

**TERRORISM,  
THE MIDDLE EAST,  
AND YOU**

Joe E. Pierce

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### Preface to re-issue in PDF format (2002):

This engaging little book was written by Dr. Joe E. Pierce, and published by the HaPi Press in 1986, while a war between Iraq and Iran was raging, and before the Iraq-Kuwait “Gulf” War.

Dr. Pierce was an anthropological linguist, raised in the small rural community of Cyril, Oklahoma in 1924. He first worked in Turkey in 1955, and maintained his interest in the Middle East until his death at age 69, in 1994. His first stay in Turkey, 1955-1961, was his longest period of residence in the Middle East. But he maintained his links with his Turkish friends, made short visits to the Middle East, wrote several books about Middle Eastern values, and continued to teach courses on the Middle East at Portland State University, where he was variously professor and Departmental Chair in Anthropology. In the second half of the 1980s, he had a short Fulbright Fellowship to return to Turkey; and from 1987 to 1989, he returned to live in Abu Dhabi and then in Dubai, teaching at universities in the United Arab Emirates.

This book is not written in an academic style, and is intended for lay audiences. Dr. Pierce eschews footnotes and academic jargon, opting instead for a “fireside chat” approach, complete with personal anecdotes and opinions. Although many statements in the book can be considered “politically incorrect,” there is also much of value in his interpretations. Although we do not always agree with his interpretations about the action implications of the value differences he emphasizes, we have felt that making the book more widely available was a sensible thing to do as the United States struggles to determine the best approach to combat international terrorism.

We have gone over the text, correcting some grammatical and typographic errors that marred the original version, but have left the contents intact.

This electronic version may be copied and distributed free of charge for educational purposes. Anyone wishing to sell this work, or parts thereof, should first obtain permission from the HaPi Press.

Gwendolyn Marie Harris Pierce (wife)  
Carol J. Pierce Colfer (daughter)  
Richard G. Dudley (son in law)

## Dedication

This book is dedicated to all of the millions of people who live in the Middle East in the sincere hope that our peoples can better understand each other.

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## TERRORISM, THE MIDDLE EAST AND YOU

### CHAPTER I: The Mess We're In!

Many western diplomats and newsmen, assume that dealing with the Middle East is a matter of economics. In reality nothing could be further from the truth.

If we look carefully at the area, we see that the most economically depressed areas have been the most conservative. Those areas that are best off are the areas in which some change has been advocated. If the pressing issues were economic, the opposite would probably be true, so we cannot blame economics for very much of what happens in the Middle East. Contrary to much western speculation, oil has had relatively little effect on the basic pattern of life for most people in the area, despite the enormous wealth that it has brought to some countries over the past two or three decades.

Various types of experts have come up with all sorts of explanations for the relative conservatism of the Middle East when compared with other culture areas on earth. The religion, the lack of communication, vast distances, lack of education and so on are said to be the root cause of this extreme resistance to change, but the real reason is the way decisions have been made over the centuries, and the way they are still made throughout the area even today.

Any proposed change within any group, for example, a village or a clan, has traditionally been discussed endlessly by the heads of the sub-groups within the group involved, for example, family heads or village headmen, until a unanimous decision as to what should be done was reached. Until such a unanimous decision was reached, nothing could change, because traditional wisdom said, 'what we have had in the past works, and let's not mess with it until we are absolutely sure that the new idea will work better.' It is this fact, and this fact alone, which accounts for most of the conservatism in the area. This is true because even if an eighty or ninety percent majority within a group wants something changed, they cannot change it unless they are able to convince the remainder of the group, either through threats of force, cajoling or strong arguments, to agree to the change.

The recent rise to power of Khomeini in Iran is a typical example of a reaction to change which had been forced on an Islamic nation without the unanimous consent of its peoples. Most western reporters, and many politicians, saw the expulsion of the Shah as a reaction by the people generally against brutality, corruption, and immorality, but this simply is not the case.

Khomeini represented all that was good in Islamic society for the average Persian, and the Shah had forced changes, such as the redistribution of land and the establishment of greater equality for women---ideas that were contrary to traditional beliefs. These reforms were thought by members of the general public to be evil things.

The more the Shah listened to suggestions made by western reporters and politicians as to how he should 'liberalize' his reign, the less support he had from the vast majority of his people. It was this loss of popular support that cost him his throne, not the few thousand people that he had had tortured and killed.

The idea that cruelty and corruption were sufficient reasons for eliminating the Shah was often used in propaganda by his opposition within Iran to impress western reporters and politicians, because the leaders of this opposition knew how ignorant western reporters and politicians are so far as Middle Eastern philosophy is concerned. However, cruelty and corruption were of far less importance to the average person in the country than the Shah's deviation from traditional Islamic wisdom.

Just so that we can understand the true nature of leadership in the Middle East, let's look at what has happened since the revolution in Iran. If the news reports are accurate, Khomeini killed more people in the thirteen month period immediately following his rise to power than the Shah had in the twenty years before the revolution. This has led to no dramatic rise in opposition to Khomeini's leadership, and what's more, it never will, because cruelty and corruption are irrelevant to the problems in Iran and always have been in the minds and hearts of the vast majority of her citizens.

The new regime does not consider giving Persians or Moslems preference over others in government hiring to be anything other than natural and good. Hence this, and a long list of similar items, which many western

reporters would consider to be corruption, become the norms for good behavior, and by definition we have eliminated much that western leaders and reporters would consider to be immoral.

The decision to change the leadership in Iran was based on traditional wisdom. This told the average Persian that such changes as the redistribution of land and greater equality for women were inherently evil and were contrary to the will of God. After all, the religious and philosophical basis for land tenure and the relationship existing between the sexes have remained relatively unchanged in Iran since before the days of Xerxes. If the Shah did not follow 'The Way', then he was attempting to thwart the will of God, and most Iranian peasants did not want to follow him, and peasants constitute approximately three-fourths of the population. In their eyes the Shah had been led away from Islam by the West and Khomeini had not, so Khomeini had the support of God (Allah, two names for the same Being), and so the great mass of people in the country were willing to follow Khomeini.

The Shah was attempting to follow a set of moral imperatives set by the West, based on Christianity, not Islam, and he was not maintaining the traditional morality of the Middle East, so he was out. Any leader in the area who attempts to follow the moral edicts of the western press is also likely to be out, and for the same reasons, unless some western government is willing to provide him with the military hardware and economic support to maintain himself in power against the will of the people.

The Persians have a saying, 'life is short, but eternity is forever.' What this means, in very simple English, is that one must live every day with the 'hereafter' in mind and not be overly concerned with anything dealing with this life, especially not money or things. Sayings such as this are the reason that the economic judgments of the West have no meaning for the lives of middle easterners.

As a brief aside, Moslem thought among the peasants is based on the idea that wealth is a blessing from Allah which has been bestowed for good behavior. On the other hand, poverty and illness are punishments for sins, and much of the type of social change advocated by those in power in the West is considered to be contrary to the will of Allah. My experiences in the Middle East, as well as what I have read about the area, tell me that

this is true regardless of what the Islamic leadership might say about such a thought.

To give just one simple example of the way ideas such as those mentioned in the paragraph above affect decision making at all levels in the Middle East, consider the extremely high value placed on virginity and its integration into almost every aspect of middle eastern life.

The importance of this value, which I have called the VIRGINITY COMPLEX in earlier publications, makes changing the rules governing the interaction of the sexes extremely difficult.

Edicts, such as those making the wearing of the veil in public illegal, as well as attempts to modernize much of the country by having men and women work side by side in offices, alienated most of the citizens, even the majority of the women.

Many Persian women have commented in print over the past few decades concerning their embarrassment, and even terror, at having to walk unveiled through the city streets. Even larger numbers have simply refused to remove their veils regardless of threats of punishment by the government. For those who are skeptical about this point, note the virtual absence of resistance from women's groups within Iran to the return to the traditional dress and patterns of sexual relationships since the Shah was deposed.

I am illustrating, in the paragraphs above, the fact that the traditional values of a culture are the things that determine exactly which decisions people are going to make, especially in a crisis situation; and in order to understand how a middle easterner evaluates a situation and makes a decision, western leaders must understand the fundamental values of his culture.

If we look at most of the values of the region, we can see in the writings of Alexander the Great that those same values existed when he invaded Persia and have remained relatively unchanged over the intervening centuries despite all that appears in the newspapers about change in the area.

All that Mohammed did was to codify the social rules incorporated in this way of life and call it 'Islam,' meaning 'The Way.' That is, the way to live



if you wish to spend eternity in Paradise. This code actually existed as a pattern of cultural survival long before the time of either Mohammed, Christ or, for that matter, even Moses.

This brings us logically to something that westerners in general, and Americans in particular, do not seem to understand at all, especially those peoples from Northern Europe, such as Sweden or Germany, and their descendants in America. This is the absence in the real world of absolute human values. Everyday on TV, politicians, and especially reporters, interpret actions of leaders in the Middle East in terms of what Europeans consider to be some pan-human value.

What one must understand when attempting to deal with people from another culture is that a culture is nothing more or less than a game, and part of this game is a set of values.

Culture is a game which gives an artificial meaning and direction to the lives of the members of the society which supports that culture. This is not only true of the Middle East, but it is true of all cultures, and one absolutely must understand that these values are completely arbitrary and different in each culture.

Also, one must understand that the Turks, Arabs, Persians and others who live in the Middle East believe that their values are absolute and panhuman, just as we feel that our values are absolute and panhuman. Middle easterners often do not even understand what westerners are talking about when the Middle East is criticized for its corruption or immorality, or they think that western leaders are simply lying for political purposes, neither of which is true and neither of which helps the cause of international understanding.

The best example of this lack of understanding in recent times was the dispute over the movie, 'The Death of a Princess.' After the Arabs had finally been convinced that our government did not have the legal authority to stop the movie from being shown in the United States, they obtained an agreement from the networks to set up a panel to discuss the film immediately after it was aired so that the viewers could see their side of a question that they felt had been grossly distorted by the movie and, indeed, it had from their point of view.

The gist of the subsequent discussion appeared to be that the westerners were saying, 'How could you do such an awful thing to that poor little girl (kill her) who didn't do anything wrong?' and the response from the people representing the Arabs was, 'Why in the name of God would you make public this absolutely awful thing that this girl did in disgracing her entire family? Can't you see the pain and agony that the King was forced to go through because of this terrible act?' There appeared to be absolutely no understanding, on either side, of the nature of what was at stake in the minds of the other group. Harking back to the last paragraph, representatives of both the West and the Middle East felt that their values were absolute and that surely the other side understood them, because their values were an inherent part of being human. But, in reality, there was little or no understanding from either side of the other's point of view, because none of the values are natural or pan-human. The values of each group are the product of a historical sequence of events in the areas in which those groups have lived.

Probably the best example of a fundamental value in the culture of the peoples of the Middle East, which is almost impossible for westerners to comprehend, is the extremely high value, mentioned above, which is placed on VIRGINITY, something that has varying degrees of value in different societies around the world. The value seems to range from virtually none at all---for example, our Germanic ancestors in northern Europe are reported in the book 'Patterns of Incest' to have said, 'if a girl reaches the marriage bed as a virgin, there must be some thing wrong with her'---to the situation in the Middle East---where it is THE single crime for which the death penalty is the only just punishment. That is, there is no fine that can be paid for such a crime. The offender absolutely must die to correct the situation. The only way a family can regain the honor lost when one of its women engages in illicit love (sex or even flirting) is by killing the offender. This fact alone tells us volumes about the importance of virginity to the people who live in the area.

The culture of any society tells the members of that social group what should be important to them in their daily lives and what should not. Since 1850, anthropologists have been searching throughout the world for cultural universals, that is, values that are shared by all human groups, and there appears to be none. It is this basic fact that makes me say that culture is a game. Granted, It is a game with very complex, and often deadly, rules, but it tells us what we should die for, what we should live for, and what we should ignore, but it is simply a game that we fill our

lives with between birth and the grave, because as insignificant humans we are unable to discover any absolute answers to the problems of living, only relatively successful and workable ones, given the situation in which our culture has developed through the centuries.

The game in groups of closely related cultures, for example all of the cultures in the Middle East, is similar, but the rules of the game in other culture areas, for example in Black Africa or Europe, are vastly different. The values of the Middle East were codified by Mohammed, around 700 AD and those of Europe have been codified by the Christian churches over the past twenty centuries.

To understand, and to deal effectively, with the people of any cultural area on earth, one must understand the rules of the game the people in that area are playing. He must also understand the rules of the game that he is playing himself, and the way that the values differ.

The vast majority of problems that the West has in dealing effectively with the peoples of the Middle East are a direct result of the fact that few westerners know anything about the cultural game as it is played in the Middle East, and our leaders, for the most part, do not even understand that it is possible that they might be playing a different game. Further, there appears to be a very strong resistance to learning anything about the way any game is played elsewhere, because if they did, it would undermine their basic beliefs that those values taught by Christianity are absolute.

Middle eastern leaders have an advantage over western leaders in that most of them understand that we are playing a different game, because they have been educated in the West, and to some extent they understand at least some of the rules of our game. Until the West learns a great deal more than it knows at present about the rules of the game in the Middle East, we will continue to have immense problems in dealing with the peoples of the area.

## CHAPTER II: Who Done It?

Probably the most important fact that one needs to know about the Middle East, in order to deal effectively with the countries in this area, is that the people who live there do not believe in individual responsibility except within the family.

Accepting this fact is critical for the West, because western nations have spent the last two or three hundred years trying to escape the almost universal concept of group responsibility. The peoples living in the Middle East not only still believe in this as one of the basic principles in human organization, but they have it incorporated into their religion. The shared responsibility of every member in a group for the actions of every other individual in that group is fundamental to their view of life, honor and justice.

An Arab lady said to me one evening, 'I know that it is wrong, but in my country family is everything.' She went on to say that all she had to do was mention her family name, and she was completely taken care of anywhere in the country, because her family was very 'honorable.'

Why did she say that this system was wrong? Because she was on an American campus and driven by what we call 'liberal thought.' On American college campuses, especially at that time, the concept of punishing one person for the crime of another was unthinkable.

In reality, there is no question of right or wrong in group, as opposed to individual, responsibility. The problem is that the Middle East has one set of rules which govern the lives of the people, and the West has a very different set of rules which govern the lives of its citizens.

One of the most important effects of group responsibility on the lives of people in the Middle East is that the individual has little freedom but, by the same token, he also has little responsibility. The reality of the situation is that one must always deal with the Middle East in terms of 'groups,' not in terms of individuals, and we must realize that the people living there will deal with us in terms of groups, because they feel that this is what is right and just.

One fieldworker, studying the cultures of the Middle East, described a case in which a camel driver inadvertently lost control of a saddle with its heavy load of merchandise. The saddle fell over on the opposite side of the camel and killed an innocent man who just happened to be standing there. The driver immediately ran away. The members of the clan of the man who was killed then found a man from the driver's clan of approximately the same rank and status and killed him. This was considered just, honorable and, in fact, the only possible thing that an honorable human being could do under the circumstances.

The point is that the man who did the killing was no more to blame than anyone else in his group, in this case a clan. The one clan had lost a valuable worker, one who contributed to the general welfare of the group, and to settle the score and protect its honor, the members of the offended clan either had to be compensated for his loss by the payment of a 'blood price' (following a specific type of negotiation) or inflict the same loss on the offending group. If a group fails to do this, the members of the group reason that everyone will then think that no matter what is done to them, they will not fight back, and they may suffer all sorts of injustice.

The group could just as well have been a family, had the tragedy been within a single clan, a tribe if the man had belonged to another tribe, or even a nation—state such as the United States or France, had a Frenchman or American killed an Arab. It appears to be virtually impossible for people with western European backgrounds to understand and accept the idea that a person living in the Middle East would consider the above type of interaction between groups to be fair and reasonable.

Since all reasonable acts are predicated on group responsibility, to understand and deal effectively with people from the Middle East, one must understand the nature of the groups he is dealing with.

Several experts on the culture of the area have noted that the largest group to which an individual owes any allegiance at all is that of the ethnic unit, such as, Arab, Turk, Armenian, Persian, and so on. There is some allegiance to the larger world of Islam, especially when it is in conflict with Christian Europe, though one must be careful not to equate the Islamic world with the Middle East. For example, Islam in Indonesia is totally different from Islam in Saudi Arabia or Turkey, because the cultures in that part of the world are vastly different from those of the Middle East.

To return now to the problem of groups, the smallest group to which one owes allegiance, and the one to which the individual owes the strongest loyalty, is his extended family. The label 'extended family' may not be familiar to many readers, so it will require some explanation.

In the West, we are accustomed to thinking in terms of a family consisting of a man, his wife and children. This unit is hardly recognized at all in the societies of the Middle East, except to a very limited extent in some of the most westernized cities. The basic family unit in the Middle East consists of an old man, his sons and any unmarried or divorced daughters, the son's sons and their unmarried and divorced daughters, and so on for as many generations as there are people living who are direct descendants through the male line, the spouses of the man and his sons and their children.

There is considerable variation in the exact make up of the extended family from culture to culture, but all generally follow this pattern. For example, in some cultures this family is limited to three generations, but throughout the Middle East this family includes dozens of what the Westerner is accustomed to calling families. When a man or woman from the Middle East speaks of his family, it is usually this fairly large unit that he is referring to, not just his wife and children.

(For a full description of extended families In the Middle East see, *Understanding the Middle East*, which I wrote in the late 1960's and published with the Charles E. Tuttle Company In Tokyo).

The extent to which this family dominates the lives of most people in the Middle East is virtually inconceivable to Europeans and Americans. My neighbor's daughter in Ankara at 26 years of age had never bought any of her own clothes. Her mother had always gone with her to select what was appropriate, because the clothing that she wore reflected on the entire family, for good or evil.

The man who lived in the apartment downstairs from us never made even what seemed to me to be the most insignificant decision about his profession or his life in general without flying to Istanbul to see his older brother to discuss the decision with him. This man was a western educated engineer, very intelligent, and 45 years old. Here again, he had to confer with his older brother because his action would reflect not only on his wife

and children, but on all of his extended family, and should the reactions of the people in the community be negative, the entire family would suffer from the decision.

A common item in the newspapers of the Middle East when I lived there was that of a student committing suicide because he or she had failed an exam and thereby disgraced his or her family.

To illustrate at least one way in which dealing with a person from Middle East is different from dealing with a European, consider the following experience. My wife and I wanted to go to Saudi Arabia to see my wife's brother who was working there. Everyone said that it was impossible at that time, for a Christian to get into Saudi Arabia without help from the Embassy from inside. Yet, I walked into the Saudi Embassy in Karachi, Pakistan, had coffee with the Consul, discussed the political situation in Pakistan, heard a long story about his family, and finally said that my wife needed to go to Saudi Arabia to consult with her older brother on family matters.

His predictable response was, 'Of course your wife has to go see her older brother,' and we had a visa within about four hours. To this man, probably the most important thing on earth would be for a lady to consult her brother, especially her older brother, before doing anything of substance, because she might bring dishonor on the family by her actions.

What western diplomat would even think that this sort of thing might be important to someone, and even if he did, would a western Embassy ever allow such a consideration to influence the decision as to whether to give a person a visa or not? Laws or regulations governing emigration were never mentioned and, I am sure, played no part in the decision of the Consul to grant us the visa.

How do modern nation-states fit into the above power structure? Not very well, if at all, I'm afraid, for the average person in the area. One must remember that the Middle East has for centuries, at least as far back as the days of Alexander the Great, been predominantly a nomadic area. That is, the people there have migrated over vast areas, utilizing the great deserts which cover nearly eighty percent of the land in the Middle East, as a pasture for their animals. This is an extremely efficient use of the thousands of square miles of otherwise useless desert to provide food for people.

Small amounts of vegetation grow here and there, and the nomads lead their animals about so that they can turn this growth into protein in the form of meat (camels, sheep, goats, rarely cattle and always a few horses) or in the form of milk or milk products. As a result of the growth patterns of this vegetation, each herding group, whether this be a tribe, a clan or a small camp group of two or three extended families, has, over the centuries, developed its own cycle of life which anthropologists call an annual cycle.

Often the annual cycle of an Armenian, a Turkish and a Kurdish group would be such that the different groups would migrate across the same territory at different times in the year. This prevented serious conflicts over who controlled the territory, so long as each group came onto the land only when it was supposed to. Even today this is true. There are Turkish, Arab, Armenian and Kurdish groups which migrate over the same parts of Turkey, Iraq and Iran at different times of the year, and this is probably true throughout the Middle East.

The question arises, then, who does any specific piece of territory in the Middle East belong to? The answer to this question is almost impossible for Europeans and Americans to deal with.

The ethnic group which calls itself Armenian wants desperately to have a country called Armenia, but they occupy lands which belong mostly to Turkey and Iran. The same is true for the Kurds, but they also migrate over a large part of Turkey as well as Iraq. Nowhere do the Kurds or Armenians constitute a majority of the population, unless one takes a group of very small, scattered pieces of land.

A good case can be made for any piece of land in the Middle East belonging to at least half a dozen different ethnic groups, based on extended occupancy of that land at one time or another during the past four thousand years, sometimes even at the same time.

The problem described above is the core of the Palestinian problem. The Jews were driven out centuries ago, but they held onto their religious feelings about the land and finally came back. Now the Palestinians will probably repeat the pattern, coming back possibly in a thousand or two thousand years, if it takes that long. If the pattern of land use had been understood in the late 1940's, the present crisis might have been averted,



but that is water over the dam so to speak, and undoing the damage now may be virtually impossible.

To summarize what has been illustrated in this chapter, the people of the Middle East see every conflict in terms of groups, not individuals. The Arabs, as a unit, are honor-bound to attempt to get the land back for the members of their group, that is, the Palestinian Arabs, and they blame the problem on the Jews, as well as the United States, because we supported the Jews. All Jews and all Americans are seen as equally to blame for any hardship suffered by any Palestinian because of the establishment of Israel. One cannot deal effectively with the problem without keeping this fact in mind.

### CHAPTER III: What's A Country?

In the last chapter we introduced the problems involved with the relationships between ethnic groups and their loyalties to local nation-states, such as Iran (Persia). In this chapter we will explore the nature of these relationships a little further, because the situation seems to be virtually impossible for the average person with a European background, including Americans, to understand.

Iran is an excellent example of a country which was established in the twentieth century by Europeans. The problem in Iran is that there is no ethnic majority in the country at all, and the people owe their primary allegiance to the ethnic unit. Persians constitute less than forty percent of the total population in Iran, and they are the largest single group, if the census statistics that I have studied are correct (in the Middle East census figures are always suspect). In any event, there are also substantial numbers of Turks, Armenians, Kurds, and one whole province which is predominantly Arab.

Why then were the lines on a map drawn to include such a diverse group of peoples in one "country"? Because the Europeans, and especially Americans (a nation with a basic commitment to the mixing of peoples from different ethnic groups), did not understand the nature of power in the Middle East. The division was made on economic grounds. It was felt that the resources within the newly established boundaries of Iran were sufficient to provide all of the needs for a modern, industrial society. The root cause of most of the problems in Iran at the present time is that it is a country with no ethnic majority.

Europeans are settled peoples. Their farms are fixed. National boundaries are drawn along natural geographic boundaries, such as the Rhine river, to separate predominantly German populations from predominantly French populations. It is comparatively easy to get agreement as to who should have control of most of the land, and when disputes arise, they are over small pieces of land here or there, usually near a border of some sort.

The Europeans created much of the instability that exists in the Middle East by making European style countries in an area where such political entities are in constant conflict with the traditional power structure. One must keep in mind always, when attempting to deal diplomatically with

countries in this area, that the underlying social structure described above is powerful, sometimes even more powerful than the government itself. When the leaders of a Middle Eastern country do something that appears strange and incomprehensible to the West, it is often because the political system is forced to compromise with this traditional system of power.

At times a government may be completely unable to rule, whether it is a democracy, a kingdom or a dictatorship, and most people in the area see little difference between the three types of government, because their basic allegiance is to the traditional social structure, with its emphasis on ethnic loyalty, and not to the European style political system incorporated in all modern governments.

In Iran, the Shah and Khomeini both faced the same problems. How does one control a large number of ostensibly independent ethnic groups when his own ethnic group does not constitute a majority of the people in the country? The result of this situation is that there is constant civil war within Iran between the various ethnic groups with each seeking to maintain its independence and its ethnic pride.

The Shah's methods, and Khomeini's methods, of dealing with these problems are, and must be, essentially the same---those of a nation at war with itself. This situation will not change appreciably no matter who is in power, and leaders in the West should stop interfering with the internal politics of Iran.

Turkey has very different problems from those of Iran, though both are Middle Eastern, non-Arab countries. Turkey had the opportunity, because of the genius of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, to set its own boundaries. Ataturk first defeated the European armies which occupied his country and then set about to establish a viable nation with reasonable boundaries, based on Middle Eastern values. As a result, Turkey has the most stable government in the region.

Ataturk was aware of the ethnic base of all allegiance in the area, and he would have liked to have gathered all of the Turks in the world into a single contiguous land mass forming a single country called Turkey, but he knew that that was not possible. He knew also that the next best thing was to form a nation, drawing the boundaries in such a way as to have a region that was populated by a large Turkish majority. That was exactly what he did. The boundaries that he drew gave him a country in which

about ninety percent of all the people were Turks. The minorities were very small and scattered in such a way that nowhere did they outnumber the Turks or threaten the power of the Turkish government.

The problems in Turkey today are in the Armenian and Kurdish regions, and these pose no real threat to the power of the central government, because there are so few Kurds or Armenians left in the country. Kurds and Armenians comprise about twelve percent of the population according to the census. As noted earlier, census figures are often grossly inaccurate, but even with those inaccuracies the figures show clearly the relative strength of Turks vs non-Turks (about 9 to 1) when contrasted with Persians and non-Persians (probably about 1 to 2).

The situation in Iran is quite different than in Turkey; in Iran, one province is heavily populated by Arabs and another one by Turks. Until Iran is broken up into smaller countries and reorganized into areas such that each country contains predominantly one ethnic group, the political situation there will not change drastically.

The war with Iraq has temporarily united the non-Arab groups to fight with the Persians against the Godless government of Iraq in a holy war of Islam. However, as soon as the Iraqi war is resolved, the internal conflicts will surface again, and the rule of one leader will be just about as inhumane, and, if you like, corrupt, as another, from a western point of view. The United States would do well to support whichever leader best suits its own purposes and forget about humanity and honesty as we see it, because no matter what we do, we will end up as the villain. The Persians interpret what we do as if we were selfishly pursuing our own political aims no matter what, so we do not win any friends by trying to be humane.

Note what happened to our image after we helped force the Shah out because he was said to be corrupt and inhumane. In no way could we have been pursuing our own selfish interests, because it was clearly in our interest to maintain the Shah in power. Our actions in helping to oust the Shah were completely humanitarian. We lost a valuable ally by forcing him out, and we opened the door for Khomeini. The people of Iran are infinitely worse off now than they were under the Shah, and we have become the scapegoat for a situation for which we were in no way responsible.

We have mentioned the largest groups, the ethnic units, to which people owe allegiance. At the opposite end of the spectrum, we have also described the smallest unit, that is, the extended family. There are also a great number of groups in between the extended family and the ethnic unit, but the European style nation-state fits nowhere.

A French sociologist, Pierre Bourdieu, has published the definitive description of the workings of this system of social power in his book, *The Algerians*. He diagrammed the power structure as a series of concentric squares. If two individuals are in the same square they owe more loyalty to each other than they do to people outside that square. Represented within a square one would find a family. A larger square would contain several family squares. A still larger square would contain several clan squares, and so on up to a unit such as Arab.

For the nomadic group, the local camp group can constitute a single extended family or several, depending on how rich the grazing land is. Often a local camp group consists of families of brothers, and these families remain together until they outgrow the available food for their animals, or until some dispute between families breaks up the unity of the group. In any event, Frederik Barth (another anthropologist) says that in Persia these camp groups are very cohesive and the emotional bond between the people in them is intense.

In a parallel fashion, villagers house one extended family in a single dwelling and often brothers have their homes in the same section of town after the death of their father. The power structure works much the same way within a village as within a tribe.

A number of camp groups are related to each other, often through actual lineages of males. The people within one camp group consider all members within the larger group, usually called a clan, to be relatives, that is, still family.

It should be noted here that these so-called 'clans' differ significantly from the traditional definition of clans given by anthropologists and sociologists. However, one has to call such groups by some name, and the word 'clan' has the closest meaning of any word we have in the English language to use as a label for them.

As one often hears in Europe and America, 'blood is thicker than water,' therefore one must support his relatives in any kind of a dispute against non-relatives, even to going to war with another clan if necessary. Hence, while this bond is weaker than that of the local camp group, it is still extremely strong.

If a member of one extended family or camp group harms someone in your extended family or camp group within your clan, you are required by all standards of good morality to support your group. But if the clan is involved in an argument with another clan, then all internal problems should be set aside until the external problem is resolved. Such a system of gradually weakening loyalties operates up through all levels of organization to that of the ethnic group, but does often does not include the nation-state, because this loyalty could undercut allegiance to one's ethnic unit.

One of the basic difficulties in dealing with the Palestinian problem is that the Arabs will often put aside even significant internal problems and join in the common struggle to protect Arabs against the non-Arab world. The leaders in western countries attempt to reason with various leaders in the Middle East as if their support of this or that act were logical, but it often is not.

Members of each ethnic group do not ask, is what our group doing right or wrong? They ask only, who is the person who has harmed a member or members of our group? They often argue from the point of rightness or wrongness when talking with western diplomats, but only because they think that this is a way to win, not because they are seriously concerned about our concepts of right or wrong. In their eyes, it would be wrong, very very wrong, for an Arab not to support Arabs (as they see it, relatives) in a fight or an argument with non-Arabs, and it behooves us to understand and recognize this as a very important driving force in the Arab world.

Note carefully here that I am not saying that Arabs are a bunch of dishonest bums. I am saying that to be honorable, Arabs absolutely must do many things that the West considers dishonorable, but by the same token, much of what we do and consider to be honorable, the Arab thinks is dishonest and dishonorable. Honor is based on the values of a people, not on some absolute right or wrong handed down by God, and their values are different from ours, despite the fact that we worship the same

God. Did He give them their values, or did He give us ours? You wrestle with that one.

The strength of these loyalties diminishes as the group gets larger and more diffuse, but it is very important and must be considered when one is dealing with any Arab, Turkish or Kurdish group. Since the Arabs have been spread out over so much land area, and the problems are so different in the different regions, it is difficult for them to muster strong 'Arab' opinion on many things. However just when you think "Arab unity" is dead, it springs suddenly, violently and unexpectedly to life again.

This ethnic loyalty is especially strong when a group, such as the Armenians or Kurds, feels that their very existence as an unit is threatened. We see the results of this periodically in the bombings of Turkish Embassies or Consulates around the world by Kurdish or Armenian nationalists who are not trying to be terrorists. They only want what they feel is rightfully theirs, the independence of their ethnic unit. However, the Independence of their ethnic units would trample on the rights of the majority of the people in virtually every part of every county where they live at the present time.

Should we move them to new lands, then? They wouldn't go, just as the Jews refused to move to central Africa years ago. The establishment of Israel in Africa would have precluded the present Israeli-Palestinian problem completely, but Middle Easterners have a religious affiliation with the lands over which they have wandered century after century, and this religious emotionalism precludes most of the solutions that Westerners consider to be logical.

## CHAPTER IV: Who's An Arab?

The words 'honor' and 'dishonor' have been used frequently in the earlier chapters of this book with the clear implication that what is honorable in the Middle East is sometimes dishonorable in the West, and that this is equally true the other way around.

Now it is time to look more closely at some of the important specifics of what it is to be 'honorable' in the Middle East, because much of the interaction between groups there, especially ethnic groups, is based on their concept of what is and what is not 'honorable.' This affects Americans because the leaders in the Middle East often relate to us as if we were just another ethnic group from the area, and our leaders often do not seem to know what people, such as the Shah or Khomeini, are doing or why.

A man's honor is perhaps the most important part of the average Middle Easterner's view of the world, as well as of himself. It explains much behavior that appears irrational to people in the West. It is critical that leaders in the United States and European countries understand how this system of honor works, if they wish to deal effectively with any ethnic group in the Middle East. If an American, Frenchman, or Italian kills an Arab, Turk or Kurd, even by accident, and the matter is not settled immediately through the proper type of negotiation, this offense will be settled, whenever and wherever it can be, against any American, Frenchman or Italian who is vulnerable... often in a hijacked plane or ship, an airline terminal or a public office in Paris.

Using terrorism as an example, most Westerners consider that the Middle Eastern 'terrorists' are killing 'innocent civilians.' But the terrorists do not see it this way. The Israelis have killed Arabs and taken their land. The United States has supported the Israelis. All Israelis are guilty, because their group is guilty, and the death of any Israeli settles the score for the death of an Arab. All Americans are guilty, because our group has helped and supported the Israelis. Therefore, the terrorist does not think that he is killing innocent civilians, rather he is settling a just and honorable score by killing an American to compensate for an Arab who has died at the hands of an Israeli. An understanding of this fact is essential to dealing with any country or ethnic group in the Middle East.



What has been said above is not simply academic theorizing or truth for the sake of truth, and many western educated individuals from the Middle East will deny that it is important, but one can easily verify that it is vital even to them, by watching what they do when they are faced with a crisis.

A friend of mine was in the Peace Corps in Iran before the Shah was deposed, and he was invited to a Persian home. During the evening they got into an argument as to the morality of a new edict which stated that 'ethnic membership' (because ethnic was thought to be equal with race in the West) should not be considered in the hiring of government employees. This move was made by the Shah in response to pressure from the western press. In the end, neither of the two participants in the argument understood each other, and the American left the house feeling that the Persian was a racially bigoted monster. I don't know exactly what the Persian thought about the American, but I am sure that he felt he had very peculiar ideas.

One day, in one of my classes on the peoples and cultures of the Middle East, an Arab student said, 'Dr. Pierce, you are always talking about cultural things, why don't you ever talk about anything important?'

I said, 'Like what?'

And he responded with, 'Like the shape of their nose,' and he pounded the desk with his fist on the word nose. What he meant was, the thing that he considered to be race, that is, an Arab, Turk, Jew, etc.

It is essential that the peoples and governments in the West understand both the nature and the strength of group loyalty and solidarity and deal with the peoples and governments of the Middle East accordingly. Terrorism is primarily the game of Arabs, Kurds, Armenians, and Persians, all peoples from the Middle East. These groups have resorted to this tactic because they feel that it is the only way they can make any headway against the enormous military power of the West, and they have a religious conviction that it is their moral obligation to 'get even.' Their concept of justice requires, as an obligation to God, that they seek revenge. This is a totally different phenomenon from the political terrorism of the Red Guard in Italy, and must be treated differently.

It is essential that the West recognize the game that these people are playing, since clearly it is a game based on the rules of Middle Eastern

power politics, not those of the West. Further, our leaders must work out a set of effective responses based on their (not our) rules. Middle Eastern behavior, as evidenced through observations of the past six thousand years of history, is based on the idea that the only way to stop people from hurting your group is by maintaining your 'respect' by certain types of actions.

In terms of Western philosophy the word 'respect' in the Middle East actually means fear. Hundreds of times when I lived in the area, I heard someone say, 'they won't respect you if you don't' do such and such, but through no stretch of the imagination could what they suggested bring respect in the eyes of a European or American. The proposed action could only cause fear, and probably resentment, but the speakers were correct in that it usually made others very cautious in the way they handled your group.

Throughout all of recorded history, the pattern of interaction between groups in the Middle East has been for the men to appear very macho and to make it clear that any group who attacks their group will be severely hurt. What this macho stance says to others is, 'You may be big enough to destroy me, but you will suffer greatly in the process.' Recognizing this fact, and fearing the group's probable response to attack, is what they call 'respect.' It seems to me, after living in the Middle East for a number of years, studying the cultures as an anthropologist and reading most of the relevant literature on power in the area, that this is the basic premise on which almost all interaction rests.

If western countries continue to look for the individual who blows up an airport, a jet or a bus, they will virtually never be able to find him. Why? Because if he is an Arab, practically every Arab on the face of this earth will protect him, except perhaps a very few who have been completely brainwashed by education in the West, or the members of a tribe which doesn't care very much for the actions of the tribe to which the offender belongs. You may or may not consider this to be morally wrong, but to a true Middle Easterner, it is morally compelling. If the culprit is a Persian, every (ethnic) Persian will protect him, though a Turk from Iran would not.

The game the West is playing is based on a set of fundamental assumptions which evolved with Western Civilization. Some examples would be: only the offending individual is to blame; killing is inherently

bad, forgiveness is better than vengeance, and so on. None of these basic values are valid in the Middle East. To prevent terrorism, even from relatively small groups, one must determine to which group the offender belongs, and hold every member in that group responsible, because that is the game they are playing, and that is what they think we are doing. When we fail to take action against an offending group, they reason, quite logically, from their basic assumptions, that we take no action because we are inept, incapable or stupid, not that we are humane. I am quite sure that millions of (but of course not all) Arabs expected us to kill one of their Princes after the murder of Senator Kennedy. This would have been just and honorable on our part.

Again and again when I was in the Middle East doing something solely for the benefit of the people there, such as, developing a mass literacy project, I was assumed to be an agent for the CIA. My actions were interpreted as if the CIA had some ulterior motive and that what I was doing was to further their goals. In reality, I was not an agent of the CIA or anyone else, and I knew virtually nothing about the CIA, except that it existed. My only concern was raising the standard of living and improving the quality of life of the very poor throughout the world; virtually no one in the Middle East accepted this as a valid reason for my actions.

The game they play has incorporated in it no, I repeat NO, absolute values. In the West we value human life above everything, and are willing to excuse almost any crime rather than kill. The overwhelming majority of people in the Middle East are quite willing to kill anybody at any time if they consider the killing to be in an honorable cause. There are hundreds of little sayings around the area similar to this one, 'Life is short, but eternity is forever,' and this is quoted in situations which imply that protecting the honor of your family, clan or ethnic group is far more important than life itself. By protecting the honor of the family, you are paving your path to heaven as well as protecting your loved ones.

Very recently, early in 1986, I read in my local newspaper of a very young British girl who had married an Arab and gone home with him to live. She became pregnant by a man other than her husband, and this disgraced the family of the husband. The family was, at the time, awaiting the birth of the baby before putting the young lady to death. She had disgraced the family, and she had to pay for that with her life. The dominant motive in all of this was the protection of the honor (respect, by others) of the family, because if members of the family did not extract the proper

vengeance, other groups would assume that they were unable to defend themselves, and they would then be subject to all sorts of terrible things. Whether this would actually happen or not is not important. What is important is that people believe that it will happen, and their actions are based on this belief.

Whether the British government was able to rescue the girl or not is a moot question, and I saw nothing further in the newspapers about it, but it shows how lightly the area generally regards killing, when compared with the attitude of the West, where no one would think of killing anyone for adultery, and all sorts of really terrible criminals, such as mass murderers, are allowed to go free 'because of extenuating circumstances.' Middle Easterners consider this to be degenerate at best. The honor of the ethnic group, the clan or tribe, but especially the family, must be protected at all costs in the Middle East. In contrast, the honor of a family is of little or no importance in most of Northern Europe and the English speaking world, when compared with that of human life.

We value truth, justice, honesty, and a number of similar concepts in absolute terms, though we do not always practice these virtues, and the people in the Middle East do not value these things in such an absolute sense. Lying is common, because many different people in the area from different walks of life told me, when I was there, that the important thing is the comfort and happiness of the person you are talking to, not the absolute truth. Say what makes your listener happy.

If a young lady comes up to me and says, 'How do you like my new hat?' and I think it is garish and horrible, should I say so? Of course not. It serves no purpose to be truthful in any absolute sense and needlessly hurt her feelings, when she obviously thinks that it is pretty and others may too. This the emotion and reasoning connected with the 'truth' in the Middle East.

I am not attempting to picture the typical person from the Middle East as a lying bum. I just want the reader to understand that people from different cultures operate on the basis of different assumptions, and in the Middle East whether an action is good or bad is always determined by a sequence of events or a situation, not an absolute rule. Killing can be good, bad or indifferent, dependent on what precipitated the killing.

In the West, the present push throughout much of the area to eliminate the death penalty illustrates the idea that people with European backgrounds do not think that killing is ever justified. If we attempt to maintain this in dealing with the Middle East, we can never understand them, and they will never understand us.

Many times when western diplomats are being completely honest, the Middle Easterner 'reads between the lines' so to speak, and figures out what he would mean if he were saying what he has just heard, which is almost always something very different from what the Westerner is thinking, because the reasoning of the two people is based on different sets of values.

Since the typical Middle Easterner's traditions are fundamentally rooted in his beliefs about the hereafter, he almost never believes that America's primary goal is helping the helpless, attempting to raise the standard of living of a group of people we do not even know, or establishing a just and lasting peace on earth, because these are absurd goals. The idea that people could be motivated to do something that absurd is so far outside their moral frame of reference that they do not believe it is possible. Middle Easterners usually read into the actions or speeches of western diplomats something that they comprehend, that is, some motive based on their own cultural beliefs. Most of the time their interpretations of our motives are totally incorrect, and most of the time our interpretations of their motives are equally incorrect.

The gist of this chapter is that to deal with the Middle East effectively, we must learn the rules of their game and play it in such a way that at least the leaders in the region understand what we are trying to do. Concerning the responsibility for actions, such as terrorism, this means holding the group which claims responsibility for an action to blame and killing enough of the members of their group so that internal pressure from the group itself will force the individuals to stop whatever action we oppose. If we learn to understand and play their game, and only if we do this, will they understand and respect us. It is quite possible that if we are willing to play their game, we can elicit the aid of many Arab groups, even against an offending Arab group, because the terrorist acts are detrimental to Arabs generally. If we continue to play our game, we will fail, and terrorism will increase. This is inevitable.

As a closing aside, basic philosophical thought in the Middle East has been influenced, or perhaps just codified in philosophical terms, by a Persian philosopher who stated that the group with the strongest internal cohesion would always win, no matter how weak or strong the opposing groups.

Our free and open society with thousands of different people expressing different opinions, gives the average Middle Easterner the feeling that they can win, even against the United States of America in any kind of struggle, because we are so divided, and they work together.

Unfortunately, this part of our culture, which we value the most, and which we believe makes us almost invulnerable, was the real cause of World War II, because none of the axis powers, especially the Japanese, thought that we would be able to fight when we were so terribly divided.

Peace groups often foster war by making other groups think that we will collapse under attack. I think that the Arabs will be extremely careful not to make the mistake that the Japanese did with their attack on Pearl Harbor, which galvanized American public opinion in 1941, because they know that their only hope is to keep us divided and arguing with each other. The problem is that they do not understand us any better than we understand them, and they too may well miscalculate, as the Japanese did, especially with terrorism.

Many people in the Middle East do not realize how dangerous the little game of terrorism really is. Americans can come together and lash out with unexpected quickness and fury when those that we consider to be innocent civilians are killed. This is true because few people outside the United States can comprehend the value that we place on the life of an individual, even one we do not know, not to mention the value we place on our freedoms.

The attack on Libya is absolutely nothing compared to what the United States can and will unleash against an offending group, whether a country or an ethnic unit, should the public become sufficiently aroused by what it thinks of as wanton killing. Despite our carefully developed traditions of individualism, we too still feel deep inside the basically human stirrings of group responsibility.

I would like to conclude this chapter by asserting that the values of the Middle East are a direct result of the attempt by the people living there to deal with a very hostile environment over the centuries. The area has never been able to produce enough food to feed all of the people, and as a result of this fact, a fairly large number of people died each year from malnutrition and related problems. The concept of group solidarity appears to be panhuman, but it was elaborated on and exaggerated in the Middle East because people, any group of people, want to protect the ones they love and are near to, and they do not really care much about people remote from them, at least not until they are taught from infancy that this is what they should be doing.

Christianity may, in the minds of many, be a philosophically superior way of life, but it never caught on in the Middle East. It failed in that area because it was contrary to the values that the people of the area had seen work throughout the centuries. The Christian tradition thrived in areas influenced by Greek culture. Christianity fitted in with the humanist thought of the Greek philosophers and was transmitted down through the centuries to those countries most affected by Greek thought.

Islam, on the other hand, caught on like wildfire in the Middle East, because it reinforced all of the traditional values in the area. What is important now is for the believers in both religions to attempt to understand and cope with the differences between the values of the two ideologies. Should we fail to do this, the consequences for the Middle East could be devastating.

## CHAPTER V: Honorable? Respectful?

To deal with anyone or any group in the Middle East, one must understand the nature of 'honor' in the region, the extent to which people will go to protect the honor of their group, and the reasons why. This was begun in the previous chapter, but we need to look further now at the nature of honor as a general concept and the natures of values expressed through human cultures.

The idea that values, all values, those of the West as well as those in the Middle East, are not absolute, but are a product of our cultural history, is extremely difficult for some people to swallow. This is especially true if one speaks a Germanic language such as English, because speakers of these languages tend to see everything as black or white, good or bad, right or wrong, and the world does not work this way.

The people in the United States are completely misled by their constitution. This document tells them that all people have been created equal, and since all people have the same type of biology, they must have the same basic desires.

People who call themselves 'humanists' have been particularly misled by their tradition, because they really believe that beginning with Aristotle, Socrates, and so forth, they began to see the true light, and a sort of religion has developed out of this in which the humanities, as academic disciplines, are supposed to teach what is real and what is true for all humanity. What they actually teach is what is believed by a small group of people who have been thoroughly indoctrinated by a particular philosophical tradition. Not everyone in the world is a product of that tradition, and many cannot even understand people with this background when they talk about it. In fact, this is true even within the United States, despite the fact that many people, especially reporters, refuse to admit it.

Just to illustrate the idea that different people have different values, I was trying to explain to a Bedouin Arab one day what the civil rights movement in America was all about. In the process I said that we thought that 'all men were created equal.' His immediate response to that statement was, 'That's stupid.' He went on to tell me that everyone knew that the Jews were good at business, the Bedouin were good with their minds, the Turks were good at war, and a number of other 'absolute



truths' as he saw them, but none of his absolute truths would be accepted by Americans as anything other than the babblings of a barbarous nomad. His reactions to our beliefs were about the same as our reactions are to those of the Middle East. To him, we appeared to be stupid and not too well developed mentally to believe such garbage.

Men in particular from the Middle East consider themselves to be extremely honorable. In fact, whether a man considers an act to be honorable or not is one of the driving forces which determines what actions he can and cannot take, given a certain set of circumstances. Anyone who does not realize this fact about Arabs, Turks and so on will be totally in error when he judges the actions of Middle Eastern men.

You may consider a man or group of men who hijack a jet to be outlaws, and I do not quibble with your right to believe that, because in western eyes, they are. But if you are to understand such a man and deal with him in any realistic manner, you must realize that he did what he did usually because of a demand of honor, not because he is a disreputable bum. The demands of this system of honor are extremely difficult for people from the West to understand. Further, it seems to be impossible for them to accept the fact that some people believe that this system is absolute and was handed down from God just as we believe in the basic principles of Christianity.

If what has been said above is true, how is it possible for a leader of a Palestinian group to appear on American TV and make one statement after another about the Achille Lauro hijacking which the facts of the case prove to be absolutely false? Easy! His first loyalty is to his family. His family belongs to the group, Palestinian refugees, and finally he is an Arab. He is free, himself. His lies were meant to protect both the honor and the lives of those who have been arrested and charged in the affair, not himself.

This act, seen as dishonorable by many in the West, is an act which his concept of honor demands that he do. He must do everything in his power to protect other Palestinians, especially when they are threatened by outsiders, in this case the Italian authorities. It is imperative that he lie, because it is clear that the hijackers were following his orders. Protecting the honor of his group means lying, killing, cheating, stealing...almost anything that he can do, including giving his own life if it will really help to show that his people are not afraid to do whatever is necessary to gain

the respect (literally, show that they can and will protect themselves) of others. This concept of honor is the life and soul of Middle Eastern culture, and the people who live in the area usually do not even understand the Germanic concepts of absolute truths, such as, killing is bad, lying is bad, stealing is bad. These things are good or bad depending on what they accomplish---a very pragmatic view of life, because under the harsh conditions of life throughout the Middle East one had to be pragmatic in order to survive.

Why did the men who hijacked the ship kill a helpless old American Jew in a wheelchair? A westerner would say, 'surely there could be no honor in that.' To quote one of the terrorists, 'to show that we have no mercy.' If people are honorable, why would they say such an awful thing, when one of the most important facets of honor is mercy itself, you say? Is it? Not necessarily. This depends completely on your definition of honor.

The quality of mercy is not even on the list of positive values for most peoples in the Middle East. As stated in an earlier chapter of this book, the hijackers were attempting to make the rest of the world 'respect' their group. Their concept of 'respect' is very close to what the West would call "fear." By killing this old man, they hoped to make the elderly leaders in western countries aware that in the future they could be targets, that is, the hijackers were not just going to kill young men in uniform. The men hoped, by this act, to instill fear (respect) in the elderly leaders of the West so that in the future they would not do things to further harm the Palestinians. This was a very honorable thing to do, not dishonorable at all, given a certain view of the world. Later, they seemed to relent, not because they felt that they did something wrong, but because the killing galvanized world opinion against them instead of gaining them the respect that they expected it would. Why did they expect this to gain them respect? Because of the nature of the system of interrelationships which has existed in the Middle East for centuries. An act such as that one would have gained them (what they call) the respect of almost any other Middle Eastern group.

For any group in the Middle East, fighting Americans, Germans or even Italians in uniform would probably only result in their sustaining heavy losses themselves and would probably accomplish nothing at all. This would demonstrate their stupidity.

To be respected in the West, one must take up arms and fight regardless of the odds. This brings respect, but not in the Middle East. There, this is stupid. On the other hand, if the hijackers could frighten the elderly leaders by an act such as killing a helpless old man, they might be able to stop or reduce aid to Israel, especially from America. This would be an honorable thing to do, because it would protect their group from outsiders and demonstrate that they are capable of doing the most awful things imaginable, if it is necessary for their survival.

What Americans must make the people in the Middle East understand about our system of values, is that we consider such acts to be cowardly and despicable. Further, such acts can bring forth extreme responses from the military of the West, for example, the bombing of Libya, which was a very mild response, compared with what the United States can and will do if provoked.

In any event, their traditional set of values directs their actions, and from their point of view, the Achille Lauro hijacking was something that they thought would bring respect to their group and honor to themselves. They do not understand anyone who has an absolute respect for life itself, no matter whose life, absolute respect for the truth, no matter what the circumstances, and so on. Nor do they understand that we respect gentleness and mercy as well as compromise. For them, these are the characteristics of the weak, the helpless and the inept. Turning the other cheek has never been popular in the Middle East.

Killing, as illustrated above, is often looked on as a way of gaining or maintaining respect, not as a dishonorable act. For example, you might well ask, why do people in the area kill girls for losing their virginity? Morally there is a direct relationship between this act and the act of killing a helpless invalid in a wheelchair. Both victims are equally unable to do harm to the killers in any real sense, but both acts are intimately tied in with the Middle Eastern male's concept of his own honor, respect and integrity.

Before going too far into this point, I should relate another incident which happened to me one evening about twenty years ago, when I was telling some Americans how important it was to understand the Virginité Complex in the Middle East, if we ever wanted to understand what went on there. Immediately, a lady across the table, who happened to be an Arab from Lebanon, grew very angry and said that no young girls had

been killed in the Middle East in years. I responded only with, 'it is reported to happen even now,' and continued my conversation with the Americans at the table.

The Arab lady appeared not to believe me and remained angry that I would tell this to the Americans at the table. Does this mean that it is not true? Absolutely not! It means that people know very little about their own cultures, and much of what they do know and much of their motivations are subconscious. They really do not know why they are doing what they are doing, and in this case the lady might well not have known how extensive the practice is. The only thing that the Arab lady saw was that the Americans would not think well of the Middle East, and Arabs in particular, if they heard this, and whether it was true or not was an irrelevant point.

Less than two years after the above described incident, there was an honor killing on the streets of Cairo. This was reported in one of the local newspapers. Ten years later, there was a six page spread in the Turkish magazine, *Hayat*, about an honor killing in eastern Turkey. In the 1980's there was all the furor over 'Death of a Princess.' The Princess was killed to protect the honor of the royal family, and their honor was considered to be much more important than her life.

Killings, such as those described in the paragraph above, are only the ones reported by the international press, and every one of them was made public because a reporter happened to stumble onto the affair. If three such incidents are described internationally by accident in the world's press in just fifteen years, think how many times such events must occur in the small, remote villages of the area with no one outside the village ever hearing about it. My informants in Turkish villages told me that such things were considered to be family matters and were simply not reported to the government at all. If a death certificate were issued, it simply said that the girl had been killed in an accident.

Again, a personal experience. When I was working in Ankara, about 1957, I had a secretary, and we needed a new typewriter for the office. I asked the young lady to accompany me to an office supply store in Ulus [a neighbourhood in Ankara], because I did not feel that my Turkish was good enough to bargain with the store clerk about the price, and she consented. We rode in a taxi, with me on one side of the rear seat and her on the side opposite, as far from me as she could possible get. There was

no way that we could have touched each other except by outstretched hands. We bought the typewriter, and a couple of days later I left for the United States on home leave.

The day after I left, the secretary's irate husband came storming into the office with a knife and said that he had come to kill Dr. Pierce. The Director of the program, Sir Kemp Malone, was terrified, but after many reassurances that I had left for home leave in the United States, the husband said that his wife was never to leave the office with a man again. She was to be a 'stationary' secretary. By his dress, background and so on, this man appeared to be completely westernized, but he was driven by traditional Middle Eastern values, virtually none of which were even slightly understood by the American mission in Turkey.

To return, just momentarily, to the concept of 'virginity,' the loss of this quality does not require penetration, as it does in the West. The young lady in Eastern Turkey was killed merely for stopping and having long conversations on the streets of her village with the son of the butcher. She was married, and therefore was not a virgin, but these conversations were much more serious to her family than the act of intercourse would be to a family in the West. The concept which I label the 'virginity complex' is far reaching, and family honor can be lost by many of what people in the West consider to be trivial acts, such as flirting with the eyes with a stranger.

In the case of my secretary's and my outing, when we had driven past the Kizilay corner, a very busy intersection in the center of modern Ankara, a friend of this man had seen the lady in question riding with a strange man. Believe it or not, this was considered by both the friend and the husband to be sufficient grounds for killing the offending male, namely me. When I returned from the United States about six months later, the lady no longer worked for my project, and I never saw or heard from either the secretary or her husband again, probably my good fortune. I am absolutely sure that he did not want to kill anyone, but he felt bound to do so by his code of honor. Since he had been prevented by fate from completing the act, his honor was satisfied, but he would have killed me, whether he really wanted to or not, if I had been there.

The above experience is given here only to illustrate the intensity of the emotions felt by even so-called 'modern' Middle Easterners who consider themselves liberated from the Islamic traditions. A point that Westerners

must understand is that the traditional values of a culture, any culture, run deep. In a situation that the individual sees as a crisis, he reverts to the stereotyped reactions of his culture. The fact that a man or woman was educated in Europe and wears western dress does not make him immune from the control of his traditional values, such as, the importance of virginity and its reflection on family honor.

I recently corresponded with officials in an Arab country in the Middle East about working there, and part of the post report on the country said that you can be jailed for up to six months for kissing your wife when she comes in at the airport; and if this happens, the Embassy cannot get you out unless you carry a diplomatic passport. This is how seriously things related to sex are treated in the Middle East even in the year 1986, so don't listen too hard to those who tell you that this is all a thing of the past.

How is what has been described above related to the death of an American Jew on a cruise ship in the Mediterranean? Very closely and absolutely. To be an honorable family, a family must demonstrate its courage, as well as its ability to do anything required to show other people that it will do whatever is needed to protect its honor. This is true for any group of any size, from the family up to a sub-group within an ethnic group, such as, the Palestinian Arabs. The Turkish husband was perfectly willing to kill me and suffer the consequences, probably death by hanging, to preserve the honor of his family in the eyes of his friend. His attempt, which would have been carried out if he had found me, was sufficient to restore the honor he felt he had lost. The hijackers of the Achille Lauro were perfectly willing to kill an innocent old man to demonstrate the fact that they would spare no one, not even a helpless invalid, in their fight for their people. I believe that this fact was completely lost on the West.

Cultures, all cultures, are games, often deadly games, as stated earlier. A part of the game is always a number of senseless rules that tell people what things they can do to demonstrate to others how well they are playing the game.

As farfetched as it might seem to some readers, this is exactly why young women who lose their virginity are slaughtered. Think for a moment about the one who must do the killing: The father and the girl's older brothers. If they do the job, the family's honor is maintained. If they do not, some more distant relative, who does not care so much for the child, will probably do it, but if this happens, the family loses some of its honor. Still,

the family is considered to be honorable so long as some member kills the girl. If the girl is not killed, then other 'honorable' families will not allow their sons or daughters to marry into that family. As a result, the families disgraced in this manner live, if they are nomadic, removed from others of their group in isolated dishonor.

The fact of not killing the girl is looked on as an act of cowardice, not a benevolent act of mercy. The importance of sex, and its consequences for people in the society are probably not the least bit more stupid than many things that we as Westerners do, but because we operate within our system, we cannot see its own stupidity. The man or woman living in the Middle East is caught in the same trap. Finally, the people in the Middle East see many of what we think of as benevolent acts of mercy as absolutely stupid. These acts demonstrate the fact that other people can run over us again and again and we will do nothing about it.

We do not know how often these killings occur, because they are almost never reported officially. However, the people believe that the just punishment for sexual transgressions should be death. This comes up in the folklore, and even in modern movies. I remember seeing a movie in 1960 in which all of the children in the theater were cheering wildly when the husband of an errant wife was catching up with her and clubbing her to death in cold blood beside a railway station. Even to the relatively young children this appeared to be a just punishment. Contrary to western belief, this is also the just punishment for a male, but he is more difficult to catch and he also can fight back, especially if he is very strong. Remember that the lover of the Princess was also killed in "Death of a Princess."

Even more important than today's movies are the folktales, such as the one which I will now relate, which come from the Marsh Arabs. The Marsh Arabs are a group living in the marshlands at the mouth of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers on islands that they have made out of reed mats.

The story goes that a man and his daughter, who was the idol of his life, his most important reason for living, were sailing down a channel in the marsh. They passed a boat coming from the opposite direction. The other boat was occupied only by a single man. The father noted from the flashing eyes of his daughter that she was flirting with the passing stranger. He rounded the bend, pulled his canoe over to the bank of the channel and slit his daughter's throat and watched her bleed to death there

on the ground, because she had, in his eyes, ‘lost her virginity’ by flirting and thereby dishonored his family, his clan and his tribe.

The story above illustrates how things that we consider natural and ‘good’ are thought in the Middle East to be so horrible as to deserve the death penalty. In my part of the United States, we would consider a man to be psychotic who would kill his daughter because she had flirted with a stranger. Do such things actually happen in real life? Of course they do. How often? No one really knows, but it is not the frequency of an act that is important in cultures, but the intensity of the emotions attached to the act and the strength of the belief. Children hearing stories, such as the one above, throughout their childhood, cannot help but carry this important value with them all through their lives.

What do the stories related above prove or disprove? If a father can kill his own daughter, who presumably he loves, then he is capable of killing anyone who crosses him. This demonstrates to the community, and to the world at large, that anyone who threatens his group does so at great peril, because he is strong enough to kill anyone who threatens him.

The killing of an elderly man in a wheelchair is comparable, because while neither he nor the girl can harm the killers, by executing such people, the killers give a clear warning to would-be attackers that they are not to be trifled with. Both of these acts are honorable in terms of the culture in which they are spawned, and one must understand this if he ever hopes to live and work with people from the area. One does not have to like it, and one does not have to approve of it, but one must understand that the majority of the people there are driven by this excessive value and other related values dealing with sex, often when they do not even realize it themselves. The leaders usually are forced to follow these values, whether they wish to or not, because if they do not, they will not long be leaders.



## CHAPTER VI: Who's the Boss?

Closely related to much that has been said in Chapter V, and following directly from the last sentence in that chapter, is the nature of leadership in the Middle East. Leaders in the West need to understand this much better than they do, if they expect to deal effectively with men like Khomeini.

Leadership in the Middle East is often very different from leadership in the West. Barth, a well known anthropologist, characterized a leader among the nomads of Persia by saying that the leader wakes up in the morning, listens to the talk of the people and watches their actions. Then he runs to get in front of them and lead them to where they were going in the first place.

On the other hand, in the West, we expect a leader, such as Adolph Hitler, to stand on his balcony and galvanize the people below him into instant action, and in a sense, force them to go the way he wants them to go.

This difference in leadership styles accounts for many things that seem to be incomprehensible to the people in the West in the actions of the leaders of the Middle East.

Carleton Coon once characterized the Middle East as an area in which the languages were filled with meaningless phrases for people to say in any given situation, so that a person who is stupid or inept cannot disgrace the family. What this means is that one rarely says what he means, and in fact often what he says means very little. However, those in a village who are "mad" can be kept from doing irreparable harm to the honor of the family or village by saying stupid things, if they can be taught to say only the acceptable phrases. We must keep in mind always the extreme value placed on group honor throughout the area.

Parallel phrases in English would be, 'How are you?' 'Fine, how are you?', when you don't really care how the person is, and he doesn't care how you are. This is simply a way of greeting people.

The principle reason in any culture for having highly formalized ways of doing (or saying) things is to maintain smooth interpersonal relationships and to prevent hostilities from developing between people when hostility is undesirable.

The honor of a family is enhanced if the members of the family stay within the highly formalized modes of social interaction, and honor is lost when one says (or does) the wrong thing. This is the main reason that an individual is virtually never allowed to do what he thinks is best for himself in the Middle East. Honor is at stake in his every action, every word, and honor is everything.

In an area without strong central governments, over the past several thousand years, family or group honor (respect/fear) was absolutely one's only protection against other groups which often were larger and stronger than one's own.

Also, if one wishes to provoke a fight, or demonstrate or reinforce his group's superiority, he purposely breaks the rules, again in culturally prescribed ways. If the members of the other group feel that they can, they respond with action to show that they are equal, but if they cannot, then they back down and lose honor, and their lower group position is reinforced.

Much normal interaction by Arabs is looked on by Americans, Britishers, Swedes and so on, as challenging, swaggering, bullying behavior, worthy only of an animal of some sort. The Arabs often look on our calm reactions to each other as a coldness or even a lack of humanity.

A friend of mine from the Middle East, who happened to be in Canada several years ago, couldn't believe her eyes when two cars hit each other on a city street in Toronto and the two drivers got out and exchanged drivers' license numbers and went on their way. She said that people from her country would have gotten out and started hitting each other first, then, maybe, they could have been calmed down by bystanders.

Just keep in mind that the Turks are playing one game, when they drive automobiles and hit each other, and Americans or Canadians are playing quite another game. Or perhaps we are both playing the same game, but with drastically different sets of rules.

An extreme example of such differences as those explained above cost a young Arab boy his life a few years ago in the U. S. A. He spent the evening going through his usual "dominance play" with a group of Americans in a bar, but they did not respond as he expected them to. They attempted to ignore what they considered his boorish behavior. He took

this as a sign that they considered him to be superior to them. He needed to find out more about how he should relate with them, and he continued his challenging behavior. Finally, one of the Americans pulled out a knife and killed the Arab youth right then and there, proving instantly who was inferior.

Middle Eastern leaders often do things that seem senseless to people in the West, especially in Northern Europe, such as claiming that they will destroy American warships which have twice the firepower of their own, and which they know perfectly well they cannot destroy. They do this to see if we have the guts to fight back, or if we will back down. If we do not fight back, then they assume that they can go one step further, because, for reasons known only to ourselves, we are unable or unwilling to respond in a proper manner. If you do not use your power, then by definition, you are unable, and the Middle Eastern leader can take the next step, as he sees it. These are the rules of his game.

Middle Eastern leaders will usually go as far as they dare. If they are not checked, they will push someone beyond acceptable limits, and serious consequences, such as the bombing of Libya, will occur. This situation developed because when the United States was pushed, again and again and again, it backed down, because our leaders felt that each specific action of the Libyan leadership did not warrant killing anyone, not even those who offended us.

This appearance of weakness by the American government led some Arab leaders to believe that they could do virtually anything, and the United States would never respond.

In World War II, the Japanese and Germans learned the hard way that while the United States will not kill or destroy unless Americans feel that it is absolutely necessary, we can and will respond with virtually unlimited power if pushed beyond certain limits.

The base cause of World War II was not economic plundering or a decadent moral code, as some historians have pictured it, but the fact that the United States appeared unable and unwilling to defend itself.

Both the Japanese and the Germans could easily have been stopped back in the mid-thirties, had Americans not had such a strong Peace Movement in this country. The actions of these well-intentioned people led the rest of

the world to believe that we would just sit on our hands and do nothing no matter what happened in the rest of the world, and there is a very good chance that we would have, had the Japanese not attacked Pearl Harbor.

We must not allow this to happen in dealing with the Middle East. We must always respond to challenges in such a way that those who challenge us know both our capabilities and our determination to defend ourselves. The raid on Libya was a good start in the right direction.

The West must make its limits clear and stand up with a deadly show of force, even over what may appear to us to be trivial matters, or this will happen again, and again, and again. One must remember one fact about Northern Europeans, basically the Germanic speaking countries, and that is, that the Germans, Englishmen, Americans, Swedes, and so on, almost never claim to be able to do more than they can actually do.

The Germanic speaking peoples long ago developed a very strong feeling that if you say you can do something, you had damn well better be able to do it, because if you cannot, someone will call your bluff. This too is something built into our cultural history. Usually, if the leaders in Northern Europe or America claim that they can do something, they can do at least twice as much as they claim, because of the idea that one should never show all of his cards, as it were.

On the other hand, the average Middle Eastern leader always claims to be able to do two or three times as much as he actually can, because he lives and dies by the bluff. So long as both participants in an activity are playing the game with the same set of rules, either system works about equally well, but trouble brews when one man is playing one game and the other man is playing the other game---for example, in the case of the bombing of Libya and the death of a young Arab in the United States.

The Middle Easterner reacts as if we were playing the game with their set of rules, and he assumes that we are not able to do nearly what we claim. We often assume that the Middle Eastern leader can do much more than he claims, when in reality he cannot even come close to doing what he claims, because these assumptions are what our respective cultures tell us we should expect.

The bombing of Libya may or may not convince some people just how deadly this game can become, because some leaders will think that this is

a one time threat, a bluff. They will think that we garnered supplies for months in order to pull it off and that it would be difficult to duplicate.

It is virtually impossible for the average Middle Easterner, living as he does with perpetual shortages of almost everything, in remote isolation from the rest of the world, to imagine that the United States could carry out such raids on a daily basis, virtually anywhere in the Middle East, if we felt that it was necessary to our security, but the fact is that we could.

The American military is at the present time, and was when we hit Libya, running on idle, and somehow we have to convince the rest of the world that it is not running full blast, and that it is in the best interest of the Middle East not to cause it to shift into high gear. All of the open discussion in the press and in Washington about the relative strengths of the United States and Russia, which is a normal part of our budgeting process, leads many people to believe that we are very weak.

Europeans, in World War II, could not comprehend the quantities and quality of goods that we shipped to Europe to fight the war, and we did this with very little deprivation on the part of the average American citizen.

The American military establishment, with the support of our industrial complex, and the will of the American people, if angered beyond a certain point, is an unprecedented power.

The devastation leveled against Nazi-controlled Europe and Japan in World War II is minimal compared with the power at the finger tips of the President now, and whoever is running things anywhere in the world should be extremely cautious about angering the average American, because when threatened, Americans fight with only one thing in mind, to win, and if angered beyond a point, they will not listen to the cautions of their leaders.

The problem of availability of resources and shortages brings us logically to the problem of conspicuous consumption. Americans often talk about a conspicuous display of wealth by certain classes of people in the United States, but we don't even know the meaning of the word when we are compared with almost any other people on earth.

I was walking through a park in Japan one day with a student of mine, and we passed under a very large, very beautiful (and, incidentally, extremely expensive) old pagoda. I asked the student, with typical American ignorance, 'What was it used for?' The student looked very puzzled and responded with, 'I don't know, probably it wasn't used for anything at all.' I then asked, 'Why was it built?' She responded quickly with, 'to show the wealth and power of the man who built it.'

In Turkey one day, I was looking across a valley at a cemetery and saw a very beautiful marble building. I asked Cengiz, my friend, what that beautiful building was for. He said it was the tomb of a rich and powerful man. I asked, who was he? My friend this time also looked puzzled by the question and said that he did not know. I said, if you do not know, how do you know that he was rich and powerful? He responded, quite reasonably, that only a rich and powerful man could afford to build such a beautiful tomb.

The act of building elaborate and expensive tombs goes back at least six thousand years in the Middle East to the great pyramids of Egypt, and even in modern Turkey, the tomb of Mustafa Kemal Ataturk is huge. I believe that we could put all of the monuments built for American Presidents in Washington D. C. inside it, except that the Washington monument would stick out the top. This giant edifice was built out of the earnings of a population made up of peasants with an annual income, at the time, of about \$150.00 a year, not a month, not a week, but a year. The purpose of building it was to show the power and wealth of the Turkish nation.

The reason for describing the events above was to show the way that enormous amounts of resources are hoarded by Middle Eastern cultures and expended in one, often irrational burst of enthusiasm, for something. This is conspicuous consumption at its worst, in the eyes of Americans, but it is simply what must be done for most Middle Easterners. It must be done to maintain the honor of one's group, in this case the Turk. Building this enormous tomb was a complete waste of materials, manpower and money by a nation that is critically short on all of these, except manpower, yet it shows what the nation can do.

We must guard against having people in the Middle East believe that the raid on Libya was similar in nature, and that it took us months or years to garner the materials to launch such a raid. Such miscalculations by people,

who see the world in different terms than we do, is the greatest threat to peace on earth.

The openness of our society, and the world's access to all shades of American opinion, shows to the Middle East a country in great disarray, a nation unable to agree on anything.

To take an incident described by a Persian lady, educated in the United States, to illustrate how important appearances are to the average peasant in the region, she says that when she visited a small Persian village to discuss what could be done to modernize it, she was offered tea with sugar in a village home. She took the sugar bowl, which appeared to be full, and attempted to remove a teaspoon of sugar. Immediately under a very very thin layer of sugar was a fake bottom created with a sheet of paper. This made the bowl appear to be full. This was a deliberate attempt to make the family appear to be more rich than it was.

I too have gone into village homes and been fed enormous meals, when food was in short supply. I always felt very guilty, because I knew the financial situation of the families. I knew that they would not eat well for a month after our visit to make up for what they put on the table for me and my family. I would have been much happier if they had only served something that they could easily have afforded, but their family honor demanded that they put on this enormous feed. This, too, demonstrates their ability to garner resources and expend them at an appropriate time on whatever cause they feel is necessary.

Lest you get the wrong idea at this point, I want to emphasize that the people in the Middle East do not understand why they are doing the things that they do, any more than do the people in the United States. These cultural drives are enculturated at a very early age, and people do them because they 'feel' that it is what must be done. Middle Easterners are not dishonest hypocrites, any more than anyone else is a dishonest hypocrite. I describe these events in the hope that we can understand each other and be able to work with each other without so much misunderstanding based on different cultural values.

Why didn't the lady request more sugar, you ask? Because this would have been a challenge to the family, something that would bring their deceit out into the open, which, under certain circumstances, could lead to a family or tribal feud. These traditionally determined reaction patterns

exist in all cultures and are critical to interaction between different cultures. The family members who pretended to have sugar that they did not have were not aware of the values which caused them to do so, but deep down, they felt that they had to do it. Many of the things that all of us do every day are much the same.

Returning momentarily to the idea that one rarely says what he means in the Middle East---If you simply say 'no' when asked to have more food in a Middle Eastern home, you will always be brought more food anyway, because it will be understood that this is a polite refusal, merely a form of courtesy. If you really don't want more food, you must say something to the effect that you are too full to eat any more, or I am finished.

All of this relates to leadership in that we must interpret the actions of Middle Eastern leaders in terms of these values, or if you will, these unconscious drives. Leaders not thoroughly inculcated with western values will practice deceit on a grand scale, because only by so doing can they bring honor to their group. What is done must be understood by the West as an honorable act, and not as a despicable act.

Middle Eastern leaders constantly pretend to have power that they cannot have. They challenge and bluff with absolutely no idea of carrying through with the bluff, and often they have no real idea of the power that they are challenging, because the easy availability of resources and productive capacity in the United States is almost inconceivable to them. Further, they have no reason to believe that that power will actually be turned against them, because we do not appear to be really angry.

Showing open anger is extremely difficult for Germanic speaking peoples, until they almost reach the breaking point, but somehow we must make clear to the leaders of the Middle East exactly how angry our people are becoming with terrorism, and the possible consequences of incurring this anger, or they could trigger World War III.



## CHAPTER VII: What's Reality?

There is one very important factor which Westerners must keep clearly in mind when attempting to interpret the actions of either people or governments in the Middle East. What is natural and what is supernatural is very different in the Middle East and in the West. The ideas about the supernatural have a great deal more control over the everyday lives of people in the Middle East than do similar ideas in the West, despite the resistance of some people to admitting this fact.

American college students always refuse to accept the fact that people from the Middle East really live by many of the beliefs that are common in the area, because these beliefs are so totally at odds with what Americans have been taught to believe from birth. The same is true for the reporters for our national news services, as well as most of the political leaders in Washington.

My favorite example is an event which occurred in one of my classes on the Peoples and Cultures of the Middle East. I was attempting to explain the nature of *Jinn* (Genies in English) for the benefit of the Americans in the class who, of course, did not believe in such creatures.

The Americans looked as if they were thinking, 'What the hell is this nut telling us this garbage for?' and one of the very sophisticated looking Arab students said, 'No one in the Middle East believes in *Jinns* anymore.'

I simply stated that many people that I had known, even well-educated, mature adults in some of the most westernized cities, believed in *Jinns*. The young man still insisted that no one in the Middle East believed in *Jinns* in the 1980's.

At about this point in the discussion, another young Arab, who had just arrived in the United States a few weeks earlier, raised his hand and said, 'I believe in *Jinns*, and in fact everyone I know believes in *Jinns*.' These two boys were from the same country.

Before I had time to interject anything further, a young Arab girl (also from the same country) sitting back in the far corner of the room raised her hand and said, 'Dr. Pierce, I believe in *Jinns*. Everyone in my family believes in *Jinns*, and if you don't mind, I would like to describe the way we drove the *Jinns* out of my sister's house last spring for my term paper.'

At this point I could see the absolute horror and disbelief registered in the faces of all of the American and European students in the class. However, I did not object, and the young lady gave a most interesting account of the rituals that they performed in her sister's home to rid it of some undesirable *Jinns*.

Now, what has all of the above to do with dealing with the leaders of the countries of the Middle East? Surely they don't believe in such things, you say. The problem is that many do, many do not, and many who say they do not are still afraid that supernatural powers must be consulted before doing anything serious.

In one major Middle Eastern capitol, many cabinet ministers consulted fortune tellers prior to voting on all major issues before the Parliament when I was there. Many of them would deny believing in such things, but many would not, and in either case, they usually took what the fortune teller said very seriously when deciding how to vote on the issue.

When attempting to understand the Middle East, most people think of Islam as a formal religion, deriving directly from the words of Mohammed, handed down to us in the Koran. Consequently, they think that everyone believes in some fairly rigid set of rules similar to the Papal edicts for the Catholic Church on birth control or abortion.

In reality this is certainly not the case. From personal experience, I have seen two villages, five miles apart. One of them required marriage within the village and the other one prohibited marriage within the village. When asked, 'why,' people from both villages said that Mohammed had said that they had to do it that way. Yet, he could not have said both. If he said one thing, then he would never have said the other.

The point is that Islam is vastly different things to different people, despite the claims by Moslems that they do not have differences such as those in Christian denominations. The Middle East is vast almost beyond the comprehension of the average western European. Communication has until the last two decades been very slow, erratic, and based almost completely on word of mouth. And illiteracy among the peasants is still astronomical in the area.

In one province in which I attended a party given by the governor and the military commander, the governor told me that his wife was the only female in the province who could read, and very few of the men could even sign their names.

In Turkey in 1955, only forty-five percent of the men could sign their names and less than twenty percent were able to write a letter home. I doubt that those figures have changed much, and I doubt that they are radically different from many other countries in the area, despite great efforts by the central governments to change them.

I , along with Dr. Wrinkle and Dr. Luebke, led a very influential project to develop a mass literacy project in the Turkish military, designed to eliminate illiteracy among males within twenty years.

The program is excellent. It teaches men who have never held a pencil in their hands before (or in many cases, never even seen the written word) to write in less than four months.

The problem is that shortly after the new literates return to their villages they forget how to read because there is nothing in the villages for them to read, and they do not need to read or write to do what they have to do in the village. They need literacy only when they move to the cities and for that brief period that they spend in the Military. In the cities, the literacy rates are much higher.

Why am I talking to you about literacy? Because, in highly illiterate societies, Islam, as a religion, relies almost completely on word of mouth for its transmission from generation to generation and from village to village. As you know, if you have ever attempted to do anything serious through verbal communication, the message rarely gets to its destination in the same form that it left you.

In some villages, even the *Hoca* (the religious leader) was illiterate. He had memorized the Koran in Classical Arabic, without knowing what it meant, really, because he spoke only Turkish. He came home from the seminary to preach to, and to guide, the people in his village. What he actually preached was the traditional cultural values of that village, not Islam as seen by the leaders of the faith in Cairo, Mecca or Damascus.

In Syria, and even in Greece, if you look carefully at the villages, the only way you can tell a Moslem from a Christian village is by noting whether the city has a mosque or a church, as shown by the bell tower or minaret. The cultures, morals and actions of the people are very much alike from the point of view of an outsider, though the Syrian (or Lebanese) Christians do see important differences between themselves and local Moslems. Again, one must emphasize that Islam is many things to many people, exactly as Christianity is many things to many people.

I think at this point that it is necessary to digress just slightly to speak about the relationship between language and culture. The average person has no idea to what extent his daily life is influenced by the grammatical structure of his native language.

The reason for bringing this in at this time is the fact that many Moslems speak Persian, an Indo-European language akin to English. Others speak Turkish, a Turkic language not related in any way to either Persian or Arabic, and of course some speak modern Arabic, a Hamito-Semitic language.

The point is that Turkish is so totally different from Arabic that much that is in the Koran is extremely difficult to translate into Turkish (or for that matter, any non Hamito-Semitic language), in the same way that much of what was in the original Bible, which was written in a Hamito-Semitic language, must have been almost impossible to translate into Greek.

Even translating from Greek into English, two very closely related, and as a result very similar, languages is extremely difficult. I heard a lecture by a devout fundamentalist preacher once in which he discussed some of the problems of translating from Greek into English, and he noted fourteen points on a single page in the book of John which could be translated many different ways, given the situation at the time. Since the translators could not have been in Israel at the time of Christ, they had to guess at which translation was best.

In point of fact, there was no word in the language in which the Bible was originally written which meant 'Virgin,' or so I have been told by experts in Hamito-Semitic languages, and my experience in the area tells me that this is most likely true. Much of the importance attached to Mary in Christianity can be traced directly to the political maneuverings of the

Empress Theodora of Constantinople, because she felt that Catholicism was too much a 'male dominated' religion.

A young girl, since she was still alive, having not been killed for her loss of virginity, must be a virgin must have been the reasoning of the early Bible translators. However, two separate words, one for virgin and one for a young lady who was not a virgin, did not exist in Hamito-Semitic languages. Many Turks laughed uproariously when I tried to tell them that Christians believed that Christ was born of a virgin.

The problems of interpretation, translation and misunderstanding all exist for Islam just as they do in Christianity, especially when translating from Classical Arabic into Turkish, Persian or Kurdish, and to a lesser degree even into modern Arabic.

My reader may still not really understand how language can have anything to do with the problems of understanding the Middle East, but look, just briefly, at the way various types of Christianity are distributed. Virtually all of the Slavic world, that is, those countries where Slavic languages dominate, is Orthodox Catholic. Virtually all of the countries where Romance languages are spoken are dominated by Roman Catholicism. Virtually all of the Germanic speaking world is dominated by Protestantism. Why do you suppose that this is true?

Many linguists feel, after having examined the nature of many languages, that there are certain fundamental values built into the structure of any given language, and that the life of the individual speaking this language is often dominated by these linguistic values.

In broad scope, this is difficult to prove, but just as a simple example, Turkish, in normal conversation, uses the passive voice almost all of the time, and the language is filled with expressions which pass the responsibility from the speaker to someone or something else.

For example, if I come up to a bus stop and ask, 'Has the bus come?' The Turk will respond with a sentence which has no literal equivalent in English at all. The closest I can come to translating what a Turk would say means roughly, 'I don't see any bus, it is past time for the bus to have come, so it must have come.' When he says this, the single Turkish word, *gelmiş*, to an American who knows some Turkish, the American translates

it automatically as, 'The bus has come.' Then five minutes later, when the bus actually does come, the American assumes that all Turks are liars.

The *-miş* suffix, attached to the verb, *gel*, above, which can be affixed to all verbs in Turkish, has no real meaning. It is called a 'quotative,' but even that is misleading. Its real function in the language is to tell the listener that the speaker is in no way responsible for the truth value of what he is going to say. Often it is something he has heard, thus it is called the quotative, that is, he is quoting someone else, but often he is not.

Very often, when Westerners think that Turks are lying, the Turk has inadvertently translated this *-miş* form into the English past tense. He feels then that he is not responsible for the truth or falsity of that statement, and the Westerner feels that he is. There is absolutely no equivalent form in English.

Further, Turks almost never say such things as, 'He washed the dishes,' or 'He drove the car.' What they say literally is, 'The dishes are washed,' or 'The car was driven.' The overwhelming number of sentences that they hear and speak in the course of their lives are in the passive voice, a grammatical form which makes it impossible to know who was at fault or who caused the action.

My reading about the Middle East tells me that the same is true throughout most of the area. The same is true to a somewhat lesser degree for Romance languages, that is, these languages use forms which place no blame on anyone a high percentage of the time. Germanic languages virtually always specify the subject of an action in a sentence. That is, languages such as English, Dutch, German, Swedish, and so on, always specify the culprit who did the action by saying, 'Mr. Johnson washed the dishes,' or 'He washed the dishes,' when it is perfectly clear who did it. My explanation for this is that Germanic speakers feel a compulsion to know 'who done it,' so that they can kill him.

The effect, throughout one's entire life, of having virtually everything stated in the passive voice, leaves the average Middle Easterner feeling that he lives in a world, buffeted by uncontrollable forces against which he is almost helpless. This can be seen in the almost constant use of words such as *Inşallah* and *Maşallah* which are used to protect one from the wrath of God.

A Turkish friend of mine, Colonel Mihtat Celan, always began every sentence, expressing something that we hoped to do in our project, with *Inşallah*, which can be loosely translated, 'if this does not conflict with the will of Allah.' I always said, in a typical Germanic manner, that we could do whatever we intended to do, without reference to any supernatural forces, if we planned properly.

After working with the man for four years, and saying over and over to him that what we needed was careful planning, not reliance on God, one day he said, *Inşallah*. Then he stopped, looked at me and grinned and said, 'No, Dr. Pierce no *Inşallah*. We will do it. We can do it.'

This was a highly educated, extremely intelligent man, but it took him almost four years to realize that if we planned properly, understood the problem, and worked hard, we could do whatever it was we set out to do, or at least we could know what our chances were of success without relying on supernatural forces.

This mode of thought dominates the entire Islamic world. I give you this one little example so that you can understand what I mean by languages dominating our everyday actions.

There is very good reason to believe that such basic thought patterns as those illustrated above are responsible for the break up of Christianity into Orthodox Catholicism, Roman Catholicism, and Protestantism. Christianity barely crossed the Rhine river before it was changed into something quite different from what it had been in the Romance speaking world, because the fundamental tenets on which Roman Catholicism rests are unacceptable to speakers of Germanic languages.

This is not to say that no Germanic speakers could accept it, but rather to say that the fundamental tenets of both Roman or Orthodox Catholicism, which involve giving over responsibility for virtually everything to God, was so foreign to the thought patterns generated in Germanic speakers, that the overwhelming majority of the people simply could not accept the idea that an omnipotent God would run the world in such an irrational fashion. As a result, we have Calvin, Luther and others saying that the Catholic Church was corrupt and that people were directly responsible to God for their actions.

Here again we see the word corrupt, when applied to members of a different type of society, because their ideas of honor, integrity and human interactions were different from those of the Germanic speakers. This is a mistake that we continue to make today in our evaluation of the actions of people from other cultures, that is, people who speak non-Germanic languages for the most part.

Now we must return to the Middle East. Since most of the languages there are radically different from those of the West, we must realize that a lot of what we call corruption, lying, cheating, and so on, are simply the result of differences in our value systems, which to a large extent are derived directly from the basic nature of the grammatical systems of the languages spoken there.

As an example, when I was looking for specialists for a project in the Middle East, several of my close friends asked me to hire their relatives. I asked these people something that to them seemed to be a completely pointless question, 'do your relatives have the proper training to do the job?'

From the point of view of their culture, this did not involve corruption, dishonesty or anything else that was evil. What they were asking was good, honorable and the only course of action possible for them. If they knew of a job that was available, they were honor bound by their moral code to try to get it for a member of their family, because this is the traditional way that families have survived in the Middle East.

As a personal friend, I was honor bound to give the job to their friend, regardless of his qualifications, because he could always learn the job once he was hired, and this is part of the meaning of the word, 'friend.' Further, they believed that if God wanted the job done, it would be done, regardless of whether the man was qualified or not.

What I am trying to get across here is that much of the misunderstanding between people in the West and people in the Middle East stems from value systems that are so totally at odds with each other, that even with the very best of intentions, there is often miscommunication. Americans and Europeans must stop judging the man from the Middle East, even if he is a terrorist in our eyes, in terms of our value system, as if that value system were something universal -- handed down from God.



We teach courses in our universities called the History of Western Civilization, and these courses show the evolution of our value system. There is nothing wrong with this, except that the people who teach these courses teach our youth that people with different value systems are barbarous savages, and while you can believe that if you wish, peoples from Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Africa think that anyone with such a system of values as ours is just a little stupid, or as a Vietnamese friend of mine once said, 'Childish,' at best.

You, as an individual, and Americans as a group, or Europeans as a group, are welcome to have and live by any set of standards that you wish, but if we are ever to deal effectively with the Middle East, we must judge them in terms of their values. Perhaps then we can see why they did what they did in their terms, and then try to do something that will result in their being more cooperative with our goals. If we do not do this, things will just drift along the same path getting worse and worse in the decades to come.

Now, back to the concept of the supernatural in the Middle East. In the West, we are taught from infancy to make a very sharp distinction between those things that everyone can see, feel and hear, as opposed to those things that just some people experience, which cannot be shared.

Some people say that those people who see, hear or smell things that the rest of us don't are crazy, if they are unfriendly, or that they have had a supernatural experience, if one happens to be sympathetic.

One of the basic points in dealing with the Middle East is to remember that the people in the Middle East do not make this sharp distinction.

The example about *Jinns* given above was just one of many that I could have given. It was meant to illustrate the fact that these things are for people who live in the Middle East a part of the real world, and that they consider many such things to be in no way supernatural. *Jinns* exist on a slightly different plane than do human beings, but they do exist, and they are around all the time doing some unusual things, such as playing tricks on people.

My students often comment, 'There are superstitious people everywhere, and those people in the Middle East are no different from us.'

But the fact is that they are, in their everyday actions, very different from us. In Ankara one morning the lady next door came screaming out the front door of her home. She was the wife of a very important man in the parliament, not some uneducated, superstitious peasant. My wife ran down to see what the problem was, and she said, 'She's put olive oil on my door.'

'So what?' my wife thought. So she asked why that was a problem.

This lady believed absolutely that her husband had a girlfriend, and that the girlfriend had smeared olive oil on the door facing in their home.

Why is this a problem? Because if a lady does this, the first male who walks through the door will fall madly in love with the lady who placed the oil there. The wife was deathly afraid of losing her husband.

Another similar incident involved a very well-educated lady who had traveled extensively abroad. One day I went over to her apartment to see her. As I came in the front door, her mother said that the lady I wanted to see was in the kitchen. When I went there, she was sitting on a high stool, draped in a sheet. An old lady from a nearby village was pouring melted lead into a pan of water over her head.

The mother explained that the lady had been depressed, and that throwing the lead into the water would carry away the depression. She pointed to the steam with the comment that the depression was being carried away in the mist. The point is that everyone in the room, except me, actually believed this, and again, I am not talking about illiterate peasants but a well-educated, well-traveled lady from the upper classes. The lady told me that she knew that a lot of people, meaning Western people, did not believe in this, but that it worked. It probably does work. But it works for the same reason that much psychological treatment works; the person needed attention more than anything else, and she got it.

Still another such example involves men with great power in the Middle East. I sat one entire afternoon (in what was supposed to be an important decision making meeting) listening to a group of Generals and Full Colonels discussing the problem of whether there were women in Heaven or not, and whether or not a group of Air Force men who had died in the recent crash of a military aircraft were guaranteed entry into Heaven.

These men were all well-educated and powerful, as seen in their ranks, and many of them had traveled outside their home country, but they rarely spoke to anyone who did not belong to their ethnic group. I was an exception because of my position at the time.

I also became very close friends with some of them, and they were dead serious in their discussion. This was not just something that they were considering academically or as party conversation.

Why am I telling you all of this? Because the driving force behind virtually all actions in the Middle East revolve around their religious beliefs. Islam is the way to Heaven, and getting to Heaven is far more important than anything on this earth.

One of the greatest causes of misunderstanding between Middle Easterners and Westerners is the fact that in the West, particularly in the Germanic speaking countries, that is, England, the USA, Sweden, Holland, Norway and Germany, we are — in the last half of the twentieth century — concerned with improving the standard of living of the less developed people around the world. That is, we are concerned with the material welfare of people on earth.

No country has a monopoly on this. The vast majority of people in all of the above listed countries, as well as many others in Europe, are concerned with improving the quality of life on this earth right now. This is difficult for most Middle Easterners to understand, because they often say that this life is very short but eternity is forever. You can find this in the writings of many experts on the area, as well as, in the writings of many people who live there.

A fundamental difference between the West and the Middle East is the emphasis on the here and now in the West and an emphasis on the hereafter in the Middle East.

Most of my friends in the Middle East gave to the poor, because the giving of alms is one of the pillars of Islam. However, when they gave, they gave much less than I did, even when they had vastly more money than I did.

I gave because I did not want to see that person suffer, and I tried to give him enough to carry him through his troubles for a while, so that at least for a day or two he would not suffer from hunger or cold.

Most of my local friends gave a very small amount, and they did not give because of any feeling of pity for the person, but rather they gave because giving to the poor is a religious obligation to God.

If they were to get into Heaven, they must give, but they do not do it in order to raise up the poor to a more comfortable level of life. However, to raise the person to a more comfortable level of life was the only reason that I gave.

The above example illustrates graphically one of the fundamental differences in the values of the two regions. Even when my friends were quite rich, they often gave the equivalent of a few pennies.

I assume that many different people have many different reasons for giving. However, Westerners are usually not absolutely sure that there will be a hereafter, and giving has nothing to do with getting into Heaven, if such a place exists.

The important thing to keep in mind is that people in the West are driven to improve the standard of living on earth of people in the developing nations, not for selfish reasons, but because of a basic feeling about humanity. This is a part of our tradition.

Is this good and what they do bad?

Absolutely not!

Both reactions are merely the end product of a historical tradition, but if we are ever to live and work together in peace and harmony, we had better each understand the nature of the values which drive the other.

Once I was asked to write a chapter for a book to be edited by two Arab scholars. I wrote up a chapter on the fundamental values of the Middle East as accurately as I possibly could. The chapter was then refused, not on the grounds that it was inaccurate, but on the grounds that such information could not be put into the hands of ethnocentric American college students.

The point of the editors was to make Americans sympathetic to the point of view of people in the Middle East, but without regard for the truth.

My point is that to deal with each other we do not need sympathy; we need facts, and any relationship must be based on truth and accuracy. Otherwise, we will continually misjudge the actions of each other, and there will be no understanding, because understanding and sympathy are totally different things.

No matter how you slice it (to use a colloquialism from my childhood), and no matter what the person from the Middle East says about his beliefs, if you observe his behavior and the conversations that he has with his friends behind closed doors, you will see that his approach to life is totally and objectively different from what you will see in the West. He does not make the extremely sharp distinction between what is natural and what is supernatural that we make in the West. Behind his every action is some thought or feeling about something that we would consider a part of the supernatural.

People continually ask me, 'How can you say that'?'

What I mean is very clear and very objective. While living in the Middle East, I saw someone almost every day change what he was doing because of something that Westerners would consider to be a part of the supernatural, such as a *Jinn*. For example, they would dress their children in dirty, ragged clothing to keep the *Jinns* from stealing their souls, and Westerners couldn't understand why the children were so neglected. It was not neglect. It was a purposeful, caring act.

Living in the United States and visiting Europe on several occasions over many more years than I lived in the Middle East, I have never, I repeat NEVER, seen a European change the course of the actions in his daily life for supernatural reasons.

I have been citing experiences from the upper classes. Now, I would like to give at least one example concerning illiterate peasants.

You must keep in mind that the peasants are the majority of the people in the area, and all leaders must play the game within their rules. In fact, one day in one of my classes several Arab students attempted to convince the American students that the King was a slave of the people, and in a very real sense, they were right.

In one of the literacy classes in Turkey, we spent an entire afternoon attempting to get across the idea that germs are real and that germs cause disease. We could not get them to believe what we were saying until we brought in a microscope and had them look at what they thought was clear water through the lens.

The problem was that these young men, all about twenty years of age, firmly believed that illness was a punishment from God for sin. As a result, it was very difficult to get them to take necessary precautions for their health.

In the course of our classes we finally convinced them, at least on an overt level, that sickness was caused by germs. However, they still believed that, since everyone was exposed to the germs and not everyone got the disease, one caught the disease because of some sin he or one of his relatives had committed.

Here again we see family responsibility, even in the eyes of Allah. The sins of the father are visited on the sons for seven generations. This is something not quoted in jest in the Middle East.

Even after the young men in our literacy classes had learned all about germs, they still did not take the precautions which would have insured that there was absolutely no possibility of their getting the disease. They really believed that if it were the will of Allah, they would get the disease anyway. People like the western-educated doctors were trying to thwart the will of God in their attempts to keep the soldiers healthy, and no one could thwart the will of Allah.

I cite the above incidents not to make fun of people, but to attempt to show how a slightly different view of reality can make all the difference in the world in what one actually does each day, especially in a crisis situation.

If you really believe deep down in your soul (if you have one) that the only really important things that we know, as most people with European backgrounds generally believe, are what we experience here on earth, then you will not be able to understand the reactions of Middle Easterners who not only do not think of this as the only possibility, they hardly consider it at all.

When I worked there for several years, I did not understand any of the things that I have put into this book, at least not during the first three or four years, and I could not understand why the natives with whom I worked did not take our developmental plans more seriously. Often they listened to us, and they admitted that what we said sounded good, but when it came to putting these plans into practice, they made a lethargic attempt, watched the plan fail and blamed it on Fate.

The real problems had nothing to do with fate or the plans, but rather the fact that the people responsible for carrying them out felt, deep down in their innermost spirit, that what will be will be.

I felt that Colonel Celan's statement, 'No, Dr. Pierce, no *Inşallah*, we will do it,' was an admission that he had finally become convinced, after four years of working with me, that if we planned properly, we could do virtually anything, and that the failures in the Middle East rarely had anything to do with God or His will, but rather had to do with the lack of planning and the absence of any real belief that things that had never been done before really could be done.

As I watch the news each day on TV or read about things in the newspapers, I see the every move of peoples in the Middle East misjudged, misinterpreted and reacted to in an inappropriate manner over and over again.

The reporters and government leaders in the West interpret the actions of people in the Middle East as if they were controlled and directed by the same set of values that we believe in, and they are not.

Their view of the world is totally different from ours, and we absolutely must interpret what they do in terms of their values, if we are ever to understand them. We must understand them if we are to deal effectively with them on a day to day basis.

It would be nice if they understood us too, and some of them do, but I cannot explain to them what our problems are nearly as well as I can explain to you what their problems are, because I cannot be objective about our beliefs. I grew up with them, and they are a part of the fiber of my soul.

## CHAPTER VIII: What Now?

To summarize the main points in this book just briefly, one must interpret the actions of any person from the Middle East in terms of his concept of his honor and that of his family. Middle Eastern men do what they do almost inevitably because it is the honorable thing to do, no matter what you think or how you judge the action we must understand this and attempt to stop ourselves from damaging the honor or good name of those we deal with from the area---something that we in the West rarely even think about---or we will never be able to deal with them.

We must also realize that in the Middle East a man does not ever act alone. He believes in group responsibility, and if an American does something dastardly to an Arab, all Americans are to blame for it.

There are no innocent bystanders. Everyone belonging to a group is responsible for the actions of every member of that group, and the killing of an American on a cruise ship or an airplane is a just punishment against our group.

We will never be able to catch terrorists as individuals, because they will be helped by so many people all over the world. Like it or not, we simply must punish the group that is responsible for supporting the guilty party, or we will never be able to prevent terrorism, because those are the rules of the game in the Middle East. As you may have noticed, groups in the Middle East usually are quick to claim responsibility, whether or not they did the deed, because this demonstrates their ability to strike.

We must also realize that people in the Middle East expect us to assign the responsibility for an act to the group to which the individual who commits the act belongs. If we do not punish the group, this gives them an incentive to do harmful things to us again, be it the acts of terrorists or whatever.

We must also understand that the leaders in the Middle East are controlled much more by their peoples than we think they are.

Barth's comment that the leader listens to the people and then runs to get out ahead of them to lead them where they were going in the first place is a perfect characterization of much that happens in the area.



When dealing with a leader, we must understand that he usually does not really lead, in the sense that we think of leading. He follows. We must attempt to make it easy for him to follow. We must not make it difficult for him by accusing him of all sorts of terrible things and attempting to pull the rug out from under him because he does not live up to our standards of morality.

The best example of this that I know of in recent history was the misguided attacks by the western press on the Shah of Iran, and even an idiot can see the terrible effects that this has had on the people in that country. If we had encouraged him to slow down, not push our kinds of reforms so fast, that country would still be a prosperous, progressing country, not to mention the fact that it would still be our friend, and a lot of the terrorism that we worry about would not be occurring.

The morality of these leaders is just different from ours, not lower or worse. And finally, their thinking is always colored by the vision of life after death. Often they do not really comprehend that our only serious thoughts are about improving the lot of mankind here and now on earth. Very often this is not even thought to be a worthy goal from their point of view, because the world is the way it is because Allah wants it to be that way.

I hope that this little book will serve some useful purpose. I know, as a social scientist, that almost never, when we attempt to be as objective as we possibly can about human behavior, do we win any friends. Usually, when we attempt to get people to understand each other and get along with each other in a more realistic manner, we end up being hated by both sides, because almost everyone on earth sees the world through a different set of glasses, and few even attempt to see it objectively. Everyone thinks that his set of values are the only human values worthy of mention and that anyone who doesn't live up to his standards is some sort of bum.

No one wants to admit that his view is not the only view.

In the West we insist that Christianity is the only religion; that individual responsibility is the only rational approach to life; that this life is the only life, and it is the thing that we must concentrate on; that war is inherently evil; and that absolute values such as truth, honesty and so on are the only way to approach life.

People in the Middle East insist that making a society work is the only way to approach life; that group responsibility is the only way to make society work; that this life is short and the life after death lasts forever, and we must concentrate on that; that war is neither good nor bad but merely a means to an end; and that only a fool would hold to absolute values.

To the Middle Easterner whether a thing is right or wrong depends on the situation. Whatever is best, in terms of his set of values, in a given situation, is right.

In the last two paragraphs I have listed just a few of the many contradictions existing in the views of the world as seen through the eyes of the Westerners and as seen through the eyes of a Middle Easterner. Somehow we have to bridge this great chasm, or we will simply spend the next thousand years killing each other, and the West has the power to kill a lot more people from the Middle East than the Middle Easterners have to kill people in the West.

However, it behooves all of us to try to understand each other and not assume the other guy is a dishonorable, dishonest slob with whom we do not want even to talk.

We absolutely must talk. We must empathize, and we must compromise, but we must also gauge our action so that it does not look as if we are weak or fearful, because if we do, the leaders in the Middle East will be grossly misled. Miscalculations of this sort caused World War II, and they could just as easily cause World War III. I know of no place on earth where this type of miscalculation is more likely to occur, nor where such a miscalculation could have more serious consequences than in the Middle East.

If you think that we do not understand Russia, you are grossly misinformed, because Americans and Russians think almost exactly alike. We have the same cultural background. We speak similar languages, and at least one scholar has said that the problems between Americans and Russians are a result of the fact that our value systems are so much alike. We feel and react the same way, but we have decided on different courses of action to better the condition of mankind, and that is the core of our problem. We are not constantly failing to react to a real situation. There is relatively little danger of miscalculations, similar to those I have attempted

to illustrate in this book, occurring between the United States and the Soviet Union, because our basic view of the world is so similar.

In the Middle East the situation is the opposite. Westerners think and act very differently from the way the people in that area do. We rarely have even the foggiest ideas about why they are doing what they are doing, and the same is true of them when they evaluate the things that we are doing. Miscalculations as to the intent and ability of the other side are made daily in the West and the Middle East. It is time that we made a serious attempt to change this before it does indeed set off a third world war.