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WHEN THE FUTURE BECOMES THE PAST, or,
THE RETURN-to-the-PAST MOVEMENTS IN 1986
The Greatest Threat in Today's World

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For: The Washington Week in Review Book
Warner Books

It was the cold, snowy December of 1978, and an unsuspecting but infinitely vulnerable world was about to begin turning in its axis around such an unlikely spot as the little French village of Neauphle-le-Chateau, only 80 miles from Paris. The Ayatollah Khomeini of Persia---the type of Old Testament religious autocrat that most "rational" Westerners could not believe still existed---had taken up brief but revealing residence there before going back to Iran to overthrow the West's great friend, the Shah of Iran.

That December day, Khomeini, just "out" in the West for the first time after 15 years of exile in the holy Shiite city of Najaf in Iraq, sat impassively before me on a Persian rug in a small and equally unlikely empty French summer house.

"Yes," this hoary character was saying of the "revolution" that already had started between his fanatically religious

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followers and the Shah, "we consider this war as a holy war, and by that we mean for the sake of Islam and for the sake of God and for the liberty of our people. That is why it is a holy war, and it will continue until the abdication of the Shah, the eradication of the monarchy and the end of foreign domination of our affairs and the establishment of an Islamic Republic."

During the hour-long interview, Khomeini sat totally and unnaturally still. He stared, his eyes never blinking or flickering, at a space between his aide, Ibrahim Yazdi, and me as though he were indeed staring at some vision that we could not fathom. He had entered the room---and soon he left it---as though he were some great black moth floating in and out of space.

One had to rub one's eyes to believe that this surreal scene, one that could have been out of the "1,001 Nights" of ancient Baghdad, were quite real. (One problem was that I could not even rub my eyes since the Iranians had insisted I wear the black robe or chador over my blonde head!)

As it turned out, Khomeini WAS staring at a very special vision. The odd thing was that his "vision" was not to carry his people forward in time; it was not to educate them and free them from poverty, pain, hunger and war; it was not to modernize his impoverished ancient land.

No. Instead, his "vision" was to carry his people backwards: to some totally pure and perfect Islamic past that he places historically around the 7th century! This, of course, was the golden age of Islam. To carry him back to it, his perfervid followers

soon were to claim that he was the "Hidden Imam" of Shiism who

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had been hidden in a cave for over 1,000 years---it was this "Hidden Imam's" return that would presage the new golden age. It was also Khomeini's return to Iran which would set in motion forces of such power---hundreds of thousands of black-clad Iranians, fists raised, marching into soldiers firing machineguns---that within months virtually all Western influence would be driven from the very Iran that the Shah had set up as "the" inner circle of Westernization in Central Asia.

Covering something like Khomeini and Khomeinism---something we had never seen or dreamed of before, at least in our rational and pragmatic times---presented those of us who were trying to be serious and responsible correspondents with extraordinary and unexpected problems for which there were no guides and no guidebooks.

Because ancient Persia had been overrun so many times by virtually all the nations and tribes around them, the Persian Shiites had developed as a kind of tenet of their religion not only the right but the duty to "dissimulate." To simplify, this meant to lie to the infidel in the service of the faith.

I knew or at least sensed that Khomeini was lying to me when he told me that Iran, under him, would be a democracy and that women would have full "rights." But how do you explain that you think this chap you are interviewing seated on a Persian rug in a big black robe with his sinister eyes fixed on the horizon was most probably lying? How do you then speculate that it is because of what the Mongols did destroying the great Persian

Empire in the 12th century?

Be that as it may, the reality is that Khomeinism has become if not "the" problem of the 1980s, certainly one of the two or three problems. He has reestablished the ancient Islamic law in a

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rapidly modernizing Iran. He has established a theocratic state. Most important for the rest of the world, he has systematically and with extraordinary passion rocked the borders of states as near as neighboring Iraq and as far away as Malaysia and Indonesia. And---in 1986, he still wages a bitter and ancient war with neighboring Iraq in which more than 1 million have died.

King Hussein of Jordan told me after the Iraqi-Iranian war began in 1980 that he could imagine no more "sinister" threat to moderation in the Middle East than the breakdown of borders---through the Khomeini-sponsored ancient form of Shiite subversion --that Khomeini so avidly sponsored.

But, very well, you might say, yes, Khomeinism IS a strange and ominous development; but it also IS restricted to the Middle East. It is a very particularist response of a special and historically paranoid people---the Persian Shiites---against Western influence in its country. It is interesting, but mostly as a human and geopolitical aberration.

Unfortunately---most unfortunately---Khomeinism is no aberration. It is the tip of the iceberg (to use a faraway Arctic metaphor) of a phenomenon that is occurring across the world. To mention only some of the most dramatic and some of the increasingly noticeable ones, there is the Sendero Luminoso (The "Shining Path") in Peru, the radical Sikh movement in the Punjab in Northern India, the radical Islamic cults in Egypt whose leadership assassinated Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and who remain a threat to the secular Egyptian state, the Jewish militants on the West Bank in Israel and and even some extreme fundamentalist Christians in America and Europe.

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I call them the "Return-to-the-Past Movements" because I don't know a better title for what they are trying to do---and, increasingly, what they ARE doing.

Think of the last two American presidencies. Most analysts pretty much agree that it was the Iranian hostage crisis---and President Jimmy Carter's too-patient response to the seemingly unending ordeal---which sealed his reelection hopes. Most analysts also would agree, I think, that the greatest challenge to President Ronald Reagan was the eerily related hostage crisis in 1985 in Beirut, when Americans on the TWA flight were held by Lebanese Shiite militiamen inspired by--who else?---the Ayatollah Khomeini.

At the same time, hopes for peace in the Middle East were being torn apart by the attempts by the Shiites literally to tear down the borders of Western-leaning countries like Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States---by 1986, they were all fighting for their lives. Within Israel itself, rational Israelis' hopes for peace were being destroyed by their own radicals who wanted to return to a territorial Israel of 1,900 years ago. Once pro-Western Lebanon...also was Khomeini-ized.

The Reagan administration, like any administration of "practical" and "no-nonsense" tough men, was thinking on its front burner over relations with the Soviets and of conventional warfare. Yet, in case after case, what our men and women in power were actually REACTING to was the sinister chaos of these new

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and thoroughly unknown and unanalyzed movements whose self-righteous violence was wracking the senses of the world. The Reagan administration, which never paused for a minute to analyze what had happened to it in the tragedy and disgrace of those Marines killed in Lebanon against Return-to-the-Past Shiites, remained fixed on nuclear war and arms control talks. Yet, across the world, the sanity and the structures of the world were being strained by maddened movements all of whom gained their sure inner power through their assurance they were returning to a perfect past.

It should not be missed that that meant--and means--utterly and ruthlessly destroying the relativity of the present.

While the men in power --and I must say, the structured Western male mind, in all its rationality and pragmatism--were ignoring these developments in part because they simply could not understand at all the dynamics of what was happening in these societies and in their minds), there was an occasional voice of concerned wonder.

Ronald Reagan's feisty and unorthodox Amb. to the United Nations in his first term, Jeane Kirkpatrick, perhaps BECAUSE she was an unorthodox thinker, expressed her concern that American policy was simply not even beginning to address these themes so crucial to our times. In an interview in her handsome U.N. office

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on Dec. 19, 1984, She told me thoughtfully and worriedly, "Most of our planning is only marginally relevant to what is really taking place."

When I asked her why, she went on, saying, "Thinking about both political and military problems, there is always a powerful tendency to be governed by what was. It is the Maginot Line complex. The Power of Conventional Thinking. The conventional management of conventional realities tends to obscure the past. In the present, the baggage of conventional thinking about the continuum of events from the Vietnams to the world wars, I think tends to obscure realities of the unconventional challenges with which we find ourselves faced."

What, then, if America did not, still, come to understand the unconventional, the irregular and (finally) the unthinkable?

"Either we have to, or we fail," she answered simply.

A high American intelligence official, who cannot be named also expressed to me the intelligence community's just beginning concern with the unconventional, the irregular and the unthinkable.

"We ... share your concern regarding the threat posed by demographic shifts, illegal migration, the risk of irregular warfare and the revolutions of 'The Return to the Past' and are actively seeking to improve our expertise in these areas," he told me. "For example, we now have two analytic groups devoted solely to studying the root causes of political instability and insurgency in the Third World.

"Perhaps the greatest challenge before us now is to explore

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how these new social forces are likely to bring about dramatic change in the current political and social order. You mentioned that 100 or more political, social, religious and ethnic groups are organized militarily and threaten 52 sovereign states. Which of these groups are most likely to launch the next revolution? More important, how exactly would they go about it?"

He was referring to some figures on irregular warfare that I had dug out that are closely related to the Return-to-the-Past movements. For instance, by 1984---at a time when America's political and military leaders were obsessed by the dangers of nuclear war and were still busily building up enormous conventional military machines, under a huge defense budget---it was already clear that that type of military machine correlated only negatively (as in Lebanon) to the reality of conflict in this new world. some key figures:

By 1984, there were 40 wars raging across the globe. They involved 45 different "nations" or, to be more exact, "entities" of various forms. Of the 80 wars that began after 1945, only 28 took the traditional form of fighting between the regular armed forces of two or more states. Forty six percent were civil wars, insurgencies or guerrilla contests, with the remaining six being riots and coups d'etat. U.N. Secy. General Javier Perez de Cuellar, one of the world leaders most eloquent on the threat of these new non-national or post-national movements, called the syndrome abroad in the world the "new anarchy" and he characterized it as "armed force, both overt and covert, used and increasingly justified as a legitimate means of obtaining national objectives.

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There were many kinds of irregular movements and many kinds of armies. There were Marxist guerrilla movements in Central America and elsewhere and there were street gangs and death squads who bore no resemblance to the Return-to-the-Past movements. But the important point was that, of all the violence in the world, the single most violent and threatening type of group were the Return-to-the-Pasters.

Why this should be is not, when one analyzes it, so surprising or so difficult to understand. Perhaps the phenomenon, certainly not new to history, was explained most sensitively by the great 20th century Mexican philosopher, Leopoldo Zea. "The beginning to begin as if nothing had been done...normally appears in times of crises or great disillusionment. In this way, man thinks that he can elude the compromises that his situation in the world has imposed upon him. Instead of devoting himself to the difficult but not impossible task of untangling his situation, he prefers to escape and to take no cognizance of the complex conditions.

"He then begins to imagine worlds without complications, worlds without previous history, worlds in which each individual can begin to realize his history as he would have it. Or, these worlds appear as virgin worlds in which everything is still to be done and thus full of possibilities. In short, they seem to be utopias, which are ideal states, or utopias in which everything

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is yet to be created."

Still, even given this historic search of man in all cultures, religions and times to exercise the utopian yearning and to create utopias (sometimes related to the purity of the past and sometimes, as Communism, related to a supposedly perfect future), how can we analyse what is happening today and why. Why are these Return-to-the-past movements and impulses breaking forth all across the globe, and in countries and in situations that would seem to have little or nothing in common? Could one make sense of them? Can one deal with them? What sense, if any at all, did they make in what we still assume paradoxically to be the "nuclear age?"

Actually, what has happened is quite understandable when one looks at the whole phenomenon historically.

The post-World War II period saw the massive and hemorrhagic breakup of the great colonial empire of the European powers. But often--although it was not so obvious at the time--the former entities were broken up into only supposedly modern "nation-states." In truth, these entities soon would come to be seen as quite simply unnatural for peoples who still thought of themselves in terms of tribes, of clans, or religions or even of islands. At the same time, the Great Powers' ability to "keep peace in the world broke down because the industrialized nations were themselves psychologically and structurally fragile on the inside.

The first class of post-colonial leaders in the Third

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World---The "Bung" Sukarnos of Indonesia, the Gamal Abdul Nassers of Egypt, the Jawaharlal Nehrus of India---simply assumed that progress would follow, as night the day, after independence. It was only the colonial masters who had held these peoples back.

Only that was not what happened. In the first age in the history of mankind where virtually ALL peoples (or, at least, their leadership groups) suddenly believed that they could throw away the shackles of the fatalism of the past and "progress," the fact was that most of them did not. It was really quite simple, if sad.

They did not have modern work habits, they did not have societal organizations appropriate for the creation of wealth and the care of it and they did not have the all-necessary Judeo-Christian or Confucial work ethic. It was not at all unnatural that, in their disappointment and frustration over "modernization," leaders and peoples would in different ways decide that the fault lay in the fact that, along the way when they were lusting over the new God of "progress," they had turned their backs on their past gods. Now they would return to the past---or try to---and they would beg its pardon with a vengeance.

One of the best analysts I have found of this inevitable consequence is Sherif Latfy, an Egyptian developmentalist who is the leading advisor to the Sultan of Oman, a country which is progressing with unusual wisdom and foresight. "The 'thing' will always be there," Latfy told me one day, sitting in his simple office in the picturesque old capital of Muscat. The 'thing' was the imbalance that came, inexorably, when countries put

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themselves into this kind of pressure cooker of social change.

"If it were not 'Islam,' it would be called something else," he went on. "It is simply something that comes with modern life. The frustration becomes bigger in the developing countries. You find people are frustrated with change---or without it. The more development you do, the more frustrated people become. Hundreds of years ago, noone knew what development was or what life in the U.S. was. The more development, the more impossible life becomes.

"what do you do? There is no economic solution to it. I can say, in many cases, what the world should have done, but no matter what you do, there often is no fixed answer. How to go through the transitional period? Noone really knows."

Then he leaned back in his chair in his office and ruminated over the violent Islamic fundamentalists who had killed Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. "Look at those men," he said. "They were the people brought to school by the government---so naturally they are going to blame the government for everything."

The other man whom I have found who best interpreted what happened to the individual soul in these countries when faced by the impossible challenge (or is it really a threat?) of modernization---a modernization usually represented by the United States---was the late psychoanalyst who is often called the successor to Freud, Dr. Heinz Kohut of Chicago. Speaking of the particular Iranian experience, which is so key to all the Return-to-the-Past experiences, Kohut told me;

"The specifics of that tension arise from the attempt to change a national/cultural/religious 'self' into something that seems not to be it. People in various Islamic countries, for

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instance, were clearly repressed and backward. They were clearly living a demeaning kind of existence leading to low self-esteem.

"Then came the Shah in Iran, Ataturk in Turkey, Nasser in Egypt. In order to make their people more capable of self-respect, the message is 'Modernize!' But if the changes made are made abruptly, within one or two generations, that threatens the continuity of the ethnic self. It is much like the individual self. We were once children--then adolescents--then mature adults. When a person feels discontinuous, that is a terribly painful feeling. You do not hang together. People will do almost anything to avoid that.

"What happens when it is not within the capacity of people to change is that they want to overthrow those who forced them to move. Change is experienced as an agent of someone else. Discontinuity arouses tremendous anxiety. So when someone comes like Khomeini or Yasser Arafat, with something of a 'new world,' there is a sense of tremendous healing. They will do anything for it, so long as the sense of continuity is reestablished.

"Then there is a degree of sadism that is mobilized--give them (the foreign agents of change) a dose of that medicine that they inflict on others. They feel shamed by us, so they need to shame us. And they know that they can have tremendous power over us, because they are at that stage of development where their goals are compatible with dying. Ours are not. We can't say we'll do the same to you.

"We are at a totally different stage of selfhood in dealing with them."

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Then he summed up what the West---really just be existing as "the" example of the "modernization" that was so hounding these peoples from one end of the globe to the other---implicitly has done to the poor and struggling countries: "We took a picture of their poverty."

Lest anyone think ("dream" would be a better verb) that these movements end with Khomeini or are about to wither away into the sun of modern times, here are some key examples of the "Return-to-the-Past" movements all around us and some of the crucial dynamics that led to each one:

---It was Miami in July, 1984. Perry Rifkind, the director of the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service there, was talking about the floods of peoples from other countries who were pouring into the U.S. illegally through his state. Suddenly, he paused and said, without any particular emphasis, "And then there are the Sikhs...."

Sikhs? Bearded religious Sikhs from the prosperous Punjab in northern India? Sikhs who believe in a religious that is a unique mixture of Hinduism and Islam?

"Yes," he went on, obviously puzzled, "they have been coming in for the last two years. We've apprehended hundreds of them. They come through a network that gets them through the British Commonwealth countries easily and eventually to the Bahamas. From there, it is easy for them to come here illegally by boat."

Then he paused and shook his head. "It is odd," he summed up. "Most of them have been behind the Iron Curtain, some of them

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for some time. Most of them have a lot of money---five, ten thousand dollars. Some have testified to us that they were told by the Sikh movement to go underground in California, where there is a big Sikh community, and to wait for orders...."

What had happened was that the Sikh independence movement in the Punjab---which then went on to assassinate Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, moderate Sikh leaders and many others and to plan to assassinate her successor, Rajiv Gandhi, while he was in Washington---had relocated in the United States and Canada. And this movement, whose radical leaders want an independent state, dream of that state in spiritually irredentist terms--they dream of returning to the sacred Sikh past.

It was only when, in June, 1985, those radical Sikhs were accused of killing 329 people by detonating a bomb in an Air-India plane, that I began to look into this fascinating, ominous and strangely untold story. I found incredible materials and from all sides. I found that that spring, 35 Indian Sikhs had been apprehended in (of all places!) Houston, trying to slip through with illegal (of all countries!) Dutch passports. They were sent back.

I found that, yes indeed, most of the radical Sikhs had been trained behind the Iron Curtain: in the U.S.S.R., in Bulgaria, in Poland, Yugoslavia and Cuba. I found that the new Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi knew this and that it was most definitely cooling his warm relations with the Soviets. And I found a pattern not at all unlike the patterns of kindred movements in Iran, Egypt or even Turkey.

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What led to the Freudian death of Indira, "India's mother," and perhaps began to presage the long-prophesied and feared (by Mahatma Gandhi, among many others) disintegration of the subcontinent that is India was actually quite clear and typical. First, secularized lifestyles had been spreading among the young Sikhs. More and more young men were shaving off their sacred beards and refusing to wear the Sikh turbans.

In trying to salvage their interests in a time of feared changes, the traditional clergy reacted by trying to ignite a new fundamentalism. However, their efforts--and even those of the once-radical Independence Party, the Akali Dal--soon were overshadowed by ultraradical Sikhs led by the ferocious Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale. When he and his men took over the sacred Golden Temple, they made it into a sanctuary for murderers and terrorists who could not there (they thought) be touched.

Instead, Indira had her troops scourge them out of the temple. Attempted negotiations between the central government and the moderate Sikhs had long been broken off, poisoned by the deliberately planned excesses of the radicals. Indira was assassinated. Once again, the acts of fanatics were able to overwhelm and control the acts of moderates and thus destroy the center!

And the Soviet interest? Ah, there is the mystery. There is no question at all about the training. AND that is in Soviet style, even with "friends." It could be a warning to India not to move too far Westward in its thinking and loyalties. Or---it could be the first step in the Soviet-backed but locally inspired attempt to break up the subcontinent!

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---In 1980, a hitherto unknown and unexpected movement burst upon always schizphrenic Peru, a physically glorious country divided still in its soul between the descendants of the great Inca Empire and the descendants of the brutal and greedy Spanish Conquistadores who destroyed that empire in the 16th century. By the time a dynamic and young new President was inaugurated in 1985, the Aprista Party's Alan Garcia, Peru was a traumatized and close-to-destroyed country.

The reason was a movement that appears, still, to be sui generis and not connected in any dramatic way even with Cuban, Russian or Chinese influence. They call the movement the Shining Path (Sendero Luminoso, in Spanish), the name coming from Lenin's description of Communism. The movement, which started around a remote university in the historic city of Ayacucho where the great battle for the independence of Latin America was fought by the great Bolivar in 1824.

The movement actually was started at the National University, a colonial university of Ayacucho that was newly reopened after being closed for 80 years. The Marxist professor who led it, the charismatic Abimael Guzman Reynoso, a philosophy teacher, as early as 1962 had sent some students to Cuba for training. At that time, this nucleus of the group was more Chinese-oriented than anything and they were definitely oriented for the long term. Then, in 1980, they came to the fore in murderous and sanguinary ways that make them comparable only to Cambodia's Khmer Rouge, which in power killed upwards of 3

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million or half of the Cambodian population.

Not only did they burn ballot boxes to show their disdain for democracy, they hung dogs from the lampposts of Lima and Ayacucho against, ironically, that revisionist "dog," the Chinese leader Deng Xiaoping. Then they began to kill. They bombed, they caused massive power blackouts. They went into villages and wiped out Indians, repeating centuries of terror. And the confused and terrified government responded with their own killings. The country turned into a kind of national terror.

Why should this have come in a Peru that had already tried a number of "paths" that were supposed to lead to more democracy and to greater participation of the "marginalized" sectors? The answer, ironically again, seems to be BECAUSE Peru had tried. As the American diplomat and writer, Prof. David Scott Palmer, who taught in Ayacucho in the formative years of the early 1960s has written:

"The major effect of the changes within Peru over the past forty years...was to bring into the national system a much larger proportion of the total population. That means that the vast majority of Peruvian citizens are now in a position to make demands on the system--and do so. A government's staying power is thus increasingly dependent on its ability to respond to the concerns of the PERuvian citizenry."

The demand had been created and was there---that devil of the new demand for "progress" and for modernization---but the Peruvian government, like so many other governments, simply could not satisfy it. Peru went through, 1.) democracy in the early 1960s, 2.) a leftist reformist military regime from 1968 on, 3.)

democracy again in the late 1970s. None of them could keep up with the demand.

As Palmer outlined, "With the exception of the 1979-1981 period, net economic growth has been negative, wage settlements have fallen behind the cost of living, and inflation rates have increased from a 20-30% range to a 75-125% range... The lower strata of society have clearly lost their incremental gains with the shrinking of the economic pie." One spontaneous answer of the people was the "informal economy," another indicator of the failures of nation-states and of ominous problems ahead--two thirds of the Lima work force is now employed in an underground economy unlinked to the government or to the national economy.

But remote and beautiful Ayacucho, forgotten for so long, had awakened in those years---or perhaps we should say, "half-awakened." In the early '60s, Ayacucho became a kind of model for development policies. The American Peace Corps came there to show what could be done. Europeans came. The Peruvian Peace Corps, Cooperacion Popular, came. Cooperatives were formed and roads were built.

Then came the 1968 military coup, and the Americans and most of the Europeans withdrew. Ayacucho was half-awakened. Into that quicksand of awakened expectation, the Sendero Luminoso stepped, now with no competitors. It remains today the most serious threat to Peruvian society, and thus to the Andean countries themselves.

But, although the Sendero was started along semi-Marxist tenets (which is natural, since those are virtually the only ones which offer a sure pattern for totalistic revolutionary takeover

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of a state), it is important to see that it, too, is spiritually irredentist. It is another classic example of "Return-to-the-Past."

"Sendero is fighting not for adjustments in the system which will work for the benefit of the grievants at the periphery but for the total overthrow of the system itself," Prof. Palmer has written. "It is also different in that it is the first full-blown rural rebellion in Peru guided by Communist principles. In its ideology and in its strategy for taking power, it consciously and quite proudly follows the principles and practices of Mao."

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"In its plan for Peruvian society after victory is won, it resembles the Indian millenarian movements and most particularly the precepts of primitive and pure Indian communism presented by Jose Carlos Mariategui." Sendero believes, as the silent but inwardly-waiting descendants of the longsuffering Incas have for centuries, that there is a "Hidden Inca" under the mountain who---in this millenarian hope---will emerge soon to return them to the glories of the Inca Empire destroyed so long ago!

---When Egyptian President Anwar Sadat was killed in 1981, shot down by some of his own soldiers---the boys he always called "my sons"---people began looking around for reasons for this bizarre and heinous deed.

To the West, Sadat was the hero, the peace-maker, the inspirer. The world reeled with shock. How could something like this happen? Why? Who WERE these "boys" with the wild eyes and the self-righteously sure vision?

The development of the Egyptian fundamentalist

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"sects"---who, it must be noted were NOT within the mainstream of the Egyptian Islamic society at all---began to form after the intense humiliation Egyptians felt after their defeat in the 1967 war with Israel. But they did not come out of the often grotesque poverty of Egypt---they were middle-class, upward-striving middle class students from the villages, the students "with a future."

Brought to cities like Cairo by the very government they later assassinated, they soon became alienated and shocked by the corruption they found. They also found themselves alone in a strange society. Fundamentalist and charismatic leaders outside the traditional mosques offered them an unambiguous "new birth"---which meant total allegiance to the group. Surprisingly, most of the fanaticized adherents to these groups were top in their class and most were in such difficult scientific disciplines as medicine and engineering.

But when they were graduated, these youths found themselves making very low salaries, particularly compared to lesser students with connections who might be earning 10 times larger salaries. It was easy to inspire these alienated and idealistic young with "fatwas" from the Islamic writings that justified violence against the state.

When police began to pick them up in the 1970s for violent deeds, they could not place them---and the "boys" would not talk. So the Egyptian police ---from what the boys told them--- cleverly placed them in two types of groups: the mentally

isolating group and the completely isolating group. It was a mentally isolating group, El Jihad," which mentally isolated them but allowed them to work in society, that finally killed Sadat. Others, like the "repentance and holy flight" group, withdrew into pure societies in the desert, isolating their fanaticized members completely.

the sociological profile of these Egyptians, drawn up by a brilliant Egyptian sociologist at the American University of Cairo, Prof. Saad Ibrahim, is not unique. It closely resembles that of the Turkish terrorists of the Right and the Left who came from villages in eastern Turkey and also found "evil" in Istanbul and Ankara and then desired to return either to pure Islam or to go on to Marxism.

The Egyptian assassins were isolated and brainwashed to believe that "the group" was everything; so were the people of Jonestown. The Egyptians withdrew to their own isolated "perfect" societies in order to swoop down later on "evil" Westernized Egyptian society and destroy it; many movements today do this.

"Actually, (the Egyptian cultists) resemble very much the urban guerrilla everywhere," Ali Dessouki, the other professor who has studied these groups, told me. "Let us not be prisoners of Islam."

Saad Ibrahim added, "Youth culture is the same everywhere. There is impatience with society, a romantic mission. They have a great deal in common whether they are called El Jihad or the Weathermen. Even the language is the same: the Weathermen had their 'days of rage' and here they called the assassination 'an outrage for God.'"

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They were returning to God and returning to the purity of the Islamic past, as surely as were the Khomeini Shiites and the Sendero Luminosos and so many others in the world. So, what the Egyptian fundamentalists finally did was to murder the man who represented to them the corrupting Westernization of their historic country.

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So, then, what comes next? Even if we recognize these movements and even if we can come to any agreements on what the causal factors are, CAN anything realistically be done or do they just have to play out their ominous compulsions over and over on the world scene?

Certainly, there are related warning signs that could be correlated. Here are some of the ones I would list:

---A first solution is to do everything possible to develop the countryside and the smaller cities so that the capitals are not overwhelmed--and overwhelming. Ironically, Sadat was trying precisely to do that, but he did not act quickly enough to stem the extraordinary population pressure that made his efforts virtually hopeless.

---Second, societies should watch for the dangerous formation of dual societies or "two cultures" within them. Whenever and wherever these chasms or schisms form---whether in Italy, Uruguay or Egypt--the second culture comes to see the government as remote, uncaring and corrupt; violence against the government inevitably results.

---Third, all societies, including the United States, should

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be constantly watching for the formation of offbeat religious cults and sects and in particular for ones who look upon the present officialdom as unsacred. The Islamic cultists in Egypt, for instance, justified killing officials by declaring them "pre-Jahili" or pre-Moslems and thus freaks or demons.

---Fourth, "security" has got to be redefined. Police work is not enough. Anything that is going to be effective has got to be first based on a profound psychological analysis of these groups---and of when peoples feel left out of their societies and when they are open to violent solutions in the name of returning-to-the-past.

---For countries like the United States, after the analysis, the next stage would be to put American aid money and influence only in places where we intend to carry out programs. The lesson of Peru, for instance, is not to start something we are not going to finish. A second and most important lesson would be to be extremely cautious about too obvious American or any Western influence in countries with pasts that lead to paranoid states of mind, like Iran. Finally, we should work in the confidence that, while these movements are threatening and complex, they ARE understandable and analyzable. They CAN be responded to---and even avoided, with a little thought.

With our forward-looking and "progressive" culture, we had assumed that nuclear warfare was the greatest danger to the world. That is far from true, at least in terms of what is really happening before our eyes and in terms of the real amount of slaughter (Cambodia, the Iran-Iraq war, Lebanon, Peru) that comes

Who would have dreamed that, alongside the most sweeping progressive change mankind has ever known would march this shadow of the past-as-alternative? What people next will try to find its future in its past?

THE END