

Are modern wars not holy wars?

Outline

I- Introduction

Modern wars are fundamentally driven by secular objectives like political agendas, strategic and economic interests, focus on military strategy and ideological competitions. They lack core of holy wars which is religion. Thus, modern wars are not holy wars.

II- Modern wars are holy wars (anti-thesis)

- 1- The Crusades: A series of christian military wars to recapture Jerusalem and Holy lands from Muslims.
- 2- Palestine vs Israel Conflict is based on religious supremacy
- 3- ISIS and wars of Caliphate

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4- The Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988):

Sectarian division

5- War on terror (9/11)

6- The Taliban's rise in Afghanistan:

Sharia and shadow of holy war.

Modern wars are not holy wars

(Thesis)

1- Palestine Vs Israel war is purely a territorial conflict-

Exodus 1947

2- ISIS used a warped interpretation of Islam to fuel its brutality and territorial expansion.

3- The Iran-Iraq war: Modern weapons, Regional power and territory based conflict

4- Purpose of War on Terror (9/11) was to dismantle terrorist organizations

5- The Gulf war - Securing Oil resources

6- The Cold war - Ideological competition (Democracy Vs Communism)

7- The Taliban's rule: a modern conflict with unconventional lines

8- Pakistan Vs India: Territory based conflict (Kashmir)

9- KSA Vs Yemen and Turkey, Russia and Iran's fights are based on political influence

10- Modern wars hit terrorism

IV- Conclusion

The Essay

For centuries, religion has served as a motivator for war, driving clash between faith and shaping the course of history. From the Crusades, the brutal war between Christianity and Islam was fueled by religion. The fights which are fought on religious basis are termed as Holy wars. Holy wars has undergone a significant transformation in this era. Modern wars derive their origin from secular objective. These are considered political and economic in nature. Nation states are indulging in fights with each other to secure their geo-political interests. Therefore, Nations have been involved in territorial conflicts like Pakistan, Israel, Ukraine etc. Besides, wars are also fought to take control of natural resources like oil. Modern conflicts also involve alliances between countries of different religions or internal conflicts within same religion,

brutality wars,

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undermining the notion of a holy war. Also, they use Drone strikes and targeted attacks minimizing civilian casualties unlike the indiscriminate violence of historical holy wars. Thus, Modern wars are not holy wars because of their objectives like control over resources and territories, political agendas, focus on military strategy and ideological competition.

To begin with critics stance, The Crusades - a series of religious wars between Muslims and Christians were holy wars. These wars were fought over hundreds of years, from around 1095 to 1291. Back then, religion was a big deal for people. Christians wanted to take back Jerusalem and Holy lands from Muslims. Pops encouraged the kings and people for fight. They told them it is the religious

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duty of Christians to fight, like a holy pilgrimage. Christian military fought in hope to win land, fame and even a ticket to heaven. The Crusades were super bloody and many Muslims and Jews were hurt. Even though Christians did not win but the Crusades show that how a religion could be a reason for people to go to war. Thus, the Crusades were holy wars.

Likewise, Palestine - Israel war is a holy war too. Israel wants to dismantle Al-Aqsa mosque and rebuild a Jewish temple on the land. Muslims call that land Haram al-Sharif and for Jews it is The Temple Mount. In order to achieve this goal, Israel has been involved in massacre against Palestinian people in that region. In response Hamas started an operation 'Al-Aqsa Storm' to counter Israeli military brutality. Thus, all these events depict

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that Israel Palestine war is a holy war.

Similarly, ISIS rose to prominence in 2014. It is termed as Islamic state of Iraq and Syria. This militant group launched a brutal offense in Iraq and Syria. The ultimate goal of this group was to establish a Caliphate, a historical form of Islamic government led by a caliph. This idea of ISIS felt as a threat to Iraq and Syrian government. They along with US tried to combat ISIS by launching airstrikes. ISIS also employed brutal tactics like public execution and mass violence, further radicalizing the situation causing immense devastation. Millions were displaced and infrastructure was destroyed across the region. This was termed as "war of Caliphate". It was estimated by The Uppsala Conflict Data program, that 110,000 to 130,000

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people were killed in conflict between 2014-2019. According to UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) about 13 million people were displaced from their homes in Syria and Iraq. Thus, the war of Caliphate was a holy war.

Furthermore, The sectarian divide between Shia and Sunni Muslims has also fueled some destructive wars. The Iran-Iraq War exemplifies this. Both Nations vied for dominance, with Iran's Islamic revolution threatening Iraq's secular government. Sunni Iraq believed leadership should go to the most capable leader, while Shias believed it should remain within the Prophet's bloodline through the Imams. Both sides relied heavily on artillery and rifles for war. But Iraq's horrific use of chemical weapons stands out as a dark stain. Therefore, both

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on conflict. According to Uppasala Conflict Data program, the death toll was in between 500,000 and 1 million people. Millions were displaced and economic cost is estimated in hundreds of billion of dollars. Thus, the sectarian fight between Shia and sunni muslims was a holy war. Moreover, the war on terror 9/11 was also a holy war. American foreign policy in the Middle east was cited as key provocation to attack. US support for Israel was perceived as an opperessive force against Palestinians. The presence of American troops in Muslim-majority nation was also a factor. Attackers believed a violent attack on American soil would strike a blow against this perceived injustice.

Similarly, The Taliban's rise to power in Afghanistan in the mid 1990's was fueled

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by a desire to enforce a strict interpretation of Islamic law, Sharia. They positioned themselves as true defenders of Islam. The interpretation of Sharia was harsh and uncompromising. They imposed severe restrictions on women's freedom, banned entertainment and many cultural practices and enforced public punishments. They justified their brutality by claiming that they are trying to establish an Islamic state. They also interpreted their activities as Jihad. Ultimately, The Taliban's claim is seen as a holy war.

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Conversely, Israel - Palestine

conflict is not a holy war.

From day one the purpose of

war was to acquire territory.

This fact is supported by 'Exodus

1947'. After Jewish people were

sent back from Europe by

British at that time. UK along with

UN presented a partition plan

in support of Jews. On November, 1947

UN general assembly said yes to

that plan. According to partition

plan 56.47 percent of Palestine

should be for Jews and 44.53 percent

should be for an Arab state.

Similarly, The third Arab - Israel

war known as The six day war

(1967) was not a holy war.

Because Israel took control of

major territories of Arab countries

All these facts support that

The Palestine conundrum is a

modern war.

Furthermore, ISIS used their wrapped interpretation of Islam to justify their ambitions. They claimed religious sanctions for acts like beheadings, public executions and the enslavement of non-Muslims. The Syrian civil war provided a perfect breeding ground to ISIS. They took advantage of the areas where government was weak and exploited sectarian divides. They took control over regions where Sunnis were dominant and gained support from local people. Moreover, in the name of self-proclaimed caliphate they took control of key cities and infrastructure, particularly oil fields. They captured centers and largest cities of Syria and Iraq. All these facts show that it was not a holy war but a modern war because main focus was on territory expansion and resource capturing.

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Likewise, The Iran-Iraq war (1980-1988) stands as a chilling example of modern war in the Middle east, despite presence of a little bit religious narrative. Regional power struggles were a key driver. Along with this power struggle, a shared waterway fueled the brutal eight year war. Shatt-al-Arab, a crucial river, which used to provide access to Persian Gulf for trade. It was vital for both economies. Disagreement over its exact border and control rights simmered for decade. This unresolved dispute became a major reason for war. Use of modern weaponry, brutal tactics, communication tech and its global impact marked it as a modern war.

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Similarly, War on Terror was not a holy war, but a global effort to counterterrorism.

The term has religious connotations but it was not intended as crusade against Islam.

The enemy was not a religion or a culture, but the specific extremist groups who employed violence against civilians. The key tools were military action, intelligence gathering and international cooperation.

The US invaded Afghanistan to remove al-Qaeda and toppled the Taliban regime. Thus, it was a modern war instead of holy war.

On the other hand, Iraqi dictator ^{Saddam Hussain} invaded Kuwait in 1990.

At that time Iraq was heavily in debt after a long war with Iran. Kuwait, with vast oil reserves looked like a solution.

Saddam hoped to seize Kuwaiti

oil reserves to erase his debt and boost Iraq's economy. Fearing disruption to global oil supplies and Iraqi aggression, a US-led coalition fought to liberate Kuwait. Thus, this was showcased modern war by using high tech weaponry.

In addition, The Cold war was also a tense standoff between US and USSR. due to their opposing ideologies. The US strongly advocated for democracy and capitalism, with a focus on individual freedom and a market economy. The USSR, was a communist state with a command economy and limited individual liberties. This standoff was followed by an arms race, proxy wars around the world, Military build up and Espionage. Therefore, it is termed as a modern war instead of holy war.

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Also, The Taliban's rule in Afghanistan lacked traditional battlefield, but it embodied a chilling aspect of modern warfare. Strict interpretation of Islam was enforced through brutality and fear. Public executions, suppression of dissent and restrictions on basic freedoms became tools of war, targeting the Afghan population. This systematic brutality, aligns with the ruthless tactics employed in modern wars even if the method differed.

Similarly, the conflict between Pakistan and India is territory based. Kashmir is a bone of contention between two countries.

Also the fights between Yemen and KSA and Russia, Turkey and Iran are political dominance influenced. All these factors come under the umbrella of modern war. So, these wars are termed as modern wars

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Lastly, Modern wars can be double edge sword in fight against terrorism. Holy wars were fought for propagation or suppression of religion. This is not the case with modern wars on terrorism that is not against any religion or religious ideology. In fact, these are against thinking of terror - spreading through excessive use of violence. Additionally, targeted drone strikes and special forces operations can take down key figures and disrupt operations. International Cooperation further strengthens this approach, allowing for coordinated efforts across borders.

In a nutshell, wars are reality. But the difference is behind the agenda on which they are fought. When the agenda is religious, they are called holy wars and

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When the agenda is driven by secular objectives like economic, political and strategic; they are called modern wars. Today the world is experiencing modern wars which rarely have anything to do with religion like Israel vs Palestine war, The Iran-Iraq war, The Taliban's rule on Afghanistan, War on Terror, The Gulf war, The cold war, KSA Vs Yemen war and further more. All these wars are based on economic benefits, political interests strategic leverages in various regions and territory and resources acquisition. All these factors do not reflect the spirit of holy wars. So, these obvious agendas followed and tactics used in wars make them modern without becoming holy.
