laws; the fundamentalist network he has formed over the past 40 years gives him a powerful political base. Turabi loyalists dominate the military council, and his allies occupy key positions in government and academia. Wealthy fundamentalist businessmen provide financial support. The Muslim network ensures obedience to governmental policy by the country's mosques.



BARRY IVESON FOR TIME

a schoolboy memorizing Koranic verses

Turabi seeks to create a united fundamentalist movement from the Mediterranean to the Indian Ocean. But in contrast to the revolutionary bombast that has often poured forth from Iran, Turabi espouses his doctrine in unthreatening terms. He speaks of an "Islamic awakening" that resorts to revolution only if fundamentalism is repressed. Turabi has discouraged the harshest elements of shari'a—public executions, stonings for adultery and other offenses—in part because he seeks greater Western acceptance.

While Turabi plays the role of visionary, the army vigorously prosecutes a nine-year-old war against the predominantly Christian and animist south—lately with success. The collapse of Ethiopia's Marxist regime last year deprived southern insurgents of sanctuary; northern forces got an infusion of Chinese and Iranian weaponry and an injection of zealotry from the Popular Defense Force waging jihad against non-Muslims. The forthcoming rainy season may provide a pause in the fighting, but no end: 1 million southerners have died so far.

Most survivors of the conflict have escaped into dire misery. Since 1983, 1.8 million refugees have settled in the capital of Khartoum in hovels made of sackcloth and sticks. At New Sahara, a camp on the outskirts of the city, dust-covered children with spindly limbs and bloated bellies tug at their mothers' threadbare garments. "There is no water, no food, no schools and no health clinics," says Baxter Adungwa, 32, a Christian Sudanese who trekked from the south. "There is nothing." The government refuses to recognize the camps and keeps relief agencies from providing aid.

The regime's relief efforts entail bulldozing the settlements; it has forcibly relocated 500,000 residents to five official sites far outside the capital, where a few cursory services are provided. Turabi dismisses criticism of the relocation as anti-Islamic, pro-Zionist propaganda. Sharaf Eldin Bannaga, the State Minister of Housing, insists the plan would eliminate "environmentally hazardous risks" to health and security caused by overcrowding.

Western diplomats in Khartoum suspect something less altruistic. With moderate Muslim voices stifled, Christian clergymen are virtually alone in opposing the regime's Islamization policy. Creation of a cordon sanitaire around Khartoum removes a potentially explosive threat to the country's rulers. But the security of the regime cannot forever rely on repression.

Many initially welcomed the fundamentalist coup and its promises of organization and order following the disarray of the last government. But today most Sudanese, however devout they may be, are more fearful than fulfilled. ■

AFGHANISTAN

The Wild Card Of Kabul

Once outlaws, Abdul Rashid Dostam and his Uzbek militia have now been called in to maintain the peace

By JEFFERSON PENBERTHY KABUL

THE TATTERED PAGES OF THE PEACE accord between Afghanistan's rival *mujahedin* groups were blown away last week as savage new battles broke out around Kabul, this time between Iran-backed Shi'ites and opposing Pashtoon Sunni Muslim factions. By week's end at least 100 people had been killed and more than 1,000 wounded in four days of fighting. Both sides seized hundreds of hostages; some of the captives were taken to deserted houses and summarily executed. In other fighting, *mujahedin* militiamen attacked ambulance and truck convoys carrying rival wounded. At one location, shells struck the Red Cross hospital, knocking out all power. Said a Kabul-based diplomat during a lull in the fighting: "It's Beirut without the green line."

After 14 years of civil war, the forces that defeated Soviet-backed Najibullah are now at war with themselves. The clashes began last month, when fighting broke out between the forces of what have lately become the country's two most powerful warlords, Islamic extremist Gulbuddin Hekmatyar and Uzbek militia leader General Abdul Rashid Dostam. And now the conflicts have spread to other groups. As a result, Dostam, whom almost all the warring *mujahedin* factions regard as their common nemesis, is nonetheless emerging as the country's most powerful military leader and the man who will either save or kill the country's tottering regime.

All this is a heady development for the son of a peasant, who held various odd jobs before going into the military in the late 1970s. After a three-month officer-training course, Dostam caught the eye of Najibullah, who was then in charge of K.H.A.D., the country's feared security services. With the backing of Najibullah, who later became the Soviets' chosen instrument in the country, Dostam began enlisting fellow Uzbeks from his native Jawzjan province in northwestern Afghanistan to form his private army.

His fierce Jawzjani Uzbek mercenaries supported Najibullah and helped keep the *mujahedin* rebels at bay for three years after Soviet troops pulled out of Afghanistan in 1989, but early this year Dostam switched sides, leading to the collapse of the Najibullah regime in April. The Uzbeks crossed over with other northern minority militiamen in mutiny against the regime's Pashtoon chauvinism, though some analysts believe that Najibullah's inability to pay Dostam's mercenary forces, following last year's aid cutoff from Moscow, played a part. Whatever Dostam's motive, President Sibghatullah Mojaddedi, the interim government leader, now regularly praises him as a "Great Islamic warrior" and has promoted him from colonel to four-star general.

The key to Dostam's great-warrior status is quite basic: he commands a force of more than 100,000 men. His rising power leaves many Afghans uneasy but powerless. Defense Minister Ahmad Shah Massoud's Jamiat-i-Islami army, for example, is no match with just 40,000 men under arms. Hekmatyar does not have the strength to take him on. "We hate these militia. They are our enemies and we want them out of Kabul," says Mohammad Afzal, a commander of the Saudi-backed Ittehad-i-Islami faction. But he too can do nothing.

At his headquarters in the mud-walled medieval "Fortress of War" on the sun-baked plain of Balkh, 150 km northwest of Kabul, Dostam exudes the confidence of someone who holds the key to power. "Our strength around Kabul is quite sufficient to repulse any attacks," he says, smiling. Dostam has little popular support, but lately he has been championing the cause of Afghanistan's traditionally oppressed northern minorities, and others who are pushing for a new federal system of government and regional autonomy. Says Sayyid Mansur Naderi, leader of the Ismaili community and a key Dostam ally: "The details can be worked out by experts, but we want a federal system along the lines of Pakistan or America."

Dostam and the others do not appear to have a clear sense of how federalism might work. Its appeal lies rather in its vague promise to regularize the present violent disarray. The state of chaos in the country was clearly demonstrated ten days ago, when *mujahedin* dissidents fired at an aircraft bringing President Mojaddedi back from a state visit to Pakistan. Only a co-pilot and the interim President's pride were wounded in the attack. But in the aftermath of that incident, the government asked Dostam's militia to help restore order in the streets of the capital. Said one observer: "Can you believe this. For years the Uzbeks raped and looted their way across the landscape, and now they've become Afghanistan's champions of law and order." Restoring peace, though, is probably beyond the new strongman. Kabul continues to descend into factional violence, which may sweep the tortured country into war again—perhaps even eventual partition. —*With reporting by Anthony Davis/Mazar-i-Sharif*

ROBERT NICKELSBERG FOR TIME

Uneven matchup: strongman Dostam, left, greets Defense Minister Massoud