The Christian–Muslim Frontier

A zone of contact, conflict or cooperation

Mario Apostolov

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The Christian–Muslim Frontier

Religion has always been used to build political organizations – from the multi-ethnic empires of the Byzantines, Arabs, Ottomans, Austrians and Russians to the present-day nation states. This book explores the complex social and political relationship of the frontier between Christianity and Islam, arguing that it should be understood as a zone of contact rather than a distinct line of confrontation.

The Christian–Muslim Frontier describes the historical formation of this zone, and its contemporary dimensions: geopolitical, psychological, economic, and security. Special attention is given to the concept of states-frontiers, to the effects of the uneven development of nation states and the contemporary interspersing of communities, which creates new functional frontiers. Further, the frontier is described as a mental construction, imagined by people in their search for social order, and individual and collective security.

Apostolov demonstrates that it is the political and economic situation of the local people that determines whether these frontiers result in conflict or cooperation. Rather than imposing unilateral principles of good governance, and to ensure cooperation prevails in Christian–Muslim relations, he argues that world society needs to undertake multilateral efforts to build participatory political institutions that accommodate groups with different identities.

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Preface

The idea of writing this book was born in 1998. At that time I was finalizing my doctoral thesis on religious minorities and security in the Balkans and the Middle East. The thesis contained a short section that ran through my initial idea of the Christian–Muslim frontier as an element of order in an increasingly globalized society, where each cultural community had its place, and frontiers between communities served as both a divide and a bridge. Although the subject fascinated me, I felt that it was not realistic to plan more detailed research. Nevertheless, one day I came across a short message in the students' newsletter of my institute in Geneva about a fellowship for research, promoting the idea of world society. My immediate reaction was that there was hardly anything that would better fit the objectives of this fellowship than my study on the Christian–Muslim frontier. A quick glimpse at the relevant website, with names of former and current fellows and topics of sponsored research, confirmed my idea. And I was right. The foundation attributed to my project exactly the amount I had requested. This allowed me to carry out one of the most rewarding endeavours in my life. It gave me the time and resources to undertake research on a topic that fascinated me, and to carry out field studies in the Balkans and the Middle East: the heart of the Christian–Muslim zone of contact.

The results of my research took the form of a manuscript, which I offered to the publishers in 2000. I was happy to receive a prompt and very positive response from one of the editors at Routledge. A couple of months later, however, a certain scepticism from a marketing perspective eliminated the chances of accepting the book. Would any reasonable person buy and read a book on such a subject as the Christian–Muslim frontier in the year 2000? The topic seemed obsolete in comparison with works on the problems of economic liberalism, e-business or the information society, for example. Moreover, at the beginning of the twenty-first century people seemed to have accepted unquestioningly the Hegelian understanding of the world, which recognized the (nation) state as the finest, and probably final, product of social evolution. Hardly any alternative in the form, for example, of religious identity would have seemed

plausible in global power politics. Yet the dramatic events of September 2001, marked by the rise of what François Heisbourg called 'hyperterrorism', seriously damaged this self-congratulatory vision of a universally expanding system of nation states. A second review at Routledge, soon after those tragic events, gave brighter prospects for my book, and it was subsequently accepted for publication. This story illustrates indirectly a key argument of my research: namely that the essentially political relations across the Christian–Muslim frontier and their impact on society depend on the concrete acts and statements of people who cherish aspirations for power and use various means to get it.

Mario Apostolov

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Introduction

> The collapse of communism, the destruction of the Iron Curtain and the Wall, was supposed to usher in a new era of liberty. Instead, the post-Cold War world, suddenly formless and full of possibility, scared many of us stiff. We retreated behind smaller iron curtains, built smaller stockages, imprisoned ourselves in narrower, ever more fanatic definitions of ourselves – religious, regional, ethnic – and readied ourselves for war.
>
> Salman Rushdie, 1999

Personally involved in one of the most publicized cases of opposition to 'otherness' in contemporary history, Salman Rushdie articulated the post-modernist idea that conflicts based on cultural identity had replaced the Cold War ideological division of the world (Rushdie 1999). Such political theorists as Samuel Huntington and Johann Galtung elaborated, during the 1990s, on the concept of a 'clash of civilizations', which they described as the defining feature of international relations in the contemporary age. From their works a notion of the civilizational frontier as a faultline of confrontation made its way in social thought. From a different perspective, the book that you are just starting to read argues that the civilizational frontier between Christianity and Islam should be understood as a zone of contact, in which the alternative between accommodation and confrontation is open. Similar to the *raison d'être* of other frontiers, the function of the Christian–Muslim frontier in world society is to introduce order. A 'civilization' is an elusive concept, and even the most ardent advocates of the 'clash' theory would admit that a civilization cannot be defined as a coherent entity with clear-cut borders. Any frontier, be it political, social or cultural, is the product of human imagination and an instrument for shaping the structure of human society. Sovereign state borders and civilizational frontiers have a similar *raison d'être*: they are powerful mental constructions, framing the societal and spatial limits within which social organization becomes possible. It is much more difficult to define civilizational frontiers than, for example, state or administrative borders, which people rank higher in their social practice. Defining the concept of the frontier between Christianity and Islam as a socially constructed

relationship is the central aim of this study. In their social practice, people construct and reconstruct the frontier in the same way as each generation constructs and defines the parameters of its social organization. The chapters of this book look at the various manifestations of the process of constructing the frontier. In this connection, the book reveals the advantages and problems of representing the frontier as a zone of contact that has its specific features and purpose in the organization of society.

The methodology of this book departs from the idea that the frontier between Christianity and Islam has various dimensions that have to be studied in their mutual relationship. It describes the civilizational frontier as a zone of contact where the alternative between conflict or cooperation is open; that it is a zone and not a line of confrontation; and that it covers various spheres of social life. The chapters of this book briefly go through the history and geopolitics of the Christian–Muslim frontier, and then focus on its contemporary manifestations in politics, social psychology and security, and in the economic performance of the countries situated in the zone of contact. Each chapter reveals a story of a separate dimension of the Christian–Muslim frontier. Nevertheless, readers must be warned from the outset that it would be unrealistic to expect from this book a complete picture, analysing the details of all expressions of the Christian–Muslim frontier, throughout the whole area to which the term may apply. The 'zone of contact', a concept to which I will return again and again in this book, underlines my understanding of the role of the frontier in world society. It refers primarily to the historical space in the Middle East and the Balkans, between Mecca and Vienna, through which the frontier between the Muslim and the Christian empires moved for centuries. Yet, as it will be seen, this concept has spread much further, encompassing areas of later contact between Christians and Muslims – former colonies, and contemporary Western states with mixed societies. One of the interesting implications for international relations today is that social relations in these peripheral 'zones of contact' often imitate relations in the historical zone of contact.

The idea of the Christian–Muslim frontier has been permeated by antinomies: 'us' versus 'them'; localism versus imperial mentality; communal conflict versus pluralism; and nationalism versus regionalism or globalization. Such pairs exist side by side, constantly changing and evolving into each other. They constitute an important part of the mental process of defining one's collective self and, consequently, of defining the civilizational frontier with 'the other'. Given this vivid presence of the idea of the civilizational frontier in the minds of men, it might seem surprising that there is no sufficient knowledge about the nature of Christian–Muslim relations in world society. And, it should be stressed, the study of Christian–Muslim relations addresses issues with potentially important practical implications for policy planners in the contemporary world.

The analysis of Christian–Muslim relations on a global scale raises a number of fundamental questions. Is human society around the world one whole, or is it intrinsically divided along cultural and political cleavages? If frontiers, including the civilizational ones, should be understood as mere instruments introducing order into the structure of an indivisible world society, why does communal violence occur along civilizational fault lines? If, by contrast, civilizational frontiers demonstrate the cultural incompatibility of large social complexes, can anything at all be done to mitigate potential conflicts so that they do not lead to violent confrontation? What is the relationship between the division of the world into nation states and the large cultural complexes that we call civilizations; are nation states and civilizations complementary or contradictory? These are some of the essential questions addressed in this study. My working hypothesis is that world society is one whole, while its structural division along civilizational frontiers introduces an element of order. Frontiers, including civilizational ones, are specific, binding elements in the institutional network of the world. The interpretation of relations between Christians and Muslims in terms of confrontation is often the result of particular interest-based or benefit-seeking activities. Such an interpretation of the frontier builds upon myths, threats of confrontation and the mismanagement of institutions of communal accommodation in the zone of contact – as demonstrated, for example, in the fate of Lebanon or Bosnia over the course of many years. Clearly, high fragmentation of social identities is a durable trait of the eastern Mediterranean and south-eastern Europe – the historical heart of the zone of contact between Christianity and Islam. This fragmentation is demonstrated in both popular attitudes and elite behaviour. The expressions of such fragmentation, however, are always concrete. They reflect the specific social and political situation, including the interests, acts and discourse of people with influence at a certain time in a certain country.

Any solution to conflicts based on confessional group differences should approach, first and foremost, the institutionalization of this difference that gives rise to the differentiated benefits for particular groups and individuals in society. Real or perceived, inequality and personal ambitions of communal leaders for power and material benefits transform issues of identity into political conflicts. They lead to the degeneration of communal relations towards relations characterized by confrontation. The notion of Christian–Muslim confrontation is a 'myth', which sets in motion a mechanism similar to Adam Smith's 'mythomoteur' – the mobilization of national and ethnic groups for communal action. Fred Halliday argues that the myth of Christian–Muslim confrontation is sustained by two apparently conflicting parties: those in the West and in the zone of contact who seek to turn the Muslim world into another enemy after the end of the Cold War, and those in Islamic countries who advocate confrontation with the non-Muslim, notably Western, peoples. These are

individuals and groups who pursue their concrete and limited interest of either attaining power or staying in power (Halliday 1996: 6).

There are numerous unanswered questions concerning the contemporary expressions of the Christian–Muslim frontier. Some of them relate to the hierarchy of values which guide the West's policy towards Islamist political movements and regimes, and towards Muslims in general. Western support for secular regimes in such countries as Algeria, Turkey, Pakistan or Egypt might be regarded simply as a pragmatic preference for keeping down Islamism while overriding democratic values which, arguably, make up part of the West's identity. The campaign against terrorism, which was launched by the United States after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, included strong support for reconstituting the stability of state structures in the Islamic world. Certain concerns and values remained in the shadow of the broader strategic objective: strengthening the system of nation states one could deal with. Similarly, questions remain about the Muslims' attitudes to the West. The perception gap in public opinion is obvious here. Sentiments of cultural vulnerability and humiliation prevail because of what many Muslims perceive as the inherent aggressiveness and discriminatory attitude of the West.

Another question concerns the feasibility of achieving institutional and consociational solutions to the problems of divided societies in the zone of contact. Would the nation state, with an inclusive national identity which would transcend confessional differences, be the solution to problems involving Muslims and Christians? Or is there a need for more comprehensive internal, regional and international political arrangements that will accommodate various religious communities in the mixed societies of the contemporary world? The communal elite in the area of contact is typically less tolerant than the population in general: communal entrepreneurs often milk their constituency, making use of collective fears of 'the other'. Consequently, the conditions that are necessary for a consociational democracy (based on consensus in divided plural societies) to take root are turned upside down. What policy should be adopted to cope with the situations that have marked the Lebanese, Bosnian and Kosovar crises? Popper notes that it is extremely difficult to identify the social institutions that may bring social change, not least because these institutions are subject to constant change themselves (Popper 1961: 31–3). A further issue for consideration is the difficulty in tracing a 'grand strategy', *à la* Clausewitz, in the regional conflicts along the Christian–Muslim frontier, which have traumatized the world; these include the Lebanese Civil War, the division of Cyprus, the wars against Iraq, NATO's strikes on Yugoslavia, the violent Chechen conflict, the independence of East Timor, and the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. If one can recognize, with ease, the Christian–Muslim faultline in these conflicts, it is not so easy to establish exactly what kind of impact the confessional background of the various actors has on their behaviour.

Finally, all the questions above concern one general issue: the relationship between unilateral egocentric approaches to relations among large civilizational complexes and an emerging world society. The latter is defined by the increasingly influential transborder forces of our age – from the global expansion of free trade to the emergence of global civil society, but also to the strengthening links among Muslim peoples, among the various groups of Christian peoples, and among Jewish communities around the world. The more we learn about this relationship between unilateralism and world society, the more obvious it becomes that it is not easy to manage, and there are problems ahead. As Fred Halliday put it, the events of 11 September 2001 alone 'precipitated a global crisis that will, if we are lucky, take a hundred years to resolve' (Halliday 2002: 24). The United Nations, based on the will of nation states, is the institution that produces international public goods – from universally valid human rights instruments to standards for trade and environment protection – and it might be well suited to deal with the challenges of the postmodern, functional frontiers. Part of this book was written when the United Nations celebrated its 'Year of Dialogue Among Civilizations', yet what is needed is more than a dialogue; rather an interaction in an increasingly global society. Whether or not we desire it, we are constituent elements of this global society, which we are continually engaged in constructing.

1 The concept of the Christian–Muslim frontier as a zone of contact

The term zone of contact between Christianity and Islam is familiar to experts in the history of religion. They have used it in their work, giving it various interpretations, even if nobody has ever made a serious effort to define the concept. This chapter focuses on several essential aspects in the concept of the Christian–Muslim frontier. I would like to emphasize here two important elements of the concept: first, the civilizational frontier emerges as an element of order in world society; and second, the frontier between Christianity and Islam should be understood as a zone of contact rather than a line of opposition. Various Christian and Muslim groups of people have interspersed across communal borders during centuries of interaction. Large and small cultural complexes shade off into each other, communities mix in the border areas, and clear territorial distinctions among various groups should be regarded as a recent phenomenon stemming from the processes of establishing nation states. There is, however, no place on Earth where a communal fronter would look as if it had been cut by knife on the ethnographical map.

The civilizational frontier as a factor of order in society

By limiting and partitioning the territory accessible to a given community of people, both political and cultural frontiers create internal order and rules for interaction with the outside world. Jean Gottmann argues that frontiers introduce order into the diversity of the world and present a framework for communication among societies. He defines the frontier as both a barrier and a bridge: a key concept for understanding the Christian–Muslim divide in its various dimensions – physical, political, cultural and economic (Gottmann 1980a). Fernand Braudel claims that it is important to know where the distinct civilizations, with their borders, centres, peripheries and provinces, are situated on the world map; which civilizations exist today; which are the specifics of their social and political culture; 'Otherwise, what catastrophic blunders of perspective could ensue!' (Braudel 1980: 210–11). Huntington writes that 'the world may be chaos but it is not totally without order', in the way some realist theorists

in international relations theory describe it (Huntington 1996: 35). With his idea of the division of the world into civilizations, Huntington actually seeks to explain the nature of order in the contemporary world. This was in fact the positive contribution of his theory, no matter what the details and policy implications were of the writings for which he received so much criticism. Following the example of Huntington, many writers who tend to regret the disappearance of the predictability of the bipolar Cold War division of the world have focused on the phenomenon of civilizational frontiers. These people are attracted by the idea that the civilizational frontier would serve as an instrument for tracing order in the increasingly globalized society.

Theorists of postmodernism defend the idea that cultural frontiers have specific functions in society, serving as markers of the space available to each group. Postmodernists speak about the end of the rigid boundaries which have defined the territories of modern states, but also about the construction of new, functional borders among communities in the same territorial states. Fundamental changes in society require redefinition of borders and this, allegedly, is one of the explanations for the turmoil that accompanies the political transformations in the post-Cold War world. The idea that changes in social structures bring about changes in the according semantics, including the meaning of frontiers, is one of the postmodernists' contributions to the theory of international relations. The construction of 'new' frontiers after the fall of communism gives new meaning to the category of 'the other'. The new, functional frontiers in today's world are typically fuzzier, but also have the same (if not a stronger) impact on society as the traditional borders of territorial states. In the postmodernist view, each group in an increasingly interrelated world delineates its borders, step by step, in various aspects of life: in the social and cultural practices or in the legal and public systems in which particular societies evolve. The idea of the postmodern frontier will be given some further attention later, when we come to it in the chronological review of the history of the Christian–Muslim frontier – i.e. after the discussion of the 'modern' age nation states.

The concept of the frontier is closely linked to the notion of sovereignty, as frontiers define the territorial limits within which political organization takes shape. 'Sovereignty is something that has to be *practised* through "marking" space by boundaries of various kind' (Albert 1998: 61–3). This is also true about the historical Christian–Muslim frontier, which served for centuries as a divide between domains under different spiritual and political authorities. The idea of the Christian–Muslim frontier has been related in the past to the existence of large empires, which drew their legitimacy from one of these two world religions, and established two- or three-polar (Muslim, Orthodox and Western Christian) political structures in the eastern parts of Europe and the Mediterranean. This pattern persisted for centuries. Contemporary communal leaders in

Lebanon and Bosnia, such as the Maronite Patriarch Sfeir, the chiefs of Hizbollah, and the first Bosnian president, Aliya Izetbegovic, confirmed that religious doctrines were not involved in the communal struggle that devastated their countries. Instead, the true reasons and objectives of the civil wars were purely political.

Max Weber's theory of religious identity focuses on its rational elements and its historical evolution. Weber emphasizes the link between human progress and the evolution of religious forms. These ideas are particularly relevant for the history of empires based on a certain religion in the eastern Mediterranean and eastern Europe, and for the linkage of the concepts of sovereignty, religion and frontiers. In his analysis of social evolution, for example, Weber points to the social significance of the transition from polytheism to monotheism, which coincided with a centralization of political power and the transfer of government to authoritarian rulers, with authority sanctioned by religion. Even such an elusive and apparently irrational concept as 'charisma' finds rational explanation in Max Weber: the charisma of Muhammed, for example, played a crucial role in the transition of the Arabian nomadic tribes from polytheism to monotheism and, consequently, to a centralized, imperial organization of power (Weber 1964). In the Hegelian understanding of history, religion has always regulated the relations between individuals and communities and states, as the spiritual dimension of various forms of social organization (Hegel 1975: 80). Religion acts as the spiritual basis of society by providing a system of moral values which is at the core of people's economic and social life. The different religious creeds have the same social function. Yet a religious affiliation always has a concrete form, reflecting the diversity of real life. What changes is the form in which each creed is revealed and practised.

Any religious community is both a sum of individuals and an individuality in itself. Its members are often more devoted to their feeling of belonging to a group than to their religious convictions. Their loyalty is a function of the spiritual impulse of the underlying doctrine, but also of the need to be members of a community of the faithful, which may be enhanced in times of oppression. Such groups as the Egyptian Copts or the Bosnian Muslim Slavs become increasingly sensitive about their identity when they feel pressure. What is more, the susceptibility of people to seeking psychological comfort and security in collectively abiding by traditional beliefs and rites is a protective instinct against the vagaries of abrupt change. This is the reason for the vitality of confessional communities (Armstrong 1994: 92). Many people in the zone of contact have turned to old religious traditions after the end of the Cold War, not because they are fanatics but because they seek individual and collective security in the link to tradition, through which they can communicate with large numbers of people around the world.

Indeed, social practice is rooted in historical and 'civilizational' norms,

ranging from culturally specific forms of labour capital formation (family customs, public and private education and labour ethics are far from uniform around the globe) to perceptions of domination and oppression among communities with an established group identity. Sets of norms, traditionally supported by religion, help individuals to socialize, and social groups to define their distinguishing characteristics. The analysis of the structure and characteristics of a given social group seems impossible without the definition of its cultural and civilizational limits. Frontiers support the foundations of communities with their distinctive patterns of settlement, social organization, and cultural traditions. 'Civilizations' define themselves in terms of distinction from 'the other', often in terms of opposing culture to barbarism. Following the postmodernist logic, the more integration and communal activism replace the nation state paradigm in the contemporary world, the more people look for a new articulation of their characteristic identity and a clearer definition of the cultural fault lines among social groups.

Frontiers in general are the creation of men, who follow the particularities of nature in a more or less deliberate search for order in their society. No mountain crest, desert or riverbed had ever been a frontier before human beings came to live in its vicinity, and established their social organization there. They say that one can observe the Great Wall of China from the Moon, yet one cannot see from there that the creators of this Wall conceived it as a military barrier separating their civilization from the barbarians.

By tradition, men stuck to their ideas of frontiers because of the social significance that they attributed to the frontier as an instrument of delimitation and self-definition, and because of the subjective belief that their particular civilization was unique. Yet such social divisions eventually acquired a life of their own. They created the myths that the separation of distinct societies and the departmentalization of humankind are natural phenomena. In this way, mental constructions of an alleged rigid partition of the world among civilizations with distinct historical identities contributed to the reification of the frontier as a natural phenomenon. The frontier was thus represented as an independent variable to which politics should adjust. Such views had an important place in the evolution of the concept of the frontier (Gottmann 1951: 519).

State boundaries depend upon impressive institutional and military support, yet it seems easier for people to grasp and cope with the artificial quality of these political lines of division than to deal with the cleavage between 'us' and 'them' defined in terms of culture and mentality. Civilizational frontiers are more complex and difficult to comprehend than the borders of nation states, or the distinction among political parties and ideologies. This, however, does not make conflict based on civilizational differences easier to deal with, or prejudice easier to eradicate. The return to cultural and religious identity in eastern Europe after the end of the

Cold War and the dramatic rise of Islamism in recent years attest to the necessity to take the problem of cultural division seriously.

Notions of the civilizational frontier – a line or a zone?

In general, the frontier has been alternatively regarded as a line which separates, a zone which brings together, or a periphery distinct from the centre. Conceiving the frontier as a zone or a step between two forms of civilizational and social organization is one of the basic contributions of Jean Gottmann to the study of political geography (Gottmann 1980a: 55). The idea of the civilizational frontier as a physical line which separates Christian from Muslim domains is still alive in the views of certain politicians and writers who interpret in this way, for example, the border of Turkey with Bulgaria and Greece, the Strait of Gibraltar, and the new state borders in the Caucasus. Enclaves in 'foreign' territory arguably exist in Bosnia, Albania, Kosovo, Cyprus, the Caucasus, and Lebanon. Central Asia is often called the new frontier of Islam because it still undergoes a process of political separation of Muslim and Christian groups. Everywhere, secularism, which still bears the flavour of seven decades of the Soviet experiment, is receding. The perceptions of the confessional frontier in certain regions of the Third World, such as Ethiopia, Indonesia and the Philippines, seem to follow the interpretation of the Christian–Muslim frontier as a line. This definition is not far from the idea of confrontation, and it seems to seek the roots of the term 'frontier' in the word 'front' and its connotation of conflict (Kotek 1996: 17).

The notion of the frontier as a clear-cut territorial border line that can be represented on the physico-geographical map developed in Europe with the establishment of the Westphalian system about two and a half centuries ago. Nevertheless, the traditional pre-Westphalian idea of the frontier is one of a zone of transition adjacent to two or more political powers, or what is called 'core areas' in geopolitics. Throughout history, the strategy of neighbouring powers has always been either to stabilize the frontier zones, as a measure of protection, or to expand into them in the pursuit of more influence, power, and security.

Starting at the very dawn of Islam, Christians and Muslims developed their own perceptions of the frontier between them; perceptions characterized by the existence of buffer provinces and mixed populations. Furthermore, this vision of the frontier was sealed by religiously sanctioned wars (respectively *crusades* or *jihads*) against 'the other'. These notions not only entered the founding myths of the two global communities, but also became closely associated with their concepts of stability and order in society. The Muslim community, which embraced much of the ideology of the two older monotheist religions, Judaism and Christianity, grew in opposition to neighbouring Christian and pagan forces. After their defeat, the Muslim leaders pledged restraint *vis-à-vis* the Christians

and no tolerance for the pagans. Islamic ideology was dominated by references to the division of the world into *Dar-ul-Islam* (the domain of Islam or submission to God) and *Dar-ul-Harb* (the zone of confrontation against non-Muslims). Following the rapid conquest of Syria and Mesopotamia, the Muslim Arabs further developed the notion *Dar-ul-Harb* as a frontier zone divided into *al-thughur*, a no-man's-land open to the activities of the revered Muslim conquerors, and *al-awasim*, a second line of protecting fortresses. It took some time before the Christian powers of the time understood that the followers of Muhammad were more than simply another heretic sect pouring out of the desert. Yet once they did understand this, they started looking for Christian allies in the frontier provinces. They started using detachments of local Christians, in addition to the regular imperial armies, against the armies of Muhammad. It was this line of reasoning that led the Byzantine Emperor Heraclius (610–641 AD) to use the Mardaite Christians in Syria to counter the Muslim advance (Sourdel 1996: 303). An analogous pattern of frontier provinces with warrior populations emerged in the Balkans centuries later. The Ottomans used local converts and Muslim settlers from Asia in specially administered frontier provinces, in order to counter Austria and Russia. The latter two Christian powers themselves made extensive use of the local Christians in the frontier areas, both inside the Ottoman Empire and in their own 'frontier provinces'. Austria had its 'military frontier zone', stretching from the Adriatic through Krajina, Slavonia, Vojvodina, Banat and Transylvania. Russia had its vast Cossack areas, which also faced the Muslim empire. As a principle, these frontier zones were flexible, had no clear limits, and shaded off into the neighbouring 'middle grounds'.

Some politicians eagerly represent borders between Bosnian Serbs, Croats and Muslims, or between Serbs and Kosovar Albanians, as civilizational borderlines. The 'green line' that separated Beirut from 1975 to 1991, the line between Turks and Greeks in Cyprus, and the demarcation lines defined by the second annex to the Dayton Accords on Bosnia from 21 November 1995 add another element to the debate; namely that the civilizational frontier could be represented as a line even in terms of international law. It is obvious, however, that in these cases the problem concerns nation-building and state-building rather than defining civilizational borders. Religious identity only contributes to the capital of myths mobilized to foster the sense of belonging to a nascent nation. Moreover, it is confrontation that cultivates the distinctive 'civilizational' and political features of a community, and not *vice versa*. Martin Glassner argues that religion becomes a basis for boundary definition, regardless of the existence of certain geographical, social and historical entities (such as Bosnia or Lebanon), primarily in societies where religious distinction has historically been a strong source of friction (Glassner 1996: 87). The transformation of the Muslim–Christian frontier into a political border in various places of the world should be seen as a negative self-definition

often brought about by acute communal tension, as in Bosnia. The idea of opposition along the Christian–Muslim frontier is often used by nationalist movements in order to create myths, which play a crucial role in the genesis of nationalist ideology and practice. The references of modern-day Chechen nationalists to their Muslim tradition, or of certain Maronite extremists in the Lebanese civil war to their Mardaite heritage and Christian frontier culture, are two of the many examples in point. Exclusive political positions and nationalistic myths demonstrate the tendency of people to lose the initial meaning of the frontier as an element of order in society, and emphasize its secondary, divisive role.

The interpretation of the frontier as a line is arguably a political and legal exercise, while the genuine historico-geographical concept is one of a zone (Foucher 1988: 14). 'The frontier can be described as a politico-geographical area lying beyond the integrated region of the political unit and into which expansion could take place', in contrast to borders represented on the political maps as 'thin lines marking the limit of state sovereignty' (Glassner 1996: 83–4). Modernity, with its key concept of the nation state, spread out the idea of the 'thin border line', but this in no way means that the broad frontier zones, especially in terms of culture and religion, have disappeared. Even the definition of the 'demarcation lines' in Lebanon, Cyprus, and Bosnia implies a meaning of the frontier as both a limit and a zone: a zone of military occupation (*occupatio bellica*) over which the occupying state has no sovereignty (Alary 1998: 7). The idea of the Christian–Muslim civilizational frontier zone implies higher permeability, and it is an appropriate sociological concept for the reality of an increasingly interdependent world. The idea of the frontier as a zone is present in the mass psychology in the various countries of this zone – even in their school textbooks. The official Bulgarian history textbook for all secondary schools in the 1990s, for example, contained a whole chapter called 'The Bulgarians in the Zone of Contact between Christianity and Islam', where the description of the zone focused on confrontation and discrimination (Fol *et al.* 1996: 168–73).

The idea of a Christian–Muslim frontier zone does not have much to do with the concepts of regionalism and a region. A region might be defined as a set of states which are markedly more interdependent over a wider range of dimensions and transactions than they are with other states, and which share such characteristics as culture, history, politics and economics, rather than geography alone (Deutsch 1981: 54). Obviously, this notion of a region does not apply to the Christian–Muslim zone of contact. There are common trends in culture, history, politics and economic behaviour in the frontier zone. There is definitely the common historical experience of being ruled for millennia by Byzantines and Ottomans. Yet there is no obvious interdependence among the various states in this zone, which is in effect a region without regionalism. It is difficult to imagine today that there can ever be a sense of regional

cooperation between Albania and Serbia or between Syria and Israel, despite their physical and even societal proximity. Finally, speaking of a regionalism that brings together the Balkans, Turkey, the Middle East and Israel is, at least for the time being, a mere fiction. The societies of the Balkans and the eastern Mediterranean share a number of substantial characteristics, but do not possess and do not want to build mechanisms of dynamic regional integration. For various reasons, some countries in the zone of contact have entered into regional and sub-regional groups of integration with states beyond the historical limits of the zone of contact. In practice, the definition of the very limits of the zone of contact is a difficult task. To put the zone of the Christian–Muslim frontier on the political map of the world, and to look through its historical development, is the objective of Chapters 2 and 5 in this book.

The literature on the frontier in a global political context

Since the end of the Cold War, and especially after the tragic events of September 2001, there has been a spate of new publications on the problems of political Islam and the acute conflicts involving Christians and Muslims around the world – from Bosnia, Chechnya and Lebanon to Afghanistan and Indonesia. Despite this fact, there are a number of reasons for writing yet another book on Christian–Muslim relations on a global scale. First, there is the dire necessity to stress that these relations are socially constructed, and whether tolerance will prevail depends on the way those people who participate in them analyse them or make decisions – in brief, on the people who build those relationships. Second, it is important to show the multifaceted character of Christian–Muslim relations. The concept of the civilizational frontier, as it appears in the social science literature, has historical, political, economic, military, psychological and demographic dimensions, and this book contributes to their understanding in their totality. Third, it is important to see that Christian–Muslim relations and the Christian–Muslim frontier are part of the structure of the growing world society. It is important to see the rationale behind the civilizational frontier as an element of order in the global society, in order to make it serve the purposes of tolerance and harmonious development in the world.

I have selected, parsimoniously, the minimum volume of facts and cases that outline the concept of the Christian–Muslim frontier as a zone. I have constantly sought contact with people who exemplify the many-sided realities of Christian–Muslim contacts in the contemporary world – first of all in the historical zone of the frontier, but also in what may be called ‘peripheral’ circles of contact between Christianity and Islam. Cautioned by the experience of some writers on Christian–Muslim relations, whose ‘academic distance’ from the subject is overly long, I have tried to get closer to the experience of people involved, in one or another way, in

these social relationships. The impressions from my personal contacts have had a strong impact on the form and conclusions of this study.

Another interesting source, albeit of a very different sort, was the works of Fred Halliday on Christian–Muslim relations. Whenever I felt that the ground beneath my feet was starting to shake, be it on the issue of clarifying the concept of Christian–Muslim confrontation or the link between religious identity and building nation states in the post-Ottoman space, I could read the relevant book by Fred Halliday and take a 'reality check'. I was happy to discover that my ideas on the political essence of Christian–Muslim conflicts were in complete agreement with those Fred Halliday had already published. Yet even if I agree with the analysis of his excellent books I still have a different approach to some key issues, which are covered in this book.

I should also warn against deterministic interpretations of my idea of the civilizational frontier as an element of order in world society. Religious identity is just one of the many factors that shape policy-making and political psychology. It is unrealistic to assume either economic or cultural determinism in treating the subject, because the relationships between values, economics and politics are reciprocal, and the concrete linkages depend on the specifics of each empirical situation and not on certain rules that are determined a priori. One should neither exaggerate the impact of cultural differences on violent conflicts, alliances, emerging polities or international borders, nor indulge in a doctrinaire interpretation of the 'secularization hypothesis' which claims that religious politics is an outdated paradigm. The contributors to the book *Questioning the Secular State: The Worldwide Resurging of Religion in Politics* (Westerlund 1996) argue that the continuous changes in the forms of religion do not mean that it has lost its significance in society as a whole. For this reason, it is important to study the anti-secular movements, organizations and individuals who engaged in strengthening the role of religion in the political life of nation states in the 1980s and 1990s. Religion is one of the parameters of social relations in the contemporary world. The neglect of its impact on various levels of social interaction may lead to political miscalculations about the power of fundamentalists or the behaviour of religious minorities, for example. The grievances, political demands and need for protection of such minorities are a sure sign that confessional identity remains a form of political identity, and affects relations among large groups of people.

The question of the Christian–Muslim frontier has provoked intellectual interest and political debate, ranging from the alarmist essay of Samuel Huntington, 'The clash of civilizations?', which explains contemporary violent conflicts in terms of cultural differences (Huntington 1993: 22–49) to the discussion as to whether capitalism can sink roots in a Muslim society (Rodinson 1966). Arguably, even if Huntington talks in his essay about all world civilizations, he 'dwells at length on his (and, arguably, the

American people's) favourite foe: Islam' (Welch 1997: 197). Christian–Muslim relations have indeed spread on a global scale and concern such critical issues for today's interrelated world as the international flows of capital, arms, oil and people. A wide array of armed conflicts in the first decade of the post-Cold War era, in such countries as Lebanon, Bosnia, Cyprus, Nagorno-Karabakh, Chechnya and Indonesia, indicated the urgent practical necessity to go beyond the fixation on the nation state paradigm in order to analyse the intricate relations of groups with distinct cultural identities. The objective would be to avoid further degradation of conflictual thinking and to identify the possibilities for positive political action.

On the basis of these and similar conflicts, Huntington has argued that theories which describe the post-Cold War world either in terms of homogenization around a liberal agenda and the end of history as a history of ideologies (Fukuyama 1989)[1] or as a field of anarchic competition among nation states (Mearsheimer 1990) explain just parts of the story, while reality lies in the division of the world among several major civilizations. International alliances and confrontation develop around civilizational identities. Each of Huntington's civilizations is centred on one powerful state, with the exception of Islam, where several important states play a key role in world affairs. Similarly, Johan Galtung represents civilizations as competing coherent units, thus neglecting the existence of frontier zones, into which large cultural complexes shade off, come together and mix with each other. In 1996, Huntington developed a book on the ideas of his 1993 essay on the 'clash of civilizations', yet, unlike most writers who expand an article that has brought them fame into a book, Huntington goes a step further, arguing that civilizations are part of a fabric that makes up world society, and that conflicts can be managed through an institutional system based on civilizations (Huntington 1996: 321).

The authors of another post-Cold War era study, supported by the RAND Corporation and entitled *A Sense of Siege: the Geopolitics of Islam and the West*, intentionally or not adopt a perception of the frontier which is similar to that of Huntington. In particular, they insist that the fault line runs between the Muslim and the Western civilizations, rather than between Christianity and Islam (Fuller and Lesser 1995). The Christian world is so divided and the West so secularized that the real political, cultural and economic cleavage should be observed between the West and Islam. Huntington rejects even the hypothesis of proximity between Western and Eastern Orthodox Christianity, and neglects the yet more serious political rift between the Sunni and Shia versions of Islam. The Eastern Christians, often living alongside Muslims, are thus perceived as a body different from the West, which is sometimes assimilated to one whole obscure entity of 'the other'. This illustrates the important notion in the West of the frontier as a zone with a mixed population of Muslims

and Orthodox Christians, and where turbulence and relative poverty reign. Paradoxically, by stating this *A Sense of Siege* implicitly furthers distinctions, reifies categorical differences, and reinforces the risk of self-fulfilling prophecies of conflict – and this is exactly what the authors of the book explicitly reject at the outset (Fuller and Lesser 1995: 5, 7, 11). Other writers, such as the Russian and Western contributors to a 1998 book on Christian–Muslim relations in the post-Soviet space (Nielsen 1998), argue that both Western and Orthodox Christianity make up the contemporary frontier with Islam. The US–Russian rapprochement following 11 September 2001, with both countries demonstrating 'better understanding' of each other's concerns with Islam, might have strengthened this approach to the Christian–Muslim frontier.

The basic problem with the picture of the world drawn by Huntington and Galtung is the image of civilizations as more or less coherent entities, with clearly identifiable borders. Yet not only are 'civilizations' like 'nations' or 'communities' – terms that claim a reality and authority which are open to question – the term 'civilization' is much less suitable than the other two to denote a coherent, historically given bloc around which political forces can mobilize (Halliday 1996: 3). Consequently, the idea of opposition (or clash) across a clearly defined faultline between civilizations is a fiction. In practice, the relations between Christian and Muslim communities or nations demonstrate the existence of a vast zone of contact and mixed populations. This zone largely corresponds to the idea of the civilizational frontier. Muslim intellectuals are, by and large, suspicious of the writings of Samuel Huntington, regarding them as one more superficial, Western interpretation of the realities in the Orient. Nevertheless, many of them endorse the idea of a 'clash of civilizations'. Hassan Hanafi, a moderate Islamist philosopher from the University of Cairo, insists that people like him have always talked about a clash of civilizations, as for example during the French colonial war in Algeria, yet the West needed Samuel Huntington and not a Muslim intellectual to waken it to the idea of a clash.

During the post-Cold War era, a number of security experts had already indicated that, beneath the seemingly overwhelming world system of states, there were other layers of social organization and political power that played an important role in the global social fabric. There was a common concern with new threats to security, created by extremist movements with esoteric goals, especially across the global Christian–Muslim divide. Terrorism, motivated by religious distinctions, was not a new phenomenon in September 2001; it simply acquired new dimensions in the aftermath of the terrorist attacks on the United States. Pervasive media coverage made millions of people horrified witnesses of the destructive force displayed by evasive non-state actors, and it virtually brought the idea of the Christian–Muslim 'frontier-as-a-frontline' to everybody's home. The world became painfully aware of the existence of vigorous non-state

power structures, and the self-confident image of an international order built up of nation states was shaken. September 11 raised the underworld of fundamentalist movements, as an important repository of power in opposition to the settled system of states, to the position of the major threat to global security. France's leading expert on international security, François Heisbourg, wrote one month after the attacks:

> hyperterrorism thus marks with extreme clarity the place occupied from now on by non-state actors in the functioning, or in this case malfunctioning, of the 'world system'. Nothing could show in a more brutal way the fact that sovereign states did not hold any more in a systematic way the primary roles on the world scene.
>
> (Heisbourg 2001: 13)

He argued in his book *Hyperterrorism: the New War* that the attacks of 11 September not only started the recomposition of the geographical map of the world, but they also changed its rules of the game. They utterly shook the United States, which had been sliding in the direction of unilateralist politics for a decade.

Some reactions to the shock, in the immediate aftermath of the terrorist assault, focused on the social causes of the hatred that made people commit dreadful suicide attacks. They identified as the main sources of conflict that had to be addressed: the rampant inequalities among countries and social groups, especially in the zone of Christian–Muslim contact; the responsibility of corrupt regimes in some Muslim states, which unequally redistributed newly acquired wealth; the degrading influence of lobbying activities in some of the world's most powerful democratic nations; and the sense of exclusion among immigrant communities in the increasingly interrelated postmodern world.

This emotional debate, however, soon gave way to discussions on how to improve the existing international structure of states, on the role of state and non-state sponsored terrorism. The primary concern was with 'rogue' states, 'failed' nation states, and non-state organizations. The question asked regarded what had to be done in order to rectify the faulty performance of intelligence services in the industrialized states, but also how to redress rusty state mechanisms in the developing world in the new security environment. Following the campaign accompanying the 'war against terror', the vast majority of new publications, which touched upon international security and Christian–Muslim relations, concentrated on terrorism and the need to heighten security measures. In practice, the intent was to improve the functioning of the global state system at the same time as Western intelligence gathering.

Yet most writings on terrorism remained out of focus, mixing together the acts of followers of al-Qaeda, Islamic Jihad, IRA, ETA, Saddam Hussein and the like. In this sense, Brian Jenkins is right in saying that

'what is called terrorism seems to depend on the point of view . . . At some point in this expanding use of the term, terrorism can mean just what those who use the term (not the terrorists) want it to mean: any violent act by any opponent' (Jenkins 1975: 1–2). As Humpty-Dumpty, Lewis Carroll's character, puts it: when one uses a word, it means what one decides that it means. . . . Defining who is a terrorist is more complicated than it might seem. After 11 September 2001, a number of governments found themselves caught between the policies they needed to adopt and the language they used. Ultimately, this led to the most serious shortcoming of the Western response to the recent rise of Islamist terrorism: the lack of strategic focus and consequently of a clear definition of political objectives and a definable enemy in the US-led war against terrorism. As a consequence, the image of a Christian–Muslim frontier has been strengthened even further.

Paradoxically, conflict acts as a catalyst in the evolution towards a global consciousness of the existence of a world society. It may seem strange that this study, which explicitly defends the idea of an emerging global society, focuses on the civilizational frontier between Christianity and Islam. Moreover, one of the defining characteristics of the countries and regions situated on the Christian–Muslim frontier, from southeast Europe to southeast Asia, is communal conflict, which resurges with unexpected vigour in the contemporary age of reconciliation and globalization. Yet this is the point exactly. People become conscious of the existence of a global society through the juxtaposition of various, apparently opposing, identities. Any acts of conflict or cooperation are the fruit of a specific experience of contact and coexistence among communities with different identities. People's behaviour is thus determined by the psychological process of positioning themselves with regard to 'the other' – in terms of either opposition or cooperation. Finally, the way in which people realize today the existence of a global society is in their recognition of the existence of crises with global impact. They recognize this while reading newspapers or watching TV, i.e. when using the globalized means of communication that bring distant peoples and their conflicts closer to them, in the way that TV channels brought the problems in Bosnia and East Timor to everyone's home.

If one thinks of world society as a global system in constant evolution, based on conflict and conflict resolution, it becomes clear that the concept of the Muslim–Christian frontier defines this global society probably better than relations and conflicts among nation states. Wars have been fought for centuries against properly constituted states, and this has been for one reason: namely that duly constituted states pursue narrow objectives, and can be subdued and managed. Yet the idea of the civilizational frontier relates to manifestations of conflict which go beyond the image of a world built out of nation states. The brutal and chaotic divisions of Lebanon and Bosnia, the bloody conflicts in Cyprus, Iraq, Kosovo,

East Timor, Egypt, Chechnya and the Philippines, and the terrorist attacks on US targets around the world have clearly indicated the threat. These conflicts are global in terms of both their scope and their role in sharpening popular consciousness of the necessity to respond, globally, to deviant expressions of distinctiveness. Moreover, the crises listed above practically illustrate first, the uneven path of development of such institutions of global society as the United Nations, which has the vocation of a pillar of international law but lacks the means to implement it, and second, the rise of global civil society, with its active defence of human rights and its struggle against the negative effects of globalization. Even Huntington points out, while reassessing his idea of the 'clash of civilizations', that 'cultural assertion and civilizational consciousness' are merely a counterforce generated by the real forces of integration in the world (Huntington 1996: 36).

Some theorists of globalization insist that the rise of world society is related to the decline of the modern nation state. This process, however, is extremely complex, and one of its elements is exactly the role of global crises as a catalyst in the process of an emerging consciousness of 'world society'. It is increasingly understood that forms of collective identity that differ from the idea of loyalty to the nation state, and which include religious identity, still have an important role to play in world politics. Communal identities are here to stay for an indefinite period of time. The relationship between the global structure of nation states and of civilizations is a key issue in this book. Contemporary states have an important purpose: to deliver political (i.e. public) goods to their citizens – security from crime and oppression, public order, logistical and communication infrastructure, health, water, energy, and various social services. Moreover, in order to provide security as a public good, states have to interact in an increasingly globalized world. Yet the cultural cohesion of the underlying communal structures, the perceptions of group equality (or inequality) and, most importantly, the existing systems of social values which help build security regimes are to a large extent related to a different and complex social phenomenon – the one called civilization. The most compelling systems of values that exist today are religious, and they offer comfort to troubled souls in references to a just order beyond this place. For this reason, religious systems of values have always been an important factor in the construction of social relationships on a very broad scale.

The rise of a global Islamist movement urged the most influential political actors in the world to call for strengthening the system of states. Restoring or building nation states in the place of failed states which have served as a power base for Islamist extremists was the stated goal of US President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair in launching their war against terror and building an international antiterrorist coalition to achieve its ends. In order to build political support for this campaign against Islamist terrorism, the US President was not only

forced to re-define the unilateralist policy that characterized his first months in office; he also understood that the financial, political and policing struggle against terrorism was global, and that he had little chance of winning it if he did not look beyond the old circle of friends in the Atlantic alliance, bound together during the Cold War. After all, the objective was not to smash other people's states but to help those who had failed to build their own, and thus avoid the risk of violent non-state actors disseminating havoc around the world. This was the message that resonated around the world in the autumn of 2001. In this sense, the United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan stressed repeatedly that the world needed strong states as building blocks of international stability. Yet whether those who sent the message before him followed it consistently is another story.

Violent conflict in the contemporary world is most often caused by arguments among states for territory, by opposing economic and trade interests, or by the struggle of groups with distinct identities over what they perceive as domination, discrimination and oppression. These causes of conflict are often intermingled. Each concrete crisis in international security demonstrates a mixture of rival political and economic interests, fuelled by opposing cultural identities. Religious identity is very durable. It is the most compelling way to communicate a sense of belonging. All this makes it an influential political factor, especially in times of social change. Finally, and this constitutes a recurrent argument in this book, most of the problems related to the Christian–Muslim frontier are institutional, and reside in the inability of a particular society or global society to construct a proper institutional framework to accommodate distinct communal identities, and to curb the risk of discrimination and oppression. Perceptions of discrimination are the guiding motive in the psychological divide in the Christian–Muslim frontier.

In this sense, the constructivist project in international relations (IR) theory rightly emphasizes that social relations depend on the way individuals and social groups interpret them and ultimately reconstruct them in their social practice and institutions. Even if the constructivist project has suffered from a certain amorphousness and lack of empirical backing, it still bears a strong promise: to explain better than the theoretical trends that have dominated the theory of international relations for decades the two parallel principles of organizing global society, nation states and civilizational complexes. Some analysts relate constructivism to certain holistic theories in the study of international relations, such as postmodernism and world society. Others look at it as a middle ground that will bring together all the major theoretical schools, including realism and liberalism. All analysts, however, agree that the constructivist project still desperately lacks the necessary empirical foundations. This study of the civilizational frontier between Christianity and Islam as a zone of contact in which people construct and reconstruct their social and communal

relations in the direction of either conflict or cooperation is meant to be a modest contribution to the relevant empirical evidence and to understanding the make-up of human society. Having said that, I feel that my research has shown that it would be counterproductive to abide blindly by certain limits that are attributed to the constructivist project. The Christian–Muslim frontier is, among other things, a psychological phenomenon, and forgetting this would be inappropriate. Constructivism moves away from individual and psychological interpretations of reality, and explains international relations as constructed through discursive practices. However, people build Christian–Muslim relations in their minds, and these are subjective interpretations of historical memories, experience and myths, which take their final shape through people's discursive practices. In the end the mental constructions of the frontier reflect motivated (even if often unconscious) biases in decision-making, which influence social reality.

I would like to conclude this introductory chapter by stressing that I understand the Christian–Muslim frontier as a socially constructed relationship that has historically developed in the zone of Christian–Muslim contact, and is built into the political, social, psychological, security and economic relations of the growing world society today. The following chapters will begin putting together the image of the frontier by looking at the history of the construction of the frontier, the role of the frontier in the establishment of large multiethnic empires, nation states, and the contemporary mixture of communities. All this has historically made the Christian–Muslim frontier an essential element in the geopolitics of the frontier.

Note

1 The thesis of 'the end of history' as a history of ideologies is attributed to Francis Fukuyama, even if he himself reversed this argument on the last page of his famous 1989 essay 'The End of History?' Curiously, people tend not to read the question mark in the title, and thus miss the whole point. Fukuyama's conclusion is that there were too many assertions about the end of the history of ideologies in the past, and the end of communism (and with it the end of the Cold War confrontation) may one day be superseded by another opposition of ideologies.

2 The history of the Christian–Muslim frontier

Several elements define the history of the Christian–Muslim zone of contact: the opposition of Christian and Muslim empires; the wave-like movement of the frontier between them, which left behind numerous religious minorities; the dualism between an eclectic imperial culture and localism related to social and political fragmentation; the existence of state-frontiers, frontier provinces and city-frontiers; and, above all, the essentially political character of Christian–Muslim relations throughout the ages.

At the same time a divide and a bridge between civilizations, the Christian–Muslim frontier is an elusive concept that finds expression today both in the individual's sense of belonging to a confessional community and in society's historical memory concerning empires with a specific religious identity. One can still visit a mosque in Kosovo, in the plain where a Serbian soldier killed the Ottoman Sultan Murad in the 1389 battle of Kosovo, where local Albanians keep a fire burning to the memory of the Sultan. They thus commemorate a foreign ruler who symbolizes the link to the once glorious empire of their co-religionists. The concept of the civilizational frontier is rooted in people's historical memory, collective psychology and capital of myths (Braudel 1966: 170). The Islamic and Christian worlds came together in four major encounters: the common links to ancient Greek philosophy and to the Judaic religious tradition; the Arab and Turkish waves of Muslim advance on the Christian world; the European reversal of the tide in the era of colonialism, and, finally, the postmodern interspersing of communities, accompanied by a certain decline of the role of the nation state in the age of globalization and construction of new functional frontiers, especially in the minds of people. Yet the element that is most important for this study is the fact that, throughout history, relations between Christianity and Islam were essentially political, and the confessional identity of various communities has always been a way of expressing a political identity.

Two trends characterize the whole complex of social relations in the eastern Mediterranean. Multiethnic empires, focused on a certain religion, have existed since ancient times in unity with and opposition to

another tendency – the fragmentation of the region into much smaller social, cultural and political entities. The 'localism' (to use the term of Albert Hourani) was the older trend, and it was related to people's tendency to identify with a local community, town, province or, more recently, relatively small nation state. The city-states of Greece and Phoenicia, and the tribal states in Thrace, illustrated this trend in ancient times. The landscape of the Balkans and the Levantine coast – a sequence of mountains, valleys, uneven coastlines and islands, which had nothing of the 'physical grandeur' of the Eurasian or North American plains – strengthened the insular local mentality of people in the Eastern Mediterranean. The great empires of Alexander, Byzantium and the Ottomans spread over a colourful mosaic of local communities, which turned inwards for inspiration. Yet several centuries after their creation, each empire inevitably allowed for diversity to triumph once again.

The imperial pattern of political organization in the eastern Mediterranean developed when eclectic empires overwhelmed the fragmented local communities. Each empire converged around a specific strategic culture and a certain form of religion. A dominant religion kept the multi-communal empire together and shaped its concepts of security, sovereignty, political organization, position in the world hierarchy, and strategic ambitions (Kupchan 1994: 5). The Macedonian empire found its spiritual focus in the ethical religion of Homer and the Hellenes; the Roman Empire in the Roman civic religion, with its cult of the spirit (*numina*) of the state; the Byzantine Empire in Christianity; the Arab Caliphate and the Ottoman Empire in Islam; Russia in Orthodox Christianity; Persia in Shiism; and Austria in Catholic Christianity.

The first of the empires mentioned above sprang out of the plural Macedonian state, situated at the point of convergence of three ethnic domains: Greek, Thracian and Illyrian. To the insular, exclusive vision of the state, which was described by Plato and embodied in the Greek *polis*, Philip and Alexander of Macedon successfully opposed a political model with 'open ended' frontiers, allowing for expansion and amalgamation of various cultures (Gottmann 1980a: 54). The difference was not so much in a certain philosophical disagreement between Plato and Aristotle, as it is argued sometimes, but in the difference between communal relations in the Greek *polis* and in the eclectic Macedonian state. The ethnic exclusiveness typical of the Greek city-states was unknown to the Macedonian political system. This was one of the reasons why, during their expansionist campaigns, Philip and Alexander could easily co-opt people from the conquered countries as soldiers in their victorious armies. This was the qualitative distinction that gave birth to the trend of regional empires ruling over the patchwork of civilizations in the eastern Mediterranean for millennia. Taking account of the changing ideological tendencies, one can trace this feature in each of the empires that rose, one after the other, in the eastern Mediterranean. The ascent of Christianity, for example, was

a leap from the ethnic limitation of the Judaic religion of God's 'elected people' to a universal message about the possibility of salvation for every individual human soul, thus winning the hearts of millions of people beyond the Jewish community. Similarly, the doctrinal specificity of Islam, with its appeal to equality and compassion among Muslims, attracted disadvantaged members of the stratified and immobilized societies of Asia. This facilitated Islam's relatively peaceful dissemination along the trading routes in central, southern and southeastern Asia, and in sub-Saharan Africa.

Christianity, since its official recognition in the Roman Empire in 313, and Islam, since its inception in 622, became largely political religions, involved in the political processes of the states and societies that embraced them. The opposition between the two was not a theological dispute but a question of power and politics, a question of identifying 'us, the good' followers of the true god, versus 'them, the bad' followers of the false god, and of 'our' right to subdue 'them', as Tzvetan Todorov puts it (Todorov 1982: 195). Medieval Europe looked at the islamized Middle East, and at Jerusalem, in the way a poor periphery looks at the wealthy centre. The wars waged by Byzantium and the Western crusaders with the objective of re-conquering the Holy Land might be seen as expressive cases of this complex of inferiority in the periphery. Only after the discovery of the maritime route to India, which bypassed the Islamic obstacle, and the conquest of America, which built new confidence within the Western societies, did this vision of the world change, and Europe turn its sights to the Atlantic (Defarges 1994: 30). Arguably, Columbus and his pious sponsors launched their 'round-the-world' expedition (which they expected would lead them to India) with the objective of raising the funds necessary for a new crusade in which they would take back Jerusalem. There is something symbolic in the fact that America was discovered in 1492, the year of the definite Spanish victory that expelled the Muslim Moors from western Europe.

The wave-like movement of the frontier

The expansion of Islam followed two major patterns. On the one hand, it affirmed itself as a world religion in a centuries-long political and territorial struggle against its monotheist precursor, Christianity. On the other hand, it expanded along the ancient Silk Road, the coasts of the Indian Ocean and the caravan routes of the Sahara, following established commercial routes which Arab and other merchants had used for centuries to do trade with distant civilizations. It was in this way that Islam penetrated relatively peacefully into the heart of China, Indonesia and Africa. The second wave was smoother, implying a primarily cultural influence and commercial cooperation, while the first one – the expansion into the established territory of another world civilization in the Mediterranean

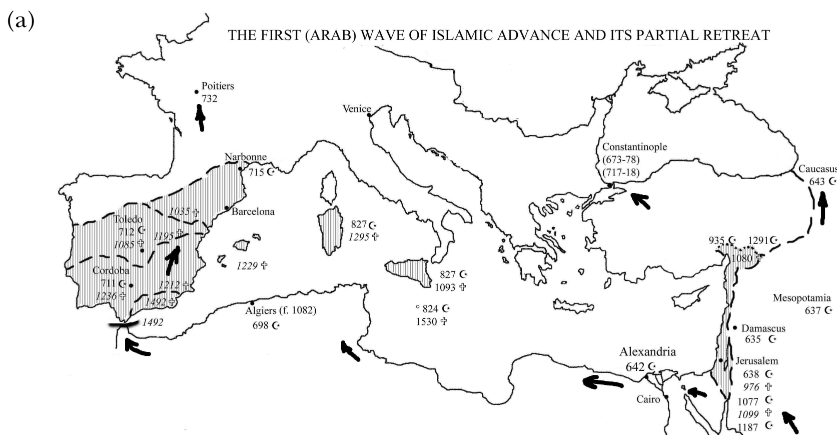
and Europe – took a longer period of time, and was characterized by tension and slow and painful movements of the political frontier between Christian and Muslim empires.

Islam poured from the ancient nomadic pool into the Christian domain in the eastern Mediterranean and southeastern Europe in two major waves associated with two ethnic groups – Arabs and Turks – with an intermission corresponding to the crisis of the Arab caliphate and a temporary reversal of the tide by the Byzantines and the Western crusaders (see Map 2.1). The frontier between Christian and Muslim authority moved back and forth from the sudden Muslim conquest of Syria in 637 to the demise of the Ottoman Empire in 1920. William McNeill and Bat Ye'or have written at length on this idea of a wave-like movement of the frontier (McNeill 1986: 76–80; Bat Ye'or 1991: 31–64). A series of empires with religious legitimization – Byzantine, Arab, Ottoman, Austrian and Russian – took part in a relay race of civilizations, in which the Muslim world had a cultural, economic and military superiority for more than a millennium. From an economic point of view, the prosperous Islamic civilization was the most urbanized (apart from China) and the most sophisticated civilization for a long time. Only two centuries ago, Christian Europe managed to reverse the balance, arguably because of dynamism created by shocks and abrupt changes at a time when the Muslim civilization was already stagnating.

The movement of the Christian–Muslim frontier created huge tension, consuming the energy and lives of millions of people, and deeply affecting group identities in the zone of contact. Nowhere else, in no other part of the history of mankind, was the mobilizing force of identity demonstrated so clearly and over such a long period of time. States and borders in this confrontation were different from their Westphalian facades today. Empires established bureaucracies, but their model of sovereignty allowed for a broad interpretation of frontiers, including within them transitory zones and captive minorities that were 'ghettoized', but retained their distinctive characteristics. The two waves of Muslim advance established two different systems regulating Islam's relations with the heterodox Christians and Jews: the Arab *dhimmi* and the Ottoman *millet* systems.

The Islamic impulse in the seventh century broke the vicious circle of the marginal existence of the Arabs at the point of convergence of the Byzantine, Ethiopian and Persian power zones. Motivated by their young, indigenous religion, the Muslims wrestled Syria away from the Byzantines in 636, defeated Persia in 637, and captured Jerusalem in 638. Their expansion seemed initially just another leak from the Eurasian nomadic pool into the Mediterranean zone of settled civilizations, while Muhammad was looked down upon as yet another heretic (Haddad 1981: 11–12). Yet the Islamic spiritual impulse and its structured legal system innoculated the Muslim community against dissolution in the established Christian civilization. The initial advance was facilitated by the exhaustion of the

(a)



(b)

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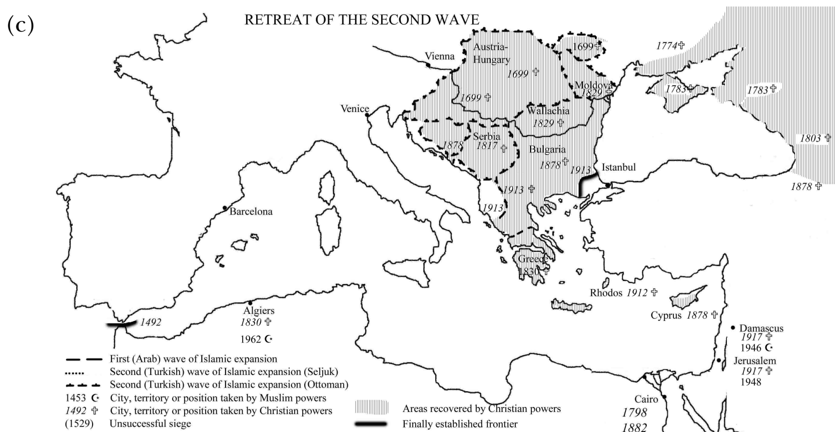


Map 2.1 The two waves of Islamic advance on the Christian–Muslim frontier.

Byzantine and Persian empires. Islam was soon able to challenge the Christian (Byzantine) Empire by establishing its own powerful theocracy, the Caliphate. In 639 the Arabs occupied Egypt and moved the country's capital to Cairo, reverting Egypt from the syncretic Hellenic Mediterranean civilization focused on Alexandria to an introvert society squeezed between a grand river and a grand desert. For Byzantium, the loss of Alexandria meant the end of an era and the loss of ecumenical legitimization. It contracted from a claim on the Roman heritage to its Greek cultural element. For more than two centuries thereafter Byzantium was forced to lead a struggle for survival against the Muslim Arabs, who defeated the Byzantine navy in 655, opening the way for two sieges of Constantinople (673–678 and 717–718), and who occupied Armenia in 693. The military defeat of the Byzantine Empire was preceded by an economic and ideological decline, which was not prevented by the reforms of Emperor Heraclius (610–641) and the system of motivated farmer-soldiers that he created.

The rapid Arab advance shocked Christian Europe. Only 100 years separate the first attacks on Byzantium in 632 and the Battle of Poitiers, the most distant point in the heart of Europe that the Muslim power was ever able to reach. This was an indication of an inherent weakness of the Christian world in the face of its Islamic opponent – a weakness which characterized the early centuries of Christian–Muslim relations. In the West the Arab thrust continued after the conquest of the Maghreb, which was completed in about 709. The Arab forces crossed the Strait of Gibraltar into Spain, where discord among local Christian leaders facilitated the Muslim conquest. The frontier then moved beyond the Pyrenees for forty years. The Arabs reached Toulouse in 721, but logistical difficulties and internal conflicts prevented their further advance. After suffering defeat by the Franks at Poitiers in 732, the Arabs finally withdrew to the Iberian Peninsula by 759. The centralized Muslim theocracy gradually gave way to a plethora of caliphates, sultanates, emirates and other types of polities in the domain of Muslim sovereignty, but the sense of unity (*wahda*) of the Muslim community (the *umma*) endured. It gave legitimization to those who sought to rule over all Muslims, notably the Ottoman Muslim Turks. This idea of *wahda* recurs time and again in the social theories and practices of the modern Muslim societies – from the creation of the Arab League and the political union of Egypt and Syria in 1958–1961 to the Iraqi conquest of Kuwait, and the latter-day Islamist movements.

The Arabs, who became the statesmen of an empire, not only extended to the Egyptian and Syrian Christians the Koranic principle of tolerance to the People of the Book, but also encouraged their schismatic Monophysite Churches,[1] luring them further away from the rest of the Christian world. In compliance with the Koranic prescriptions, Jews, Christians and, hypothetically, Zoroastrians entered the category of 'People of the Book' (*dhimmis*), and had to establish contractual relations with the *Dar al-Islam*, the domain of Islamic sovereignty. As monotheist cousins, they enjoyed

reasonable security as long as they paid the *jyzia* poll tax, which was intended for non-Muslims. It is often argued that the personal experience of the Prophet Muhammad, who learned the tenets of the monotheist creed from Jewish and Eastern Christian priests wandering in his homeland, contributed to the establishment of this principle of tolerance. In addition, on several occasions the personal followers of Muhammad found refuge with the neighbouring Christian rulers against the persecution of the pagan masters of Mecca and Arabia.

Nevertheless, the People of the Book remained practically separated from the dominant strata of society, and there was hardly any dialogue. This was a reality that the Monophysite Christians, who had welcomed the Muslim armies as allies against the oppression of the Chalcedonian prelates of Constantinople, were soon to realize. The number of Christians in the areas occupied by Islam dwindled, not because of deliberate policies of conversion but because additional taxation and social restrictions (on building churches, carrying arms, wearing bright colours, etc.) motivated many *dhimmis* to embrace Islam. Under Muhammad and the Umayyad caliphs (661–750), Islam was not a pronouncedly proselytizing religion and respect for the People of the Book was the general policy. Yet the rule of the Abbasid dynasty (750–936), which saw the ascent of non-Arab Muslim elements in a period of prosperity, especially in trade and the crafts, was also a time of large-scale conversions in the already absorbed territories. As a result, relations between the Muslim power and the captured Christian communities became part of the civilizational frontier, a filter for any form of cultural exchange. The Christian Arabs, who had once translated the Greek philosophical texts into Arabic, became part of the frontier and a channel for cultural exchange. What is more, communal distinction and functional separation became an inalienable feature of most societies in the frontier zone with the establishment of the various versions of the *dhimmi* system.

The Abbasid Caliphate then itself went through a process of decline, struck by the same old problem: inadequate taxation. Evidence from the last decades of the Abbasid dynasty, especially in the writings of ibn-Haldun, suggests that the Caliphate suffered from organizational insufficiencies and crumbled under the pressure of ill-conceived and burdensome fiscal policies. This led to new political and economic fragmentation in the eastern Mediterranean. 'Liberal' sentiment in the centre granted more autonomy to rulers in the Islamic periphery (Glubb 1965: 397). The Byzantines used this chance to recover some of their earlier possessions, including Jerusalem, while the West launched the Spanish Reconquista and the crusades – a new imperial thrust in the eastern Mediterranean. The crusades were a triangular relationship: a Western response to the Muslim advance, but also a claim on primacy over Eastern Christianity, which came soon after the schism between the two Christian centres of power in 1054.

The Abbassid decline coincided with the advent of the Turks, who stopped the Christian advance, revived the crippling Muslim empire (nominally under Abbassid sovereignty), and breathed new energy into the Islamic faith. The Turkic Seljuk dynasty (1038–1194) crushed the Byzantines at Manzikert in Armenia in 1071, a symbolic debut on the stage of Christian–Muslim confrontation. They then created the Sultanate of Rum in eastern Anatolia, already weakened by wars against Arabs and Persians and by the suppression of *iconoclasm* (which imposed a ban on religious images, such as icons) and the Paulician heresy, two dissident movements that were popular in the eastern frontier areas of the Byzantine Empire (Foss 1975). In 1077, several years after the victory at Manzikert, the Seljuks captured Jerusalem, meeting almost no resistance from its Byzantine rulers. This loss of Jerusalem served as one of the pretexts for the organizers of the Western Christian crusades. While the Seljuks consolidated their power in central and eastern Anatolia, they were not yet able to wage a serious resistance in Palestine. The participants in the First Crusade (1096–1099) captured the Holy City of Jerusalem on 14 July 1099. As far as most of them had ventured to the Holy Land as pilgrims, after the conquest of Jerusalem some of them started returning home. Others stayed in the Middle East and established Christian states, despite an earlier promise to leave the conquered lands under the administration of the Byzantine emperor. Nine decades later, a Kurdish Seljuk officer by the name of Salah ud-Din (Saladin is the Western transcription of his name), nominally acting on behalf of the Abbasid caliphs, led to victory the Muslim attempts to destroy the crusader presence in the Middle East. In July 1187, Saladin totally defeated the Christian army of Guy of Lusignan, king of Jerusalem, at Hattin in eastern Gallilee. He then took Jerusalem by assault on 2 October 1187.

When the Seljuk sultanate disintegrated in its turn in 1243, under the Mongol onslaught, it was again the Muslim Turks – the Ottomans – who provided the energy to save the Muslim empire, whose leadership definitely passed to the Turkic ethnic group. The terms Turkish and Muslim even became interchangeable in Europe for centuries. Yet the specific characteristic of the Ottoman Empire, which is of great interest for this study, is its transformation into an actual state-frontier. Its defining feature was a mixture of different confessional and ethnic groups with separate functions. The concept of the state-frontier can explain much about the realities of the civilizational frontier in various parts of the world. The Ottoman Empire simply provides the perfect example to study this.

The Ottoman state-frontier

The Ottoman wave marked the zenith of the Muslim advance against Christianity. It also laid the foundations of a state that embodied the idea of the civilizational frontier as a zone. Following the classical model of

empires in the eastern Mediterranean, it brought together numerous Muslim and Christian communities, which did not mix but retained their separate social, economic, and political functions. The Ottoman Empire, which never became a homogeneous Muslim state, matched the two trends in the social and political development of the area: an eclectic empire and an impressive blend of cultures and sects, where each segment preserved its identity and sense of coherence. The Muslim frontier culture, islamization, the *millets* as a system of control, and the specific role of frontier provinces were the elements that shaped the Ottoman Empire as a state-frontier.

The Muslim frontier culture was the backbone of the extraordinary expansion of the Ottomans. The small frontier state of the first Ottoman emirs, situated next to Constantinople, embodied the notion of the military frontier state, a defining feature that did not disappear in 1453, when the Turks occupied Constantinople, or during the two sieges of Vienna (1529 and 1648). Paul Wittek argued that the major forces which drove the Ottoman expansion were the frontier culture of the empire and the material motivation of the enthusiastic *ghazi* fighters. The *ghazi* were the spearhead of the Ottoman conquests, and were recompensed with booty and military estates called *timars* (Inalcik 1985). When in 1516–1517 the Ottomans subdued the Mameluke state and established sovereignty over the holy sites of both Sunni and Shia Islam (Mecca, Madina, Jerusalem, Najaf, and Karbala), they also laid a claim on the religious authority in the Muslim empire. The very institution of the caliphate passed from the last Abbassid caliph, Mohammed Abu Ja'far Mutawakkil, to the victorious Sultan Selim I in humiliating circumstances. Muslim chieftains, from North Africa and Iberia to the eastern African coast, pledged allegiance to the Sultan as the guardian of the Islamic world against the infidel. The Turks were greeted as the necessary salvation from political disorder in the *Dar al-Islam* (the Abode of Islam), because 'the whole tradition of later Islam (or at least Sunni Islam) was Hobbesian: any government was better than anarchy' (Hourani 1970: 4–5). The Ottoman conquests were ideologically justified as a holy war (*jihad*) against the unbelievers. Moreover, whenever the Sultan attacked one of his Muslim neighbours (Anatolia in 1388–1415, Syria and Egypt in 1514–1517), the *muftis* condemned in *fetwas* the Muslim rulers of those countries for showing disloyalty when the Sultan was fighting the infidel (Inalcik 1995: 14). Islam remained the key to imperial sovereignty in the Empire until 1924, when Kemal Atatürk abolished the caliphate and the Turks retreated from 'imperial grandeur into Turanian nationalism in the aftermath of a military defeat' (Cragg 1992: 116).

As a whole, the first centuries of the Ottoman state-frontier were characterized by higher social mobility than was the case in medieval Europe, and this bolstered the dynamism of the empire. During that period, the Ottomans granted *timars* even to Christians, mostly in Albania and Bosnia. No less than thirty Albanians served as Ottoman Grand Viziers. The

Herzegovinian convert Mehmet Pasha Sokolovic was the Grand Vizier of Suleyman the Magnificent at the time when the Ottoman Empire was at its zenith. Western military men served in high positions under the Ottomans. The imperative condition, however, was conversion to Islam (Logoreci 1977: 23, 30; Jacques 1995: 214). Islamization and Muslim colonization contributed to the development of the Ottoman Empire as a state-frontier. By contrast, the decline of the empire can be explained by the loss of this frontier spirit and dynamism of the system. The *sipahi* cavalrymen increasingly settled in what they turned into hereditary domains, in order to enjoy the fruits of earlier war efforts, while their expansionist moral fibre gave way to hedonism.

The system of the *millets* (a Turkish corroboration of the Arabic word *milla*, which means creed, religion or faith) was the institutional framework through which the Ottoman frontier culture spread around the empire. The *millets*, which were established by imperial *berat* (decree), hypothetically incarnated the Koranic principle of tolerance to the People of the Book, and granted the various confessional communities autonomy in matters of personal status (such as marriage). Yet in the absence of a specific legislation, Muslim law, the *sharia*, was the common law. The subjugated *millets*, but also the non-Turkic Arab Muslims, were left out of such central themes in history as the collective struggle for power and use of power, which any social group needs to express itself. All Orthodox Christians in the empire were gathered for convenience in the *Rum millet* under the spiritual authority of the Greek *Phanariote* patriarch (from the *Phanar* neighbourhood in Istanbul, where his residence has been situated for centuries), and all Monophysite, Georgian Orthodox and Gypsy Christians, as well as the Bogomils, came under the spiritual jurisdiction of the Armenian Patriarch. The Ottomans thus relied on two ethnic communities, the Greeks and the Armenians, for the control of all Christian communities. Paradoxically, these two communities suffered most in the twentieth century, when the Turks turned from empire to nationalism (Sonyel 1993: 45 *et al.*). As the centralizing power of the Ottoman Empire lost momentum, the various communities became conscious of their deplorable condition and started struggling for autonomy – including religious autonomy – and the number of *millets* gradually increased to fourteen by the end of the nineteenth century. The Roman Catholics and Protestants in the empire had solely a representative, *wakil*, and not a head of *millet* or *millet-basi* in Istanbul (Tsimhoni 1993: xv). Albert Hourani (1947: 22; 1970) describes the Ottoman system as a mixture of closed communities which touched but did not mix, each being a 'world' sufficient to itself, and seeking to extract the ultimate loyalty of its members. It is this sense of the nature of the Ottoman system that prompts such writers as Georges Corm to characterize plural societies of the type of Lebanon and Bosnia as the 'last fragments of the Ottoman Empire', because they have preserved the Ottoman principle of communal separation (Corm 1986: 48).

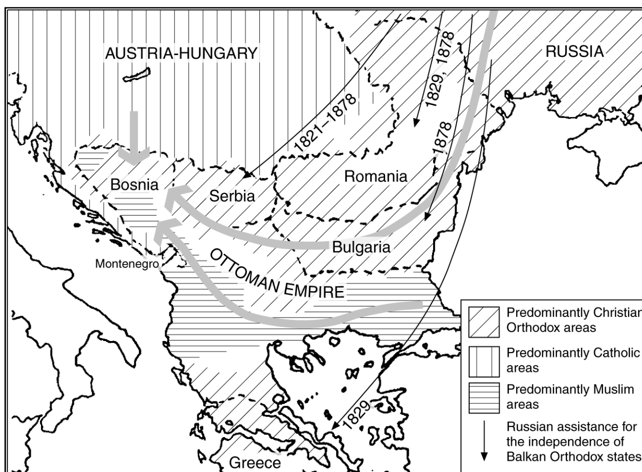
The Ottoman invasion led to the emergence of a triad of multinational empires in eastern Europe – Ottoman, Austrian and Russian. It was in the struggle against the Ottoman advance that the so-called Hereditary Lands of the Habsburg dynasty in Austria grew into a huge empire, with the endorsement of the whole Christian West. The Croatians and other peoples who lived in the vast areas of confrontation with the Ottomans voluntarily joined the Habsburg crown in 1526, after the defeat of their former Hungarian masters and in the face of a rising Ottoman threat (McCartney 1969: 8). This explanation of the *raison d'être* of the Habsburg Empire was evoked in the early twentieth century by the Serbian nationalists, who demanded its dissolution when it was clear that the Ottoman threat had dissipated (Miljus 1969: 11).

The Russian state also expanded into an empire in the struggle against Muslim powers. First, there was the struggle against the Tatars. The Russian revolt against the Muslim Tatars is still associated with the myth of the religious leader Sergi Radonezhski, who allegedly sanctified the act of killing a Muslim Tatar as a glorified expression of the freedom-loving spirit of the Christian Russians. The road towards the conquest of the Eurasion heartland and of vast parts of the Muslim frontier was open at the decline of the Nogai Horde – the strongest Muslim state opposing Russia in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. The next opponents were the Ottomans, and then Persia. The myth of opposition to Islam is fundamental for the Russian ethno-religious and political identity. Expansion in the Ottoman frontier became a survival strategy for Russia in the open Ukrainian steppe, and a clash of empires with a universal mission (LeDonne 1997: 148). Russia sealed its victories over the Ottoman Empire with the treaties of Küçuk Kaynarca (1774), Adrianople (1829), and San Stefano (1878). These treaties and the wars that preceded them were part of the realization of a strategic plan devised by the eighteenth-century Russian War Minister Potemkin, which included: forward action on the frontier; creating independent states in the conquered countries; annexing them later; and subduing the militant Muslim frontier communities in Crimea and the Caucasus, which stood in the way of Russia's advance. The Christian Georgians and Armenians in the Caucasus were actually incorporated into the Russian Empire after they had been wrestled away from the Muslim empire, but the Orthodox countries in the Balkans (Romania, Bulgaria, Greece and Serbia) became independent states mostly due to their geographic proximity to western Europe and the balance of power politics in the triad of Western, Orthodox (Russian) and Ottoman powers, which interlocked in the region. Alliances and conflicts emerged between all three members of this triad. At least three times Russia befriended its enemy and prevented the definite breakdown of the Ottoman Empire: in 1799 against Napoleon, in 1833 against Muhammad Ali, and in 1913 against the Bulgarians and their Balkan allies (Thaden 1965: 132). Russia needed the decaying Ottoman Empire, from which it could easily cut away

pieces one after the other. Elsewhere in the 1850s, the British, the French and the Austrians cooperated in containing Russia's expansion by siding with the Ottomans and defeating it in the Crimean War. It was Western backing that prompted the unification of Orthodox (but non-Slavic) Wallachia and Moldova into a completely new state, Romania, in the aftermath of the Crimean War. The goal was to create a viable state that would block further territorial expansion of Russia in the Balkans. The political implications of pro-French affinities in Latinophone Romania date from that period.

The triple Ottoman, Russian and Austrian rivalry over Bosnia, at the point of contact of the three civilizations – Muslim, Christian Orthodox, and Catholic – was the emanation of this triangle (see Map 2.2).

A system of frontier provinces, which represented belts of military settlements next to the border, with their specific social structure, emerged in the areas where the three powers came into contact. Such frontier provinces were the Austrian 'military frontier', Ottoman Albania, Bosnia and the Northern Caucasus, as well as Russia's Cossack areas. The Austrian military frontier zone encompassed the largest part of Krajina, Vojvodina, Banat and Transylvania, where the Austrian authorities settled Christian refugees from Turkey with the intention that these people, who had bitter memories of oppression, would be the best defenders of the frontier against the Muslim empire. The Cossacks – peasant-soldiers who were the spearhead of the Russian imperial army for centuries – were a typical frontier population, which enjoyed an unusual level of freedom in a generally illiberal state. In exchange, they had a permanent military obligation to the emperor. Their well-defined military organization and



Map 2.2 The triple rivalry over Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Source: Apostolov, M. (2001) *Religious Minorities, Nation States and Security: Five Cases from the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean*, Aldershot: Ashgate, p. 124.

conservatism, which was most probably due to the freedom and privileges they enjoyed, were their key distinctive features. Similarly, in Albania, Bosnia and the Northern Caucasus, the Ottoman Turks relied on the islamized local non-Turkish elite to defend the Muslim empire. The Ottomans clearly distinguished between frontier provinces, commanded by *uç-begis* (*uç* meaning frontier), and the already assimilated interior (Inalcik and Quataert 1994: 14). The frontier provinces retained a high degree of autonomy and an obligation to defend the frontier. This conditioned the unusual political psychology of the people of the frontier: conservative, leading a low-energy and low-technology existence, scared by the idea of modernization, and deeply concerned with the issue of autonomy. Not by chance, the Muslims from the frontier provinces fiercely resisted the *Tanzimat* reforms of Sultan Mahmoud II, whose primary goal was the centralization of power and income distribution (Pinson 1994: 75–6). Similarly, the Cossacks were a major conservative force in the resistance against the Bolshevik revolution in Russia. The frontier population regarded the nominal subordination to the centre as a trade-off for the protection and political organization provided by it. Consequently, most frontier communities lacked, until very recently, their own political organization, cohesion and sense of common purpose. This was the case of the Muslims in Bosnia, Albania, Kosovo and the northern Caucasus. Their nationalism was clearly retarded in comparison with that of their Christian neighbours, and its expressions in the late twentieth century inevitably bore the traits of both romanticism and extremism.

In his theory of elite behaviour Vilfredo Pareto argues that, in the beginning of the history of each society, military, religious, and commercial aristocracies constitute the key part of the governing elite (Pareto 1968). The victorious warrior, the prosperous merchant, and the opulent plutocrat are all men of such quality, each in his own field, so as to be superior to the average individual. However, as time goes by considerable differences arise between the ability and the label of an elite. In Pareto's view, aristocracies do not last, and history is their graveyard. Aristocracies decay not only in numbers, but also in quality. They lose their vigour parallel to the decline in the surplus value they can produce, which has enabled them to win power and hold on to it in previous times. This is exactly what happened in the Ottoman Empire after the reign of Suleyman the Magnificent. Moreover, if a governing elite does not find ways to assimilate exceptional individuals who come from the subject groups in society, an imbalance is created in the political and social body. This can be resolved either through opening new channels of social mobility, or through a violent overthrow of the old, ineffectual governing elite by a new one that is capable of governing. In the case of the Ottoman Empire the new forces were the new national elites, which rose in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

In the final resort the disintegrating Ottoman state-frontier was forced

to give way to a number of states, whose foundation was secular nationalism. The Ottoman imprint, however, went deep into the political psychology, elite behaviour and material culture of the Balkans, the Arab Middle East and North Africa. Albert Hourani argues that some typical characteristics of Ottoman political psychology can be observed in the behaviour of politicians in the independent Arab and Balkan states (Hourani 1970). These people are patient and cautious, carefully balancing one force against another in order to neutralize all of them, giving the enemy time and space to ruin himself. They assess with persistence how far they can go, and always leave themselves a way of escape. Jonathan Fox (2001: 39) argues that there exists a feeling among the inhabitants of the Middle East 'that religion and autocracy are normal [elements of political life] . . . and therefore do not deserve any special response'. If one allows for certain nuances, this assertion holds not just for the Middle East but for the whole post-Ottoman space, which to a large extent overlaps with the historical zone of contact between Christianity and Islam. Many more people in the countries of the former communist bloc – which made up part of the zone of contact in southeastern Europe, Russia, Ukraine, the Caucasus, and Central Asia – are likely to think that a regime with an 'iron fist' has definite advantages for their society. Paradoxically, this is one of the pillars of social stability in these countries. 'Perhaps expectations in the Middle East are lower', Fox (2001: 39) goes on, and thus participants in ethnic conflicts in the Middle East are less likely to respond to the presence of religious issues in their ethnic grievances and less likely to initiate for violent protests just because of religion.

Many common characteristics of states and societies in the Middle East and the Balkans 'can be explained by their having been ruled by the Ottomans; while many of the things that differentiate them can be explained by the different ways in which they emerged from the Ottoman Empire' (Hourani 1970: 2, 8). Some of them went through nationalist revolutions, others became French and British colonies, but those that first fell out of the Ottoman grip were annexed by Russia and Austria. The young nations had to cope with the legacy of a lack of distinct collective political experience under the Ottomans. The Muslim Arabs, Albanians and Bosnians faced an identity crisis at the end of the Ottoman period which was much stronger than that of the Christian peoples next door, for whom the crumbling Muslim empire was a foreign body. As Muslim members of the *umma*, the majority of the Arabs, Albanians and other peoples remained, for centuries, closer to the Ottoman system and bureaucracy than their Christian neighbours. It was the rising Turkish nationalism in the twentieth century that eventually estranged them from the central power.

The Russian Empire and the Christian–Muslim frontier

Russia's expansion into the Muslim frontier turned it into another frontier state, whose map resembled a marble cake and encompassed concentric circles of Christian Orthodox and Muslim populations. The core area around Muscovy overthrew the Tatar and Mongol rule, and gradually subjugated the former Tatar oppressors, notably the Noghay Horde in the sixteenth century, before it launched an impressive series of new acquisitions in the Eurasian heartland. The opening out to the south and east added to the Russian state areas inhabited by Muslim Tatars, Chuvash, and Bashkirs. Beyond those territories the Russian Empire established a belt of Christian Cossack settlements as frontier provinces whose purpose was to defend Russia against its Muslim neighbours. Yet the empire grew even further, entering the territories of Muslim peoples in the Crimea, Dagestan, and the northern Caucasus. After their conquest, the Christian countries in Trans-Caucasia and Bessarabia became yet another round of acquisitions. The last thrust into the Muslim world took place in Azerbaijan and Central Asia. Russia finally wrested these lands away from the Persian frontier at the end of the nineteenth century. The wars on the Ottoman Turkish frontier had the same old objective – territorial expansion into Armenia and the Balkans, where the Russians relied on the religious proximity with the local Christians. The objective was the expansion of first influence, and then sovereignty. Yet Great Power politics prevented this expansion in the Balkans and the Bolshevik Revolution in Armenia. Russia's imperial rulers always used the myth of the Muslim threat to mobilize their subjects and, in the final resort, to justify their authoritarianism.

The empire established strict control over its Muslim areas, but it never managed to pacify them completely. The northern Caucasus is a case in point. In effect, this very opposition with Russia contributed to the Islamization of this region. Before the Russians penetrated into Chechnya in the sixteenth century it was divided by tribal clanic societies, which were religiously divided – Christians to the west (the Adyghes Ossetians and some of the Kabardians), Muslims in the east (the various communities in Daghestan) and pagans in the centre (Chechens and Ingush) (Benningsen-Broxup 1996). In a way similar to the Albanians, the Chechens and the Ingush adopted Islam as a means of preserving their separate identity in the face of an external, Christian threat.

The demographic competition between Christian and Muslim peoples became an important issue in the mass psychology of the Russians. Arguably, it was the fear of the higher birth rate of the Muslim peoples that made the Russians accept with surprising calmness the demise of an empire dominated by them – the Soviet Union – in the 1990s. They regarded the end of the Union as an amputation that was necessary to prevent them from being swamped by a rapidly growing Muslim sea of

people. Nevertheless, the Muslim demographic threat in the Soviet Union was an exaggerated myth, and Table 2.1 indicates that the Russians clearly retained their demographic advantage in the Soviet era. The Muslim peoples made an unimpressive headway in the twentieth century. Many of them suffered heavy physical and psychological blows in the early Soviet decades; the number of Bashkirs declined from 1.5 million in 1897 to 1 million in 1926 as a result of the suppression of their independence in the 1920s, and grew to only 1.181 million in 1970 (Carrère d'Encausse 1979: 66). The Kazakhs suffered losses during Stalin's campaigns of collectivization and cultivation of the steppe in the 1920s and 1930s, while numerous Slavs moved into their country, leaving the local population in a minority by 1990. Tatarstan's population today is only 48 per cent Tatar (Yemelianova 1999: 625). During World War II Stalin deported some of the Muslim peoples of the Crimea and the Caucasus, accusing them of affinity with the Nazi invaders, who had reached the Caucasus in 1942. The deported peoples – the Crimean Tatars, the Chechens, the Ingush, the Karachays, the Balkars and the Meshkhetan Turks – suffered severe human losses. Some of them, exceptionally, demonstrated spectacular new growth after a new regime in Moscow, under Nikita Khrushchev, restored their rights. Thus the Chechens, who numbered 408 000 in 1939 and had increased to only 419 000 in 1959, rose to 581 800 in the late 1970s, after returning to their homeland (Carrère d'Encausse 1979: 66–7). The suppression of the Chechen independence movement in the 1990s is believed to have inflicted a new serious demographic blow to this

Table 2.1 Communal structure as percentage of total population in Russia

Confessional and ethnic groups	*1897*	*1926*	*1959*	*1970*
Eastern Christians:				
Russians	44.4	47.5	54.6	53.4
Ukrainians	19.4	21.4	17.8	16.9
Byelorussians	4.5	3.6	3.8	3.7
Moldavians	1.0	1.2	1.1	1.2
Georgians, Armenians	3.9	3.6	3.8	3.8
Western Christians:				
Latvians, Estonians, Finnish	2.3	2.2	1.5	1.4
Lithuanians	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.1
Muslims:				
Turko-Muslims and Tajiks	12.1	10.1	10.3	12.9
Tatars (Muslims)	1.9	1.7	2.4	2.5
Jews:				
	3.5	2.4	1.1	0.9

Source: Carrère d'Encausse, H. (1979) *Decline of An Empire: The Soviet Republics in Revolt*, New York: Newsweek Books, 60.

people. The story of the deported and returning Crimean Tatars and Meshkhetan Turks is still unveiling.

The Ottoman and Russian empires, which constituted part of the historical opposition between Christianity and Islam, do not exhaust the list of state-frontiers. Two other multinational states on the Christian–Muslim frontier – the Austrian and the Persian Empires – also exemplified the idea of the state-frontier at certain periods in history. Some states in the zone of contact in the modern age have retained the features of the Ottoman Empire as a state embodying the Christian– Muslim frontier, surprisingly clinging to communal separation. Yugoslavia and Lebanon are the most obvious examples of such state-frontiers, yet others, such as Egypt, Ethiopia, the Philippines or Indonesia, cannot escape the analogy.

Colonialism was another important Christian–Muslim encounter. It was a first step in the global interspersing of communities, a specific form of multiculturalism, even if it was a particularly unequal relationship. With the colonial expansion of European powers, the two civilizations met in 'the further Islamic lands' – the lands beyond the traditional Arab–Persian–Turkish Islamic core. Colonialization actually started from the 'periphery' of the Muslim world. The consolidation of Dutch authority over Indonesia, the French conquest of Algeria in 1830, the British colonization of India, and the partition of tropical Africa by 1899, brought Western interests, Western settlers and Western patterns of political, economic and social organization into these non-Western societies. The active parties now were European nation states, strengthened by their industrial and cultural advancement. All this resulted in Western penetration into the societies and economies of the colonies. Parts of the core Muslim lands in the Middle East, Egypt and Iraq were dominated politically only for several decades, while other parts – Turkey, Arabia and even Iran – never completely succumbed to the blows of colonialism.

When Christian missionaries appeared in the ports of West Africa and pushed their way into the interior, Islam had already been penetrating the interior from the northern trading routes for over a millennium. The situation was practically the inverse in East Africa, where Islam had been dominant in the ports for centuries, while European missionaries christianized the interior. Large parts of the continent were thus divided between the two world religions. The colonial partition of Africa, at the end of the nineteenth century, did not change this pattern; the colonial powers merely limited the operation of Islamic law, especially of Islamic punishments, in the Muslim areas that they colonized. The new territorial entities that the colonizers created, and which then served as the basis for the delimitation of the independent states in Africa, did not correspond, as a rule, to the Christian–Muslim cleavages. New state-frontiers appeared, such as Indonesia, the Philippines, Nigeria, the Ivory Coast, Sudan, and many other new states in Africa. The defining feature of the modern age,

the nation state, gradually spread from the west to the decolonizing east – and one of the curious characteristics of the construction of nation states, even if they declared themselves secular, remained their linkage to confessional identities and the civilizational frontier.

Note

1 The confrontation between Chalcedonians and Monophysites started at the Ecumenical Council of Chalcedon in 451, where, following a dispute about whether Christ had two or one natures, the Western prelates of Rome and Constantinople (the Chalcedonians) and the ecclesiastical leaders from Egypt and Asia (the Monophysites) excommunicated each other in a poorly disguised instance of a struggle for power. This 'Chalcedonian' schism remained the basis for political and civilizational opposition for millennia. The Byzantine Emperor Heraclius (610–641) tried in vain to establish an intermediate doctrine, called *Monothelete*.

3 Modern nation states and the frontier

Arguably, Europe outstripped the Muslim civilization in the modern age because it maintained a spirit for change and because it was a *sui generis* frontier society – it explored new lands, and new territories of science, social thought and political organization – at a time when the Muslim world had exhausted the dynamism of its frontier culture, and when its political and social organization was stagnating. The political and social model associated with Europe's supremacy is the nation state. This chapter looks at the impact of the rise of the nation state on the historical zone of contact between Christianity and Islam. This book adopts a simple periodization of history by distinguishing between modernity (related to the nation state) and postmodernity (related to the interspersing of communities in the age of globalization and interdependence). The chapter deals with the expansion of the model of the nation state in the region and its link to the civilizational frontier, and Chapter 4 deals with the postmodern, functional frontier in the zone of contact. The key argument of these two chapters is that the different speed of development of nation states and of postmodern mixed societies is a major source of friction in the zone of Christian–Muslim contact.

The frontier in the age of nationalism

As in any other region around the world, nation states appeared in the zone of Christian–Muslim contact as the result of a struggle that people saw as being a struggle for national emancipation. In the Balkans, nationalism took its point of departure, in the early nineteenth century, from the movement of the local Christians for independence from the Muslim Ottoman Empire. The Balkan peoples willingly associated themselves culturally, socially and even politically with the image of modern Christian Europe – a Europe of nation states – in the struggle for emancipation from the Muslim Empire. In a similar vein, a century later the Arab nations of the Middle East followed the dream of national independence from both the Ottoman Turks and the European imperial powers, with their Western Christian culture. Turkey itself became a nation state in the

struggle against the Western dictate imposed on it by the Mudros Armistice of 30 October 1918, in the aftermath of the crushing defeat of the Ottoman Empire in World War I. Even the nationalism of the Muslim peoples in the Balkans – Albanians and Bosnian Muslim Slavs – was born in reaction to a perceived threat to their identity and freedom by the young and energetic neighbouring Christian nation states. Israel took shape on the wave of a strong sentiment, which favoured the establishment of a sovereign Jewish state, after the trauma of the Holocaust in Nazi-occupied Europe. One can conclude that religious identity has always been present in the historic processes of opposition that led to the establishment of nation states in the zone of Christian–Muslim contact. This dynamic has to be taken into account in any analysis of problems, conflicts, and possible political arrangements in the region.

The process of establishing nation states in the historical zone of Christian–Muslim contact (generally corresponding to the post-Ottoman geographical space) actually imposed a new principle, legitimizing social organization over the old one, which was based on the confrontation between Christianity and Islam, between the Ottoman, Austrian and Russian Empires. It does not make much sense to argue, as some historians do, that these empires would have had legitimization as a model of multiethnic coexistence in the modern age, characterized by individual and collective freedom. The old empires were not a model of liberalism and tolerance that could be reconciled with the principles of modernity.

Building nation states created opportunities for freedom and development around the world. A genuine belief in the enhanced potential of independent nation states for economic, social and political progress was the guiding motive in this process, which went hand in hand with economic, social and political modernization. The young nation states increased their economic capabilities through industrialization, and their political capabilities by creating national bureaucracies that worked for a common purpose. This allowed more people than ever before to transform their condition from being poor to being rich. The modern nation-state model, often associated with the advent of capitalism, was oriented towards economic growth as the dominant goal of society, and personal achievement as the dominant motivation for action of the individual. The idea of the modern nation focused on political and cultural unity and became a binding link in society, as well as a cultural pillar of the modern state. Yet the process of establishing nation states rarely went smoothly. As was the case elsewhere in the Third World, a number of countries in the post-Ottoman and post-colonial zones of Christian–Muslim contact were seduced by theories of a possible faster road towards social and economic progress, and this allowed the new, independent regimes to adopt arbitrary policies. This approach often became a source of trouble during the Cold War.

Another reason for tension was the difference in speed of various

people's establishment of nation states in the zone of the Christian–Muslim frontier. The rise of nation states started at different points in time, and took place at different rates in the various countries. This created real problems. Religious difference, as an important differentiating factor among the Herderian, culturally defined nations of the zone of contact, played a very important role in the nationalist tensions. The problems and conflicts in the Balkans and the Middle East stemmed from the different speeds of establishing nation states and not simply from the rise of nationalism, which substituted the religions, and which legitimized the former eclectic empires. The following sections of this book concentrate on this problem of different speeds and objectives of the nationalist movements, which created friction in the zone of the frontier. The national states of Christian Orthodox Serbs, Romanians (Wallachians and Moldavians), and Greeks were established first on the fringes of the Muslim Ottoman Empire, in frontier areas whose masters often changed during the confrontation of empires. These young nation states had already designed plans of sharing all the territory of the Balkans among themselves, when the Bulgarians, whose lands were closest to the Ottomans' political centre, Constantinople, were still striving for their nation state project. When the Muslim peoples of the Balkans – Turks, Albanians and Bosnian Muslims – woke up to the era of nationalism in the first decades of the twentieth century, they found themselves at a further disadvantage. The sense of belonging to the elite of the Muslim empire, which had dominated the Christian peoples of the region for five centuries, delayed the development of nationalist sentiments among these 'latecomers'. The predominantly Muslim Arab subjects of the Ottoman sultan found themselves in an even worse situation. Their nationalist movement lacked energy and experience, so they were simply incorporated into the colonial empires of the Western powers, a process which was complete by 1920.

The small peoples in the zone of contact often used the rivalry of the three centres of power – Austria, Russia and Turkey – in their struggle to establish independent states. Nation states emerged in the Balkans between 1821 and 1913, and in 1991–1992; in the Middle East between 1920 and 1950; and in the Caucasus in 1992. At present, such countries as Greece, Bulgaria, and Turkey have already completed the construction of their nation states. Others, such as Egypt and Syria, are getting close to the model. A third group of countries, including Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Lebanon, are still at an embryonic stage of developing nation states. The often violent way in which nation states emerged in the Balkans and the eastern Mediterranean, the strength of broader identities, such as Arab nationalism, and the complex relationship between secularism and religious identity in the area, contributed to the current instability and to the continuing fragmentation of the region.

The second problem lies in the very nature of nationalism, and the

exclusive nature (both social and legal) of the nation state. On the one hand, nationalism and the nation are constituted as a function of 'the other'. The limits of any particular nation, in the zone of Christian–Muslim contact, are defined through their distinction from the other nations that had sprouted out of the disintegrating empires. This was a process of demarcation from both the disintegrating eclectic empires and the neighbouring nations, perceived as yet another 'other'. On the other hand, the nation state soon became the symbol of a superior social and political structure with whose help mankind could resolve the problems of social management. This made the nation state a very rigid concept. The global political and social structure based on the division of the world into nation states, became the pre-eminent idea of social organization, whose importance was exaggerated. The nation state became a primary reference and stereotype in people's interpretation of international relations. It turned into a dominant concept, which informed all Western thinking (Walker, R. 2001: 621). 'We' and 'them' entities, which increasingly stood for nation states, were redefined in terms of friends and enemies, separated from each other, and defined by mutually exclusive sets of assigned rights and duties, moral principles, and rules of behaviour. Nationalism became associated increasingly with the mechanisms of modern statehood: official language; common educational, monetary, and legal systems; monopoly in the use of power; and, in a number of cases, official religion. The goal was to do away with linguistic, confessional and other cultural, regional and ethnic differences, and to construct an abstract citizen whose loyalty to the nation existed through his loyalty to the state and *vice versa*.

Religious identity participated in nation-state building not as a moving force, but as an important factor influencing processes that were already under way. Max Weber contributed to the understanding of the rationale behind religious consciousness and identity, and this contribution was not lost, even if his empirical evidence was surpassed. Weber emphasizes the link between the political and religious constructs that stand behind social organization, especially in situations of transition from one political regime to another. The leaders of rising political powers in the Balkans and the Middle East have always relied on references to a certain religion in order to mobilize their compatriots for collective action. The nationalist movements in the zone of Christian–Muslim contact were influenced by Western nationalist ideology; it would be an exaggeration, however, to say that these movements were completely secular. Religion had an important role to play. It provided historical myths, as well as an organizational structure (the church), and this facilitated the nationalists' drive to political independence from the multiethnic empires.

The nations in the zone of Christian–Muslim contact have been defined, from the outset, in the Herderian, cultural sense of nationalism, and not in its purely civic sense. The elements defining these nations were

primarily cultural (e.g. language and religion). The rise of nations in the zone of contact preceded, historically, the creation of nation states. The sense of nationalism and the nationalist movements were born within the weakening bodies of the pre-modern, multiethnic empires of the Christian–Muslim frontier. Typically, these Herderian nations were not concentrated territorially. Nations and religious communities mixed and spread across administrative and political borders, thus making the process of delimiting nation states an extremely painful exercise. The Greeks and the Turks represent two cases in point. The Greeks have, for millennia, lived dispersed along the shores of the eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea. The Turks, as the dominant group in the Ottoman Empire, were scattered throughout all the countries under their control. The creation of nation states led inevitably, and without exception, to large-scale movements of people, and to the territorialization of formerly non-territorial nations.

Religion only accentuated the cultural distinctiveness of the nascent nations – the stronger the religious difference between such a nation and the dominant group in the respective empire, the stronger the nationalism of the dominated group in the modern era. Due to the specifics of the history of the region, the twin issues of religious discrimination and religious independence (autocephaly) were the first to be addressed by the nascent nationalist movements in the Balkan countries. The 'national' Orthodox churches in the Balkans, for example, struggled for autocephaly from the 'universal' Phanariote Patriarchate in Constantinople, parallel to (and often prior to) the political struggle for national independence from the Ottoman Empire.

Under the influence of the European Enlightenment, the Balkan Christian peoples under the Ottomans – Greeks, Romanians, Serbs and Bulgarians – went through processes of cultural and national revival in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The revival then ushered in violent attempts at regaining independence from the Muslim empire. Under Ottoman rule it was not unusual for such resistance to be cruelly suppressed. Such atrocities as the butchery of tens of thousands of Bulgarian peasants by irregular Muslim troops (*bashibozuk*), after an abortive revolt in 1876, were a recurrent practice. The founding myth of nationalism among the Balkan Christians has expressed itself, since the nineteenth century, in a deeply seated belief that their struggle for independence was a way of redeeming their place in the family of European Christian nations. This idea is emphatically present in history textbooks regarding the region (Fol *et al.* 1996: 269, 296; Gaceša *et al.* 1998: 48–9, 71):

> The historic context of the struggle against Muslim Ottoman rule produced the theme of a nation that gave its blood in defence of Christian Europe. There are other nations in Europe, which derive this kind of frontier feeling from events in their own histories (the Poles,

> Hungarians, Russians, and Croatians, for example). The absence of any recognition of this historic role, and the sense that one is even considered oneself to be part of the barbarian periphery of Europe, reinforce Serbian bitterness at international criticism.
>
> (Dijkink 1996: 114)

This theme was taken up by some of the brightest minds of Europe at the time, such as Lord Byron, Victor Hugo, and Chernyshevsky. Historians confirm the popularity among the Christian peoples of this interpretation of their nationalist struggle against the Muslim empire (Jelavich 1977: 267, 320–1). The nationalism of the Muslim peoples, Turks, Albanians, Arabs, and Bosnian Muslim Slavs, wakened later, but demonstrated the same features of ethnic and confessional exclusiveness as its predecessor, the nationalism of the Christian peoples in the last Muslim empire. In fact, Muslim identity has a substantial place in modern Turkish nationalism, despite a declared loyalty to secularism.

Exclusive nationalism in the Balkans and the Middle East has always been juxtaposed to 'the other', who is very often identified in terms of a different religion. Muslims were simply eliminated, with European blessing, from Hungary after 1699, Serbia after 1821, and Wallachia and Moldova after 1829, in the way they had been eliminated from Spain three or four centuries earlier. The Russo-Turkish treaty of Adrianople, signed in 1829, banned Muslims from settling in the Danubian Principalities (Wallachia and Moldova). After the Crimean War in 1856 the situation changed utterly, both on paper and in practice. New principles were stipulated in international treaties, which regulated transfers of territory and minority protection. This change was induced by the shifts in attitude of the European powers, which had themselves undergone profound changes under the inspiration of the humanist ideas of the Enlightenment. The result of these developments was fast progress in the economic and political spheres, which finally gave the Christian powers an economic and military edge over their Turkish Muslim rival. The European powers were now dictating the conditions of the slow movement of the Muslim empire out of Europe. Another effect of the Enlightenment was exactly the attribution of new value to the principle of protection of religious minorities in the zone of contact. The earlier regime of capitulations, which the Western powers had imposed on the Ottomans, concerned the protection of Western citizens in Ottoman territory. Protection was now extended to several local Christian communities. Yet the 'realist' motivation of egoistic states was not lost. The Great Powers competed for the right to protect such minority groups, which could be of use for them later. Russia protected Christian Orthodox peoples all over the Ottoman Empire, especially those who occupied what Russia perceived as lying along its road to conquering Constantinople. Another Russian objective was to prevent the Austrian Empire from expanding too much in that

direction. In a similar vein, Austria provided support to the Catholic communities in the Balkans, and to the Albanians in their plight against Slavic neighbours. France supported the Uniate Maronites and other Christian communities in the Middle East, because it followed a strategic ambition to control the routes to the colonial world. The Christian empires thus barely covered their attempts to extend their imperial sway.

At the same time, the European powers obliged the young Christian nation states to respect the rights of Muslims. This might have been a product as much of the civic concept of religious tolerance of the Enlightenment as of a balance of power competition for the heritage of the 'Sick Man on the Bosphorus' (the Ottoman Empire). Austrian troops occupied Bosnia and burnt Sarajevo to the ground in 1697. Had they continued with this occupation at that time, the country might have become as Christian as Serbia or Croatia today. Yet when they established their rule over Bosnia once again in the aftermath of the Berlin Congress, in 1878, the time for 'religious cleansing' was over, and Bosnia remained this mixture of communities at least until 1992. By virtue of the Berlin Treaty of 1878, Bulgaria had to accept the principle of tolerance towards Muslims as a condition for its international recognition. Similarly, when the Serbs stepped into Kosovo in 1913 and into Bosnia in 1918, under the watchful eyes of the patrons of the Balkan Alliance (Russia, Britain and France), internationally accepted practice prevented them from following earlier practices of converting and deporting Muslims, which had led to the creation of a homogeneous Serbian Orthodox state around Belgrade a century earlier. The international guarantees for the rights of the Muslim minorities in the territories that Greece, Romania, Serbia, Montenegro, and Bulgaria acquired in the decades after 1878 sought to prevent a repetition of what had once happened in Spain, Hungary, and the core territories of the Balkan nation states. A curious element in the story of the Balkan Wars (1912–1913) was the ardent criticism of the mistreatment of Muslim peasants at the hands of the victorious Serbian and Bulgarian armies, reported emotionally by the war correspondent of *Kievskaya Mysl*, Lev Davidovich Bronstein, better known as Leon Trotsky (Trotsky 1980: 283). Attitudes had changed, at least in the minds of many intellectuals. There were thus two opposite tendencies, which transformed utterly the patchwork of communities under the Ottoman Empire. One of them was the creation of ethnically and confessionally pure nation states; the second was the principle of respect for minorities, which made its way despite the reluctance of the young nation states.

The relationship between the two trends was never smooth. There was much hypocrisy and many setbacks. Trotsky's fiery defence of Balkan Muslims did not prevent him from encouraging atrocities in the Bolshevik civil war, for example. In a larger perspective, the mass persecution of Armenian, Greek and other Christians in Turkey and, in the twentieth century, the Greco Turkish population exchange in 1923, the Cyprus

crisis since the 1970s, and the events in Bosnia and Kosovo in the 1990s, threw a shadow over the existing ideas of tolerance towards minorities. In the 1990s, Ivo Banac compared the 'ethnic cleansing' in Bosnia to 'a cultural reversion to pre-Enlightenment ideas' (Banac 1994: 133). These events reinforced the idea of the rigidity of the nation state in the zone of Christian–Muslim contact, and also demonstrated the limits of secularism in the nation state logic. After all, religious difference was used as a factor in nationalist mobilization and persecution of minorities in all the crises on the Christian–Muslim frontier cited above. Social behaviour followed the conjuncture of international and internal politics, and deviated from the internationally adopted, but still weakly implemented, rules of minority protection. The post-Ottoman nation states engaged in a search for security, departing from a 'realist' understanding of the world, characterized by anarchy. Yet this hardly contributed to the realization of the 'idealist' principles of human and minority rights. Suspicion towards religious dissidence, influenced by strong historical memories, was the factor that shaped the mind-sets of the new, national statesmen in the region.

Nationalism is the objective of any project of nation-state building. However, if a nation state is defined as 'a sovereign political organization of the folk' and 'an independent political unit, usually formed of people with the same language and traditions' (Goodin and Pettit 1995: 508), religious consciousness constitutes an important component in any concrete project of nation-state building. In the age of the nation state, the zone of the Christian–Muslim frontier is characterized by two parallel focuses of political identity, which correspond to two historical patterns of organizing sovereignty: the nation and religion. The logic of the first suggests an overarching loyalty to the nation state, which cuts across all social strata, and which unites the cultural, linguistic, religious and other communities established within its territory. The existing or desired nation state becomes the basis of political identity. Nationalist politicians in the zone of Christian–Muslim contact have always sought religious homogeneity within the territory of the nation state. Examples, such as the suppression of religion or atheism, in recent history may also be regarded as a specific expression of the ambition for a spiritual homogenization of the nation state. This was the case not only in the communist-dominated countries, but also in the Turkish and other nation states in the zone of contact.

The tendency to create religiously homogeneous nation states was the dominant trend in the modern history of the zone of contact. The young, secular nation states were much more uniform, in confessional terms, than their imperial predecessors, and Turkey's experience is not an isolated case. The people who managed to build their nation states at the expense of heavy sacrifices looked upon followers of other religions, or simply other denominations in their state, with suspicion. This suspicion was deeply rooted in the Ottoman legacy of communal separation. Even

today, religion remains a factor of communal mobilization in nationalist conflicts in the Balkans and the Middle East. This has been the case for more than two centuries in relations between Turks and Greeks, Turks and Bulgarians, Turks and Serbs, Albanians and Serbs, Armenians and Azeris . . . and the list may go on.

Another illustration of the problem is the plight of weak intercommunal groups, such as the Serbo-Croatian-speaking Muslim Slavs in Bosnia, the Bulgarian-speaking Muslims (Pomaks) spread around Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, Albania, and Turkey, or the numerous Arab Christian communities. Nationalist politicians in the zone of contact regard these groups as an easy target in their homogenizing dreams of uniform nation states. This is the tendency in countries with various levels of nation-state construction – from older nation states in the Balkans, to countries which are still establishing their nation states (such as Lebanon or Bosnia), or countries where the process has not yet started (such as Montenegro or Chechnya). Most peoples in the Christian–Muslim zone of contact have built their states, but it is doubtful whether all of them can be qualified as nation states.

My argument here is not that people in the mixed societies of the Christian–Muslim frontier are 'bulldozed' into a homogeneous national identity. I would rather argue that the idea that the nation state is the superior form of social organization today, and one that offers solutions to all problems of divided societies, is simply misleading. Even if this idea dominates contemporary international relations, even if the nation state may offer high, practical standards of organizing social functions and services, even if it presents an unprecedented potential for personal and collective freedom and economic efficiency in the modern societies, it is not the only form of social organization today.

Ranking nation states in the zone of contact

This section proposes an ordered list of the contemporary states in the historical zone of contact, as shown in Table 3.1, in terms of how close they are to the idea of a nation state. A number of selected countries in the zone of contact are ranked with reference to their achievements in realizing a project for building a modern nation state. The brief comparative analysis, which follows here, focuses on several criteria that might be used to define a modern nation state. These are: the level of development and strength of an overarching (often exclusive) national consciousness, which is linked to the respective territorial state; the extent to which a nation is concentrated exclusively in a given state; the share (expected to be dominant) of this nation in the population of its state; the relative cultural homogeneity of the population, including confessional unity; the role of religion in achieving national cohesion in the respective nation and state; the existence of violent minority conflicts inside the state; and

Table 3.1 Rating countries in the zone of contact according to their level of nation-state building

Tentative rating of nation-state building	*Year of autonomy*	*Year of independence*	*Portion of the dominant group (%)*	*Christian–Muslim ratio (% of total population, mid-1990s)*	*Existence of:*		
					Violent minority conflict	*Broader identity: Yugoslav, Arab, etc.*	*Large kin groups next door*
Greece	1829	1830	89	98:2			Yes
Romania	1829	1878	90	99.8:0.2			
Bulgaria	1878	1908	86	87:13			
Turkey		(1922)	69	1:99			
Russian Federation		(1991)	84	92:7	Yes		
Croatia	(1946)	1991	79	98:2			Yes
Serbia	1821	(1992)	69	79:21	Yes	Yes	Yes
Albania		1913	96	31:69			Yes
Israel		1948	80	2:18[a]	Yes	Yes	
Egypt	(1805)	1922	(95)	5:95		Yes	
Syria	1936	1944	11	6.5:93.5		Yes	
Jordan	1928	1946	38	10:90	Yes	Yes	Yes
Armenia	(1918)	1991	97	98:2	Yes		Yes
Georgia	(1918)	1991	71	90:10	Yes		
Azerbaijan	(1918)	1991	81	7:93	Yes		Yes
Iraq		1921	17	3:97	Yes	Yes	Yes
Macedonia	(1946)	1991	66	71:29	Yes		Yes
Lebanon	1861	1944	(16)	40:60[b]	Yes	Yes	Yes
Bosnia	(1946)	1991	(38)	62:38	Yes	Yes	Yes
Cyprus		1960	68	80:20	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sudan		1956	63	15:65	Yes	Yes	Yes
Palestinian territories	(1995)	None	88	3:97 10:90[c]	Yes	Yes	Yes
Montenegro	(1946)	None	62	75:25		Yes	Yes
Kosovo	(2000)	None	90	15:85	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: Minorities Rights Group (ed.) (1997) *World Directory of Minorities*, London: MRG International; Editors Introduction (2001) *Middle East Quarterly*, Winter.

Notes

a Including 2% Druze. The remaining 80% are Jews.

b Including 6% Druze.

c According to Israeli sources 10% of the Arabs in Israel are Christians, and according to data of the Palestinian Authority only 3% of the Arabs in Gaza and the West Bank are Christians. The figures for the Muslims include 9% Druze.

the existence of links to a kin group abroad, which might become entangled in communal or nationalist conflicts at home. A very strong factor in the process of constructing a nation state is the existence of historical memories of a violent struggle against foreign opponents. The idea of ousting foreign domination in order to create an independent state has a strong potential to foster national cohesion. In the zone of contact, this idea has often become a founding myth, which facilitates people's identification with their nation state.

For analysis, it is important to see whether national identity is diluted in such broader identities as Arabism or, during the twentieth century, Yugoslavism. These identities have the potential to divert some people's nationalist loyalty away from a certain nation-state project. Nationalism is closer to such sociological categories as 'kinship' and 'religion' than to such ideological concepts as 'liberalism', 'communism', and 'fascism'. During the last two centuries, the latter have demonstrated dynamics that were different from nationalism. In this sense, the former two (kinship and religion) are taken into account in the ranking of nation states in Table 3.1, rather than any links to communism, capitalism, fascism or other ideologies. The present analysis focuses on the role of Christian–Muslim relations in the formation of nation states and in the struggle among these states. The mentality of the civilizational frontier undoubtedly influences the processes of nation building, the internal situation in each state, and the regional relations. In brief, the ranking in this section shows the level of consolidation of a nation in the various countries, and to what extent this nation identifies itself with an existing territorial state. In other words, this ranking indicates the level of territorialization of nations that have not been territorially concentrated and culturally homogeneous in the past. It is obvious that the various states of the historical zone of Christian–Muslim contact, from Mecca to Vienna, are still at very different stages in the development of nation states. My argument, in this section, is that this difference might be conducive to conflict. Whether there will be conflict or cooperation depends largely on the way the processes of nation-state building are managed. In the final resort, the role of religious identities in these processes, and within the region, is obvious.

The first group of countries, those that are closest to the idea of the modern, territorial nation state, are the Christian Orthodox nations in the Balkans. These nations took shape in the Ottoman era, defined by their distinct cultures. Later, they gained their independence in a violent nationalist struggle, which would have been characterized today as a series of pervasive terrorist campaigns. The process started in the nineteenth century when the first national homes were established in the periphery of the Ottoman Empire, with the help of Christian Europe and Russia, and then slowly moved towards its heart. The young nations started territorial expansion through wars against their neighbours. Greece, Serbia, and the

Danubian Principalities (Romania) were the first to break away within territories that were much smaller than their present ones. They soon created the First Balkan Alliance, with the objective of distributing among themselves the remainder of the Ottoman territories in the Balkans. Bulgaria, the country situated closest to the heart of the Empire, found itself at a disadvantage when it gained its autonomy half a century after the former three. When it tried to reunite two of its provinces in 1885, it was attacked not by the Ottomans but by a sister Orthodox country, Serbia, in the first of a series of fratricide wars for the Ottoman heritage in the Balkans. The problem was aggravated when the Muslim peoples –Turks, Albanians and Bosnian Muslims – joined the club of nation states, abandoning the imperial identity of the Ottoman era. Nationalism might have come to these countries late, but it demonstrated great vigour, and the Armenians and other Anatolian Christians had something to say about this. Greece, Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey took shape gradually as nation states, with strong national consciousness of their respective majorities, and the overarching loyalty of all citizens. Even if these states declared themselves as secular, the historical identity of their dominant nations is closely linked to their historical religions: Orthodox Christianity in the first three, and Islam in Turkey.

The older Balkan nation states

The historical memory of the Byzantine Christian period is very much alive in the social psychology in modern *Greece* – it is stronger than the memory of Classical Antiquity, for example. Yet the political developments and exchanges of population in the twentieth century left the Greeks not with an empire reminiscent of the Byzantine might, but with a much smaller territorial nation state – the focus of Greek nationalism. This was established in 1830, in the southernmost tip of the Balkan Peninsula, as the accomplishment of a vehement liberation movement. The Greeks also received crucial support from Christian Europe, which breached, for the purpose, its principle of 'legitimacy' of the sovereign dynasties (including the Ottomans) that it had established at the Congress of Vienna in 1815. A romantic feeling of European Christian solidarity and egoistic imperial interests were mixed in this process of European civilizational expansion into the territories of the Muslim empire, and this was part of the famous *Drang nach Osten.*

During the following decades Greece took part in several wars against the Ottoman Empire, with the objective of redeeming territories populated by its fellow Greeks. As a result, it had more than doubled its territory by 1919. The reference to Christian Orthodox identity remained essential to the Greek nation, and was defined by culture rather than by citizenship. Yet a curious development here was the conflict over the role of the Orthodox religion for Greek nationalism; a conflict between the

old, 'Phanariote' elite, inspired by the Universal Patriarchate in Constantinople, and the new, nationalist elite. The old elite was fixed on the *megali idea*, which asserted that the Greeks had a mission – to restore the eclectic Christian Orthodox empire. The modern nationalists defined the Greek nation in terms not just of religion but also of a whole set of cultural and political traits that distinguished it from the neighbouring nations. Since the capture of Constantinople in 1453 the Ottoman Turks had treated the Phanariote Patriarchate as the speaker for all Orthodox communities in the Empire, and this gave further impetus to the champions of the *megali idea*. The nationalists, whose plan was to create a modern Greek nation state, considered this idea retrograde, unfeasible, and even dangerous for their struggle, given the history of collaboration of the Phanariote clergy with the Ottoman power. They felt that a state that was clearly distinct not only from the Muslim Turks, Albanians, and Arabs but also from the neighbouring Christian Orthodox peoples would be modern and viable. Yet there was no question of abandoning the Greek Orthodox religion as part of Greek national identity. Thus a second, nationalist Greek Orthodox patriarchate emerged in Athens in 1833, and immediately entered into a zealous conflict with the Phanariotes. It was not always obvious how to change the role of religion from the diversity under the Ottoman regime to that of a national church in a dynamic nation-state system. According to Pashalis Kitromilides (1989) this was an evolution from a universalistic to a nationalist vision of the church institution, and a step in the process of 'imagining' national communities in the Balkans.

Athens maintained the strong relationship between the nation state and the Christian Orthodox religion. Until the end of the twentieth century it linked Greek citizenship with belonging to the Greek Orthodox Church, and recognized only one minority in its territory: the Muslim minority of Western Thrace, which was defined by the Lausanne Convention of 1923 between Turkey and Greece, and which constitutes today about 2 per cent of the population of Greece. This minority actually comprises Turks and Pomaks (Bulgarian-speaking Muslims), who were allowed to stay in the Greek province of Western Thrace in exchange for the right of a Greek Orthodox community to stay in Istanbul and two Aegean islands, still in Turkish possession. Even if the problem stirs strong emotions on both sides, the numbers of the two minorities are negligible. The population exchange with Turkey in 1923 contributed to the homogenization of the population in the contemporary Greek nation state and to the territorialization of an originally non-territorial nation, scattered on the banks of three continents. The only remaining problem is Cyprus. Some nationalists see the Cyprus problem as part of the Greek nation-state project. This was the origin of the calls for re-unification (*enosis*) of Greece and Cyprus in the 1960s and 1970s. Moreover, the essentially nationalist conflict in Cyprus is nurtured by the myths of confrontation across the Christian–Muslim frontier. Yet the problem of proper recognition of

minorities and their rights does not prevent Greece from being one of the most homogeneous and cohesive nation states in the post-Ottoman space today.

With the accession to the European Community in 1981, as the first non-Western Christian member, however, Greece faces strong challenges in the postmodern era; an era characterized by a mixture of various communities and the functional opposition among these communities. Greece has to dilute the strong nationalist feelings, which have thrived for centuries, into an eclectic European identity in which many Greeks take pride. The resulting tension is both internal (in the social psychology of the Greek people) and external (in Greece's relations with Europe and its neighbours). Greece's specificity, as the only Christian Orthodox nation in the European Union, has never passed unnoticed.

Romania came into existence in 1856 after the unification of Moldova and Wallachia, which had previously been autonomous principalities ruled by Christian princes (*hospodars*). The initial name of the new state was Rumania, from the Turkish word Rum (Christian Orthodox), which in its turn came from the idea that the Byzantine Empire was the late Roman Empire. Romania became independent in 1878 and, in the same way as Greece and the other Balkan states, it underwent several stages of territorial expansion and re-unification of a Herderian, non-territorial nation at the expense of the multi-ethnic empires of the Christian–Muslim frontier. Several factors led to the elimination of the Muslim element from the territory of the Romanian state. First, the relative isolation of Wallachia and Moldova behind the Danube, away from the route of Ottoman expansion towards Vienna, saved the population from Ottoman colonization and islamization. Second, the autonomous regime of *hospodars*, nominated not directly by the Ottomans but by the Greek Orthodox *Phanariote* clergy preserved the Christian character of Wallachian and Moldavian societies. Third, several legal acts, such as the decree (*hati sherif*) issued by the Sultan in 1802 and the Russo-Turkish Treaty of Adrianople of 1829, banned Muslims from settling in the Danubian principalities. Less than 1 per cent of the population of Romania, a country that once was part of the Ottoman Empire, is Muslim today. All these Muslims live in Dobrudja, which was acquired by the Romanians only in 1878. As wars, territorial changes, and nationalist propaganda strengthened the national consciousness of the Romanians, the significance of the Christian–Muslim cleavage receded, giving way to *Realpolitik* and even strategic alliances with Turkey during some periods in history. Other cleavages became more important, such as relations with the Hungarian and Uniate communities.

The Bulgarian nation also emerged when the country was under Ottoman rule, and struggled to establish a nation state, inspired by the idea of breaking away from the Muslim empire and joining Christian Europe. Due to its geographical proximity to the Ottoman capital, Bulgaria was the last of the Christian nations in the Balkans to gain its

autonomy (in 1878) and its independence (in 1908). At the Berlin Congress of 1878, the Great Powers obliged Bulgaria to respect the principle of tolerance towards Muslims as a condition for its recognition. Ivo Banac (1994: 132) argues that the existence of a Muslim minority in Bulgaria, which makes up 8–10 per cent of the population and consists of Turks, Gypsies, and Pomaks, 'speaks to the lateness of the Bulgarian national state' created in 1878. The Bulgarian Principality appeared only fifty years after the Greek, Serbian, and Romanian nation states, but during that time the conditions for building a nation state in the Balkans had changed. A large-scale 'purification' of a liberated state from its Muslim communities would no longer be tolerated by Europe. Only a portion of Muslim Turks and Pomaks left for Turkey during times of difficulty in Bulgaria. In this sense, the Bulgarian nation state is less homogeneous than Greece and Romania. The Pomak community of Bulgarian-speaking Muslims did not take part, during the Ottoman period, in the formation of the Herderian Bulgarian nation, because of its religious distinction. Following Bulgaria's independence, this weak intercommunal group split among three identities. Some Pomaks identified themselves as Turks, on the basis of the common Islamic religion, and tended to be assimilated by that national group both in Turkey and in Bulgaria. A second part of the community, especially those who had attended higher schooling and university in Bulgaria, embraced a Bulgarian national identity. A small number even converted to Orthodox Christianity. Third, some activists insisted that the Pomaks have a separate national identity, adding to the confusion.

The territorial expansion of the Bulgarian nation state was quite similar to that of the neighbouring states, even if it started later. It actually came to a halt with the Balkan Wars (1912–1913) and World War I (1914–1918). In a geopolitical sense, these were wars for the distribution and redistribution of what was left of the Ottoman Empire. The newcomer to the club of nation states, Bulgaria, faced opposition from her neighbours, and this resulted in violent conflicts for decades, even if it never managed to annex most of the Ottoman territories to which nationalists aspired. The Christian–Muslim cleavage in that country, however, is still felt strongly. Over 10 per cent of the population has a Muslim background. On the popular level, the Bulgarians take pride in maintaining relations of tolerance with their religious minorities, Muslims and Jews, especially in comparison with events in neighbouring Yugoslavia in the 1990s and in Nazi-occupied Europe, when the Bulgarians successfully exercised popular pressure on their king and his pro-Nazi government in order to save their Jews. The sense of overarching civic loyalty to the existing state has eclipsed the idea of belonging to a transborder cultural nation, among both majority and minorities in the country. On the one hand, since the fall of communism the Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF) – a political party representing Turkish and other Muslim communities – has

participated fully in Bulgaria's political and parliamentary life. On the other, the importance of transborder issues in Bulgarian nationalism, such as the Macedonian question, have diminished significantly during the last five decades.

State-frontiers in the modern age

Turkey (in 1922) and Russia (in 1991) entered the era of nation states on the smouldering ruins of their former empires, which had constituted part of the Christian–Muslim frontier for centuries. They still remain the only two large states with Eurasian identity, combining Eastern and Western features in their social structures and mentality. The fact that the two nations still cherish memories of their rule over large empires has bolstered their national self-confidence, but also the psychological association of their contemporary nation states with the religions that the former empires stood for: Islam and Orthodox Christianity. Unlike the Western colonial empires, there always existed a territorial continuity between centre and periphery, between metropolis and dominated countries, in the Russian and Ottoman Empires. As a consequence, the demise of the multi-ethnic empires left behind complex issues of territorial delimitation, which the modern states inherited from the Ottoman and Soviet states. The issue of conflict over territory remained a source of trouble between centre and periphery for much longer, in these two cases, than in the relations of the Western powers with their former Muslim colonies. Acute conflict for territory still characterizes the historical hot spots of the Christian–Muslim frontier, in areas such as Nagorni-Karabagh, Bosnia, Kosovo and Chechnya. By contrast, the colonies simply endorsed the borders that had been drawn up by the colonizers as the borders of their modern states. This solution has worked in the process of decolonization, yet the problems come when nation-state building enters into conflict with the self-assertion of confessional communities. The cultural background of nationalism in the Third World is changing, as the examples of Sudan, Lebanon, Indonesia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone have demonstrated, and this increasingly leads to the redefinition of the cultural basis of nation states. Religious identity still has a role to play in this process.

The Turkish nation state, established in the 1920s, has reached a critical level in its development, and faces serious challenges in its aspiration to join the process of European integration. The creator of the Turkish Republic, Kemal Atatürk, advanced modernization actively, by enfranchizing women, making Western dress compulsory, and substituting Latin for Arabic script in the official Turkish literary language. Above all he suppressed the political role of Islam, because he believed that it was the reason for the backwardness of the Turkish society and state. All the same, Islam remained part of the identity of the Turkish nation. The population of the nation state that Atatürk created was much more

culturally homogeneous than that of the Ottoman Empire – 99 per cent of the Turkish citizens today have a Muslim background, something that was not the case in the same territory when Atatürk came to power. During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries various Christian communities in Turkey dwindled, while the country absorbed large numbers of Balkan and Caucasian Muslims, some of whom were not ethnic Turks and who had come to Turkey for fear of persecution because of their distinct religion. Yet Ankara took the view that such people became Turks upon settling in its territory. The Turkish nation-state project reached its zenith at the start of the twenty-first century. The repressive, authoritarian system has exhausted its resources, and Turkey is actively seeking integration into Europe. The Turkish nation state, however, still has to leapfrog serious problems in order to join Europe: Kurdish separatism and the ascent of Islamism to start with. These two issues risk a backlash, as they can at any time revive violent nationalist sentiments. While the ruling elite seeks integration in the European Union, others, especially on the far right, believe that broader Turanian solidarity, from the Balkans to China, would make more sense.

In the 1990s, the Islamic dimension of Turkish national identity could be traced, despite the declared loyalty to secularism, in the foreign policy of the nation state and in the support for fellow Muslims in Bosnia, Kosovo, and the Caucasus. Yet where Islamism made real advances was in the area of populist politics in Turkey, even if the Turkish Islamists remained moderate in comparison with some of their Arab counterparts. The revival of Islam in contemporary Turkish politics stems arguably from the problems of Turkish secular nationalism, such as confrontation with fellow Muslim Kurds, corruption, and the economic crisis. Islamists argue that if Islam were at the centre of Turkey's politics, the Kurdish dilemma would have disappeared (Hunter 1995: 14). The new Turkish Islamism is, on the one hand, modern and progressive. It yearns for democracy, economic development and freedom from corruption. On the other hand, it is conservative; it cherishes an authoritarian agenda to establish, in the modern Turkish society, a moral code defined by religion. Similar to any other populist movement, it suggests simple solutions to acute social problems.

For many Turks the rise of moderate Islamism seems not so much a return to religion as a much-needed reference to a community in which the new underclass of the slums seek psychological comfort and social protection from the dislocation and alienation of modern urban life. Such things as wearing a scarf in public schools have become issues of class relations between a Europeanized bourgeoisie and a poor working class which has recently migrated from rural areas to the industrial centres while preserving its traditional culture. The growing discontent of the Anatolian middle classes, who feel at a disadvantage in comparison with industrialized Istanbul and the Aegean coast, adds to the Islamic vigour. Liberalization and democratization, during the last decade of the twentieth century,

produced an unexpected result in Turkey – the return of Islamism to the political scene. The role of the Turkish army, as a guardian of secular democracy, remains ambiguous. In the mid-1990s the army intervened to prevent Islamists from getting too much power, after what they viewed as worrying electoral results. The army saw expanding social liberties as a prelude to growing minority and civil rights demands, which were interpreted as a direct threat to the Turkish nation state.

Islam eventually entered the debate over Turkey's accession to the European Union, despite public assurances that this has never been an issue. The debate regarding the ability of Turkey to join the Union moved closer and closer to the idea that there was a barrier between Christianity and Islam, and relations between Europe and Turkey hit that barrier. For Turkey, which has been a NATO member for decades, the desire to join the European Union is a way of planting itself once and for all in the Western club of nation states. Public opinion in Turkey favours membership because of potential economic benefits and support for still vulnerable democratic institutions. This situation is reminiscent of popular attitudes in Greece in the late 1970s. Yet the way in which Turkey exercises pressure on the European Union to let it in is not appreciated in Europe. On the way to the European Summit on 12 December 2002, Recep Tayip Erdogan, leader of the governing 'Justice and Development' Islamist party, and other top politicians warned Europe that it would face serious consequences if it rejected Turkey's bid for membership; namely that a forsaken Turkey would turn to the east – i.e. to Islam. The pressure, however, rebounded despite unequivocal support from US President George W. Bush, who sought Turkey's loyalty in an eventual war against Iraq. Politicians and public opinion in Europe felt that such a 'Middle-Eastern' behaviour, based on applying pressure, playing on emotions and riding around on big horses, should never be accepted. Turkey needed to show commitment to democracy, not only by precipitate administrative reforms but also by anchoring its behaviour in a democratic process of negotiating positions. For many Europeans the mentality of menacing, with a possible twist towards Islamist policy, was already a societal threat. And what if Islam were to regain strong political influence after Turkey had become a member of the European Union? Europe made it clear that it preferred keeping Christian–Muslim relations under control, within relations with a separate Turkish nation state, rather than creating a post-modern functional frontier with Islam inside the European Union. Admitting a Muslim country of 70 million – the same figure as the population of the ten EU members accepted in 2003 – seemed to be a crucial problem. Regrettably, the debate over Turkey's accession for the moment underpins the image of the Christian–Muslim frontier as a problematic divide. Yet it shows, once again, that the way Christian–Muslim relations are shaped reflects the acts and modes of thinking of politicians and the general public alike.

The demise of the Soviet Union, which had kept together the lands and peoples of the former Russian Empire for an additional three-quarters of a century, led to the creation of a new *Russia*, which is, however, still far from being a nation state. It is a multi-ethnic, multi-religious and multicultural polity in which the Christian–Muslim divide still plays a very important role. Russia is further than Turkey from the model of the nation state, and there is a historical gap: the Turkish state shrank to the core territories inhabited by the Turkish ethnic and cultural nation nearly a century before this happened (only partially) to the Russians. As in the past, Russia remains a state that embodies the idea of the Christian–Muslim frontier as a zone of contact. The position of ethnic Russians and their culture in the Russian Federation is strong. Nevertheless, this role has to be redefined if the country is to become a nation state. The nature of Russian national identity also has to be redefined – whether it should focus on ethnic Russians or adopt the civic notion of an overarching loyalty of diverse peoples and cultures. Whether the Russian Federation will become a nation state or a postmodern society with a mixture of communities and functional frontiers is a question that still has to be answered.

In 1991, the Russians made a civilizational choice to depart from the imperial vision of their state. The choice was not self-evident, in view of Moscow's unyielding grip over power in the Soviet Union, or the experience of the Serbs, who adopted an aggressive stance while they were in a similar position in Yugoslavia in 1991. In all the federations of the former Eastern bloc – the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia – the communist ideology had acted as an iron lid which had covered the simmering problems of malfunctioning melting pots without resolving them. When the lid was taken away, the problems boiled over. The collapse of the two federations in the zone of the Christian–Muslim frontier, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, exposed the ugly face of communal strife. The iron lid helped to neglect, if not destroy, any quest for a democratic means of regulating communal relations. As with Islam in Turkey, the suppression of religion in the Soviet Union did not prevent Orthodox Christianity from reappearing after 1991, as an inherent part of Russian national identity. This inevitably roused the suspicion and animosity of Russia's Muslim communities. The Russians did not resort to violence in order to preserve the integrity of the Soviet Union, and were left with better chances than the Serbs for the construction of a nation state based on civic unity. Islam, the religion of several sizeable minorities in the Russian Federation, remained the major challenge. The Chechen wars for secession should be regarded within this broader perspective of Russia's relations with its Muslim communities – in the rest of the northern Caucasus, in Tatarstan and elsewhere – or with the independent republics of Central Asia and Azerbaijan, where Moscow strives to preserve its influence. The broader relationship with the Muslim peoples of the former empire and the war in Chechnya are closely connected.

Russia's conflict with Chechnya is more than a problem of separatism. The small, mountainous country has a territory of 15 000 sq km (half the size of Belgium) and a population of 1.1 million, a quarter of which was constituted of Russians before the conflict began in 1991. Moscow let the fourteen other Soviet republics (both Christian and Muslim) go, practically without resistance. Why did it then strengthen its grip around the restive mountainous province, in a war with incredible cruelty on both sides? Letting Chechnya go would have meant Russia losing prestige in the zone of the frontier – prestige that it had won through centuries of bloody wars in the Caucasus. Letting Chechnya go would have given an undesirable signal to other provinces populated by independent-minded Muslims, such as Dagestan, Kabarda, and Tatarstan. The Chechen nationalists were close to independence; they could have won a political settlement when Russian forces withdrew in 1996–1999. Yet the events went out of control, either when splinter Chechen groups with criminal links increased their influence, or when the Chechen leaders succumbed to Islamic militant activism as a tactical instrument of keeping the rebellion in motion. The revival of pro-independence movements in the northern Caucasus made this border region of Russia again a military frontier between Christianity and Islam. Many Russians believe that Muslims throughout the Russian Federation still represent a secessionist threat. It was not by chance that, after the terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001, and after the shift in Western attitudes from indifference to animosity to Islamism, Russia's President Vladimir Putin championed solidarity with the (Christian) West. Russia could not let this opportunity go – it had too many Muslim groups to deal with.

The dissolution of the former *Yugoslavia* – the third state-frontier in this analysis – was due to the strength of national feelings of the former Yugoslav peoples, notably the Serbs and the Croats. Their national consciousness was based on cultural (and confessional) difference, and focused on the desire to construct separate nation states. The process of setting up Serbian and Croatian nation states had started more than a century ago, but was interrupted by the Yugoslav experience. Consequently, the two nations still have problems in identifying themselves with the existing territorial states. In Bosnia, Herzegovina, Kosovo, and Montenegro, Serbs, Croats, Slavic and Albanian Muslims are still pondering how to separate from each other. The Serbian nation-state building began in 1806, with a series of uprisings and the creation of an autonomous Serbian national home around Belgrade in 1830. Serbia embarked on the path of expansion at the expense of the neighbouring Ottoman and Austrian Empires. Yet the successful expansion of the rule of the Serbian dynasty into neighbouring Slavic and non-Slavic areas between 1913–1918 actually slowed down the formation of a Serbian nation state and diluted it into a broader ethnic conglomerate – the Yugoslav ('South-Slav') state. The wars for the Yugoslav secession, in

1991–2001, were in fact a belated edition of the struggle to establish Serbian, Slovenian, Croatian, Bosnian, Albanian, Macedonian, and Montenegrin nation states in the western Balkans. The Serbs had built their nation state in opposition to the dominant Muslim Ottoman Empire in the nineteenth century, and they still define their nation state in terms of opposition to Muslims – Bosnian and Kosovar. The territorialization of the scattered Herderian Serbian nation is not yet complete. The Serbian nation state has many problems that still need to be solved, such as relations with Republika Srpska – the Serbian entity in Bosnia, which is nominally part of Bosnia and Herzegovina but is run by Serbian nationalist elements. Another problem is Kosovo, which is *de jure* part of Serbia and *de facto* politically independent, thus creating a real 'black hole' for international law. A third problem is Montenegro, which was reduced, in the 1990s, to being a junior partner in the rump Yugoslav Federation, and whose Serbian-speaking Christian Orthodox majority was split into two equal parts – one pro-independent and the other pro-Serbian. This rivalry led to the transformation of Yugoslavia into a federal state of Serbia and Montenegro. The Christian Orthodox religion remains a strong and distinctive element in the national identity of the Serbian communities outside the Serbian state – in Slavonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Voivodina, and Kosovo.

The idea of an *Albanian* nation state emerged relatively late – in the late nineteenth century – as most Albanians had identified themselves with the Muslim (Ottoman) Empire and not with an Albanian nation until fairly recently. The majority of Albanians had embraced Islam, partly as an act of distinction from the Christian Orthodox neighbours – Slavs and Greeks – whose numbers and dominant culture had threatened the Albanians with cultural assimilation. The San-Stefano Treaty of 1878, which established a Bulgarian state next to Albania, awakened the Albanians to the danger of being assimilated by their neighbours, and set in motion Albanian nationalism. The Albanian League was created in 1878, in the town of Pristina, as a precursor of the Albanian nationalist movement. Resentment for the neighbouring Christian nation states – Serbia, Greece and Bulgaria – influenced the Albanian national idea, which was both imitative and antagonistic. The Albanian state was created during the Balkan Wars, in 1913, with the decisive support of Italy and Austria–Hungary. During the preparations for World War I, the two large powers planted a wedge in the Balkan Alliance, set up by Russia against them. They redirected Serbia's ambitions from Albania to Macedonia, where they clashed with those of Bulgaria.

The population of the contemporary Albanian state remains split into roughly 70 per cent Muslims, 20 per cent Orthodox Christians, and 10 per cent Catholic Christians. This has made Albania one of the state-frontiers of the modern age. After the country became independent, three generations of Albanian politicians enforced anti-religious measures. The objec-

tive was to strengthen Albanian nationalism by wiping out the Christian–Muslim division and laying to rest the retrograde Muslim imperial identity. The establishment, in Tirana in 1922, of an autocephalous Albanian Orthodox Church, independent from both the Greek and the Slavic churches, was designed to serve the 20 per cent Orthodox Christian population, but also as a support for Albanian nationalism. The anti-religious policies reached their peak with the ban, by Enver Hoxha, on all names of religious origin (when the dictator forgot only his family name). Paradoxically, these anti-religious campaigns created a difference between Albanians in Albania proper and Albanians in Kosovo. The latter are almost exclusively Muslim, and still feel Islam to be a strong element of their collective and national identity.

As one of the latecomers among the nation states in the Balkans, Albania was haunted, from the very beginning, by the ghost of an irredentist movement which claimed territory twice as large as that of the sovereign Albanian state. This movement gathered momentum during the twentieth century, at the same time as nationalism and irredentism, marked by bloody wars and defeat, receded among the Balkan peoples. The nationalist vigour among Albanians in Kosovo, Serbia, Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania, typical of the early stages of nation-state building, rose, in contrast to the fatigue of the neighbours from nationalist exploits. Today there exists a strong national consciousness among the various groups of Albanians, yet they remain split between loyalty to Albanianism and loyalty to the established territorial state. The violent conflicts in Macedonia and Kosovo, where religious distinction fuels nationalist strife, and also the collapse of state institutions in Albania in the 1990s further damaged the image of Albania as an accomplished territorial nation state.

The Middle East between secular nationalism and religion

Nation-state building in the Middle East both imitated developments in Europe and, at the same time, sought a viable form of political organization for the newly independent peoples. In their ‘protectorates’ and League of Nations ‘mandates’, the Western powers simply oversaw the waking up of nations in waiting. As elsewhere, the paradigm of the nation state was ‘Europe’s most successful export product’, yet the process was never smooth, and this ‘product’ may also prove to be Europe’s ‘most pernicious export’ (Liebich 2002: 104–8).

Israel, another modern state in the post-Ottoman space, stands out as a specific case in the Christian–Muslim frontier zone. It is part of a broader Christian–Muslim–Judaic triangle of civilizations and political power. The Zionist settler movement and the establishment of the state of Israel, in May 1948, were yet another example of the process of territorialization of non-territorial nations in the post-Ottoman space. These acts met with

widespread international sympathy in the aftermath of the Holocaust in Nazi-occupied Europe. The key characteristic of the Israeli nation became its definition primarily in terms of religion, something that fits well in the traditions of the region. Only a Jew could qualify for immigration to the new state, and being a Jew had a confessional meaning. Moreover, the network of global Jewish solidarity marked the identity of Israel. It remained 'the State of the Jewish people' and not the state of its citizens, where the Palestinian Arabs were not recognized as a national minority.

Despite this strong religious element in Israeli identity, the people and state of Israel can still be regarded as a nation, and nation state, in the post-Ottoman space. The Israeli–Palestinian conflict should be understood in terms of two opposing national projects in which two nations fight over the territory where they want to establish their respective states. As in many other countries, territorial claims are supported by evidence from religious tradition and the legacy of holy places. One of the things that distinguishes Israel as a special case of a nation state is the impact of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, which has focused attention and support from two global communities – Jewish and Muslim. A case in point is the support of the Organization of the Islamic Conference and of the World Zionist Organization for the Palestinian and Jewish communities in Jerusalem (Dumper 2002: 12). The linking of the Arab–Israeli conflict to the idea of opposition between Islam and the West, between East and West, is an element of confusion that has been cleverly exploited by political and communal leaders. The Middle East conflict has become both a conflict of two nations for territory and the focal point of a global opposition. This is the key to understanding the international security dynamics of the civilizational frontier. On the one hand, many Arabs and Muslims around the world see Israel as a foreign body implanted by the West in their ancestral territory. On the other hand, Israel, the biblical promised land, has become the state of the Jewish nation – but is this a nation only of the Jews established in Israel, or is it the nation of all those Jews around the world who support Israel? The relationship with the global Jewish community, and unresolved minority problems, confuse the definition of the Israeli polity as a modern nation state, in the same way as the modern Arab nations are split between state-specific nationalism and the link to Arabism. Some Arab states may be even better integrated internally than Israel. What sets Israel apart as a nation state is its distinct cultural identity, including religion and language, which draws a line separating Israelis from their neighbours.

Obviously, the various states in the Middle East have reached different stages in the building of a nation state. *Jordan* is closer to the idea of a nation state than is Kuwait or Yemen. Kuwait's native population is difficult to distinguish from that of the regions in its immediate vicinity, while the share of foreigners – Arabs and non-Arabs – remains very large. In its turn, Jordan, which was separated from Palestine and Greater Syria by the

colonial powers, and half of whose population is of Palestinian descent, is less advanced in the construction of a nation state than Egypt.

Of all the Arab states, *Egypt* seems to be closest to the model of the nation state. Yet, as any other predominantly Muslim Arab country, Egypt is split between a broader Arab identity and a local, national consciousness. Even if Egypt is considered as the cultural, political and even spiritual hub of the Arab world, it has become a nation state in its own right. It has had a distinct identity and history as a separate country for millennia. Not by chance, Egypt's foreign policy, including its position on the Palestinian conflict, has at various points been quite distinct from the general Arab line, and has indicated a separate national consciousness. What is more, the two large communities in the country – Arab Muslims and Christian Copts, who speak the same Arabic dialect – share the feeling of belonging to the modern Egyptian nation, despite instances of street violence and communal discrimination. The goal of the Copts has for long been the transformation of Egyptian society on an inclusive, pluralist basis, where cultural diversity poses no problems for their participation in national life. Muslims and Christians collaborated in the nationalist 'revolution' against the British of 1921, whose emblem was a combination of the cross and the crescent. The Copts had one objective in this revolution – equal participation with the Muslims in the independent Egyptian society and state. These events seemed to suggest a formula for Coptic–Muslim political cooperation in an Egyptian nation state. Yet the ensuing communal violence, most often triggered by frustration with the lack of economic development, reflected the difficulties in realizing this ideal. The government and many intellectuals insist that the fusion of the two communities should be promoted actively, yet such factors as the conservatism of this deeply religious people contribute to the conservation of the division of Egyptian society into two large confessional communities. Most Muslims find it difficult to abandon their historically dominant position, while millions of Copts do not want to sacrifice their ancient communal identity. The Copts have never really demonstrated mobilization for political action, probably because of the unequal power of the two communities and the geographical dispersal of the Copts. The Egyptian Christians live in all provinces (*muhafazas*) of Egypt, but nowhere are they in a majority. The Copts have rejected suggestions for fixed representation in the Egyptian parliament (in a way similar to the Lebanese political system), and ideas to define them as a 'minority', probably because they fear more discrimination if they do not integrate in the Egyptian nation.

The problem here may come from the insufficient protection of the Christian minority's cultural and political rights, and it bears a risk for the future unity of the Egyptian nation state. Inclusive nationalism might be a way of accommodating the religious minority. In this sense, Egypt has not yet travelled the whole road to constructing a nation state, and it has not

yet found the magic solution to the problems in economic and ethno-religious relations. The very principle of the nation state has demonstrated certain limitations, as the ultimate goal of any nation state project is cultural homogenization. Greater opening of the majority to cultural diversity at home and regional cooperation abroad seems to be a better option.

The contemporary states of Syria, Iraq, and Jordan emerged as a result of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire during World War I, and French and English colonial diplomats drew their borders. They elaborated the system of 'mandates' of the European powers over the former Ottoman territories with the declared objective of preparing the dominated peoples for the creation of their own states. Thus Sikes, an Englishman, and Picot, a Frenchman, engineered the border between Syria and Iraq, attributing Mosul to the latter as an exchange chip in their global, imperial game. Had they decided otherwise, much could have been different in international politics in the Gulf and the Middle East at the close of the twentieth century. France and Britain not only divided historical Syria between themselves (which encompassed contemporary Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan and part of Turkey), but Britain further split its mandatory territory into Palestine (later split between a Jewish and an Arab state) and Trans-Jordan, and France created Greater Lebanon as a Christian-dominated, pro-French state in the Middle East at the expense of Syria. The French also handed over the province of Alexandretta to Turkey in the late 1930s, as a carrot to keep Ankara from joining the Nazi alliance. Syrian irredentists still look at these two territories as lost parts of their homeland.

After independence, countries in the Middle East with a mixed Muslim–Christian population, such as Syria and Iraq, perceived an opportunity for building secular nation states. Their choice was to join the global community of modern states, and to break the vicious circle of backwardness and traditional social structures. Yet the dream of modernization proved difficult to achieve in the Middle East, and secularism soon gave way to authoritarian and nationalistic regimes in quest of legitimization.

The Christian minority in *Syria* consists of nearly 1 million people, or 6.5 per cent of the country's population. The community is split among numerous denominations. More than half of Syria's Christians are Greek Orthodox (about 503 000), followed by the Greek Catholics (118 000) and several communities that settled in Syria recently, fleeing persecution in Turkey and Iraq – Armenian Orthodox and Catholics, Syrian Orthodox and Catholics, Assyrians, and Chaldeans (Mouawad 2001: 51–3). The Baath Party, whose Syrian branch came to power in 1963, established a secular regime following the ideology of its founder, the Syrian Christian Michel Aflaq. Even if Islam is not established as a state religion, the President of the Syrian Republic has to be a Muslim. In 1982, a riot of the Muslim Brethren in Hama marked the zenith of the rise of Islamist opposition to the secular regime, and resulted in heavy repression of the

Islamists. Yet the rise of Islamism, faltering economic performance, and defeat at the hands of Israel obliged President Hafiz-al-Assad to adopt popular Islam as a legitimization of his regime. Syria's Christians, who enjoy more freedom now than under the Ottomans, see the regime of Hafiz and Bashir al-Assad as a protecting and benevolent force. Indeed, the Alawi elite, to which the Assads belong, has a narrow communal base – the Alawi Shia sect – and seeks alliance with other religious minorities, including the Christians. In this situation, if the Christians have problems under a dictatorial regime, these are shared with the other citizens.

The *Iraqi* state, created in the 1930s, followed a similar path of development, yet this post-colonial state has played a specific role in the Christian–Muslim frontier. A conglomerate of cultural and ethnic groups with weak overarching loyalty to Iraqi identity, Iraq brings together roughly 20 per cent Sunni Arabs, 20 per cent (mostly Sunni) Kurds and about 57 per cent Shia Arabs. This country creates a problem for those (including its own leaders) who try to define the limits of the Iraqi nation. As a consequence, Iraq's leaders, swamped with oil money as if coming from Ali Baba's cave, have entertained ambitions of territorial expansion more often than have the leaders of other states. This has brought them finally into conflict with the Western-dominated system of nation states.

The lands of contemporary Iraq have practically never been part of the Christian Empire, yet at a certain point in antiquity dissident Christian sects, who had been chased out of the Byzantine Empire, converted the majority of the Mesopotamian population to Christianity. The Mesopotamian Christians, subjected to millennia of foreign domination and invasions, remained isolated from the rest of the Christian world, and this is still a defining feature of their identity. These Mesopotamian Christians, estimated today at about 600 000 (or 3 per cent of the country's population), experienced difficult times after Iraq acceded to independence. In 1933 the army of the young Iraqi state massacred about 3000 Assyrian Christians, who cherished ambitions for political autonomy. These events scared all the Christian communities of Iraq, and made them keep a low profile for decades. Under the rule of the Baath Party, whose ideology is a mixture of Arab nationalism and populist socialism, Iraq has been constituted as a secular republic. It was the declared secular orientation of Saddam Hussein's regime that prompted the United States and their allies to support it against the ayatollahs during the Iran–Iraq war of the 1980s.

The Sunni minority, whose geographical base is just the central part of the country, has always exercised a disproportionately high influence over Iraqi politics. The Shia, the Kurds, and the Christians have had limited chances to determine the country's destiny. The case of the long time foreign minister and deputy prime minister, Tariq Aziz, who is a Christian, was an exception rather than a rule. During the Iran–Iraq war of the 1980s, Saddam Hussein's regime made an effort to give more freedom to

the various minorities in order to strengthen among them the sense of belonging to an Iraqi nation. Nevertheless, the lack of cohesion and homogeneity remained a defining feature of the Iraqi polity, which still represents a fragile mosaic of communities. Curiously, this lack of homogeneity can be interpreted as one of the key reasons for the expansionist spirit of Iraqi rulers. It is easy to dream of swallowing neighbouring countries, such as Kuwait or the Iranian province of Khuzestan, whose population is ethnically close to the Iraqis, if one already has a patchwork of communities at home. This situation prompted the Iraqi regime to use a combination of references to national unity and to Islam in order to mobilize popular support. In reality, even if the Baathist regime came to power with the promise of secularism, it adopted a constitution that established Islam as the religion of state. The regime thus gave in to pressure to legitimize itself among the Muslim population.

Iraq's antagonism with the West after 1990 should be seen from the point of view of the uneven development of the Iraqi national polity and growing frustration with the failure of nation-state building. The influx of new wealth from the exploitation of Iraq's oil resources contributed to the self-confidence of the regime in its opposition to the West. As a result, Saddam Hussein's acts not only did not realize the declared goal of consolidating the Iraqi nation state, but also led to more particularism among the various groups, in the aftermath of several military defeats. The lack of homogeneity threatened Iraq with disintegration. After the first US-led war against Saddam Hussein, from 1990 to 2003 northern Iraq was practically excluded from the central control of Baghdad. Local Kurds and Christians (Assyrians and Chaldeans) established a practically autonomous entity, where Kurdish and Syriac (not Arabic) were taught in schools. Nevertheless, Christians in this enclave, as elsewhere in Iraq, Syria and Lebanon, looked increasingly for possibilities to emigrate to the West because of the societal insecurity they lived in. It remains doubtful whether things are changing for the better now the authoritarian regime has been overthrown. Indicating a general trend, rather than an act in isolation, an attack on the Christian quarters of Basra was one of the first acts of the Shia rebellion against Saddam Hussein during the Gulf War in 1990.

The adoption of the model of nation states in the Middle East has one very significant consequence: the exodus of large numbers of Christians. The emigration of Middle Eastern Christians, and the absolute and relative decrease of their numbers, is a key development that shapes the outlook of the Christian–Muslim frontier in the area. Recent publications have indicated that Christians are fleeing from all over the Middle East, and this is part of the process of consolidation of modern nation states in the predominantly Muslim countries. The Christians in Turkey have diminished from 2 million in the beginning of the twentieth century to several thousand today. Christians made up close to one-third of the population of Syria in the early twentieth century, but had diminished to less

than 10 per cent by the end of the century. In 1932 Christians represented over 50 per cent of the population of Lebanon, but they account for less than 30 per cent now (Editors Introduction 2001: 3). This decrease has two major sources, emigration and lower birth rates, yet it clearly shows the side effects of the territorialization of non-territorial nations in the modern Middle East.

As far as the three nations of the southern Caucasus are concerned, they have not yet managed to consolidate their nation states established after the collapse of the Soviet Union. *Georgia*, *Armenia*, and *Azerbaijan* have clearly distinguishable ethno-national majorities, but it is doubtful whether there are overarching loyalties to the nation state, which bring majorities and minorities together. It seems, for example, that the various regions of Georgia have not yet been fully integrated into a one nation state. The strong Georgian nationalism, which existed even in the Soviet era, left a sense of discomfort among the country's minorities. The Mingrelians, the Svans, and the Laz (most of whom live in Turkey) speak languages close to Georgian, but maintain strong regional identities. Ethnic conflicts in Abkhazia and South Ossetia have marred the period of existence of Georgia as an independent state. The problem with breakaway Abkhazia is not so much one between Christian Orthodox Georgians and Muslim Abkhazians (simply because half of the Abkhazians are also Christian Orthodox), but is rather an ethnic and geopolitical problem, as the local government (with Russian support) orchestrated the secession of Abkhazia. Nevertheless, in some cases of minority conflict opposition along the Christian Orthodox–Muslim line augments the problems of the Georgian nation state project. In fact, Christian–Muslim animosity plays a key role in the hostilities between Armenians and Azeris. The war over Nagorni-Karabagh led to the 'purification' of the Armenian and Azeri states. Following *pogroms* against Armenians in Baku and Sumgait, an estimated 300 000 Armenians left Azerbaijan, and 167 000 Azeris were expelled from Armenia. It is estimated that only 18 000 Armenians still live in Azerbaijan proper, while tens of thousands of Azeris left Armenian-controlled Nagorni-Karabagh (Minority Rights Group 1997). The fact that a large Azeri community lives in Iran, just across the border from Azerbaijan, adds to the picture of incompleteness of the Azerbaijani nation state. The frontiers of the Caucasian region are still fluid, and it is not yet clear whether overarching loyalties to the territorial nation states prevail over regional or broader civilizational identities that go back to the history of the Christian–Muslim frontier.

The last fragments of the Ottoman Empire – sources of insecurity

It is difficult to define the states in the group which follows – Macedonia, Lebanon, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Cyprus – as nation states. In Macedonia and Bosnia, for example, the leading community in the young state is

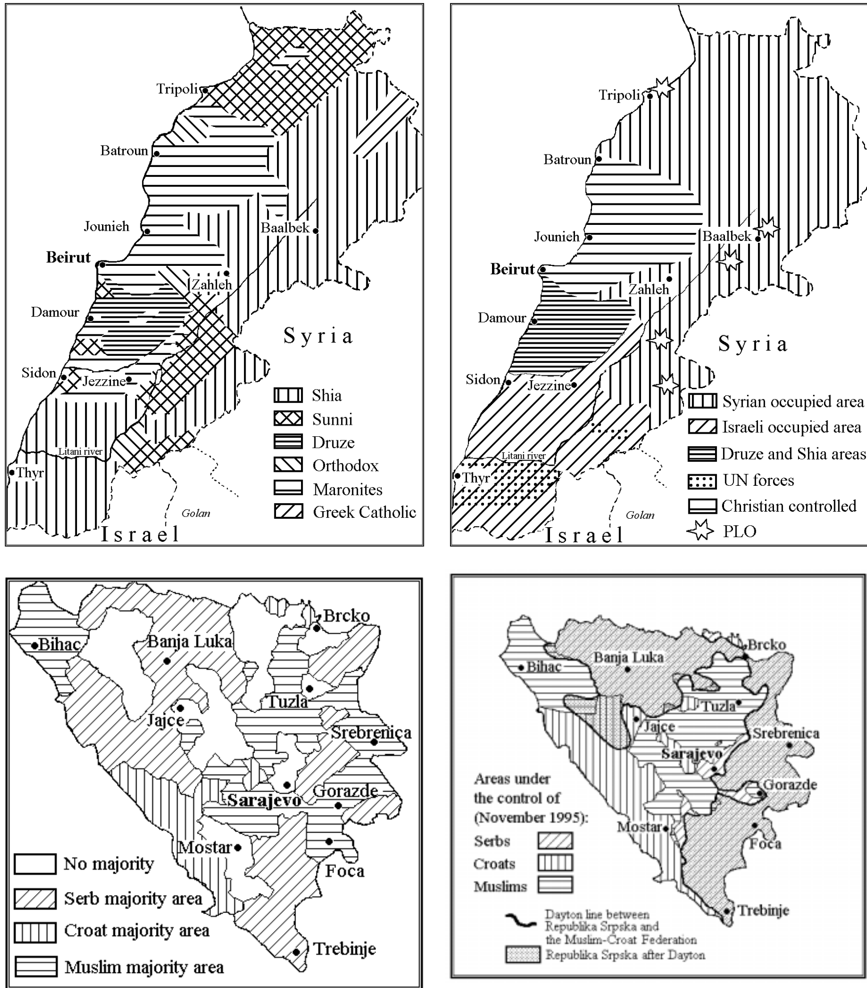
a weak intercommunal group, which had been declared a nation by the former Yugoslav regime. Tito, himself half-Croatian and half-Slovenian, favoured the engineering of new nations – Montenegrin and Macedonian in the 1940s, and Bosnian Muslim in the 1970s – as a means of limiting the influence of the Serbs in the socialist Yugoslav Federation. Macedonia cautiously demanded its independence in 1991, when Croatia and Slovenia were already ablaze, and received it in a surprisingly peaceful manner. Similar to Bosnia, Serbia, and Montenegro, Macedonia has retained one essential feature of the former Yugoslavia: with its mixed population and communal tension, it still embodies the Christian–Muslim frontier. Most theorists of inter-ethnic conflict predicted the break-up of independent Macedonia owing to the tension between Orthodox Macedonian Slavs and Muslim Albanians, who constitute a quarter of the population and live in a compact area in northwestern Macedonia. The threat loomed large when the conflict in neighbouring Kosovo threatened to spill over the Macedonian border. Two factors prevented the demise of the young state: the government's support for consociationalism at the parliament and cabinet levels, and the international commitment to keep the multi-ethnic state together (especially in 2001, when the Albanian guerrillas launched a campaign of violence with secessionist objectives). The crisis was kept at bay, and Skopje remains one of the few cities in the Christian–Muslim frontier zone that have preserved their mixed character as part of a zone of contact. The religious distinction of the two communities allegedly remains a source of hatred in the mass psychology, and political entrepreneurs use this difference to mobilize popular support. Not by chance, the two communities pay great attention to religious symbols and places of worship. Building churches, mosques and symbolic landmarks (such as the gigantic cross erected in 2002 on the Vodno Mountain overlooking Skopje) is part of the political confrontation. International diplomatic and military support helped the young Macedonian state survive, even if it is still far from the model of a nation state, thus keeping alive hopes that a multi-ethnic state based on civic identity can be viable in the Balkans.

There are certain similarities between the processes of creating Yugoslavia and Lebanon in the 1920s. Both of them were established with the crucial support of French diplomacy in the aftermath of France's victory in World War I, and both aimed at creating a form of a melting pot for the fusion of several communities that had lived side by side for centuries, and spoke a common language. These communities were separated, in practice, only by their different religions: Islam, and Eastern and Western Christianity. In both cases, the leading community in the 1920s was expected to be staunchly pro-French and pro-Western. The objective was to construct modern, secular, and more or less homogeneous nation states. The historical experience of nation-state building in France was not far from the minds of the authors of the Lebanese and Yugoslav nation-state projects.

The modern state of *Lebanon* was created by the French colonial (mandatory) power, in the 1920s, as a Christian island in the Muslim ocean of the Middle East. However, decades of communal violence, related to the search for national identity in a post-colonial state, plagued the fragile Lebanese state. It was difficult to base a nation state on a mosaic of confessional communities which mixed physically but not mentally, and which continued to function separately. The Lebanese nation-state project was inspired by the idea of a consociational political arrangement among several confessional communities, living in the territory of what the French mandatory power in the 1920s defined as Greater Lebanon. A key element in the system was the central position of the Maronite Christians, with their long tradition of autonomy and pro-French affinities, to whose territories the French added the lands of other dissident religious minorities – Druze, Shia, Uniate and Greek Orthodox Christians, but also some Sunni areas on the Mediterranean coast. Despite the communal diversity, Lebanon soon developed a distinct identity based on three pillars: political compromise about a fixed ratio of communal representation in the political institutions; a foreign policy balanced between the industrialized West and the Arab East; and an economy anchored in the principles of free trade. This distinct identity, however, should not be taken as an overarching national consciousness. Various communities never stopped contesting what seemed to be the basis of stability in the Lebanese state – the system of fixed representation – because they never stopped contesting the figures allotted to them.

The confessional and communal essence of politics in Lebanon impeded the construction of a nation state, yet the Lebanese state survived, despite the tension and civil wars, for a variety of reasons. First, the Lebanese religious communities never formulated viable separatist political demands, and members of all minorities still identify themselves with the state of Lebanon. The wars of 1975 to 1990 were merely a struggle for more power in the existing state, while 'political confessionalism' (the system of fixed representation) had little meaning beyond communal politics. Second, the Syrian occupation of Lebanon did not destroy the three parameters of Lebanese unity, described above. Syria sought control over Lebanon, but not the annihilation of its political system; Damascus preferred stability in Lebanon to romantic dreams of Greater Syria or of Muslim solidarity. Several times it betrayed its alliance with the left-wing Muslim coalition in Lebanon in the name of *Realpolitik* objectives.

Similar to Bosnia, Lebanon can be qualified as a state, but not as a nation. Map 3.1 represents how the ethnic mixture in the two countries fostered political and military division. It is difficult to separate territorially the intermingled confessional communities in the last two 'fragments of the Ottoman Empire' (Corm 1986: 48). In contrast to Bosnia, where the territory is split among the three constitutive communities, the Lebanese nation-state project remains feasible. The post-war Prime Minister of



(a) (b)

Map 3.1 The difficulty of constructing nation states in Lebanon (1982) and Bosnia (1996): (a) ethnic division; (b) military division.

Source: Apostolov, M. (2001) *Religious Minorities, Nation States and Security: Five Cases from the Balkans and the Eastern Mediterranean*, Aldershot: Ashgate, pp. 89, 137.

Lebanon, Rafiq Hariri, suggested a compromise based on the revival of the liberal economy and on a balance between a declared loyalty to Syria and an increased interaction with the West. Many sources indicate that the commitment to an inclusive Lebanese nationalism has grown among the Maronite Christians, following the end of the civil wars in 1990. This has removed a major obstacle to the Lebanese nation-state project. If this

project is to succeed, all communities should make an effort to reconcile modern secularism and the confessional basis of the Lebanese consociational democracy. Communal separation has remained part of life, even after the signature of the 'Taif Accords' in 1989. Communal violence, Syrian control and Shia extremism, fuelled by the Arab–Israeli confrontation in the south, remain the major impediments to the construction of a viable Lebanese nation state.

The former Yugoslav republic of *Bosnia and Herzegovina* faced, after 1991, two alternatives: to construct a plural polity of its three constitutive communities or to divide into three national states. The Bosnian Muslim Slavs, the Orthodox Christian Serbs, and the Catholic Croats spoke the same language, but were divided by different religions and historical experience. A factor that greatly complicated the situation in comparison with Lebanon was the Serbian and Croatian linkages to nationalism in the two neighbouring countries. As elsewhere in the zone of contact, the religious distinction among the Bosnian communities, and bitter memories of violence, were simply used by ethnic entrepreneurs in the mobilization of popular support. In the early 1990s, the choice was made to construct separate nation states in Bosnia. The ensuing communal wars followed one objective: completing the construction of three nation states in the western Balkans – Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian Muslim – at the expense of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a separate country. The three religious communities actually fought for the territorial delimitation of their nation states.

Several factors stimulated the formation of distinct national consciousness among the three communities: the influence of nationalism in neighbouring Serbia and Croatia; the different and often hostile historical myths of the three groups; the categorization of difference among ethnic and national groups in the former Yugoslavia; and the activities of 'ethnic entrepreneurs', who promoted nationalism actively in the pursuit of their egoistic objectives. The balance between conflict and cooperation in Bosnia always depended on external factors. The Serbo-Croatian clash destroyed not only the Yugoslav Federation, but also the communal balance in Bosnia and Herzegovina, defined as an administrative rather than national unit in the former Yugoslavia. It was the only one of the six Yugoslav republics that did not belong to just one but to all three nations that inhabited it.

The official categorization of group difference had saturated the socialist Yugoslavia with ideas and practices that nourished distrust among the communities. There was a hierarchy among the six Slavic 'constitutive nations' of Yugoslavia, the numerous 'nationalities' (minorities) linked to nations that had their states abroad, and such 'ethnic groups' as the Gypsies and the Vlachs who had no 'kin' state abroad. Many people continued to think in terms of this hierarchy even after the demise of Yugoslavia, aspiring towards 'promoting' their group. 'Nations' aspired to independence; 'nationalities' dreamt of becoming 'nations' with the right

to secede; and 'ethnic groups' of becoming 'nationalities'. Hence the tension over the recognition of the right to self-determination of the Bosnian Muslim Slavs (a 'nation' which includes the Muslim Slavs, who inhabit the Sandjak area, split between Serbia and Montenegro) or of Kosovo as a republic with the right to secession.

The collapse of the communist system and the end of the idea of a Yugoslav 'melting pot' eliminated two powerful focuses of collective identity. The ensuing ideological vacuum made the three communities in Bosnia turn to their traditional identities, and their distinct confessional identity became the basis for building three separate nations. Nationalism, rather than religious extremism, was the driving force in the Bosnian civil war. This was a continuation of the belated formation of Serbian and Croatian nation states, which involved the Bosnian Muslims in the process. Numerically inferior and lacking the historical experience of a vigorous nationalist movement, the Bosnian Muslims (a term denoting an ethnic rather than religious category) were at a disadvantage from the very beginning. It was the idea that they were defending a homeland that boosted their morale in the Bosnian wars – and this was higher than that of the Serbs and the Croats by any observer's account.

The Bosnian conflict raised serious moral and political questions regarding the violent transformation of plural societies into nation states. The role of 'ethnic entrepreneurs' on all sides was central to the Bosnian wars. Struggling for power and hunting for the souls of the Bosnian Christians and Muslims, they inflicted suffering and hatred, and used people's fears of discrimination and violence in order to create small, autonomous entities, which they could then easily milk. All three communities adopted an exclusive identity, and preferred to live in their own nation states rather than a united Bosnian polity, shared with people they did not trust.

As the Bosnian example seemed to threaten contagion and new, destructive wars of partition, in the European periphery, the international community prepared to intervene and establish a form of control over the process of formation of nations and nation states in the Balkans. The Bosnian conflict reintroduced confessional, communal strife as an influential factor in politics and nation-state building in southeastern Europe. At Dayton in 1995, the international diplomacy imposed a project for peace and the construction of a plural Bosnian polity. The local communal and national leaders accepted it, as they felt there was no possibility of advancing their nationalist plans without endorsement from the key powers in the West. Nationalist tension and the psychology of Christian–Muslim confrontation still simmer beneath the surface, while ethnic partition and nation-state building prevail over pluralism in Bosnia. Policymakers in Europe, the United States, the United Nations and NATO have to take into account the confessional factor in nation-state building if they want their policies to be effective in the complex post-Cold War realities of the zone of the Christian–Muslim frontier.

Unrealized nation-state projects – the hottest points on the frontier

In several countries of the Christian–Muslim zone of contact, the process of constructing a nation state or being assimilated by a neighbouring, ethnically close, nation state has not yet been completed. In Cyprus, Montenegro, the Palestinian territories, Kosovo and Chechnya the Herderian cultural notion of the nation is very much alive, but has not yet led to the construction of a nation state. The Greek majority of Cyprus, for example, has oscillated for decades between the idea of union (*enosis*) with Greece and preserving the plural, independent state. Had it not been for the British occupation of Cyprus, which lasted from the Berlin Congress of 1878 until 1960 (the United Nations year of decolonization), it would have been easy to imagine Cyprus being integrated into Greece in the same way as Crete was, or, alternatively, into Turkey. When the Turkish army invaded Cyprus fourteen years after its independence, in the aftermath of a pro-*enosis* coup, the island was split into two parts, which seemed to be geared up for incorporation into the Greek and Turkish nation states. The distress of nationalist fighting and the Turkish invasion made the chances of reuniting the island appear fairly bleak, while the fear of a Turkish reaction cooled the spirit of *enosis*. The major problem of Cyprus remains its puzzling relationship with the nation-state structure of the world. Neither the Greek-Cypriot southern part of the island nor its Turkish-occupied northern part can be defined as nation states. The relationship between Ankara and Athens, and not between the leaders of the two Cypriot communities, has always been decisive for the political future of the island. The promise of Cyprus's accession to the European Union can break the stalemate. It may lead either to a *rapprochement* of the Cypriot Greeks with Greece and of the island's Turks with Turkey, or it may revive the 1960s project for an independent (and united) Cypriot state this time around under the benign sway of the European Union.

The *Palestinian territories* and *Kosovo* have never been independent states, yet building statehood is their prime objective now. In both countries, confessional distinction from their current masters simply reinforces the nationalist standoff. Building a nation state has been the ultimate goal of the Palestinian movement since World War II. In 1948, the question was whether to establish an independent Palestinian state within the borders of the British mandate (which was the position of the Arab states) or limit it to the territory of the Arab State, as defined by Security Council Resolution 181, which also recognized the right to self-determination of the Jewish population of Palestine. Britain could no longer handle the conflict between Arabs and Jews, which it had created, and handed the issue over to the United Nations, which decided on the creation of two states with illogically carved borders. In the ensuing Palestinian War of 1948–1949, the better organized Israeli forces defeated the neighbouring

Arab states, and established a Jewish state in most of the Palestinian mandate territory. From the very beginning of the Arab–Israeli conflict, images of East–West confrontation penetrated the mass psychology. Beyond the issue of nation-state building, the Arab–Israeli problem remains largely a psychological one. It is part of the mental constructions in the minds of millions of people, which are then reflected in political acts of serious consequence.

The Egyptian administration in Gaza and the Jordanian one in the West Bank and East Jerusalem between 1949–1967 only complicated the situation. These prevented the creation of institutions of Palestinian statehood. The idea of a Palestinian state then had to go through a series of steps: the creation of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which for years functioned as a prototype of a Palestinian state structure; the PLO's recognition of Israel in 1988, which opened the way to a peace process of *de facto* Palestinian nation-state building; and Israel's recognition of the PLO with the Declaration of Principles, signed in Oslo in August 1993. By 1996 Israel had withdrawn from 60 per cent of the Gaza Strip and 5 per cent of the West Bank. A Palestinian National Authority was established in these areas, but the fragmented autonomous areas remained ringed by Israeli-occupied belts. This situation seriously impedes Palestinian state building, and contributed to the explosion of the second *intifada* in 2001.

The political environment in Israel – a state defined by its distinct religion, which enjoys the support of the world Jewish community and excludes the Palestinians – influences the identity and the character of the struggle of the Palestinians. The popularity of Islamists, namely in the Hamas and Islamic Jihad organizations, has risen in the two *intifadas* (popular uprisings) in 1987–1991 and after 2001. The Islamists maintain close relations with extremists elsewhere in the Muslim world, and aim to achieve a Palestinian state governed according to the rule of Islam. At the same time, many Palestinian nationalists, both Muslim and Christian, stick to the idea of secularism. A conflict between the two sides is looming in the nascent Palestinian polity. As in Egypt after 1920, it seems that the problem will not be solved with the establishment of a nation state. As the secular leadership of the PLO and the Palestinian National Authority face serious problems in their relations with the Israeli authorities, Islamism enjoys increasing influence in the pro-independence movement. There was a good chance that Hamas or another Islamist party could simply become an opposition party in the plural Palestinian National Authority, yet it seems that, in the current situation of confrontation, Hamas (which is a modern political organization with an archaic and exclusive ideology) will most probably continue its anti-democratic course. The rise of Islamism will downplay the major advantage of the Palestinian national liberation movement in the past – secularism. With the rise of Islamism the Palestinian Christians are being put under additional pressure, and it

is important to find a way to integrate them – an increasingly marginalized minority of 3 per cent in a largely Muslim society. As in other areas of the world, the drive to create homogeneous nation states, and the accompanying xenophobia, creates tensions in international relations in the Middle East. Successful accommodation of various communal identities in any state of the Middle East is a must, and for this purpose it might be necessary to look beyond the nation-state logic. Israel's politicians should recognize that the future of their state would be better if the Palestinians were also to enjoy stability and prosperity.

Montenegro, a principality hidden in the Balkan mountains, was never fully subdued by the Ottomans. It was incorporated after World War I into the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (later Yugoslavia) on the basis of its linguistic and religious proximity to the Serbs. In fact, the Montenegrins have been divided historically between those who consider themselves Serbs – the 'Whites' – and those who see themselves as a separate ethnic group – the 'Greens'. In the early stages of the wars for the Yugoslav heritage the Montenegrin army fought in Croatia alongside the Serbs (the shelling of Dubrovnik was their deed), and joined the rump Yugoslavia, together with the Serbs, in 1992. Later in the 1990s, however, the Montenegrin society and government sought to distance themselves from Belgrade. Many embraced a 'Green' policy, which culminated in the years of the presidency of the pro-independent Milo Djukanovic. Montenegro is a multi-ethnic society whose majority constitutes 62 per cent out of a total population of half a million. There is not much record of animosity between Montenegrins and Albanians, who constitute about 6.5 per cent of the population and inhabit compact areas to the south, yet the two communities live separately. Montenegro even gave refuge to Kosovar Albanians fleeing Serbian repression and the effects of NATO's attack on Yugoslavia in 1999. Resentment is reserved, however, for those Montenegrins who adopted Islam during the Ottoman domination, and are identified as Bosnian Muslim Slavs. These people constitute 14.6 per cent of the population, and live primarily in the Montenegrin part of the Novi Pazar Sandjak, split between Serbia and Bosnia. Montenegro may become another testing area for the viability of multi-ethnic states in the late age of nation states in the Balkans.

The population of *Kosovo* was split roughly into two halves, between Serbs and Albanians, when Serbia took it over from the Ottoman Empire in 1912. The Albanians were predominantly Muslim, with a small Catholic community (about 50 000), and the Serbs were Orthodox Christians, apart from a small minority of Muslims (*gorantsi*) to the south of the province. During the following decades Kosovo was the scene of a dramatic demographic change, which is difficult to reconstitute with precision today. The result was a province that was 90 per cent Albanian at the end of the twentieth century. Many Serbian families came to the area after the Balkan wars, and some Albanians may have moved to the province during World

War II, when Kosovo was attributed to Albania. Another source of this change was the much higher fertility rate among the Muslim Albanians, but also the voluntary departure of Serbs from the hostile land of Kosovo to the more developed cities of Serbia. Between the two World Wars the government launched an assimilation campaign, when instruction at schools was only in Serbian. After the communist takeover of power in Belgrade in 1945, education rights were granted to the Kosovar Albanians, home rule in 1968, and full autonomy within Serbia through the 1974 Yugoslav constitution. Belgrade never recognized the right of Kosovar Albanians to have their own republic in Yugoslavia because they were not Slavs, and also because Albanians already had a nation state abroad. By contrast, the Kosovar Albanians wanted nothing less than a republic, which had the right to secession. After the Albanian riots in 1981, mainly over the language of education, two opposing national programmes – Serbian and Albanian – clashed in Kosovo. Kosovo was stripped of its autonomy in 1989, its Assembly (Parliament) was closed in 1990, and the hardline Serbian President, Slobodan Milosevic, abolished its presidency in 1991. In response the Democratic League of Kosovo (DLK) organized a referendum, which endorsed independence, in September 1990. A parallel Albanian educational and administrative system was set up in 1992. All this was a nationalist dynamic that had nothing to do with religious doctrines. Yet vivid historical myths and the distinct confessional identity of the Muslim Albanians and Orthodox Serbs, who venerate Kosovo as the cradle of their state, church, and nation, contributed largely to the atmosphere of intolerance and readiness to fight.

Kosovar leaders, including President Rugova, persistently push for the international recognition of the province's independence. This contradicts, however, the interpretation of the Helsinki principle of inviolability of state borders, made by the Badinter Commission in the beginning of the Yugoslav wars, which practically recognized the right to self-determination of the former constitutive republics, but not of autonomous provinces (such as Kosovo in Yugoslavia, or Chechnya in the former Soviet Union). Inter-ethnic relations in Kosovo constantly deteriorated during the 1990s, and culminated in a guerrilla war and NATO strikes in 1999, which drove the Yugoslav Army out of Kosovo. The result was a *de facto* United Nations protectorate over the province, which remains a black hole from the point of view of international law. Formally the province belongs to Serbia, while in practice it is independent. Islamic fundamentalism is not an issue in the province, as the overriding line of division is national. Nevertheless, religious difference remains a major source of communal hatred.

Chechnya declared its independence unilaterally, after the failed procommunist coup, in Moscow in 1991. Yet the odds of constructing a nation state in this rebellious province remain bleak twelve years later. First, Moscow did not prevent the former Soviet Republics in the Baltics,

Transcaucasia, Central Asia, and even Ukraine and Belarus, seceding from the empire, but stuck to the idea of keeping the territorial integrity of the Russian Federation in its Soviet era boundaries. Russia's successive presidents, Yeltsin and Putin, did not hesitate to go for two exceptionally bloody wars in Chechnya in order to keep the restive province at bay. Their concern was that Chechen independence would start a chain reaction amongst the other Muslim peoples of the northern Caucasus, the Volga Tatars and Bashkirs, who also want to free themselves from Russian tutelage. Hence the ferocious opposition to demands for independence made by national and religious leaders in Chechnya, who Moscow qualifies as 'terrorists', 'extremists' and 'Islamist fundamentalists'. In its rhetoric, Moscow simply substituted the label 'anti-democratic' for the 'anti-Soviet' from the previous era.

Second, despite the remarkable record of centuries of vigorous resistance to Russian occupation, the Chechens have no experience in managing a statehood of their own. The historical experience and aspirations of the Chechens relate to two other foci of identity – Islam and the regional identity of the Muslim peoples of the northern Caucasus. When the Russians for the first time came into contact with Chechnya in the sixteenth century, it was a clanic society with largely pagan culture. It was during the struggle with Russia that the Chechens finally united around a militant Islamic identity. The Chechens took part in periodic bursts of resistance in the northern Caucasus: in 1785–1791, when the Chechen sheikh of the *Naqshbandi* Muslim sect, Mansur Ushurma, united the whole northern Caucasus in a holy war against the Russians; in 1824–1854, during the *ghazawate* (holy wars) under Imam Shamil; in 1877–1878, during one of the Russo-Turkish wars; and in 1920–1922, when the Muslim peoples of the region stood against both Whites and Reds in the Russian civil war. The *tariqat* (Sufi orders) provided the ideological support for the struggle. When the Soviets appeased Chechnya in 1922, and especially after Stalin deported its people in 1944 and closed all its mosques, it was difficult to believe that the Chechens would rise again in the way they have done since 1991 (Benningsen-Broxup 1996: 1–7). It may have been Stalin's singling out of the Chechens that prepared them for separate nationalist action for the first time in their history. All the experiences above focused on resistance rather than building independent statehood, while the reference to religion remained strong: 'In the North Caucasus, the role of Islam is not limited to its being an expression of the national patrimony. To be accepted as a Chechen, an Ingush or a Dagestani, it is necessary to establish one's *bona fides* with an appropriate attitude to Islam' (Bryan 1996: 195). The *tariqats* are still influential in the national movements in the northern Caucasus. Islam gives the multiple ethnic groups of the region a dimension without which they would have been simply small groups without a feasible political objective. Dudaev, the Soviet general who inspired the contemporary independence movement, also stressed

that Islam 'was the only force able to unite the Caucasian nations and to resist foreign ideology and creeds' (Benningsen-Broxup 1996: 232). It is indicative that one of the first decisions of the National Chechen Council, after the election of Dudaev as President of Chechnya, was to set up a Caucasian Independence Party, with the objective of establishing an independent federation of the Muslim peoples of the northern Caucasus. The National Chechen Congress developed a three-stage programme: independence first, confederation next, and then federation of the mountain peoples of the Caucasus. In this sense, Russia's fears that the Chechen movement aimed at igniting the whole northern Caucasus, from Abkhazia and Kabardino-Balkaria to Ingushetia and Dagestan, were not far-fetched (Benningsen-Broxup 1996: 236). Russia's strategy in this situation is easy to decipher – shooting the leader will disperse the whole flock. Chechnya practically acquired its independence after the first Chechen war in the 1990s, when Russia, challenged morally and militarily, completely withdrew its troops. Yet regional and Islamic loyalties, which triggered extremist operations in neighbouring provinces, stemmed from the broader loyalties of the local leaders. In this situation, the issue of a Chechen nation state remained confused, to say the least.

Finally, another feature of the nation-state era is the disappearance of the 'city-frontier', which has been the norm of large settlements in the zone of contact for centuries. City-frontiers harbouring various communities, such as Istanbul, Thessalonica, Sarajevo, Alexandria, Beirut and Jerusalem, had been the dominant model of urban settlements in the zone of contact, yet little remained of this legacy after the advent of the nation-state model. In Istanbul, once the heart of the zone of contact, the non-Turkish and non-Muslim population has declined in a drastic way. From a city of 400 000 Turks, 280 000 Greeks, 150 000 Armenians, 50 000 Jews and 15 000 'others' just before World War I, it has now become a megapolis of over 10 million people, with only 2000 Greeks, 17 000 Armenians, and 20 000 Jews (Kotek 1996: 92). The violent division of such cities as Nicosia, Beirut, Sarajevo, Mostar and Kosovska Mitrovica, with the obscure goal of creating purified national or communal territories, has become a sad symbol of contemporary politics of nation-state building in the zone of contact.

Conclusion: different speeds of nation-state building and international conflict

I want to conclude this section with two observations. First, while religion has not been the defining motive in the creation of nation states in the zone of Christian–Muslim contact, religious identity has played an important role in the mobilization of the masses behind a nationalist idea. Second, there is a serious problem for international security stemming from the different speeds of transformation into nation states of the coun-

tries in the post-Ottoman zone. These countries moved at different points of history, and at different rates, away from the structure of large eclectic empires towards building nation states. While some peoples completed the construction of their nation states long ago and are now facing challenges of a completely different nature – regional integration, globalization, and dissolution of their national liberties in a wider community (something that we would characterize as postmodern society with its interspersing communities and a rise of new, functional frontiers among these communities) – others are still fixed on nation-state building, with all its implications for human freedom and group relations. The different speeds of development of social and political forms create a difference in the objectives and means of collective action in the various states and countries. This is often conducive to serious friction. The changing and complex criteria regarding the purpose of social and political organization, at various stages of its development, have added to the confusion.

The nations that were the first to start building territorial states had a clear advantage over those who joined the bandwagon later, and this became a source of conflict, primarily over territory.

The construction of nation states definitely created prospects for development. The later a certain state gained its independence from the Ottoman Empire, the less chance it had for development. At the time when the Christian peoples of southeastern Europe established nation states in the nineteenth century, their Muslim neighbours were still living with the imperial grandeur of the Ottoman Muslim Empire. The Balkan Christian nation states thus captured opportunities and territories later claimed by their neighbours. When the Muslim peoples in the area – Turks, Albanians, Bosnian Muslims, various Arab peoples, Azeris, and Kurds – wised up to the ideology of nationalism, their nationalist fervour overshadowed that of their Christian neighbours. The way of treating religious minorities also varied significantly from period to period, and from country to country. While Spain, Hungary, Serbia, Greece, and Romania managed to clean their territories of the formerly dominant Muslim element, latecomers such as Bulgaria, Bosnia, Macedonia, and also Albania, had to behave differently.

Much depended on the way people structured communal relations in local and regional perspectives. Territorial borders in the Balkans and the Middle East depended on political processes, which differed from place to place and created possibilities for conflict. Many states that emanated the Christian–Muslim frontier, including the Soviet Union/Russia, Yugoslavia, Lebanon, and Sudan, faced the risk of disintegration in the age of nation states. Some of them opted for a federalist solution. The ill-fated federal states in the zone of contact, Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union, disintegrated under the blows of belated state building, and revived divisions along the Christian–Muslim line. Yet 'federalism' (as its etymology from *foedus*, Latin for agreement or covenant, shows) relates to bargaining and

compromise about government. The federal agreements in the zone of contact were not always voluntary and advantageous to all – at least not in the last decades of the twentieth century. In the final resort some of these federalist alliances proved to stand on shallow ground, as the violent crises in the former Yugoslavia, parts of the former Soviet Union, and Lebanon have shown. In Yugoslavia and the Caucasus, the problem turned into a struggle for territorialization of non-territorial nations, which took a high toll of human lives. Currently, the tension between the modern model of nation states and the postmodern logic of mixed societies split by functional frontiers has important implications for the psychology of the frontier. Can Turkey, for example, relinquish the objective of a uniform nation state and recognize its historical errors in treating its minorities, just because it seeks to join the European Union? The same problem exists even in the European Union – for example with reference to Greece, with its balance between EU membership and nationalism, and with its 'Muslim minority' and Orthodox majority.

If we define the nation state as the materialization of a state-building effort concentrated on the territorialization of the social relations of the nation (Hall 1995: 8), and the nation as the manifestation of strong overarching loyalties unimpeded by such broader cultural loyalties as Arabism, then religious and cultural homogenization of society is an essential element of nation-state building. Such a process of homogenization had not been part of the social realities in the multi-ethnic empires of the Christian–Muslim frontier, where the religious and ethnic communities performed separate functions, and where there were well-ordered hierarchies of groups. The process of homogenization was typical for the nation states that substituted for the multi-ethnic empires. Nevertheless, the nation state can never be fully uniform. Fragmentation, inherited from millennia of history of the Christian–Muslim frontier, remains part of social life. Where such fragmentation prevails, the nation state cannot impose a uniform sense of identity. Moreover, in the contemporary world the loyalty to the nation state competes with a myriad of other identities in a postmodern 'free market' of identities. There is a conflict between a nationalist vision of society, which would mobilize all its strata in the name of a common purpose, and the postmodern vision of the world. There can be a great deal of tension within a society that believes that it is part of a postmodern international structure, but is challenged by a neighbouring, young and vigorous nation state that can easily mobilize national loyalties.

There are certain limitations that must be overcome in order to understand the logic of the Christian–Muslim frontier in the age of the nation state. There is an argument in social science, that collective motivation for action in the age of nation states focuses on groups whose purpose is to further their members' economic interests. Any communal conflicts or cooperation are determined, arguably, by rational choice behaviour and material interests. Yet such explanations are insufficient today. People are

part of an increasing number of groups and systems and in order to be motivated for action, they need explanations of social and moral, 'irrational' causes. In addition, many scholars of international relations have assumed that the only significant 'cultural' identity in the modern age that has substantial political consequences belongs to the nation state. In Bertalanffy's theory of systems, the concept of society as an evolving system that has moved from the idea of a sum of individuals, or 'social atoms', to a concept of society where the economy and the nation are one whole, organized on a level that is higher than the constitutive parts. This holistic understanding of social reality was generally positive for the evolution of political thinking, yet it also led to the emergence of serious problems: planned economy, but also deification of the nation and the state (Bertalanffy 1968: 30). Part of the problem resulted from a fixation on the nation state as the ideal and final form of social organization.

The idea that world society should be organized solely on the principle of the nation state has come under increasing criticism. Just after the end of World War II, Inis Claude wrote (1971: 382):

> the state system imposes an arbitrary and rigid pattern of vertical divisions upon global society, disrupting the organic unity of the whole, and carving the world into segments whose separateness is jealously guarded by sovereignties which are neither able to solve the fundamental problems, nor willing to permit them to be solved by other authorities.

In the contemporary 'post-traditional' societies, individuals select for themselves a number of personal, professional, religious, and other identities. The choice they face is by no means limited to the nation state to which they belong. The next chapter will briefly analyse the implications of the transformation of the Christian–Muslim frontier into an element of the contemporary global society, as a postmodern, functional frontier.

4 Interspersing communities and the postmodern functional frontier

Postmodernist theories in international relations are amorphous and eclectic, arguably reflecting a reality in which 'simultaneity and superimposition replace sequence, when the subject is decentred, dismembered, and dispersed' (Ruggie 1993: 144). Postmodernism argues that:

> the logic of late capitalism is undermining the cultural, economic and political organization of the modern order in general, and of the nation state – that quintessential expression of the modernist principles – in particular, through the twin process of global homogenization and local fragmentation.
>
> (Walker, R. 2001: 614)

With its emphasis on difference and otherness, postmodernism illustrates a paradox in the contemporary world which has arguably gone beyond the rigid limitations of the nation state. On the one hand, postmodernists stress the futility of efforts to create homogeneous nation states and insist on the necessity of tolerance to diversity and minorities. On the other, they emphasize the importance of cultural identities and point out that intensification of violent communal conflict is a key characteristic of the postmodern era (Kavanagh 1998: 34–6).

The state of affairs in the theoretical current in international relations studies, known as 'postmodernism', actually resembles what it describes as its subject – a variety of philosophies rather than one single method. Postmodernists criticize the epistemology of our age, and insist that the only basis for one's knowledge is language and culture. They reject the possibility of grounding inquiry and thought in certain pre-given principles and absolute truths, and they question the rigid understanding of the world in terms of a solid structure divided into clear-cut Westphalian states, with a clear distinction between inside and outside. Postmodernists speak about a crisis in the globalized concept of the nation state system, with its twin notions of citizenship and secular nationalism. They see national societies as 'state-bounded segmentations of increasingly global social relations' (Shaw 1994: 6).

Yet postmodernism is not simply about the deconstruction of borders by the global flows of goods, investment, people, and information; it is also about a step by step reconstruction of new frontiers through new, refined definitions of 'the other', in which various communities mark their territory (Albert 1998: 60–3). These new, functional frontiers, which enter people's everyday lives, for example through their contacts with immigrants, often demonstrate a tendency to intolerance or conflict (Martin 1999: 831). The galloping development of the means of communication – transportation and the pervasive dissemination of information – bring people closer together, but also bring the civilizational frontier closer to people.

The concept of the postmodern functional frontier is related to the idea of a transfer of authority within the postmodern society. In the words of David Mitrany, 'sovereignty cannot in fact be transferred effectively through a formula, only through function . . . the accumulation of partial transfers [of authority] in time brings about a translation of the true seat of authority' (Mitrany 1966: 31). One can understand the postmodern functional frontier as the product of a qualitative change in social relations and morals, which inevitably leads to shifts in the structure of authority from the nation state towards postmodern society: less structured, open to the outside, but increasingly divided from within. The interspersing of communities that has lasted for decades and even centuries and which now finds expression in new qualities and quantities in such Western countries as France, the United Kingdom, and the United States, represents a piecemeal accumulation of changes, a gradual transformation of the composition of society, where distinct communities touch and function side by side but remain separated and never really mix. Even if certain forms of relationship are considered normal, are they the norm? Let us just think what was considered as normal, in inter-racial and intercommunal relations, in western Europe a couple of generations ago; what is considered normal now; and whether this is the norm.

As a result of the growth of wealth, rapid increases in information flows, and the evolution of the welfare state in the West since the 1960s, an 'intergenerational' change of values has occurred, moving society from materialist values that emphasized above all physical security and security from need towards certain new 'post-materialist' values that emphasize self-expression and the importance of quality of life. The new desire for self-expression affects all societies indiscriminately, from the formerly discriminated communities in the West (Black Americans, Irish and others) to people in the poor former colonies in Africa and the oil-rich monarchies of the Muslim East. The shift in values is part of a broader shift in worldviews – a 'postmodernization which encompassed a change in a variety of orientations, from religious outlook to sexual norms' (Inglehart 1997: 5). Contemporary Islamist extremism grows, in part, on the foundations of this postmodern drive to self-expression of groups of people, who

see their societies and communities as being at a deep disadvantage in the modern structure of the world. In order to change this, they feel ready to sacrifice everything they have – their (sometimes significant) wealth and/or their lives. In Western societies Christian and Muslim communities continue to function separately, in a situation when cultural distinction is matched and even overshadowed by functional divisions that are the cause of feelings of exclusion and animosity. Muslim expatriates in the West, even if they are technically well educated, can be the spearhead of Islamist extremism, probably because of this feeling of exclusion, as the personal backgrounds of the organizers of the World Trade Center and Pentagon attacks on 11 September 2001 have shown.

This feeling of inferiority and exclusion is not limited to Muslim expatriates in the West; it also affects people who remain in the developing countries, who are well informed about the rest of the world, who profess admiration for America and the West, but who feel bad about the way Americans and the West treat them. Hundreds of millions of Arabs, to whom Western media refer as 'the Arab Street', bear exactly this feeling in their hearts. The 'Arab street' may matter less in the minds of conventional politicians in the West than such strongmen as Saddam Hussein, Hosni Mubarak, the Saudi Crown Prince Abdallah, or Usama bin Laden, yet it is this 'street' that is much more important when it comes to the global postmodern frontier, which politicians should take into account in the longer term. On both sides of the divide the conditions for extremism to flourish are ripening, as the creation and expansion of the global extremist organization, al-Qaeda, has demonstrated. A new paradigm is making its way in international and intercommunal relations on a global scale.

European colonization of Asia and Africa in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries led to a first wave of interspersing communities in the colonized countries. The post-colonial world, however, was characterized by re-territorialization of the young Third World nations. Growing insecurity and nationalization of the economy caused many colonists to leave. The 1 million *pieds noirs* who left Algeria in 1962 were the most dramatic example. The 1960s were a watershed in the patterns of migration movements across the Christian–Muslim frontier. The new Western expatriates in the developing Muslim countries have much more diversified origins in comparison with the earlier predominance of people from the metropolis. They stay now for shorter periods of time, following particular market conditions. As a rule, such people are even less likely to integrate into the local society. A White descendant of colonists in Zimbabwe would identify herself as Zimbabwean, but a Shell worker in Abu Dhabi, or a tour operator in Egypt, would not. By contrast, the movement in the opposite direction, towards the affluent West, has become one of the defining characteristics of the post-colonial era.

Political scientists love the analogy of postmodernism in sociology with postmodernism in architecture. A favourite notion here is 'internalizing

the exterior', which means making the exterior part of our interior, as was done by the architects of the Eaton Center in Toronto or of Armand Hammer's International Trade Center in Moscow. These buildings create a total and complete 'postmodern hyperspace' – the world in its diversity in miniature – in our interior (Ruggie 1993: 146–7). If the postmodern world is defined in terms of 'internalizing the exterior', the West, with its mixture of communities and its drive towards integration and globalization, has become more postmodern than the East, with its inertia of the national liberation movement and nation and state building. Liberalism and material prosperity have lured people from their established cultural environments in the Muslim Third World into the postmodern megapolies of Britain, France, and the USA, affecting the identity of the host countries profoundly. The negligible number of Muslims in western Europe before 1960 grew to several millions in each of the larger Western countries in the last decades of the twentieth century. There were 3.22 million Muslims in France in 2000, which represents approximately 5.68 per cent of the country's total population – mostly Maghrebis, but also Black Africans, Turks and others. The number of Muslims in the United Kingdom is similar, but they come mostly from the Indian subcontinent. Germany hosts a Muslim community of about 1.75 to 2.1 million, which is almost exclusively Turkish, and represents 1.33 per cent of the country's total population. About 14.7 million Muslims live in the Russian Federation, making up about 10 per cent of its population (Frémy 2000: 543). The level of integration of the Muslim communities in Europe is quite low, with Germany having the poorest record in this sense (White 1999). No more than 160 000 out of a total of 2.1 million Turks in Germany have German citizenship, although many of them were born in Germany. A 1913 citizenship law makes it difficult for foreigners to become German citizens if they cannot prove a German bloodline. These migrants are mostly economic, following a natural movement from lower- to higher-income countries. Yet once in the host country in the West, many of these migrants tend to stick to their traditional culture and identity, complaining that they face exclusion. Arguably, an Algerian, a Kurdish, a Lebanese, and a Palestinian Muslim in the West, each fleeing a civil war and a desperate economic situation at home, have little in common apart from a feeling of exclusion.

The number of Muslims in the United States has been estimated at between six and seven million (about 2 per cent of the population). According to data from the Council on American–Islamic Relations, the number of mosques in the United States increased between 1994 and 2000 by about 25 per cent, to more than 1200, as an indication of the growing religious organization and visibility of America's Muslims (Bagby *et al.* 2001: 2). Twenty per cent of mosques have Islamic schools of full-time general study for children, and 70 per cent provide charitable assistance for the poor.

Western states aim at greater control over international refugee movements in order to limit the security risk in this area. They are increasingly active in international humanitarian agencies, such as the office of the High Commissioner for Refugees of the United Nations (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM). According to UNHCR data, of 779 700 Kosovar Albanian refugees (almost exclusively Muslim) who left during the Kosovo crisis in the spring of 1999, only 84 450 were evacuated to Western countries, where they were subjected to a strict return programme. The others stayed in southeastern Europe. The declared goal of this policy was the possibility of a quick return after the end of NATO's campaign against Yugoslavia. Of those in refugee camps in Albania, Macedonia, and Montenegro, 700 000 actually returned to Kosovo by September 1999. Another policy consideration was to prevent the refugees from joining the ranks of hundreds of thousands of Kosovar Albanians, who already constituted a large part of the immigrant workers (*Gastarbeiters*) from Yugoslavia, who had been accepted for work in western Europe during the Cold War.

The amorphous postmodernist theories are marked by the debate about de-territorialization and re-territorialization of nations. Two refugee crises on the Christian–Muslim frontier in 1999 illustrated the problem. Christian East Timorese and Muslim Kosovar Albanian refugees left their homelands, chased by Muslim Indonesians in the first case, and by Orthodox Christian Serbs in the second. The primary objective of Indonesians and Serbs alike was the consolidation of their territorial nation states at the expense of restive heterodox minorities. What followed, however, was international intervention led by powers dominated by Western Christian culture – Australia in the first case and NATO in the second – whose declared goal was to support the plight of small, beleaguered communities. The problem was internationalized; it moved away from the idea of the exclusive territorial sovereignty of the modern state. Yet the final outcome was another form of territorial state. The international intervention led to the establishment of a nation state in East Timor, while Kosovo is moving towards a similar re-territorialization of cultural and national division of society. Billions of US dollars in aid for reconstruction, and tens of thousands of Western-backed international personnel wittingly or unwittingly assisted the territorialization of an Albanian nation state in Kosovo, even if the Western powers officially reject any changes in the status quo – i.e. the nominal status of Kosovo as a Serbian province. At the same time the non-Albanian population of the province dwindles, intimidated by revengeful nationalists, and without the protection of a coercive Serbian state. According to data provided by UNHCR and IOM, over 200 000 Serbian refugees from Kosovo have moved to Serbia proper. This case illustrates that the zone of contact is still dominated by the logic of nationalism and the nation state, even if powerful currents push it in the direction of the postmodern world of mixing communities.

Postmodernism illustrates a complex picture of the globalization of social and cultural relations, where religion and 'theopolitics' partly redeem the ground they had once lost to secular nationalism. Geoffrey Parker argues that the secular trend in history moves upward and downward much like the Kondratieff's cycles of economic growth and crises. Fernand Braudel was arguably the first to notice this linkage in the 1980s, but it attracted real attention after the end of the Cold War, when the secular trend declined (Parker 1998: 151–3). The challenge of modernity has been to reconcile science with religion, while the challenge of the future will be to reconcile economics with spirituality. Not only the evolution of world economic systems, as described by Wallerstein (1984), but also globalized spiritual relations, create the consciousness and reality of global society. The tragedies in Bosnia, Kosovo, and East Timor, and the danger of fundamentalism, have stirred world-wide attention because they reflect the global opposition of spiritual identities. This gives certain legitimacy to one of the arguments of Huntington and of Galtung about the possibility and necessity of building 'an international order based on civilizations' as the surest safeguard against world war (Huntington 1996: 321; Galtung 1998).

The mixture of populations, and the conflicts based on familiar cultural distinctions (as in Bosnia, Kosovo, southern Sudan, or East Timor), foster the development of a global civil society, which demonstrates itself not only in the struggle against the neo-liberal globalization of trade but also in responding to acute cases of abuse of human rights around the world (Shaw 1994: 22–4). Global civil society pushed for action against the oppression of Muslim Kosovar Albanians by the Serbian nation state, of Christian East Timorese by the Indonesian state, and against the discrimination towards migrants. It reacted with indignation to the hideous acts of terror on 11 September 2001, but it also set up protests against plans for unilateral military action around the world. Nevertheless, these reactions of international civil society often bear the traits of civilizational biases. One does not have to go far to find the symptoms: from the debate on whether the oldest humanitarian organization in the world should keep the red cross and the red crescent as its symbols (or add others to them or simply substitute them with a diamond shape), to the motivations behind the 'humanitarian interventions' in Iraq, Yugoslavia, and East Timor. Much, in the interventions in the former Yugoslavia, was reminiscent of the old logic of the triad of civilizations and centres of power. Turkey, Iran, and other Muslim countries openly protected the Muslim populations, whilst Russia and Greece chose to back the Orthodox Serbs, and it was not by chance that Germany and the Vatican were among the first states to recognize the independence of Croatia. Indeed, civil society has gone beyond the limits of the nation state, but it is still influenced by civilizational values.

Modernity, with its nation-state logic, and postmodernity, with its

functional frontiers (such as the contemporary frontier between Christianity and Islam), cannot be separated in time and space, and the West makes no exception to this linkage. The anti-Muslim and anti-immigration right-wing politician in the Netherlands, Pim Fortuyn, for example, struck a chord in the Dutch psyche with his political slogan, 'This is a full country; I think sixteen million Dutchmen are about enough'. Even the immigrant Muslim communities in Europe maintain a link to the nation-state logic. As a rule, imams in Europe are commissioned and paid by the governments of Muslim countries. Even secular Turkey provides imams and organizes religious education for Turkish children in Germany through an organization established especially for the purpose, known under its abbreviation DITIB. The Moroccan and Algerian governments do the same in France.

I would like to conclude the historical outline in the previous two chapters with two observations. First, one should clearly underline the dynamism of geopolitical relations between Christianity and Islam. Civilizational frontiers assist social organization by setting limits to the various concrete forms of human society. These frontiers, however, face the rigidity of the underlying regimes and cultural traditions, which arrest their dynamics and resist change. Jean Gottmann describes how regimes that converge around an 'iconography' of symbols in which people believe tend to be stable and resist change (Gottmann 1951: 512–13, 516). The more there is a need for cultural exchange, migration, travel, trade, transportation, and transfers of technology, the more frontiers should be fluid, dynamic, and subject to change. Second, growing interdependence in the world today has eliminated a set of deep-seated ideological and state borders, but a major new development, as emphasized by the postmodern theorists, has been the rise of functional frontiers within established societies. People now mix easily with each other in the increasingly interrelated world, but remain separated by cultural lines of distinction. The Christian–Muslim frontier is one of the notable examples of a postmodern functional frontier that continues to bear the potential for conflict.

On 31 December 2002, the Geneva newspaper *Le Temps* published an article by the art historian J.C. Blaser, who argued that the destruction of the twin towers of the World Trade Center probably meant the end of 'postmodernism' in architecture. Even if they followed the traits of 'modernism', thus representing a belated symbol of the trend, the towers were built at a time when postmodernism had captured the imagination. What about postmodernism in international relations theory? Does the bell toll for the 'internalization of the exterior', whose most prominent example has been the city of New York, where the towers of the World Trade Center once stood? Do the strengthening controls on aliens with suspicious origins, heightened security measures, and implicit linking of the US-led war on terrorism with a war on Islam, announce the mutation of the postmodern functional frontier into a post-postmodern society with

more rigid civilizational frontiers? This does not seem to be the case. The current hiccups are not the symptoms of a serious disease which would impede the construction of more harmonious relations among interspersing communities on a global scale. The more serious problem is in building the institutions of accommodation of various identities regionally and globally. This process needs a global leadership, yet a leadership that would help all communities express their positions, and not unilaterally impose solutions. There are doubts in the region after the Iraqi crisis of 2003, that the US can play this role as an 'honest broker'.

We saw in previous chapters how the frontier between Christianity and Islam was constructed, and how it took shape in different forms of political and social organization since the seventh century. Chapter 5 will build upon this historical overview in order to show the place of the Christian–Muslim frontier in geopolitics.

5 Geopolitics of the frontier

The previous chapters have described how the historical 'clash' of the Christian and Muslim civilizations took the form of a political struggle between the Muslim and Christian empires themselves. This chapter concentrates on the geopolitical dimension of the Christian–Muslim frontier, which has its roots deep in the history of Christian–Muslim relations and is reflected in the statements and acts of contemporary political leaders. History shaped the relationship between men and geography in the zone of contact, and was an important factor in the construction of various group identities, which often confronted one another – for, in the words of Jean Gottmann, 'the worst barriers in society stem from the diversity of historical past' (Gottmann 1951: 519). This chapter also deals with the structure of the Christian–Muslim frontier, as shaped by history. In this sense, the frontier consists of a core area within which the border between Christian and Muslim states has moved since the seventh century, and concentric peripheral circles corresponding to the legacy of peripheral historical contacts, notably colonialism and the postmodern interspersing of communities.

The historical patterns of political interaction between Muslims and Christians – alliances based on historical memories of 'civilizational' empires, the triad of civilizations and empires (Muslim, Christian Orthodox and Catholic), the specific social structures of frontier provinces, and the system of communal separation – are alive in the political realities of today. The leaders of confessional communities with whom I spoke in Bosnia and Lebanon insisted that there was no doctrinal element in their struggle, and that their objectives were primarily political. Both the Maronite Patriarch, Pierre Nasrallah Sfeir, and the spokesperson of Hizbullah, Mouafak Algammal, insisted that all communal conflicts in Lebanon, as well as Hizbullah's war with Israel, had political character. The goal of any community and its elite was the control over political power or territory. The 'special representative of Chechnya to the United Nations and the Council of Europe' in 1999, Ahyad Idigov, told me that the objective of his people was independence. He argued that the Islamist forces had very limited influence – a fact which was magnified by Russian

propaganda. He accused the Russians of fundamentalism, because their real objective in Chechnya was to intimidate any Muslim peoples in the Russian Federation who would dare to follow the Chechen example and break away from Russian control. Communal and state leaders thus use religious identity and the plight of their co-religionists in the pursuit of specific strategic objectives. This is a civilizational and religious bias in decision-taking, which usually compensates for the leaders' inability to formulate a clear strategy in the postmodern age of confused political identities.

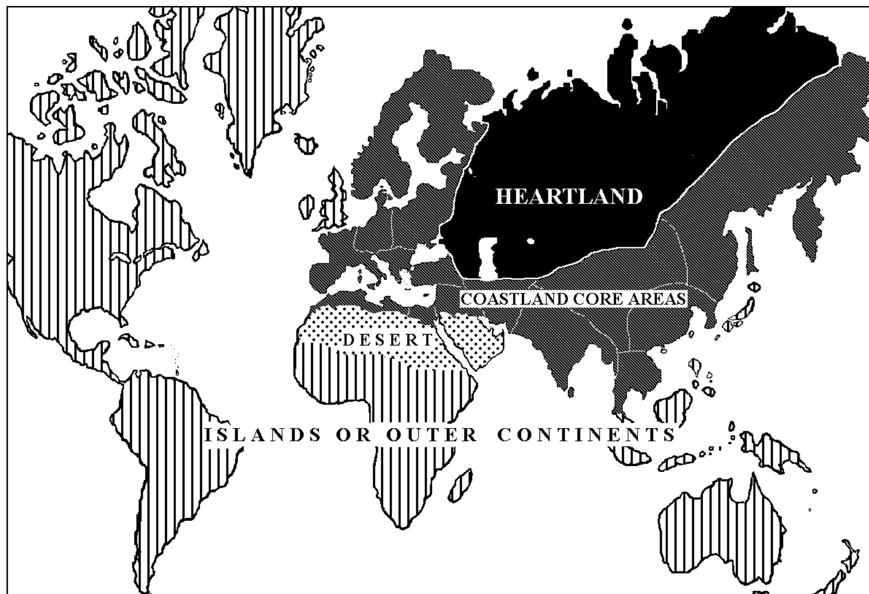
Geopolitics and religion

The term 'geopolitics' can be used with reference to the civilizational frontier between Christianity and Islam, because the relationship between the two large cultural and religious complexes includes a strong political element. On the one hand, for thirteen centuries there existed a historical interaction across the frontier between empires whose legitimization was primarily religious. Contemporary definitions of geopolitics go beyond the idea of a simple link between physical geography and state politics, and bring people's ideological and intellectual potential into the picture (Zorgbibe 1986: 3; Defarges 1994: 11). Geopolitics reflects people's consciousness of the physical, political, and cultural environment. Its subject can be an individual or a group (including civilizations, churches, and nations), and its perceptions of political space take shape through social experience – including the collective spiritual life of large religious communities whose dynamic development is situated in a concrete geographical space. The purpose of studying geopolitics is increasingly seen as the visualisation of global space and the relationship of human society to the surrounding geographical setting as a structured whole (Agnew 1998: 1–3). Religion, civilization and geopolitics have existed in a tripartite unity since antiquity, defining the different civilizational complexes and political powers in the various geographical regions of the world. The intention of this chapter is to visualize the frontier between the Christian and Muslim cultural complexes, as a zone with its own geopolitical dynamics and influence on politics.

Political geography and geopolitics deal with power relations, and with the way men make use of the particularities of nature in their search for power (Ó Thuathail 1996: 1–3). The sense of belonging to a local or global religious community also demonstrates an attitude to power and oppression. The geopolitics of the Christian–Muslim frontier focuses on the confessional level of people's perception of political space, which is part of their sense of belonging to a certain nation state, community, or various forms of political and economic institution. The analysis of the frontier, contained in this book, concentrates on one single element of what Mackinder once viewed as the field of geopolitics: the frontier

between two 'core areas' on the fringes of the geopolitical heartland. Mackinder, whose ideas influenced, as nobody else's, the field of geopolitics, understood the world in dualistic terms. Mackinder's world consisted of a Eurasian mass of land and surrounding outer continents and islands (see Map 5.1). In this setting, the 'natural' authoritarianism of the powers controlling the heartland clashed with the liberalism of the island powers. The 'core areas', on the fringes of the heartland, occupied a controversial place as an object of rivalry between the authoritarian centre and the free world of the surrounding islands. Torn between the two trends, constantly struggling among each other, the core areas follow dynamics of their own.

The Mediterranean Sea provided a point of convergence and a means of communications for the multicultural and multi-ethnic complex of societies in the area of the Christian–Muslim frontier. On the one hand, the geographical specifics of the Middle East and the Balkans – a sequence of mountains, valleys and coasts – favoured localism and caused the appearance of communities, limited in size and separated from each other by natural barriers. On the other hand, geography framed the patterns of cultural and political interaction and influence that followed the maritime and terrestrial links in the cultural patchwork of the zone of Christian–



Map 5.1 Mackinder's vision of geopolitics.

Source: Adapted from Mackinder, H.J. (1998) 'The geographical pivot of history', in Ó Thuathail, G., Dalby, S. and Routledge, P. (eds) *The Geopolitics Reader*, London: Routledge, p. 31.

Muslim contact. The Mediterranean Sea, with its transport corridors, was the focal point of the frontier, and it still remains both a divide and a means of communication between the two civilizations.

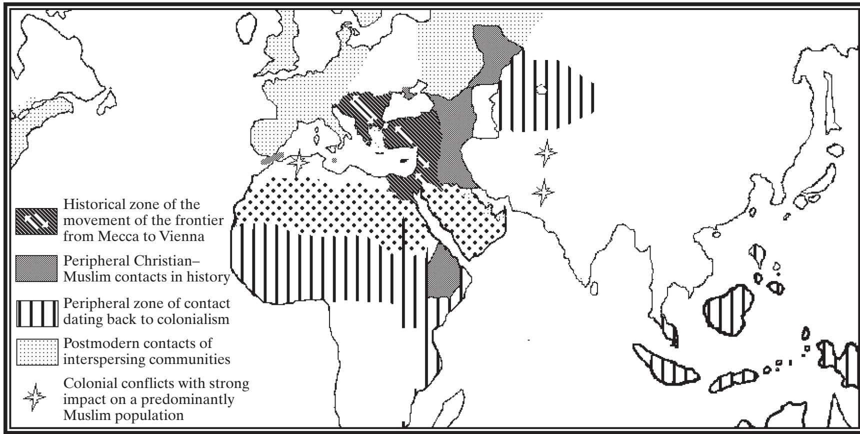
On the whole, one should not exaggerate the significance of natural factors in the development of the various forms of social organization. Geopolitics may misrepresent certain trends in social reality – for example, by attributing to the frontiers the image of marginal lands, lacking the resources to become a middle ground, and doomed to remain an arena for the rivalry of the core areas. Many geopolitical analyses of the civilizational frontier are clumsy, often reflecting the objectives of a certain political regime or mere prejudice. Some of them offer a static explanation of the civilizational frontier, a reductionist vision of global interdependence, which might represent, for example, the Islamic world as the inherent 'other', which helps to define the limits of European civilization (Fuller and Lesser 1995: 2–3, 14). By contrast, the frontier should be understood as a dynamic object. The way people interpret the nature of the frontier and its dynamics strongly influences the way social relations across the civilizational frontier are constructed.

In the geopolitical perspective, the historical Christian–Muslim frontier represents a succession of zones situated between two or more core areas flanking the heartland. In some instances in history, the frontier coincided with the faultline between the heartland power (Orthodox Russia and the Soviet Union in modern times) and certain Muslim core areas (Persia and Turkey). In some cases it corresponded to the line dividing two core areas (e.g. Anatolia, and southeastern and central Europe). In classical geopolitics, core areas are endowed with a relatively well-defined territorial base, a characteristic political, social and military system, and an ideology of their own. They are separated from each other by frontier zones, which have mixed features and are open to influence and invasion from both sides. Mackinder addresses two different dimensions of the modern 'globalizing' world: the unity between the world ocean and the heartland, and the fragmentation and integration of 'separate and coexisting world systems' (Mackinder 1998: 29; see also Ruggie 1993: 168). The fusion of different cultural, social and political entities in the zones of contact and the diffusion of territorial sovereignty are a constant theme in geopolitics. One of the most interesting suppositions of geopolitics is the link between the concepts of the frontier and of global interdependence. Frontiers have a social purpose, and this social purpose is not to cut off a community from the rest of the world. Fortress-style policies of closed borders, reminiscent of Enver Hoxha's regime in Albania, are absurd. The world is interrelated in all its diversity, and frontiers are markers of the structure of global society rather than a foundation of isolationism. In this setting, civilizations might be seen as the arteries of world society, along which cultural information and influence flow constantly, and which serve specific parts of this global society.

Geopolitical structure of the frontier

The civilizational frontier, and the Christian–Muslim zone of contact in particular, should be understood in dynamic terms. It has already been shown that high social mobility contributed to the dynamism of the early Ottoman Empire as a state-frontier, while the rigidity of communal separation was one of the reasons for its demise later. The frontier has its own core, and several concentric peripheries. Each of them is defined by its historical and functional dynamics. In this sense, the geopolitical concepts of a core and a periphery should be reconsidered. Instead of Muslim and Christian core areas facing each other, the frontier itself has its own core: the geographical space from Mecca to Vienna, through which the frontier moved for more than thirteen centuries, and where a number of 'enclaved' minorities still exist. This representation of the frontier highlights its dynamism, and clearly indicates the link between the Christian–Muslim frontier and the partition of the world among various structures of political authority – multi-ethnic empires established in the zone of contact with the ideological sanction of one of the three religions of the frontier (Islam, Eastern Orthodox and Catholic Christianity), but also nation states, each focused on a certain religion. The idea of the geopolitics of the Christian–Muslim frontier presented here differs from the conventional idea of geopolitics in that the civilizational frontier should be understood in terms of dynamism as its defining element. The frontier has been a political frontline between vast empires with religious legitimation, moving constantly for centuries. At the same time, it has always been a geopolitical zone in its own right, which has been defined by the movement of imperial borders and has always provided a field for interaction to various confessional communities. This representation of the frontier also helps us to understand the zone of Christian–Muslim contact as an organizational link in an interrelated world.

Beyond the core of the Christian–Muslim frontier zone, several circles of contact between the two civilizations gradually emerged. The core and the peripheral sub-zones have no clear-cut borders; they shade off into each other and into the large cultural complexes that surround them on both sides of the frontier. Map 5.2 visualizes the contemporary mixed societies, that live with memories and contemporary perceptions of the different historical encounters of Christians and Muslims: the movement of the frontiers of the Christian and Muslim empires; the historical contacts beyond the core area; the legacy of colonialism; and the postmodern interspersing of communities. The first 'circle' reflects the oldest points of contact and conflicts, points that were peripheral to the Christian and Muslim empires – e.g. in Ethiopia, Russia's Tatar provinces, and the western Mediterranean. The second circle is characterized by the European colonial expansion, and encompasses various countries, ranging



Map 5.2 Contemporary geopolitics of the frontier between Christianity and Islam.

from Sudan to Central Asia, the Philippines, Indonesia, and sub-Saharan Africa. When nation states, as the defining feature of the modern age, replaced colonial imperialism in the Third World, the seeds of opposition remained vital in countries such as Nigeria, the Ivory Coast, Indonesia and the Philippines. In these countries there are two levels of opposition between Christianity and Islam. Similar to the situation in Egypt, Bosnia or other countries in the core area of the frontier, there is an opposition between local Christian and Muslim communities, often exacerbated by conscious policies of division and mischief adopted by the colonial authorities. Communal strife then gives way to the ideas and practice of a global confrontation between the two civilizational complexes.

Indonesia's Muslim majority (approximately 85 per cent of the total population), for example, has traditionally demonstrated a moderate attitude to communal relations, despite certain strident voices of extremism. Some radical organizations, such as Laskar Jihad, have used the laxity of weak governments in the fledgling democracy after the fall, in 1999, of the Suharto regime, which had constrained religious leaders – Muslim and non-Muslim alike. Populist politicians, who had played with the Islamist voters, had done much damage to the secular foundations of the Indonesian state. Laskar Jihad, which had openly espoused the concept of *jihad* and had instigated massacres of Christians in Maluku (the Moluccas Islands) and other provinces, enjoyed support from certain centres of power in Indonesia. Another Islamist group, which the government in Jakarta refused to qualify as terrorist for years, is Jamiat Islamiya, whose declared objective is the creation of a regional Islamic state, including much of Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei and the southern Philippines. Even if this idea may seem senseless at this point, it is reflective of the rejection

of patterns of territorial state borders in the Orient that follow the old colonial division of the world. The ghost of redrawing state borders in Africa and Asia, with a view to establishing more homogeneous nation states, has never been far away. Even if the extremists inspire but a small portion of the people of Indonesia, emissaries of Usama bin Laden's al-Qaeda international network have made contacts with leaders of the two Indonesian Islamist organizations with a view to integrating them as national sections of the global terrorist network. Al-Qaeda seeks to make southeast Asia its new power base, along with its traditional bases in the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia. Acute conflicts in the Moluccas, the southern Philippines, and East Timor have played into the hands of the global extremists. The Islamist terrorist acts in areas of conflict, such as Jolo in the Philippines, and in sites attracting millions of Western tourists, such as Bali, are a clear signal.

The five Central Asian republics are not far from this image of post-colonial Third World states. There were hardly any stable state borders in this region before the Russians occupied it and the communists established separate Soviet republics there. In what sense does the border between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan look different on the map from the border between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, both drawn by European imperial powers? The key problem that the Central Asian republics faces today is quite similar to that of other post-colonial states with Muslim majorities: a dilemma between established autocratic regimes and the need to democratize in order to develop. In 1991, the year of independence, the former Communist Party bosses became presidents everywhere, except for Kyrgyzstan. All the political actors seemed preoccupied with independence, and thus allowed the autocratic regimes of the presidents to evolve (Vinatier 2002: 32–5). Political stability in the region has built upon the external presence, especially American but also Russian, in the years since the fall of communism. As elsewhere, Islam has found in this quandary a fertile ground to increase its popularity. As the independent states of Central Asia move away from Moscow's influence, they are caught between cleptocratic dictatorships of narcissist post-communist presidents and an American-style vision of capitalism. As elsewhere in the world, the mollas in the mosques of these former Soviet republics are at the front of the popular discontent. They are already appealing to the population to act against the despotic rulers and, by the same token, against the Americans who are supporting the new/old regimes, whose elite still consists of former Communist Party leaders. The Russian Orthodox minorities in these countries, primarily in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan, face similar problems to any colonist communities in former colonies. The major cleavage of conflict in the Central Asian frontier, however, remains the opposition between post-communist cadres and an increasingly radical Islamist movement. Tadjikistan, which slid between 1992 and 1997 into a bloody civil war between neo-conservative communists in power and a heterogenous

coalition of provincial chieftains converging around the Islamist Rebirth Party, is an example in point.

The postmodern mixture of communities characterizes the third circle of peripheral contact. This circle has been created by the relatively recent arrival of immigrants and expatriates, who moved – primarily for economic reasons, in the search for better jobs – in both directions away from the frontier. Muslims spread throughout western Europe, the United States, and Russia, where recent immigrants already constitute a significant portion of the population. France's Muslims constitute about 5.68 per cent of its population; and Britain's various Muslim communities account for nearly 3 per cent of the population. Muslims make up about 1.33 per cent of the population in Germany, over 2 per cent in the United States, and about 10 per cent in the Russian Federation. All these communities have a clear geopolitical link to the (imperial) past of these powers. The Muslims in France are mostly Maghrebi and (to a smaller extent) Levantine Arabs or groups originating from the francophone countries in sub-Saharan Africa. In both cases they come from countries in which France applied rigorous campaigns to spread its cultural influence in the colonial period. These countries still maintain strong cultural, economic, social and political links to the former metropolis, for example via the Agence Intergouvernementale de la Francophonie. The Muslims in the United Kingdom come primarily from the Indian subcontinent – India and Pakistan – and their establishment was also facilitated by preferential treatment for expatriates of countries from the British Commonwealth, the loose organization that brings together the former British colonies. There is nothing surprising in the slogan often raised by immigrants' civil rights movements: 'we are here because you were there'. The story of Russia's Muslims is partly different. Much like the Muslim immigrant communities in the West, many Caucasian, Central Asian and other Muslims who moved around the Soviet Union, especially to the large political and industrial centres, followed professional obligations or mixed marriages. Nevertheless, most of the Muslim peoples in contemporary Russia – Tatars, Chechens, Dagestanis and others – already lived in their current homelands at the time when Moscow conquered their lands.

In the United States, the six or so million Muslims are roughly equal to or exceed the number of Jews in that country. This might be a surprising statement, given the much stronger influence of the Jewish lobby on American politics. Even links to such Arab countries as Saudi Arabia are driven by economic and strategic considerations rather than the influence of the divided Muslim community, often looked upon with suspicion, especially since 11 September 2001. The Muslim community is growing in number and, if not the case already, will soon become the second largest religion in the United States. One of the sources of this growth is, naturally, the immigration of Muslims into the United States, which has always attracted migrants from countries with low prospects for material

development for the individual. Other sources are the large numbers of children in typical Muslim families – a trend that the Muslim communities carried over with them when they crossed the Atlantic Ocean – and the conversions of primarily Black Americans. In the United States there is also a strong link between the social and political identity and history of the country, and the composition and identity of the Muslim community. Worshippers of Islam are ethnically diverse, according to a 2000 Study of the Council on American–Islamic Relations. One-third of them are South Asian, 30 per cent are African-American, and only 25 per cent are Arab. They use English as their main language, or one of the main languages in Islam, at their Friday prayers (Bagby *et al.* 2001). Some Black civil rights activists converted to Islam recently for political reasons, as a sign of distinction from the mainstream culture and nationality in the United States.

At the same time, and also for economic reasons (in the search for better job opportunities), many Westerners have moved to Muslim countries. These people stay for short periods of time and come from any part of the developed world, following the business allocation of multinational corporations or the concrete economic and even military projects of the host countries. This pattern is quite different from the type of migration that characterized colonialism, when colonists originated almost exclusively from the metropolis and settled for longer periods of time (if not forever), establishing a community that had its identity and ambitions for independent political action.

The different historical experience of Christian–Muslim contact in the various areas of the civilizational frontier has contributed to the different character of interaction between Christians and Muslims. People in the various circles of the frontier zone see this relationship differently. Those from the core of the frontier zone, whose historical memories include centuries of interaction and whose ancestors have experienced the movement of imperial frontiers, are different to those people living in societies where everyday contact between immigrant minorities and host communities is a very recent phenomenon. Consequently, given the varying historical experience of the various societies, there are alternative ways of building cooperation between Christians and Muslims. Table 5.1 shows the link between the experiences and perceptions of Christian–Muslim relations in the zone of contact. If the objective of global political action is to foster cooperation and to moderate attitudes in the mixed societies of the frontier, closing the perception gap might be one of the first and important steps to take. There is a gap, for example, between the way Muslims in the Middle East and the way Americans see world events. It will be difficult for the United States to help build peace in the Arab–Israeli conflict if Middle Eastern Muslims do not see the United States showing equal empathy for the suffering of Palestinians at the hands of the Israeli army as for Israelis at the hands of Islamist terrorists. The world's greatest power needs a deeper understanding of the realities

Table 5.1 The potential for conflict or cooperation in the zone of contact

	Core	*First circle: historical expansion*	*Second circle: colonialism*	*Third circle: immigrant groups*
Potential for conflict	Rigid communal identities anchored in historical memories of opposing sovereign powers	Deeply seated historical identities; long tradition of competition between Christianity and Islam	The colonial legacy – struggle for power between communities, some of which were created by the colonial powers	Immigrants seen as a threat to host country's civilizational values
Potential for cooperation	Both communities are indigenous: possibility for inclusive nationalism	Both communities are indigenous, often ethnically and linguistically close to each other	Modernization and links of the indigenous population to the metropolitan culture	No memory of opposing sovereign powers in the actual country of residence

of mixed societies in the zone of contact, in order to help moderates instead of religious extremists win over the hearts and minds of people in the Balkans and the Middle East. Only such an approach will lead torn societies in the region along the road of communal cooperation.

Hundreds of years of life on the frontier and the absence of indigenous political administration have preserved the various groups in the mixture of conquered, converted and resettled communities that make up the population of the historical zone of the Christian–Muslim frontier from complete assimilation. This pattern of communal relations can still be felt in such countries as Lebanon, Bosnia, Egypt, Russia, and Bulgaria. The historical zone of contact is still fragmented among numerous, sometimes irrationally small, separate communities and states. Social and political fragmentation remains one of the defining characteristics of the Christian–Muslim frontier. The historical overview of Christian–Muslim relations (see previous chapters) has shown the origins of this division of society into segments, a division that penetrated the institutions and the psychology of societies in the zone of contact. It also influenced the security structures and economic behaviour of people and states in this zone.

Frontiers bring dynamism to human society. In the English language, especially in America, the term means a peripheral and dangerous region, a 'Wild West' where poverty, wars and suffering reign. Yet many peripheral or frontier zones have in the past undergone spectacular evolution to become new centres of civilization. The early Ottoman state or Austria, and its capital, Vienna; the New World; the new industrialized countries

(NICs); these were all at a certain point of history merely places on the fringes of civilization, yet they eventually became centres of events with global significance or even the cutting edge of civilization. Innovation often takes place on the periphery, in defiance of the existing political, economic and social structures and patterns of behaviour. We have already mentioned the impulse of the Reconquista liberating the Iberian Peninsula from the Muslim Moors that led Spain and Portugal to unforeseen discoveries and expansion into world empires, and the impressive expansion of the Ottoman principality, with its military frontier culture, into a vast empire. World history is full of such examples. Owen Lattimore claims that opposition on the frontier between agricultural China and its nomadic, 'barbarian' neighbours to the north produced such crucial innovations as grand-scale military construction (the Great Wall) and new techniques of warfare (the cavalry warfare of mounted archers, adopted from the 'barbarians'), which made possible the emergence of centralized political organization in China (Gottmann 1980b: 205–8). Frontier powers in a way profit from their place in world society. The Ottomans, for example, acquired knowledge of certain Byzantine administrative and technological achievements before and after they crushed the Byzantine Empire.

The Christian–Muslim frontier should be understood from the perspective of the potential for innovation and revolutionary leaps ahead. Whether this potential has been realized under the various historical circumstances in the various cases of frontier opposition, is another issue. It seems that the dynamism and expansionary thrust in many cases gave way to more or less rigid structures, which gradually closed the way for social mobility. This was the case of the Arab Caliphate, the Ottoman Empire, and the colonial empires of the nineteenth century. Another historical process, which is explained by the dynamism of the frontier, is colonialism. In a book that has become a standard source on this topic, Robinson and Gallagher explain colonialism in terms of the dynamism of the frontier: trouble in the periphery arguably caused imperial powers to seek pacification of the periphery, and then to expand in Africa, Asia and Oceania (Robinson *et al.* 1992). Blaut (1993) explains this violent projection of European power and European way of thinking in the underdeveloped world as a largely subjective activity.

I would like to conclude this chapter with three observations. First, the chapter builds upon a dynamic explanation of the civilizational frontier, which is in any way my explanation of the Christian–Muslim frontier. A division between two 'core zones' is regarded as a periphery in most geopolitical interpretations of world history, yet the zone of the Christian–Muslim frontier has its own vitality and structure. This is a political frontier that reflects the historical movement of territorial borders between different domains of political authority. In this sense, the historical zone of contact has become the centre of a specific geopolitical dynamic. The

millennia-old battlefield between Mecca and Vienna is the centre of the geopolitical concept of the Christian–Muslim frontier. Patterns of social interaction and specific mental constructions about relations among civilizations are projected from this centre to the peripheral circles of the Christian–Muslim frontier – in sub-Saharan Africa and south-east Asia, and in the multicultural communities of the postmodern West and postmodern Russia. It is not necessary to understand the dynamism of frontiers simply in terms of innovation and leaps ahead; this is only a potential that might or might not be realized. The outcome of the processes of interaction depends on the specificity and rigidity of established structures in each society.

The second observation refers to the political implications of the structure of the Christian–Muslim frontier, as represented on Map 5.2. Social relations in the core historic area (the frontier from Mecca to Vienna) have influenced the emergence of a number of concentric sub-zones that shade off into each other and into the two neighbouring civilizational complexes. The Middle East has been perceived for millennia as the focal point of the three monotheistic civilizations. Sigmund Freud would call the historical confrontation among monotheist cousins a 'narcissism of minor differences' – a term that explains little beyond an alleged inclination to aggressiveness towards one's neighbour in human psychology (Freud 1993: 65).

It is clear that people pay so much attention to the conflict in the Middle East because they see it through the prism of their civilizational thinking. They attribute to the ancient land of Palestine the meaning of a 'Holy Land', even in the contemporary, secular age. This Holy Land is a reference and an anchor for their deepest cultural identity – suffice to mention the impressive migration, in the not so distant past, of Jews from the Diaspora to Israel, with the purpose of establishing a nation state in the biblical 'promised land' for their non-territorial nation. Another example in the same setting is the continuous support that Israelis and Palestinians receive from their Jewish and Muslim brethren throughout the world. On a broader scale, even Western strategic thinking, especially concerning Middle Eastern affairs, passes through the prism of images of the history of the Holy Land, reflecting its religious and psychological importance for the rest of the monotheist world. Conflicts among civilizations use references to the situation in the Holy Land. Both sides pay much attention to events in Israel and Palestine as the focal point of the civilizational frontier. Moreover, part of this attention is transformed into political and military support for one of the two sides in the deadly Middle East conflict. Paradoxically, there are influential forces in the Islamic world that will lose a significant part of their political and psychological leverage over the Muslim masses if the Palestinian conflict suddenly finds a lasting solution. Similar to the threat posed by Saddam Hussein to the neighbours of Iraq, the Middle East conflict has been used for manipulative ends in the politics of the Western world. A seemingly trivial conflict

between two nations for one and the same territory has thus expanded into a global crisis which has tormented the world for over half a century – and its end is not in sight.

In Bertalanffy's theory of systems (Bertalanffy 1968), the Middle East conflict can be compared to a local trauma that disturbs the functioning of the system as a whole. The large cultural complexes described in this book can be likened to living organisms that react to an open wound such as the Palestinian conflict or the Bosnian war. These complexes make up part of the broader system of world society, which is also affected by the situation. The ideological, political, economic and nationalist levels of confrontation, which add up to the complexity of the Middle East conflict, can swell on the basis of this systemic interaction.

The 'politics of sacred place' in Palestine and Jerusalem clearly have global implications. This can be seen in the episode that preceded the severe crisis in Palestinian–Israeli relations called the 'second *intifada*' (second Palestinian uprising). In September 2000, the right-wing Israeli leader Ariel Sharon visited an area of religious and public buildings in the old city of Jerusalem which is of great importance to both Muslims (who call it Haram ash-Sharif) and Jews (who call it the Temple Mount). Muslims in Palestine and in the whole world interpreted this visit as a provocation, an attempt to claim Israeli sovereignty over a contested holy territory. The result was a hardening of Palestinian resistance and Israeli public opinion. Six Palestinians died in the clashes immediately following the incident. Ariel Sharon's Likud Party won the next elections in Israel on the wave of mounting confrontation with the Palestinians. It was not long before there were global repercussions of these events. No matter what politicians around the world said at that time, tension in the Middle East directly affected the psychology of confrontation between Christians and Muslims world-wide. These events had a strong emotional impact, which reinforced the appeals of right-wing extremists and Islamist terrorists to intensify the conflict. The effect of this instance of politics, in the sacred places of the old city of Jerusalem, can be compared to the ripples caused by a pebble thrown into the middle of a lake. Such an example is connected to the idea of the geopolitics of the Christian–Muslim frontier as a series of concentric circles, with Jerusalem in the centre, surrounded by the Palestinian–Israeli and Arab–Israeli conflicts and then by a global confrontation between the Islamic and Western (Judeo-Christian) worlds. Jerusalem played a central role, at least in people's minds, in the historical opposition in the triangle of monotheist religions – Christianity, Islam and Judaism – from the first Muslim conquest of the city and the crusades until modern days. Fred Halliday (2002: 28) writes 'in the case of Jerusalem let us not forget that it was disputes in 1853 between two groups of Christians over the keys to the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem that sparked the Crimean War'. In that sense, historical memories have a strong impact on political psychology. Most observers agree on the cen-

trality of Jerusalem in the current Middle East crisis and peace negotiations. The complexity of communal relations in Jerusalem, especially in its old city, which lies directly on the border between Arab East Jerusalem and Israeli West Jerusalem, is born of the long history of inter- and intra-communal disputes over the ages. Moreover, this complexity stems from the central role that the city has played in the Middle East conflict, in which national, regional and international forces have all played their part. A review of the diplomatic developments in this crisis since the Madrid Peace Conference in 1991, when Palestinians and Israelis for the first time sat together at the negotiating table, shows that Jerusalem has been both the major obstacle and the key to solving the Palestinian conflict (Dumper 2002: 5).

The Palestinian–Israeli conflict is the overriding issue in people's minds in the Middle East, crossing all boundaries in the region, and can simply ignite what think tanks in the United States have called 'the Arab Street'. It is not by chance that the bin Laden statement distributed on 7 October 2001 – the day the United States attacked Afghanistan – emphasized an alleged link between al-Qaeda's terrorist acts and the exacerbation of the Palestinian crisis. America and its allies, bin Laden claimed, would never again know security until Palestine had no security. And these words had a strong echo in the Arab Street. The Lebanese Shia militia, Hizbullah (the Party of God), which was the most efficient militant Islamist organization in the world at the close of the twentieth century, organizes an annual military spectacle called the Jerusalem Day parade at which people chant 'Jerusalem, Hizbullah is coming, coming'. Sheik Hassan Nasrallah and other Hizbullah leaders thus emphasize the justification for the existence of Hizbullah – its struggle against the United States and Israel, the oppressors of the Muslim *umma*.

Finally, the third observation relates to the very idea of geopolitics. Obviously the interaction of geography and history in political relations is the basis of geopolitics, yet much of what is referred to as geopolitics concerns such things as perceptions, identity, and difference of opinion regarding the social and political realities of the contemporary world. The literature on geopolitics, which mushroomed in the 1990s following the renewed interest in the field, clearly shows this. Christian–Muslim relations are seen in different ways from different perspectives in time and space, as argued by Edward Said in his various works on Orientalism. Christian–Muslim relations are seen in one way from Belgrade, where there is no large, historically settled Muslim community today, and in another from Bosnia, where three confessional communities – Muslim, Orthodox and Catholic – have lived together for centuries. Many observers note that most of the atrocities carried out by Serbs in the Bosnian wars of 1992–1995 were committed by 'visiting' fighters from abroad, rather than by local Bosnian Serb residents. Similarly, the various groups of Christian Arabs see Christian–Muslim relations differently. The

Copts in Egypt, for example, have voluntarily accepted their political marginalization in a predominantly Muslim society as a survival strategy, while the political activism of the Lebanese Maronites remains a defining characteristic of this independent-minded dissident minority in Mount Lebanon. Last but not least, Christian–Muslim relations on a global scale were not viewed in the same way by the average American before and after 11 September 2001. No matter how strong the official line that Islam and Muslims are not to blame for the upsurge of terrorism, most Americans have come closer to a worldview that Islam and the Muslim masses, seen on the TV screen in a distant Middle Eastern or Asian country, are the enemy of today, and this has transpired in certain statements made at a very high level.

Today's physical frontier between Christianity and Islam runs primarily through the Mediterranean Sea, which continues to be a divide and a bridge between the two civilizations. Observers interpreted the short clash in 2002 between Spain and Morocco over the small uninhabited island of Persil, in the Gibraltar Strait, not merely as trivial border incidents, but as opposition across one of the most sensitive frontiers of the European Union – the frontier with the Muslim world. The incident also revived the controversy over Ceuta and Melilla, two small Spanish possessions in North Africa, across the Mediterranean divide. At the other end of the Mediterranean Sea, two states with Christian Orthodox majorities, Greece and Bulgaria, share short land borders with the predominantly Muslim Turkey. Since 1923, these borders have been stable but never free of tension. Expelled, harassed or assimilated Orthodox minorities in Turkey, oppression of the Turkish minorities in Greece and Bulgaria at various points of time, and the division of the island of Cyprus after 1974 became the material expression of this tension.

6 The Christian–Muslim frontier as a psychological phenomenon

The civilizational frontier between Christianity and Islam is essentially a mental construction, deeply rooted in the collective psychology of communities different in type and size. Christian–Muslim relations are shaped by each of these community's capital of myths, which nourish feelings of hope and horror, amity and animosity. As Jean Gottmann put it in his theory about frontiers: 'the real partitions which are the most stable and the least flexible are in the minds of men' (Gottmann 1951: 519). On the whole, it seems that deeply seated mental constructions and attitudes cannot be altered easily, at least in the short term. Their intensity might change over time, in the way that American popular indifference to, and sometimes political complicity with, Islamists around the world was overrun by undisguised hostility after the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington in September 2001.

Most often, images of relations with 'the other' are not deliberately built in human minds. They are to a certain extent the product of unconscious but motivated biases, which are influenced by people's cognitive predispositions, historical memories and real-life experiences. Some of these mental constructions may at times be lost and forgotten, overwhelmed by everyday emotions, interests and aspirations. They may then be revived, usually under the impact of some important events. The overall argument of this book is that even if psychological constructions about the relations between Christians and Muslims are very rigid, people still have the ability to influence them, at least in the long term. This should be taken into consideration when analysing the constructed nature of social relations across the Christian–Muslim frontier in an increasingly globalized society.

Theorists of constructivism in international relations underestimate the implications of psychological factors on people's relations with 'the other': with different cultural communities. In the analysis of the processes of constructing social relations it is important to consider the specific cognitive processes, which involve interpretations of historical memories, concrete experiences of people, and discursive practices. These are, on the one hand, a product of people's subjective interpretation of relations

among civilizations, and on the other, a reference orienting people in the taking of concrete positions, with regard to relations between Christians and Muslims. In order to understand the psychological dimension of the Christian–Muslim frontier, it is important to look at the civilizational bias in individual and collective decisions, and at the impact of historical myths on human mindsets. The role of individuals who convey a community's message across the frontier and the means they use are of great importance for the way the message gets across. There exists a generally negative attitude to the zone of contact as being a zone of conflicts and problems, and this factor has entered people's mental reconstruction of the Christian–Muslim frontier. Studying errors in perceptions about communities on the other side of the divide, about their values and intentions, is essential for understanding why the Christian–Muslim frontier is primarily a psychological phenomenon.

Constructing the psychological frontier

Each civilization is 'unique' just because people define it as such. If the civilizational frontier is understood as an intellectual product of people's quest for order in society, it is obvious that many problems in the relations among Christians and Muslims are the fruit of gaps in perceptions, biases in decision-making, and, in the main, different mindsets. Many issues concerning alliances and conflicts among states, social groups, migrant communities, majorities and minorities in the zone of contact stem from the specificity of the cultural and political psychology of people and communities in this zone. Collective historical memories and people's personal experiences shape a particular understanding of Christian–Muslim relations in the minds of individuals and groups of people, and the formation of these mental constructions is finalized in the discursive practices of thinking, speaking and writing about relations with 'the other'. Such practices are reflected in the way people act and participate in the complex interplay of communal relationships.

Political discourse about Christian–Muslim relations today shows that calculated statements about international relations, human rights, non-interference in the affairs of other states, and religious freedom often hide notions of a relationship with 'the other'. Behind outward appearances people give these relationships a meaning that is passed from generation to generation in the respective communities, but which is also constructed and reconstructed by each generation. The US President, George W. Bush, stated in the fall of 2001, after the 11 September attacks, that the war on terrorism had nothing to do with animosity towards Islam and Muslims, and made a point of demonstrating respect for Islam. Yet popular reactions in the United States to anything that might be related to Islam and Islamism showed anti-Muslim feelings. The struggle against terrorism is too often confused in the popular mind with a struggle with

Islam (Scholl-Latour 2002). On the other side of the divide, Chechen and Kosovar independence fighters centred their discourse on human rights, and the Taliban in Afghanistan focused their statements, in 2001, on anti-imperialism and the sovereign rights of Afghanistan. Nevertheless, community-specific images of Christian–Muslim relations everywhere remain a reference, which people use in order to understand social reality. Both high-level political statements and mass attitudes in the Christian West and the Muslim East are strongly influenced by different interpretations of the interaction between the two large cultural complexes.

People often attribute to Christian–Muslim relations a meaning of inequality and discrimination. Islamist extremists claim that Muslims are discriminated against all over the world, and that their identity and culture are under threat of destruction. In the same vein, right-wing extremists in Europe and Russia stress that their Christian culture is under siege and under the constant threat of being submerged by incessant waves of Muslim immigrants. The subjective interpretation of Christian–Muslim relations, in terms of inequality and prejudice, makes people particularly vulnerable to manipulative influence. This is the secret of the influence and success of relatively small groups of extremists whose ideology would have never caught the attention of their compatriots and co-religionists were it not for this idea of discrimination and threat by 'the other'. The extremist and violent views on Christian–Muslim relations expressed by the al-Qaeda network, fanatic nationalists in the former Yugoslavia, and far-right extremists in the West are far from the overwhelming attitudes of their fellow countrymen. Yet they may receive unconscious sympathy from many people when they stir motivated civilizational biases by references to discrimination and threats.

Thus the Serbian leaders, in the 1980s and 1990s, manipulated public opinion, playing with data about the drastically different birth rates between the Albanian Muslim and Serbian Orthodox communities in Kosovo. The Kosovar Albanians were looked upon with suspicion as a clannish society, whose solidarity was directed against the Serbs. Kosovar families have had large numbers of children for generations, and this pattern has never changed despite the world's transition to a modern style of life where better education and career building for the individual within smaller families has become the norm. At the same time, the number of children in Serbian families has been decreasing for more than a century. In their popular psychology, especially after 1980, the behaviour of the Kosovar Albanians appeared to be demographic warfare. For some of the Serbs, this was a justification for the need of forceful retaliation against a deliberate demographic threat. Many Albanians would not reject this reasoning, admitting that a frontier mentality might have influenced the difference between a higher birth rate of Albanians in Kosovo and a lower one in Albania proper, especially in the cities. This popular psychology,

which led to the disastrous conflict in the late 1990s, might appear strange, but it is not so different from the arguments of far right activists in Western Europe, who are concerned with the rising number of Muslim immigrants and the inability of Western societies to assimilate them culturally.

Another revealing example of manipulating the idea of inequality and discrimination appears in a video used for recruiting fighters for the al-Qaeda terrorist network. The material starts with a section on the deplorable condition of the Muslim community in the contemporary world. The leader and moral instigator of the organization, Usama bin Laden, opens the clip with the words, 'Today our wounds are deeper because the crusaders and the Jews have joined together to invade the heart of Dar al-Islam [the Abode of Islam].' He thus leads the audience from the outset towards his key argument about the urgent necessity to defend, by force, the freedom and pride of the Muslim *umma* (bin Laden 2002: 174). Only after this introduction does the video turn to concrete examples of defence of the Muslim community against Russians in Afghanistan and Chechnya, and against Americans in Somalia. These are, however, peripheral conflicts. The real crux of the problem is the humiliation of Islam by 'crusaders and Jews' – the deployment of American troops in Islam's sacrosanct land, Saudi Arabia. And here comes a second reference to humiliation: ordinary Muslims are humiliated by corrupt and godless Arab rulers, who not only oppress their population but also invite American soldiers to wander freely in the prophet's land. Bin Laden does not even refer to Saudi Arabia by its official name, but calls it instead the 'Land of the Two Holy Places', thus rejecting the legitimacy of the ruling Saudi dynasty. He finishes by asserting his conviction that the Americans are weaker than the Soviets, both of whom the Muslims have routed: in Afghanistan and in Somalia. In the latter case, the US was sent running by the image of dead bodies of US marines being dragged along the streets of Mogadishu. The conclusion indicated is that Americans could be defeated easily by devoted Muslim fighters.

Obviously, people like Usama bin Laden are not representative of the way the majority of their countrymen and co-religionists reason. Yet the statements they make, although laden with misperceptions, are capable of striking a chord in people's psyche exactly because of the reference to inequality and discrimination. Every time a pre-recorded statement by Usama bin Laden was made public the CIA and the US State Department were on the alert, as they interpreted it as a coded message appealing to his followers to go for terrorist action. Yet there was more to this than simply a coded internal message: inequality and discrimination are concepts that are built into people's motivated civilizational biases and mental constructions of the frontier.

The theme of the 'threat posed by the other', as utilized by key political leaders, is a revealing element of the psychology of the frontier. The mis-

perceptions are not always the fruit of deliberate manipulation by ill-intentioned politicians, but can be due to an 'unacknowledged motivated error' emerging in the pursuit of everyday needs and interests (Stein 1993: 367). At the beginning of the third millennium, hundreds of millions of Christians and Muslims throughout the world are interpreting events that have a major impact on humankind through the prism of their community-specific perceptions of Christian–Muslim relations. The wars for the Yugoslav succession, communal violence in East Timor, Indonesia and the Philippines, bloodshed in the Middle East, the assassinations of Western tourists, journalists and humanitarian workers in Muslim countries, and ruthless terrorist attacks, find different explanations in people's minds. Yet these explanations reflect, in one way or another, preconstructed images of Christian–Muslim relations. These images come to light in various situations: from *lapsus linguae* (such as President Bush's comment about a 'crusade' against terrorism in the sensitive atmosphere after 11 September 2001) to differences in attitudes to the 'dirty' wars in Kosovo and Chechnya, where both sides in the conflicts make use of myths and images of the Christian–Muslim frontier. The above explanation of *lapsus linguae* evidently fits with the classic psychoanalytical approach to speech errors, which treats them as surface manifestations of unconscious processes. In the specific case of the image of a 'crusade against terrorism', the unconscious process in the speaker's mind corresponds to the unwitting part of the construction of mental images about the Christian–Muslim frontier. The concept of a 'crusade' means for the Western leader a total mobilization of society for affirmative action in defence of civilization, but in the historical memories of Muslims around the world it evokes images of suffering and humiliation at the hands of an aggressive and oppressive intruder who wants to rule the world. The use of the concept 'crusade' is just one among many examples that show the ambiguity of the mental construction of Christian–Muslim relations. These constructions are like an iceberg; the tip is seen by everybody, yet what remains under the surface is an unconscious structure which, all the same, influences the way people think, speak and act.

The wars in Kosovo and Chechnya have demonstrated that the images of the Christian–Muslim frontier change all the time and are subject to the influence of various factors. Both Russian and Chechen fighters, participating in the conflict in the remote Caucasian province, share something of the historical frontier mentality. They see the conflict as part of a historical opposition between two civilizations. The northern Caucasus has been a frontier province for at least five centuries, and this has strengthened the feeling among Chechens that it is their destiny to be a frontier population and to defend Islam. On the other side of the divide, the conquest of the Caucasian frontier is the most romantic part of Russian literature and history, a story that is much stronger in popular memories than tales about the Napoleonic wars, or even about the two World Wars in the

twentieth century. From an early age, Russians learn, often by heart, pieces of work by Pushkin, Lermontov and Lev Tolstoy, which reveal the conquest of the north Caucasian frontier.

Public opinion about the Chechen war, however, has changed several times, in both Russia and the West, since the beginning of the hostilities. Answering questions on Russia's toughening stance in the Chechen war in 2002, the US President, George W. Bush, said 'people try to blame Vladimir [Putin]; they ought to blame the terrorists'. Given the staunchly critical position of the United States before September 2001, the change of official attitudes in Washington can be characterized as one of the major shifts in the backdrop to understanding Christian–Muslim relations after the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. The general attitude changed from criticism of human rights abuse by Moscow, and apprehension concerning the will for independence of the Chechen people, to the idea that the Russo-Chechen conflict simply constituted part of a historical confrontation with Islamist terrorists. The open combination of national liberation and militant Islamist rhetoric in the statements of Chechen rebels does not prevent Western leaders from making analogies between the West's opposition to Islam and Russia's problems with its Muslim communities. A tacit acceptance of Russia's objectives and means in the Chechen conflict was the logical outcome of the West's reassessment of the conflicts on the Christian–Muslim frontier. High-ranking politicians in Germany made official statements, in the immediate aftermath of 11 September 2001, that the events prompted them to understand better Russia's efforts in Chechnya. Reports about Chechens fighting for the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and about Arabs fighting with the Chechens against Moscow strengthened the rapprochement between Russia and the West on the basis of growing anti-Islamic sentiments.

Shifts in attitudes to the Christian–Muslim frontier, as in the case of Chechnya, are not uncommon. Such shifts have taken place with regard to the communal conflicts in the Caucasus, the Balkans, and South East Asia. Moreover, attitudes may vary significantly among the different strata of society, and they may alternate from good neighbourly relations to open communal violence in provinces, towns and villages where Christians and Muslims live together. Even if the presidents of the United States and Russia, George W. Bush and Vladimir Putin, demonstrated that they were on the same wavelength following 11 September 2001, popular reactions remained quite different. Public opinion surveys in Russia have demonstrated that more than 50 per cent of Russians thought that Americans 'got what they deserved' on 11 September.

Another feature of the psychological dimension of the frontier is that the constructed images of relations with 'the other' are amazingly symmetrical. On both sides of the frontier, these psychological constructions combine attitudes of suspicion and animosity with common-sense under-

standing of the need for reconciliation or, at least, coexistence. On 9 December 2002 *Newsweek* magazine published an article on fundamentalism which contained two citations: one of Usama bin Laden, the leader of the Islamist al-Qaeda network, and the other of Pat Robertson, a Christian evangelical from the United States. Our enemies 'have divided the world into two regions – one of faith and another of infidelity, from which we hope God will protect us', said the first; 'This is a religious struggle, a clash of cultures.' Luckily, God is on the right side, 'having put a pledge of protection around us', said the second. Confusing, isn't it? 'Eye for eye, tooth for tooth', '*jihad*' for 'crusade', this has been the traditional logic at the frontier for centuries. Yet many people understand today that there is no sane way out of this vicious circle, and it must be realized that the problem is psychological. Consequently, there is a necessity to change the mentalities and ways of people.

Various factors are at work, deliberately or unintentionally, in the reproduction of the political reality of the Christian–Muslim frontier into human psychology. Conversely, collective memories, individual and collective experience, discursive practices, and reflexive images of the Christian–Muslim frontier have a significant impact on the way people shape their social relationships. The psychological reconstruction of the frontier, in the minds of men, plays an important role in the conflicts within the mixed societies in the zone of contact. They have a durable impact on people's world views and political actions. Moreover, as social relations are increasingly global, the psychology of the frontier also becomes global. People form their opinion with reference to a broad range of events around the world – from conflicts in the Middle East, the Caucasus and the Balkans, to issues of independence for East Timor, or Islamism in Indonesia and the Philippines.

Albert Hourani, one of the most knowledgeable experts on communal relations in the Middle East, wrote once that the ruling elites of the independent states in the post-Ottoman space shared the same features of political psychology, which they had inherited from the Ottoman Empire: always very cautious, even suspicious, of the intentions of the other, never going too far ahead, and always leaving enough space for retreat (Hourani 1970). The contemporary nationalist politicians in the Balkans, the Caucasus, and the Middle East would be really astonished to learn to what extent their political psychology is anchored in the Ottoman past, despite the fact that some of them sincerely despise the Ottoman heritage of their countries and region.

History, experience and myths in the interpretation of the frontier

Many developments with a crucial impact on international relations today are rooted in the historical memory of the Christian–Muslim frontier.

Thousands of years of opposition and coexistence, and of localism and imperial mentality in the zone of contact, have left a deep imprint on people's loyalties, which are often divided between nation states and broader religious communities. History has created various forms of frontier culture. The mentality of nations that once ruled over multi-ethnic and multi-cultural empires dominated by one religion – the Turks, the Russians and the Austrians for example – have a different mentality to those who were dominated by 'the other' – Armenians, Bulgarians, Tatars, Copts, Maghrebi Arabs, and the various communities of Central Asia. A third kind of mentality characterizes those peoples who were formerly entrusted with special tasks in the military provinces, such as the Chechens and other Muslim peoples in the northern Caucasus, the Cossacks in Russia, the Albanians and the Bosnian Muslims in the Ottoman Empire, and the Krajina Serbs and other Orthodox migrants in the Austrian military frontier zone. They still have something of the combat mentality, which is rooted in the history of struggle on the frontier. A fourth type of frontier mentality exists in the heart of the Muslim world, in countries that experienced the frustration of Western colonization and imperialism. Islamist theories of a Christian–Jewish conspiracy against Islam are rooted in this frustration arising from several centuries of dependency and colonialism (Zeidan 2002: 15). Islamists, who are a minority in most Muslim societies and countries, perceive life as a perennial battle with the forces of evil. In the final resort, the imperial forces that have recently oppressed large Muslim communities – the Western powers, the Soviet Union, but also Israel and Serbia – are defined as evil. Islamism is 'moderate' (i.e. not violent) in Turkey, probably because Turkey has never really been a colony.

Historical memory is the basis of the cognitive predispositions and biases that influence people's perceptions of the world. Popular culture in the zone of contact is soaked with images and memories of the Christian–Muslim frontier. Epic poetry based on such images assumed primary significance for the national movements of the Balkan Orthodox peoples in their struggle for independence against the Ottoman Empire. The Greek Acritic songs, very popular during the period of cultural and political upheaval against the Ottomans, described the exploits of Byzantine border fighters against the Arabs in the tenth century. Another source of inspiration for these epics was the resistance and consequent fall of Constantinople to the Turks. Similarly, Bulgarian ballads tell the story of Bulgaria's last king opposing the Ottomans, Ivan Shishman. Both Serbian and Bulgarian songs and fairy tales glorify one of the last Christian princes, Marko (Marko Kraljević in Serbian and Krali Marko in Bulgarian), who eventually became a Turkish vassal, and the *haiduk* bands and their chiefs who fought the Turks most often for personal reasons. For several centuries the story of the battle of Kosovo in 1389, reconstructed in Serbian folklore, served not so much the glorification of indi-

vidual heroes as the elevation of the modern Serbian nation. The Catholic Slavs of the Balkans had similar poems about the struggle with the Ottomans. By contrast, the songs of Muslims in Albania and the northern Caucasus depict heroic acts in the struggle against the Christian Slavs. Since the early nineteenth century, all these elements of popular culture have concentrated on their national aspects (Jelavich 1977: 268).

This aspect of popular culture is reflected in the modern literature of the Balkans. The Nobel Prize-winning novel of Ivo Andrić, *The Bridge on the Drina*, is a symbolic description of the frontier with its two aspects: a divide and a bridge (Andrić 1959). The setting is medieval Bosnia, during the first century after the Ottoman conquest, and the book is saturated with vivid descriptions of the cruelty of the Muslim Ottoman rulers. Andrić writes about desperate Christian mothers running after a caravan taking away their small boys, who would be trained as merciless Muslim fighters (*janissaries*), or about the slow death of a Christian peasant impaled on a pole as a punishment for his resistance to a corrupt and ruthless Ottoman officer. *The Bridge on the Drina* gives an artistic interpretation of the relative notions of a frontier or a bridge among civilizations. Ivo Andrić's work shows that the concept of a bridge does not simply mean a link among people, but can also be interpreted as a tool of political influence, domination and violence. This fear of being dominated as a result of improved means of communication exists in various forms of human interaction in many cultures, but Ivo Andrić makes a link, perhaps unwittingly, between the complex social meaning of progress in communications in the medieval past and in the postmodern age. *The Bridge on the Drina* is probably the best-known example of a myriad of books by Balkan writers depicting, in the same unforgiving way, the sufferings caused by the Ottoman occupation. This is also the theme of the novel *Under the Yoke* by the nineteenth-century master of Bulgarian literature, Ivan Vazov. Yet *The Bridge on the Drina* is strongly contested by the Bosnian Muslim community today, for whom Andrić is simply a biased Croatian and Christian writer. The complexity of the images of the past, reflected in modern fiction about the history of the frontier, characterizes more than anything else the psychological dimension of the Christian–Muslim frontier.

We can add to the examples above the surprising differences in the interpretation of the history of Christian–Muslim encounters, notably Ottoman history, by professional historians in various countries. Turkish historians in general assert that the Ottoman Turks made an essential contribution to the cultural development of southeastern Europe. They argue that the main reason for the impressive expansion of the Ottoman Empire was the tolerance of its rulers, who made themselves acceptable to the conquered populations, and thus attracted new recruits into their victorious army. Arguably, the Ottoman system was a meritocracy in which anybody, even a slave or a member of a conquered people, was able to reach the highest positions in the administration, including that of a

Grand Vizier (the equivalent to a Prime Minister). By contrast, Austrian historians assert that reports of the incredible cruelty of the Ottomans in dealing with the conquered population in the Balkans and in Hungary was the reason for the desperate courage of the defenders of Vienna, who managed to resist two Ottoman sieges. Greek, Serbian and Bulgarian historians normally qualify the Ottoman occupation as a major obstacle to their people's social and economic development, which separated their countries from the rest of Europe and prevented all progress. They describe the specific 'blood tax', through which the Ottomans manned the *janissary* corps with kidnapped small Christian boys, as one of the cruellest elements of the Ottoman system, although it did lead to some *janissaries* rising high in the hierarchy of senior administrators in the Empire. It is true that any post in the early Ottoman Empire was attributed to someone as a reward for his devoted military service to the Sultan and participation in the Muslim conquests.

Collective experience has a strong impact on both the mentality and political acts of members of the various communities in the zone of Christian–Muslim contact. There is a whole complex of factors, involving collective memories of war and violence, loyalty to tradition, and experiences of cooperation, which influence human mindsets, decisions, and acts. The psychological dimension of the civilizational frontier can be traced in all sub-zones of the Christian–Muslim frontier – from its historical core (between Mecca and Vienna) to the cosmopolitan societies of the New World and to such young, post-colonial nations as Indonesia, the Philippines and Nigeria. Such historical events as the disappearance of the universal centre of Orthodox Christianity, when the Ottomans conquered Constantinople in 1453, or the universal centre of Islam, when Turks moved the capital of their brand new nation state from that city to Ankara, had a huge psychological effect on the communities that followed these two religions.

In the contemporary age of rapidly expanding communications, boundaries between the various parts of the zone of contact are becoming thinner. Mentalities and opinionated political discourse about Christian–Muslim relations have had limited local impact in the past, but in the post-modern era of global communications this is no longer the case. Not only does information spread rapidly throughout the world; various sources of information reach the individual directly, giving fewer possibilities for interference by a single, local authority. This makes the psychological dimension of the Christian–Muslim frontier almost universal. An example illustrating that trend is suicide bombings, committed by people seeking martyrdom in Palestine, which intensified after 2000 against the background of an aggravating Israeli–Palestinian conflict. They must have had a galvanizing effect on the suicide terrorists, who flew hijacked airplanes into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the Middle East conflict has a central

place in the psychological Christian–Muslim frontier, as it provokes chain reactions in the living body of world society. The contemporary conflicts involving Christian and Muslim countries and communities are not global conflicts, in the way the Cold War was. Christian and Muslim communities come into contact only in a limited portion of the planet. Moreover, Islam does not appeal to people in the developed Western states in the way that communist ideology did, and nor does it have the economic and military potential the Soviet bloc once had. Any notion of a global impact of Christian–Muslim relations should be regarded in the context of the limited area that the civilizational frontier occupies on the surface of the Earth and in world society.

Politicians' reactions may have global consequences, but simply project local perceptions of social order and justice. Immediately after the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001, there were calls in the United States to punish those who were responsible – something that fitted well with the moral code of justice in the country. The leaders were thus sending a message to a society where punishing the offender has always been not only part of the system of justice, but also a legitimate source of moral satisfaction for the victim and his relatives. Yet the physical perpetrators had actually died in the hideous acts of terror. US President George W. Bush then appealed for the capture of the presumed organizer, Usama bin Laden, 'dead or alive', evoking images of another frontier that had laid an imprint on American culture – the 'Wild West'.

From a more general perspective, Samuel Huntington argues that international alliances and hostilities in the post-Cold War world are primarily decided upon on the basis of cultural kinship. Yet, as the history of Christian–Muslim relations has shown, what is important is the motivation behind biased decisions. Past experience generates expectations among political actors, and through these expectations actors assess novel situations and motivate their political decisions. Motivated biases are fertile ground for alliances based on civilizational affinities. Studies of multilateral negotiations in various areas – from trade to environment and security issues in the UN – indicate that Anglo-Saxons stick to Anglo-Saxons, Arabs to Arabs, Latin Americans to Latin Americans, etc. Was it by chance that the US-led coalition that marched into Iraq to topple Saddam Hussein in March 2003 consisted primarily of the three Anglo-Saxon nations: Americans, British and Australians? Two factors in this pattern of alliance formation, apart from the simple reason of a common language facilitating communication, are past records of cooperation or confrontation, and the idea that unfriendly behaviour is readily attributed to 'the other', as Karl Deutsch would put it. Ten years after the collapse of the Soviet Union, James Schlesinger, the former American defence secretary, argued at a historic meeting on NATO's enlargement in eastern Europe in November 2002 that the most important thing for the North Atlantic alliance was not its military capability, but 'the psychological bonds of the

North Atlantic Treaty', which were meant to keep the Western powers from drifting apart (Tyler 2002). Such psychological bonds are the key to establishing durable alliances which make up the fabric of international order.

The story of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), which exemplifies working solidarity among Muslim states today, clearly demonstrates how political acts and reactions can be motivated by the logic of the Christian–Muslim frontier. The organization was established in 1969 as a response to the arson at the al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem. Founded on the basis of the idea of strengthening cooperation for the defence of the Muslim world against Western domination, OIC soon found its niche as a comfortable platform for the Muslim state elites. The latter sought to ascertain collective identity, smooth internal differences, and cooperate economically, with a view to wiping out the underdevelopment of member states *vis-à-vis* the industrialized world (OIC Charter: 3). OIC actually endorses the modern nation-state model. It is composed of sovereign member states, it stands for dialogue with others (including the World Council of Churches), and it sticks to the principles of the United Nations Charter. The development goals of the OIC are worth the attention of any international organization that has the means to promote development. So why worry about emphasizing its Islamic roots? After all, OIC remains focused on its founding myths of Muslim unity and the need to defend the Islamic world against external threat, selectively emphasizing, in different periods, assistance to the Palestinian people, Afghanistan, Bosnia, and the numerous Muslim minorities around the world. At the same time it criticizes instances of Western aggressiveness: crusades, colonialism, support for Israel, disciplining rogue states and leaders (such as Gamal Abd al-Nassr and Saddam Hussein), as well as Russia's occupations of Afghanistan and Chechnya. The organization plays a pioneering role in the promotion of projects promoting Islamic education, Islamic human rights, and Islamic banking for the redistribution of oil revenues. These projects are conceived primarily as a tool of emancipating the Muslim world from Western hegemony, which is a familiar mechanism for implanting the civilizational frontier in people's minds. OIC did not hesitate, after the collapse of communism, to cover its lost territories in Albania, Azerbaijan, and Central Asia – the new 'frontiers' of Islam (Baba 1993: 41–3; Brown 1993: 13–14; and *Yearbook of International Organizations* 1999: 1845–6). In the final resort, OIC is a powerful organization that uses images of the frontier, and of opposition to the dominant Christian West, in order to increase the influence of its individual member states.

Historical experience has shown, however, that a country's politicians and population do not always perceive the idea of sticking with culturally akin communities and states to be their best strategy. Orthodox Serbs, Russians and Greeks may have assumed, in 1999, a commonality of interests, yet realistically minded Greeks did little to stop NATO troops, who

moved from Greece against Christian Orthodox-dominated Yugoslavia. Similarly, Bulgarian authorities gave preference to their strategic goal of joining the North Atlantic alliance, recalled old grievances with the Serbs, and decided to support NATO, while refusing to grant free passage to Russian troops and aeroplanes that were en route to Yugoslavia. Intellectual constructions about shared historical experience, such as the idea of a presumed Byzantine Orthodox Commonwealth (Obolenski 1971), most often reflect the political orientation of their author rather than reality. Before making assumptions about broader civilizational alliances, the influence of motivated psychological biases should be balanced against a whole spectrum of opinionated calculations, interpretations of past experience, and present social and political concerns.

Both Christians and Muslims around the world have influential myths about confrontation with 'the other'. Fred Halliday suggests that the 'myth of confrontation' is sustained by two apparently contradictory groups of people: those in the West (but also in the Christian Orthodox East) who seek to turn the Muslim world into another enemy for use in their political programmes, and those in the Islamic countries who advocate confrontation with non-Muslim powers for practically the same reason. The objective of all these activists, in their respective societies, is to strengthen their political position, using the civilizational discourse and myths of Islamic, Western, Christian or Christian Orthodox threats. As often happens with political myths, the broadly propagated 'confrontation with the other' is reified. It becomes a reality for those whom the myth is designed to mobilize, and for those against whom it is directed (Halliday 1996: 6, 107).

There are various and selective interpretations of history and experience. This is particularly true about the idea of opposition among civilizations. This problem is present in the views and works of serious scholars in social science. Thus, on the one hand, Karl Deutsch claims that societies in the East that share the Western system of values have performed better than those which do not, while those who condemn Western freedom suffer from a 'sour grape syndrome' like the fox in La Fontaine's fable (Deutsch 1981: 51–93). In this interpretation, the jealousy of the Muslim Third World is the driving force behind opposition to the affluent Christian West. On the other hand, on the basis of his analysis of the works of the most eminent Western thinkers on social organization, Edward Said argues that the problem stems from Western dominance (political, military, economic, cultural, and scientific) over the East. The West arguably created the study of Orientalism in order to affirm its superiority and dominate the Orient (Said 1978). Said contends that what is known in the United States and the West about the Arab and Islamic worlds, as shown in his *Orientalism* and other books, 'is extremely attenuated and a series of stupid clichés: violent this, despotic that' (Said 2001: 371). Professor Hassan Hanafi, the moderate Sorbonne-educated Islamist who teaches

philosophy at the University of Cairo, spoke to me in May 2000 about the inability and unwillingness of the West to take seriously the contributions of modern Islamic intellectuals to the analysis of Christian–Muslim relations, including the Islamic version of the idea of the 'clash of civilizations'. Tzvetan Todorov describes this problem in the relations among civilizations as epistemological and gnostic. He highlights the risk of augmenting the dangers of opposition among civilizations, if ignorance about the other parallels a conscious attitude of superiority (Todorov 1982: 191). The implications of this problem today affect the debates on such issues as development, human rights, minority problems, migration, individual freedom, and collective responsibility.

The issues of 'domination' and 'threat' also exist in the global relationship between the West and the Islamic countries. Even if Europe is clearly confident in its economic and military superiority over the Muslim world, the sense of an assault or siege by 'the other' makes sense to many Westerners at the beginning of the third millennium. There are myths anchored in the mass political psychology in the West, for example, that the Muslim world is a united whole which is inherently militant and aggressive, and that Islam and terrorism are two sides of the same coin. These mythical images are then easily attributed to the large Muslim immigrant communities in the West and in Russia. Experts have advanced several arguments showing that these myths reflect a selective vision of history.

First, the Muslim world is divided among over fifty-five sovereign states with Muslim identity (the fifty-five member states of OIC) and numerous minorities in other countries. The various communities are ruled by political regimes with very different ideological tendencies. Some experts even claim that this diversity is the defining feature of the Muslim world (Miller 1996). At the turn of the twenty-first century, the Muslim states varied in population from 212.1 million (Indonesia) to 0.3 million (Brunei Darussalam). Per capita GNP (PPP US$) ranged from $17 935 in the United Arab Emirates (down from $29 887 in 1980) to $746 in Niger. Counted among the members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) are such states as Turkey, with an army of 639 000 and a defence budget of $1 276 000 000, and the Comoros, with a negligible armed force (UNDP 1999: 151–2, 197, 199; UNDP 2002: 149–152). The resources of the Muslim world, notably oil, are unevenly distributed, and this causes further tension over income distribution between haves and have-nots within the Muslim world.

Second, Islamist acts that may appear aggressive to Westerners are seen as being defensive by Muslims. From the other side of the civilizational divide, Islamist action in the Middle East appears to certain elements as a reaction to the dangerous intrusion of Westerners and Western values into Muslim societies. Islamists have successfully made use of a deeply seated persecution complex which encompasses many aspects of life – from

memories of the colonial past to the derogatory way in which Muslims are depicted in Western media and in Hollywood. Islamists evoke the conflicts in Kosovo, Somalia and Chechnya, and the suffering of people in Afghanistan and Iraq under sanctions or military action imposed by the (Western) world superpowers. Similar images of suffering endorsed by the West dominate views of the conflict in Palestine, a 'holy land' for Islam. The presence of Western troops in the other 'holy land', Saudi Arabia, with its two sanctuaries, Mecca and Medina, is particularly offensive to puritan Islamists. For these people, the Saudi cooperation with the West is a sure sign of the regime's apostasy, which explains its corruption and despotism.

In some countries of the modern Third World, oil revenues or rapid industrialization produced a huge jump in wealth. However, there was a parallel process of growing confusion and a sense of exclusion among some people in those societies who felt left out of the general process of enrichment. This was not just an issue of polarization of revenues and wealth, but also a problem of major transformations in the idea and structure of global society. People's sense of order in the world was shattered. This may in part explain why some rich Arabs from Saudi Arabia have became ardent Islamist terrorists, waging war both on the establishment in their own countries, and on the Christian powers which corrupt and oppress Muslims. Muslim expatriates to the West, and Christian ones to the East, are very much inclined to succumb to the same feelings of exclusion. These feelings combine solitude, fear, and anger. They get stronger when people find themselves in a foreign culture, where basic elements of everyday social behaviour, such as wearing a scarf, going out with friends, and relations among sexes, are essentially different. The idea that the norms of life with which a person has been brought up are not accepted in a society to which that person has chosen to move provokes a strong feeling of solitude. As a consequence, people increasingly look for the warmth of communal relations, sticking together with other expatriates who share the same culture, and this reinforces the postmodern frontiers and feelings of isolation within contemporary industrial societies with increasingly mixed populations.

Growing Islamist activism among Muslims in western Europe is arguably a reaction to their exclusion from host societies. The Muslim immigrant, most often coming from a former colony, often stands in the eyes of the Westerner not only for the 'absence of values' but also for the 'negation of values' (Hamil 1997: 193). Stereotypes and pejorative epithets lead to alienation of 'the other', who seeks refuge in an introvert flight to the past and in the cosiness of an environment that raises his social status: his Muslim community. The German investigation into the preparations for the terrorist attacks of September 2001 discovered that members of the Hamburg cell, which played a central role in the plot, shared the same religious convictions, and Islamic lifestyle, but also a

feeling of being out of place in unfamiliar cultural surroundings. Thousands if not millions of people experience this alienation, which is their personal 'clash of civilizations'. Only a small number of these people cross the threshold and join a militant Islamist organization. They do it under the combined influence of feelings of solitude, and of propaganda from experienced members of the Islamist movement.

The spearhead of the extremist Islamic movement are young and technically well-qualified people. Muhammad Atta, for example, who was a key organizer of the 11 September attacks, fits perfectly with this general description of an Islamist activist. His family shared the secular ways of most inhabitants of Cairo. The story of this family was as if taken from the novel of Nagib Mahfouz, titled *Respected Sir*. It is so typical of contemporary Egyptian and other Muslim societies that the thought of a broad potential base for Islamism in these societies is really chilling. The ultimate objective in life for Atta's father was to join the upper middle classes of the Egyptian capital. Following this goal, the father exercised stringent control over his son's education and lifestyle. A shy and well-behaved youth who followed the will of his father without objection, Muhammad Atta was sent to Germany at the age of twenty-four to study engineering. The plan was that upon his return he would become a well-off, respected Cairene bourgeois. Yet no one knows what exactly happened in the mind of the ambitious youth upon his contact with the West, when he arrived in Germany. Did he come to the conclusion that the ambition to become part of an imitative upper middle class in the heart of the Muslim world was futile? Or was he hit by feelings of inferiority, which depressed the Muslim student in one of the most technically advanced nations in the world, which is not famous for its love for immigrants – especially those with a Muslim background? Obviously his life and views completely changed, and he turned from a quiet and diligent future engineer into a cold-minded terrorist, calculating every step he made in the rejection of his perceived inferiority. Similarly, the alleged perpetrator of the bombing of a nightclub on the Indonesian island of Bali in October 2002, Imam Samudra, was an engineer who spoke fluent Arabic, English, and Indonesian. Intelligent and skilful, he had nevertheless gone to Afghanistan for terrorist military training under al-Qaeda and Taliban instructors. For several days after his terrorist acts he demonstrated an incredible bravado by walking around the scene of the crime, carrying a laptop computer case.

Discursive practices and the construction of the frontier

Historical memory and experience are not the only factors that shape people's ideas about Christian–Muslim relations. It is equally important to look at everyday human interaction and at discursive practices, which define people's positions and acts. The different interpretations of events

imply different motives, morality, strategy and political positions. Each event is construed – in oral or written statements and reports – in a pertinent manner, so that its interpretation can motivate further action. Being action-oriented is a key feature of discursive practices in group relationships in the Christian–Muslim frontier. Speeches and writings on this subject are oriented towards concrete actions. Discursive practices contribute to the construction of images about relations with 'the other', and these images have an important impact on people's acts.

Discourse about past events is potentially a very contentious business, in which people construct versions of events. Descriptions, reports and statements that reflect a specific culture are drawn upon when there is a sensitive issue at stake – for example, a separatist war, or a terrorist attack against a state or a group of states. The possibility of manipulating mindsets in this process is huge. One may call to mind discussions about the meaning of 'civilization', 'crusade', 'terrorism', and 'Islam' in statements after the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. The concepts and images used in speeches during the days of shock following the terrorist attacks had to be accommodated, for political reasons, in order to make them acceptable to people with different world views. The US President might have been advised to make a clear distinction between the terrorist enemy and the followers of Islam. It was understood that references to Islam and 'crusade' were grist to the mill of the terrorists, who sought to mobilize the universal community of Muslims. It was not by chance that Usama bin Laden played on historical images in the minds of Muslims by calling his organization (al-Qaeda) an 'International Islamic Front to Combat Jews and Crusaders'. In fact, the notions of discrimination, oppression, and moral duty of the Muslim are used to manipulative ends by modern-day Islamists. Speech accommodation addresses directly the epistemological problem behind written and oral statements, which is reflected in the huge differences in the mental constructions of the frontier. Speech accommodation, in sensitive situations, is treated with much care, because those speeches are meant to affect people's mental constructions about social relationships – which depend on how events are described and explained, on how factual reports are structured, and on how cognitive states are attributed.

The impact of discursive practices on the mental images of the frontier can be incremental and unconscious, but it can also be very strong, especially in the short term, following stressful and violent events. In its emotional impact, 11 September 2001 was probably the most horrifying single day in American history. While following the media coverage, and in their discursive practices, people actually linked this event to their understanding of Christian–Muslim relations. Much depended on the concrete environment in which people received the news, and with whom they discussed it. The Manichean message of US President, George W. Bush, to people in the United States and around the world, 'either you are with us

or you are with the terrorists', voiced his foreign policy doctrine for the years to come. Yet there were other voices as well. An anonymous American listener called an English language radio station in Geneva on 11 September 2001 to say that Americans should understand that they are the greatest nation in the world, and stop surrendering to egoistic lobbies against their national interest. There followed the perennial problem for all Manichean thinkers – to define what is good and what is evil. The doctrine and statements of President Bush were not directed against Islam and Muslims, but many Americans gave a concrete image to the terrorist menace, and this image was Islamic, wearing a turban or a chador. Popular discourse on the tragedy reflected, in increasing instances, the harassment of people wearing such dress. Even Sikhs in the United States, mistakenly taken for Muslims because of their traditional turban, suffered from harassment. Participants in popular discourse about the attacks actually joined in a collective exercise of fact reconstruction. Yet descriptions or reports of such important events are typically contrasting versions, and contribute to building opposing images of the Christian–Muslim frontier.

In most cases, Christian–Muslim confrontation is a psychological problem that stems from differences in understanding social order, be it on the scale of a single country, a region, or the whole world. Recent developments in various regions, especially with reference to Christian–Muslim relations, attest to the uneven dynamics and diversity of views in people's quest for order. After World War II, the industrialized West developed open, multi-ethnic and multicultural societies. Millions of people who were brought up in different cultures evolved together and became increasingly part of one global society. Individuals with various backgrounds were happy to befriend individuals of a different cultural upbringing, who come from communities that would have been defined previously as 'the other'. People saw this openness as an inherent part of social progress, and increasingly believed in the universal validity of the 'secularization hypothesis' as part of human progress. However, the destruction of the World Trade Center, the US-led campaigns against Afghanistan and Iraq, the Chechen hostage-taking operations, the Palestinian suicide bombings, and the arbitrary use of force by the Israeli army cooled the optimism that may have been too premature. These developments are not related to a direct clash between Christianity and Islam, yet, taken as a whole, they give the impression that such a clash takes place (Scholl-Latour 2002).

The personal story of an American Jewish friend of mine, who works for the United Nations, demonstrates the shifting attitudes. Before 11 September 2001, he found satisfaction in joining a multi-cultural circle of intellectuals – Muslims, Jews and Christians, mostly from the countries around the Mediterranean – who discussed the problems of the Middle East, especially the water crisis. All this came to an end when 11 September 2001 became the centre of their discussions. Everyone had his or her

own reading of the events, which reflected a sense of belonging to a specific tradition and community. Some Arabs in the group sharply criticized their Jewish friend for not adopting a position critical of the United States and Israel, whose policy had allegedly led to the terrorist acts. This led not only to the loss of valued friendships, but also to a reassessment of his belief in blending different mentalities in the postmodern world. Conflicts in views are related to deeply seated mental constructions about the civilizational frontier, which everyone builds individually. News and conversations, things heard, seen, or said, can knock people out of their ivory towers of intellectual brilliance and back into the deeper layers of a mentality that has been constructed during the course of their lives.

When crucial events in the world, such as the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, or the military campaigns in Kosovo, East Timor, or Chechnya, catch the imagination of millions around the world, people are very selective in picking up bits and pieces of information from the burgeoning discourse around them. What could be read in *Le Monde diplomatique* in 2001–2002, for example, with its critical approach to American politics in the Middle East, differed sharply from the way mainstream periodicals in the United States, and even in Europe, covered the events. When they gather information, people have a choice of selecting an opinionated source that corresponds to their mental constructions of Christian–Muslim relations. In effect, people make a choice of what kind of information they will accept in shaping further their mental construction of the Christian–Muslim frontier.

The mental constructions of Christian–Muslim relations are created as people write, speak, assess, and reassess their experiences and collective memories. As the ultimate objective of written and oral statements is the realization of certain actions, there is a circle of mutual influences involving human mindsets, discursive practices, and social relations. Whoever is capable of influencing the way people reflect reality in their minds is capable of influencing social reality. Despite well-considered convictions, a final choice between conflict and cooperation is often determined by the way people act in concrete circumstances and react to concrete events in their environment. Statements made in sensitive situations by people with influence both reflect latent popular attitudes and have a strong impact on these attitudes. In November 2002, for instance, in the aftermath of a deadly Chechen terrorist operation in a Moscow theatre, when the world prepared for an American attack on Iraq, Russia's President Vladimir Putin accused Islamic and Chechen rebels openly of indiscriminate plans to murder non-Muslims and 'cross-bearers' (Christians). In an interview with the Western media he made a coarse remark about Islamic customs, which his interpreters left without translation:

> if you want to become a radical Islamist and undergo circumcision, we are ready to invite you to Moscow. We are a multiconfessional country

> and we have good specialists even for this kind of question. And I will tell those specialists to operate in such a way that nothing would sprout again.
>
> (*Le Temps*, 12 November 2002: 5)

At about the same time a tape-recorded message, attributed to al-Qaeda leader Usama bin Laden, praised the terror attacks in Yemen, Kuwait, Bali, and Moscow in 2002 as a response to the way Muslims had been treated around the world, and warned US allies: 'just as you kill us, we will kill you'. To the public campaign of US President George W. Bush against what he defined as the 'axis of evil' of states (Iraq, North Korea, and Iran) that intend to develop weapons of mass destruction, refuse to abide by the rules of the new international order, and do not want to align with the new world order, the radical Muslim cleric Abou Hamza al-Masri opposed his version of a 'coalition of evil' composed of the United States, Israel and India, which has encircled Islam. This self-declared imam, who preached extremist views in Finsbury Park mosque in the UK for years, declared that the explosion of the space shuttle *Columbia* in February 2003 was a sign from God, because the shuttle carried on board Americans, an Indian and an Israeli. Moreover, the engine of the spacecraft fell in a town called Palestine.

This type of exchange is specific to political discourse at times of increasing tension. It also confirms that there is a reciprocity of attitudes on both sides of the Christian–Muslim frontier. Generally, such harsh messages do not pass unnoticed for millions of people on the 'Arab street' or in the postmodern Western societies, susceptible to the fear of an aggressive 'other'. There are still many people in the developed countries of the West who think that the basic difference between Christianity and Islam is in the doctrines – Christianity arguably preaches love, while the Koran sanctions *jihad* as one of the pillars of Muslim faith . . . Such people with superficial views simply miss the fact that fundamentalist extremists are guided by political motivations and not by texts. Terrorists are 'guided by other, extra-textual [political] concerns, to find what they want in the texts' (Halliday 2002: 46). Nevertheless, in the age of globalization their Manichean views also become global, transmitted through the enhanced communications in the 'global village' (McLuhan and Powers 1989). Obviously, the impressive leap in global communications has not been matched by a similar development in the psychology of communal relations. The postmodern frontier among large cultural communities is thus becoming universal, a peculiar expression of the growth of world society.

In many countries of the Christian–Muslim frontier, especially in the Balkans, the Caucasus and Lebanon, where memories of violent conflicts are still fresh, popular hatred for people of different faith remains part of social psychology. This is the case, for example, in the plural societies of Macedonia and Lebanon, which many scholars and politicians would like

to see as prospective success stories of communal cooperation and consociational democracy in the zone of contact. 'We hate each other with the Albanians because we have different religions', a Macedonian told me in August 2002, on the occasion of the inauguration of a gigantic cross on the mountains overlooking the Macedonian capital Skopje. 'This is a Christian land, and the cross will remind it to everyone', he added. In reality, however, the city and the country remained divided between a Christian–Orthodox Slavic majority and a primarily Muslim Albanian minority, one year after bitter communal fighting ravaged western Macedonia. The primary objectives of the two communities in this conflict have little to do with religion. They show conflicting ambitions to build two distinct nation states with one and the same territory. Religious symbols have become a means of asserting claims on territory in most post-conflict areas of the former Yugoslavia. The Herzegovinian Croats, for example, also constructed a cross overlooking the divided city of Mostar, on the hill from which their artillery shelled the city during the Bosnian civil war. They destroyed, among other things, the Ottoman bridge across the Neretva river, a landmark that gave its name to the city ('most' means 'bridge' in the Slavic languages). The campaign of blowing up Serbian Orthodox churches, aimed at securing power in Kosovo for extremist Kosovar Albanians, had a similar objective – asserting the long-term right to the territory of the province. The destroying of churches and mosques by the belligerents was a consistent practice during the Bosnian wars between 1992 and 1995.

Another story revealed the psychology of communal division in Lebanon more than a decade after the end of the civil war in 1990. Arab tourists from the oil-rich monarchies of the Gulf had started once again spending their holidays and petro-dollars in Lebanon's coastal and mountain resorts. In 2002, a group of Arabs from the Gulf, who were regular holidaymakers in the Christian towns of Beit Meri and Broumana in the Lebanese mountains, requested permission from the local authorities to build a mosque for their spiritual needs during their annual vacations. Yet the municipal authorities coldly rejected their demand. Consequently, the tourists changed their minds and moved to other, more welcoming, holiday havens. Commenting on this episode, an Oxford-educated Muslim from Beirut expressed full comprehension of the motivation of the local Christian chiefs by saying, 'what if somebody decides to build a church in our area?'.

Perception gaps and motivated biases

Gaps in perceptions about each other and about mutual relationships are a major feature of the psychology of the Christian–Muslim frontier. The different communities interpret symbolic objects and events related to the Christian–Muslim frontier differently. Perception gaps may exist even

within one and the same community, in different situations, and in different periods of time. The majority of Americans, for instance, had little or no interest, before 11 September 2001, in the fact that millions of people in the Arab and Muslim worlds resented American policies and were suspicious of America's intentions around the world. They neglected the threat of a small number of Islamist activists who were ready to commit audacious acts just to affirm their vision of truth, global order and relations with the Christian world. Yet the terrorist attacks in September 2001 awakened Americans to the reality that they had long ignored. Negative images of American culture had been cultivated for years in many parts of the world, especially in the Islamic countries, and there was a gap in the way Muslims and Americans perceived the world. The cause of hatred for the United States was not American values, which were praised by Muslims in both the oil-rich Arab monarchies and in countries like Egypt or Pakistan, but US policy, particularly towards the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Many people in the Middle East are suspicious of American policies and easily yield to conspiracy theories. This tendency stems from a cultural and political psychology in the Muslim world, which it is almost impossible to alter in the short term. In this sense, the best remedy for the perception gap is not in responding to the Muslim world taken as a whole but to the nuances of reactions, in distinguishing between militant and moderate positions in Muslim public opinion. It would be useful for the United States and the West to work with moderates and with such popular media services as the TV network Al-Jazeera. It is important to understand the mechanism behind the popular conviction that Muslims are discriminated against as the 'eternal victims' in a polarized world. In the long run, acting upon such myths would have a much greater effect than bombing.

The terrorists who launched the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon sought, above all, the oldest strategic objective of war – a psychological effect that would augment negative attitudes on either side of the imagined divide: those of both the enemy and unconvinced fellow Muslims. The Arabic term for terrorism is *irhab,* which is literally translated as 'intimidation'. The terrorists built upon negative images, and used them for the ultimate goal: raising the level of confrontation. Their principal weapon was violence, the destruction of thousands of lives, while their tactical tool was the use of negative images. François Heisbourg argued that the assault of 11 September 2001 was directed against symbols that stood for different things for people on the two sides of the divide. They epitomized the power of democracy, freedom, and prosperity for one side, and oppression, injustice, and moral degradation for the other (Heisbourg 2001: 46). This is a typical clash of the postmodern age, when advanced communication and information technologies bring people with various backgrounds together, and when the material symbols of social organization stand for different things and different values for different people.

Political psychology regards 'systematic biases' as an essential element of decision-making. In this sense, motivated biases play an important role in the politics of the Christian–Muslim frontier as well. Arguably, 'individuals have psychological needs to bias their views of in-groups and out-groups' (Goldgeier 1997: 138). Such biases influence the codes of political behaviour in the various countries of the zone of contact; they underpin the structure and nature of political regimes from the level of the individual to large social groups with a specific political or cultural identity. Building a collective image of 'the enemy' is an important element of relations across the civilizational frontier. The unclear definition of the concept of 'civilization' facilitates the construction of images and social relationships. The term 'civilization' claims an obscure reality, and can be used for manipulative purposes. It was coined in the context of the European Enlightenment, but reflected the ancient paradigm of opposing the cultured 'us' with the barbarian 'them'. The definition of a civilization is negative and biased. It is often formulated in terms of opposition to 'the other', who are depicted as uncivilized or 'barbarian'. Wallerstein (1991: 231) questions the way the term 'civilization' is used in social science:

> We should conceive of 'civilizations' as historical mental constructions, created, dissolved, and re-created, as groups feel the need of asserting their particularity in a dyadic relationship with some other groups. 'Civilization gave rise to barbarism', said Owen Lattimore. We could rephrase the same point: 'One civilization gives rise to another civilization.' One only exists in function of the other(s).
>
> (Wallerstein 1984: 162)

The parallel existence of civilizations, which may be considered in terms of opposition to each other, makes part of the logical order of things in the world.

The term 'civilization' has strong roots in mass psychology. In its contemporary context it again relates to a distinction between 'us' and 'them'. Many people in the West, for example, believe that the problem with immigrants in their societies is an issue of incompatible mentalities. They see the transformation of mentality as a prerequisite for the integration of Muslim immigrants into Western societies. Johan Galtung put it openly:

> countries should make it clear that would-be immigrants cannot have it both ways: either they stay at home and enjoy their own culture, or if they immigrate, it must be on the terms of the country which they seek to enter, with due adoption of its culture, basically to serve its purposes and without expecting such nonsense as special-language schools and other preferential treatment for immigrants.
>
> (Galtung 1998: 184)

In the final resort, what is really deplorable is what Fred Halliday describes as the choice of many people with authority, voice, and learning 'not to resist but to profit and inflame conflict' (Halliday 2002: 28). Not without justification, he points the finger at reporters, historians, novelists, and, not least, clergymen, for betraying their calling, and disseminating careless, selfish reporting, which can do the same job as deliberate provocation.

The sense of belonging to a cultural and religious complex, as an in-group, is a form of collective social identity. Such identities, created and made a routine through social practices, constitute an element of orderliness in society, emphasizing the link between civilizational cleavages and the structural organization of world society. By creating a sense of order, social identity introduces a degree of predictability: 'It provides information on who the actors are, what their defining properties are, and on how the actors would behave in social interactions' (Arfi 1998: 158). Yet social relations and expectations, which are anchored in the structure of social group identities, are subject to historical change and development. This necessitates constant updating of the information about who 'we' are and who 'the others' are: a quest for collective identity, which often implies tension. This quest motivated, for example, the individual choices of young people who were joining one or another militia in the Lebanese civil war. The same logic was evoked, with bewildering simplicity, by the US President, George W. Bush, in his call to individuals and political figures in all nations to make a choice between joining either the US-led coalition against terrorism or the terrorists.

A war of words and images has been waged across the civilizational frontier as identities and group relations have been defined and redefined. Images acquire social meaning when they are interpreted in words. One example is the images of suffering in Palestine, Bosnia, and Chechnya, which Muslims see every day on TV and in the press. Yet it needs the words of a charismatic leader in order for some hot heads to join an extremist organization and give their lives in the fight against the oppressive 'other', otherwise, an impressive image may never lead to action. A second example is the images of the deadly attack on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon. No organization or movement claimed responsibility for those attacks, and they were related to concrete people, a concrete terrorist network, and a concrete cause, by the victim – the US administration. Statements about a monumental battle of good against evil, and an attack against the civilized world which had to be countered by a 'crusade', acted directly on popular psychology. People were quick to imagine massive punitive actions against people in turbans, without caring about collateral damage.

Perception gaps are not limited to assessments of each other by the two civilizational complexes. There is also a tendency indiscriminately to perceive the zone of the Christian–Muslim frontier as a dangerous and under-

developed place, where intolerance, violence, and poverty prevail – as a place that should simply be avoided. People inhabiting the zone of contact, Christians and Muslims alike, are thus regarded as a surrogate 'other' against whose background inhabitants of the West, Russia, the oil-rich monarchies of the East, and other countries construct their self-congratulatory image of stable and affluent societies. From the perspective of some in the European Union, Europe is surrounded by 'zones of intractable conflict' which are 'underdeveloped, historically violent, and filled with seemingly insurmountable religious and identity conflict' (Richmond 2000: 42). Maria Todorova describes the problem in the following way: the 'in-betweenness of the Balkans, their transitory character, could have made them simply an incomplete other; instead they are constructed not as other but as incomplete self': a marginalized and despised alter ego, and the reasons are two: 'religion and race' (Todorova 1997: 15, 18). The wars in the former Yugoslavia strengthened this negativism about the zone of contact significantly.

Most observers agree that the idea of European integration has focused historically on, among other things, the Catholic and Protestant Christian civilization and the strategic alliance with North America (Waever *et al.* 1993: 65). Europeans have been reluctant to accept new members from the peripheral zone of contact with Islam. The saga of European Union enlargement again points to the logic of a three-sided division among the Western Christian, Eastern Christian, and Muslim worlds. The Western Christians of the Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Slovenia, Malta, and the three Baltic states were easily accepted, while any 'Orthodox' completion of the Union has always been regarded with suspicion, and endorsed for primarily strategic reasons. The European Community accepted Greece in 1981, for instance, in order to bolster its young democratic institutions and reinforce the strategic southern flank against the communist bloc. Yet diplomatic gossips in Brussels targeted, for years, the inclusion of Greece as an anomalous member who received much, contributed little, and caused trouble. There were voices saying that this country should not have been allowed to join in the first place. The accession of Cyprus, where incomes have reached very high levels, has been subject to numerous controversies, and only persistent lobbying from Athens led to the invitation from the European Union in December 2002. Bulgaria and Romania, two other Orthodox states from the post-Ottoman space, started negotiations in 1999, in a move that was seen largely as a concession, in order to strengthen the democratic belt of stability around the former Yugoslavia. Yet they were the only candidates, together with Turkey, dropped from the first wave of European Union enlargement. Lower income levels and structural problems in the judicial and economic systems, sometimes attributed to the historical political culture of Romania and Bulgaria, may be the explanation.

The perception gaps of the Christian–Muslim frontier are also present

in attitudes to the literature of the Balkan peoples. The two previously mentioned novels by Balkan Christian writers, *Under the Yoke,* and *The Bridge on the Drina,* whose subject is the history of the Christian–Muslim frontier, are a case in point. Ivan Vazov's *Under the Yoke,* describing the desperate Bulgarian revolt in 1876, drenched in blood by the Ottomans, is considered a classic work of nineteenth-century Bulgarian literature. It is inspired by romantic Balkan nationalism, which asserted that the objective of the struggle of the Christian Balkan nations against the Muslim Ottoman Empire was to join the family of enlightened European nations. Indeed, Western intellectuals at the time admired this Herderian passion of the Balkan peoples for freedom, as is demonstrated by the essays of the British Liberal politician Gladstone. Some latter-day historians in the West have revisited this version of history and Vazov's work. They claim that the 'yoke' hardly ever existed, and that the Ottoman Empire might have had a certain legitimacy as a multi-ethnic and multinational polity. Criticism of Balkan nationalism gained momentum in the light of the devastating wars for the Yugoslav succession in the 1990s. The major accusation is that nationalism, in the post-Ottoman space, degenerated from liberalism to authoritarianism. People from the zone of contact, Christians and Muslims alike, are seen increasingly as 'the other', especially when they express nationalist convictions in a time of postmodern amalgamation and shifts to new, postmodern frontiers. In 1997, I heard extremely negative comments on *The Bridge on the Drina* in the Muslim part of Bosnia. I had the feeling that this book might have not won a Nobel Prize in the 1990s.

There is a substantial difference in the historical interpretation of conflict with Islam in the various regions of Christian–Muslim contact. The roles of Christian and Muslim communities, in terms of oppression and domination, are perceived differently in different parts of the world. While Westerners, who had acted as colonizers in the Muslim world, were seen as the domineering power for a couple of centuries, for the Balkan Orthodox Christians the oppressive imperial power was Muslim. As indicated previously, confessional identity played a key role in delimiting nation-state borders in the Balkans and the Middle East. The Christian and Islamic religions have played an important role in self-identification and the nationalist struggle for territory in the conflicts in the zone of contact. Westerners sometimes find it difficult to understand how the specific identities and ideas of collective freedom can motivate people's acts in the zone of contact.

The richer, core area of the Muslim world also regards the zone of contact as a dangerous place marked by conflicts and trouble, where Muslim dignity is challenged. Political attention in the Muslim world has been fixed, throughout history, on Europe and the Christian powers. The zone of contact has been seen as a frontline, and the Christian minorities in the Muslim world as a fifth column. A key problem today remains the Arab–Israeli conflict, which has turned from an issue of struggle for terri-

tory and nation-state building into an immense psychological problem for millions of people in different countries. The state of Israel emerged in the mid-twentieth century as a new civilizational frontier, creating a new triangle, or a square, involving Eastern and Western Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Yet Islamist activists argue that Israel is not a civilization in its own right, along with Islam and Christianity, but is merely a projection of European culture, which seeks to dominate the Middle East. It is difficult to imagine the survival in the long run of the Israeli state without the assistance of the West, America, and the global Jewish community. Since the 1920s, the modern Muslim states have made promises concerning Palestine that they could never deliver, and these still weigh heavily on the political consequences of popular disenchantment with authorities in the Muslim world. There are many myths upon which the conflict resides. Henry Kissinger, a major player in Middle Eastern politics in the twentieth century, claimed that he managed to mediate between Israel and Egypt because he made the Egyptian President Sadat understand that the problem was psychological. Sadat's return to the sound grounds of Kissinger's *realpolitik* in the 1970s demonstrated Egypt's limited interest in continuing the confrontation with Israel in the name of the Palestinian cause.

The rise of political Islam in the zone of contact is also founded on motivated biases and often on consciously developed perception gaps. Islamism has many and various sources, but the fear of being dominated by 'the other' is central. Even acts of terrorism are most often the consequence of feelings of insecurity, deeply seated in mass psychology. The consciousness that the Muslim societies lags behind the technological, military, economic, and cultural thrust of the West is a prime source of political Islam. Major developments in the Muslim world in the 1990s clearly demonstrated the limits to the policies for development adopted by secular national elites in the decades following the independence of the former colonies. A key development was the disillusionment with the promises of a Western type of modernization. It brought down the regime of the Shah in Iran in 1979, and led to the rise of Islamism in Algeria, Turkey, and Malaysia. To the astonishment of many observers, Islamism bloomed in those countries where modernization seemed successful. Islamism rose as a political movement seeking a higher profile for Islam in social and political affairs, but also a more just and less corrupt society and politics.

Despite the initial thrust in the 1980s, Islamist political regimes and movements, in the 1990s, such as those in Iran and Sudan, faced serious constraints to their potential for expansion. The Islamic regime in Iran lost momentum and popular support. The Algerian Front Islamique du Salut (FIS) found itself in a vicious circle of senseless violence and the inability to return to legal political life. Even in Palestine the Islamic Hamas lost its lustre as the leading national force when Arafat again took

over the initiative in the peace process with Israel, and susequently in the second *intifada*. Only the recourse to oppression by the right-wing governments of Ariel Sharon, after 2000, brought Islamist extremists back to the fore, with their suicide-bombing tactics, against the background of a frustrated and humiliated Palestinian authority.

The Islamist movement in Turkey lost much of its vigour (including its anti-Western and anti-imperialist direction) after its conflict with the military, even if it went from one electoral success to another, running on a platform of populism and anticorruption rhetoric. The Welfare Party was the first to raise the banner of political Islam, in the mid-1990s, since Kemal Atatürk suppressed religion in the 1920s. It won 21 per cent of the votes in the 1995 parliamentary elections. When it was banned, its successor, called Virtue, won 15 per cent in the April 1999 elections, and the Nationalist Action Party (MHP) won 130 parliamentary seats (up from 3) because many Islamist supporters saw the nationalists as the only alternative to the banned Welfare Party. This development only confirms the organic link between nationalism and Islam in Turkey (Kubicek 1999: 189). Shireen Hunter argues that the contemporary problem with Islamism in Turkey stems from the fact that Kemalism is based on ethnic nationalism, together with secularism (Hunter 1995). Islamists argue that many of the problems Turkey faces today, such as the fratricidal war with Muslim Kurds, the unbalanced development of the various regions, and the unequal distribution of new wealth, would have been avoided had Turkish nationalism stuck to Islam rather than ethnicity.

In Malaysia, the most industrialized and modernized Muslim country in the world today, the Islamic PAS Party marked an important victory in the November 1999 elections, defying the incumbent Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad, champion of modernization in a moderate Islamic society. PAS came to power in the states of Kelantan and Trengganu, and there introduced Islamic law, the *sharia*, including Islamic punishments for adultery and theft, while alcohol and 'indecent' pastimes were banned. As the average age of the population of Malaysia decreases and people become more conscious of the opportunities presented by economic growth, they are turning away from the paternalistic methods of Mahathir. The paradox is that the ambitious youths turn to traditional religious identity for inspiration, something that hides huge threats for social peace and stability in this multicultural Third World country.

Iranian, Algerian, Turkish, and Malaysian societies faced the same structural problem that has led to a growing popularity of Islamism: the inability to deal with newly acquired wealth in an equitable way. The 'rentier society' of Iran under the Shah, for example, was marked by a strikingly uneven distribution of the new wealth gained from oil exports, and this fomented social turmoil. The rentier mentality made senseless the Shah's idea of promoting a new work ethic through industrialization, and generating a new and strong white-collar working class. In terms of

relations with the Christian West, the rentier state in the Gulf is simply Edward Said's 'Orientalism' turned upside down: a construction of a self-image of superiority and, consequently, a voluntary distinction from the inferior 'other'. Arguably, this might have been the position of some intellectuals in Iran, who supported the Islamic Revolution of Ayatollah Khomeini (Boroujerdi 1996: 29). In Turkey and Malaysia the source of new wealth was different, coming from rapid economic growth, mostly owing to industrialization and an export-oriented economy, yet the result was an increasing discrepancy in income levels and uneven regional development, which brought about discontent and populism. It was against this background of frustration that the old ghosts of confrontation with the former colonial powers in the West revisited the castles of Muslim politics.

At the beginning of the 1990s the wave of Islamism was already receding, after several decades during which such organizations as the Muslim Brethren had scared the West and the regimes in place in the Middle East alike. 'National' Islamism in the various Muslim societies was beginning to become 'social-democratic', throwing away its initial radicalism, as the case of Turkey has shown. Islamists sought legitimization within the established political systems, even if some of them emphasized the necessity of re-establishing the *sharia*. In the economic sphere, Islamist rhetoric masked either a form of state socialism, as in Iran under Khomeini, or economic liberalism, geared towards speculation rather than production (Roy 1994: 78). Yet all of a sudden the wave of extremism splashed out anew, more than a decade after the end of the Cold War – and it is difficult to say what exactly triggered it. Was it the escalation of the conflict in Palestine? Was it the ideological vacuum after the end of the history of ideologies, as we knew them from the twentieth century, when people in the Muslim world had to re-discover explanations of inequality and domination by others? Is this a conflict of national aspirations, as in Palestine, or social grievances, as in Algeria and Turkey, with the trend of Western-dominated globalization, where violence in the Middle East simply adds strength to the Islamist arguments? Or were the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001 the swansong of Islamist activism, as its spearhead, al-Qaeda, needed desperate acts in order to avoid marginalization? For sure, the psychological frontier has grown to be global, and it is important to understand that people's biased discourse and practices have the potential of restructuring social relations, such as the global relationship between Christians and Muslims.

7 The international security dimension of the frontier

After 1960, the UN year of decolonization, the world security order built upon the idea of a universal expansion of the nation-state model. Global relations among nation states rendered the international system more predictable and, for that reason, easier to manage. The nation-state paradigm offered a form of social organization that was rational and better suited to the needs of modern society than any other model known in the past. The nation state offered better prospects for individual and collective development than the multi-ethnic empires, which had been the norm in the Christian–Muslim frontier zone for millennia. Yet the nation state never became a unique building block in international relations. The contemporary world, with its interspersed cultures and communities, consists of a combination of various social and cultural cleavages, where the relations among large, loosely constituted cross-border cultural communities are also ones of power. In this sense, the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 on the symbols of military and financial might in the United States of America merely exposed a dynamic that had been present beneath the surface of the nation-state system for decades. The sudden revelation of the danger of non-state, Islamist organizations showed that the nation state should not be taken as an unquestionable principle that both determines the organization of world society and functions as the only foundation of international security.

This chapter looks into the double nature of security relations on the Christian–Muslim frontier: relations which involve states, and also large socio-political complexes, whose role and place in the international security structure have not yet been clarified fully. The concept of the Christian–Muslim frontier relates to 'soft' issues in international security, as compared to matters of military strategy and tactics, which are the traditional subjects of security studies. Of course, security relations among states remain by far the most important element in the international security architecture. Nevertheless, as recent events have shown, the 'soft' issues in international security should be taken into account very carefully when wanting to address the sources of conflict and organized use of violence in the contemporary world.

> What types of groups exist and are able to carry out collective action is becoming a question to be explored, not a starting assumption. This is true, even in the field of international relations, where scholars have long assumed that the only significant group identity comes from the nation state.
>
> (Fiorini 2000: 19)

This chapter looks into this problematic relationship, between state and non-state actors, in the global security architecture today.

The impact of Christian–Muslim relations on security strategies

When the Cold War came to an end, some security experts rather quickly forgot such terms as 'mutually assured destruction' (MAD), 'Soviet strategy', and 'spasm nuclear war', which had been part of their professional lives for decades. This was the product of a new assurance born under the break-up of the Soviet empire and the radical change of strategic mentality within the Russian elite. MAD was forgotten, even if the nuclear arsenals that had inspired it continued to exist. The price to be paid for this new assurance, however, was the loss of the axis on which experts focused their vision of stability in the world. They began looking for new points of reference, which included political issues arising from Christian–Muslim relations – from the rise of political Islam to communal conflicts in such places as Yugoslavia, Lebanon, Chechnya, and East Timor. With the loss of the clarity that had prevailed in the bipolar world, policy-makers had difficulty in formulating their new strategic goals. Hence the infiltration of ideas of cultural distinctiveness in their thoughts and acts. In 1999, during NATO's bombing campaign in Yugoslavia, Henry Kissinger noted, at a conference in Geneva: 'when people don't know what to do in foreign policy, they stick to their traditional friends'. This statement distilled the essence of civilizational thinking in the domain of security and strategy. It is this logic that, sometimes unconsciously, earns the popularity of writings about the 'clash of civilizations'.

At the end of the twentieth century, most Western security planners asserted that relations with the rest of the world, including its Islamic part, were managed successfully within the global system of states. Strong economic and political forces had drawn the key Muslim countries – Turkey, the oil-rich Gulf monarchies, Malaysia, Indonesia, and Pakistan – into the world capitalist market, and into security cooperation with the West. Egypt entered the orbit of Western strategy with the 1979 Camp David accords, and it was hoped that the other Arab neighbours of Israel would follow suit. The rest of the Muslim world was looked upon as another boring Third World backwater in an age of multinational corporations and globalization, even if US policy-makers were already clearly aware of the

problems of Islamist extremism. Religious identity was seen as an element that added predictability to relations among duly constituted states. The texts of Samuel Huntington on 'Islam's bloody borders' had limited effect on the rational choices of strategy planners. Such arguments mostly had an indirect impact. As a self-fulfilling prophecy, they influenced mass psychology by stressing the conflictual aspects of relations between Christians and Muslims.

During the last decades of the twentieth century, policy-makers hardly anticipated anything catastrophic in these relations. No major Western security organization envisaged setting up a division to deal with the Islamic world, as such. As a high-level official in the Western European Union, the military wing of European integration, explained to me in 1998, the major object of attention, and a worthwhile partner for official relations with the West, were the governments of the Muslim states. NATO had two major objectives in its relations with the neighbouring regions: 'binding Russia into the European security system' and 'promoting stability and confidence in the Mediterranean' (Solana 1999: 24). The first was basically achieved with the NATO–Russia Founding Act, which NATO leaders signed with President Yeltsin in the summer of 1997. The second objective was more complex, and NATO felt it could deal with it by engaging in a security dialogue with the states of the southern Mediterranean (Solana 1999: 23). In the meanwhile, US President George W. Bush, upon taking office in 2001, put forward a programme to dismantle the 1972 Antiballistic Missile Treaty as the centre of his national security strategy. His strategy paid tribute to the realist thinking of the previous decades; namely, that the United States had to put in place a large-scale defence and offence against well-organized state actors. This position was justified by perceived threats raised by 'rogue states', such as Iraq and Iran, against the established system of states, led by the United States. Yet this strategy led to the neglect of warnings about the threat of non-state terrorist actors and social sources of tension in the world.

When the CIA, with the help of the Pakistani security services, armed, trained and encouraged Islamists in Afghanistan in 1984–1989, in its largest operation since Vietnam, which was directed once again against the Soviet Union, the objectives were tactical. On the bigger chessboard, Western security planners took a passive stance with regard to Islamism because they never believed that non-state actors could become an offensive force they would have to account for. In those years, the extremists who called for Islamic holy war (jihad) in Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, Egypt, and Afghanistan actually had different priorities (enemies) rather than the struggle with the West. Corrupt and oppressive regimes that cooperated with immoral Western 'non-believers', and a 'godless' Soviet occupation of Afghanistan, were situated much higher on the Islamist list of targets. Prince Turki al-Faisal, the chief of Saudi intelligence who worked with CIA directors to support 'freedom fighters' coming to Afghanistan

from all over the Muslim world, later acknowledged that Saudi Arabia and the United States largely exploited the culture of *jihad* in the 1980s. Yet the potential of these sentiments to generate joint Islamist action against the West was clearly underestimated until most of Afghanistan fell to the Taliban in the mid-1990s.

At the same time, the definition of allies, opponents, and strategic goals of states in the zone of contact has always been subject to an undeniable civilizational bias. The leaders of the Western alliance have always been conscious of its 'civilizational' foundations. No serious study on Turkey and NATO, for example, omitted the fact that Turkey was the only predominantly Muslim country in the organization, and that Turkey was admitted to this Western club mostly because of specific geostrategic considerations. For sure, the West also took into account the secularization effort of the first president of the Turkish nation state, Kemal Atatürk, and his followers. At the same time, an Eastern bloc mentality, to the extent that it existed among the communist leaders of the Cold War era, found a most fertile soil in those countries that were situated on the fringes between the European and the Asian civilizations in eastern and southeastern Europe. The Cold War overshadowed most (if not all) confessional and civilizational distinctions in the frontier zone. It was in the post-Cold War international disorder that more and more politicians started looking back at centuries-old cultural links as a focus for new security alliances. This was the case, for example, in Turkey's rapprochement with Central Asia and some Balkan and Caucasian countries after the end of the Cold War.

The new security arrangements have little to do with allegations that one civilization might have been more militant than the other. These are rational calculations that aim at enhancing a people's security and political influence through entering broader alliances with 'reliable' fellow coreligionists. They exist along with other considerations based on political reasoning. Indeed, there is no empirical evidence that one civilization is today more militant than the other. Table 7.1 indicates that Muslim states outside the zone of contact with Christianity (with the exception of Saudi Arabia) spend a similar portion of their GDP on military purposes as do west European countries. States in the zone of contact with Christian and Muslim majorities, allocate similar portions of GDP to military expenses, even if these allotments are higher than those of the countries outside the zone of contact. It may be concluded that states inside the historical zone of contact between Christianity and Islam have more concerns about security than other states with Christian and Muslim populations (the states of western Europe and the Gulf, for example). Yet neither Muslim nor Christian countries can be qualified as 'more aggressive' than the other, on the basis of higher military spending. Only one item in Table 6.1 shows a clear disbalance: arms trade. The states from the upper (Christian) part of the table are net exporters of arms, while those of the lower

Table 7.1 Military (mis)balance across the frontier in 1998

State	*Population in millions*	*Military staff in thousands*	*Arms trade in millions of US dollars*		*Military expenses as % of GDP*
			Imports	*Exports*	
United States	271.8	1401	656	10 840	3.2
United Kingdom	58.5	210	71	2631	2.8
France	58.5	358.8	160	3343	2.8
Germany	82.1	347.5	–	569	1.5
Russia	147.7	1159	–	3466	5.2
Cyprus	0.8	10	110	–	5.5
Greece	10.6	168.5	750	–	4.8
Croatia	4.5	56.2	37	–	8.3
Bulgaria	8.4	101.5	40	–	3.7
Albania	3.1	54	n/a	–	6.6
Jordan	6.1	104	62	–	7.7
Lebanon	3.1	55.1	10	–	3.6
Turkey	63.4	639	1276	–	4.4
Egypt	64.7	450	867	–	4.1
Saudi Arabia	19.5	162.5	2370	–	15.7
Iran	64.6	540	11	–	6.5
Tunisia	9.2	35	37	–	1.8
Morocco	17.3	196	104	–	4.6
Indonesia	203.4	299	171	13	2.6
Malaysia	21.0	110	1346	–	3.7
Kazakhstan	16.4	55.1	172	–	2.2
Ethiopia	57.0	120	n/a	–	6.0
Eritrea	4.0	47.1	53	–	35.8

Sources: IISS (1999) *The Military Balance 1999–2000*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 300–4, and UNDP (1999) *World Human Development Report 1999*, New York: UNDP, pp. 188–91.

(Muslim) part are net importers. Undoubtedly, the direction of this type of trade flows from the first to the second group of states.

The events on 11 September 2001, and the subsequent reactions to them, demonstrated that the way individuals think and act can change security relations among nations and large cultural complexes. The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon provoked, at least temporarily, a major shift in people's perceptions about the foundations of the global system of states. The crumbling towers of the World Trade Center shook not only the ground of Lower Manhattan but also the concept of stability, built gradually in a global system of nation states. There is little doubt that the world changed because of these attacks. Yet the change did not come as a result of a decision taken by a territorial state. It was the consequence of a shocking act of unknown terrorist assailants with suspected links to a global Islamist network – al-Qaeda – 'the base' on which Islamist groups of extremists around the world were supposed to build a united front. The attacks presented the US and the

rest of the West not with the well-known, traditional type of military opposition to a territorially organized military power, but with a threat of an utterly new type. This was an elusive set of extremist organizations, whose devoted members believed that they acted in defence of a discriminated and oppressed part of humanity.

The psychology of the Christian–Muslim frontier influences the discourse and acts of people, as well as the way security planners shape national and international strategies. The new threat of terrorism urged the West to look for new strategies, from reviewing intelligence-gathering practices and launching new security initiatives for international trade, to switching national defence priorities as a whole. How can one otherwise characterize the abrupt shift in US military strategy to an emphasis on war on terrorism and 'preventive' attacks on Afghanistan and other 'rogue' states? The reaction of the US President, George W. Bush, and the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, to the heightened menace of terrorism in the fall of 2001 was to urge on the creation of an international coalition of states (*sic*) against terrorism. The leaders of the two powers that once stood at the origins of the Atlantic Charter and post-World War II international system realized, in 2001, that non-state terrorist organizations had become a menace to the stability of the global state system. The goal of the coalition-building campaign in the fall of 2001 was to rebuild the shattered foundations of the global state system and, as a consequence, restore predictability in this system. It was only three weeks after 11 September 2001 that the United States and their 'anti-terrorist' coalition partners started a military campaign to unseat the Islamist Taliban regime in Afghanistan, which bluntly refused to make the international Islamist brigades of Usama bin Laden surrender. The Taliban were denoted as the mainstay of the global network of militant Islamism, al-Qaeda, and the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, and the declared goal was punishing the offenders before the eyes of the whole world. Nevertheless, the United States quickly understood that the struggle to defeat al-Qaeda and all similar organizations meant nothing without re-establishing the predictable order of nation states – the legitimate repository of power in the modern age. As a consequence they shifted the machinery of nation building in post-Taliban Afghanistan into higher gear, but their policy objectives and practice, in that respect, remained highly contradictory. First, recalling bitter memories of the Somali disaster into which the United States had been drawn a decade earlier, President George W. Bush promised, in 2001, not to engage in nation-building plans in the war in Afghanistan. Second, it was necessary to build a nation state in order to bring Afghanistan back into the global family of nation states. However, the United States and its allies, who brought down the Taliban, hardly had the capabilities to build a nation state in Afghanistan.

Part of the price that had to be paid for the reconstruction of the international order of states after 11 September 2001 was mitigating criticism

of human rights abuse by 'friendly' regimes in Muslim countries such as Egypt or Turkey, but also in Russia and China, whose governments had a vital interest in putting down Islamist movements in their backyards. Even relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran improved temporarily (before diving again into a rhetoric of animosity and accusations of belonging to a global 'axis of evil') as an alternative to dealing with the unyielding al-Qaeda, Islamic Jihad and other Islamist organizations. The *raison d'Etat* partly overshadowed the paraded sense of justice. Some analysts called this policy 'sleeping with the enemy', and saw in it ominous consequences for the future of democracy in the world. This policy put a question mark over the presumed Western mission in contemporary civilization – namely, the expansion of democratic values. The ends – re-establishing stability in the state system – appeared to justify the means, which were not always conducive to further democracy. Moreover, the concern with the future of the global nation state system soon silenced the humane response of many intellectuals, in both the East and the West, to 11 September 2001. These intellectuals had called for attention to the dire need for greater equality among nations and people around the world. Uneven development around the world may have been the factor that allowed extremist political entrepreneurs to mobilize support for their operations. 'Even if many terrorists are not directly driven by poverty, the inequalities of globalization feed a general anti-Westernism that is a seedbed for Islamism' (Hirsh 2002: 28). For a moment after the terrorist attacks, even the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, echoed the sentiments urging for more democracy and equality in the world.

Experts in security have always considered interaction with predictable states as an alternative to anarchy, disorder, and the arbitrary use of violence. The Gulf War of 1991 illustrated this point. The then President of the United States, George Bush Senior, stopped this war short of destroying Saddam Hussein's regime. The preservation of Iraq, as a state one could deal with, seemed a better option than its demise at the hands of Shia and Kurdish anti-Saddam rebels. Those rebellions could jeopardize the regional order of states, and bolster Shia radicalism and Kurdish irredentism in the neighbouring countries. Self-determination of the Shia and the Kurds would have posed more problems than trying to install democracy in Iraq could have solved.

The Palestinian leader, Yassir Arafat, also learned this lesson of world order during the decade between the US wars on Iraq in 1991, and on terrorism in 2001: between the time when he backed Saddam Hussein (not fully understanding the consequences of the end of the Soviet Union and of the bipolar structure of the world) and the time when he acknowledged that the key to any solution of the Palestinian problem was in the hands of the United States. Ordering his troops to shoot at a radical anti-American Palestinian crowd, in the days following 11 September 2001, meant not only siding with the West, but also transpired a will to affirm himself as the

leader of a Palestinian nation state with the ambition of joining the world order of states. The subsequent chaos and escalation of violence in Israel and Palestine was the result of conflicting visions of territorial nation states in one and the same land, as has been the case in the Middle East crisis since 1948. The governments of Ariel Sharon in Israel did their best, in 2001–2002, to discredit Arafat, describing him as part of a global terrorist network and a potential target of the United States in its global campaign against terrorism. One of the objectives of the Israeli campaign was to limit Arafat's ability to act as a national leader and slow down the process of establishing a Palestinian nation state in the occupied territories of Gaza and the West Bank. The *raison d'Etat* thus degenerated into *raison de guerre*, both in Palestine and in the international community.

The challenge that the global system of states faced in September 2001 was not at all new. There were clear signs in the Christian–Muslim frontier zone, during the last decades of the twentieth century, that the construction of a global network of nation states was not going unchallenged. State institutions in such countries as Lebanon, Somalia, Bosnia, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan had simply fallen apart under pressure from imploding communal strife. Political extremists in various countries, affected by communal conflicts in the zone of contact, capitalized on the historical animosity between Christians and Muslims. Political entrepreneurs within the intermingled confessional communities of Lebanon and Bosnia struggled over the distribution of territory and political influence. They used, especially in Bosnia, popular fears of the cruelty of 'the other' who lived next door. These fears were deeply seated in the historical memory of the different communities.

The construction of nation states has always been difficult and painful in the post-Ottoman space, mostly due to the key social feature inherited from the Ottoman system and described in Chapter 2: a society representing a mixture of different communities that function separately. It was particularly difficult to build nation states in Lebanon and Bosnia, as these two 'last remnants of the Ottoman Empire' represented patchworks of various communities, which speak and write in the same language, but remain separated by their different religious heritage. When it came to the question of establishing territorial nation states, in line with the imperatives of the modern age, the task was daunting. Map 3.1 provides only a weak representation of the complexity of the task. In reality, the problems in Lebanon and Bosnia are an illustration of a much broader problem – the territorialization of non-territorial Herderian nations, whose sense of nationalism and desire for independence had already grown under the Ottoman Empire. Greeks, Bulgarians, Turks, Serbs, Arabs, Albanians, and the other nations of the post-Ottoman space had to go through the process of territorialization of their modern states. The inequality between Christian and Muslim peoples, under the Ottoman system, was a catalyst

for violence in the process of separation and territorial delimitation of the Balkan nations.

In the 1990s, several 'failed states' became the locus of international terrorism. Torn among rival factions, Somalia became a 'black hole' with no central authority with whom to share information, no links to Interpol, and no extradition treaties. The situation was similar in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan, a strange type of state that existed for years in the postmodern age, officially recognized by only three states in its region, and emphasizing Islamic solidarity in its relations with the outside world. Kosovo became the third case of a 'black hole', from the point of view of international law, after NATO chased the Serbian forces from the province. In all three countries, fresh conflicts involving the Christian and Muslim worlds lurked behind the political chaos. Having successfully resisted some of the strongest powers of the modern world – Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the United States – the Muslim population of Afghanistan and Somalia faced confrontation with predominantly Christian neighbours – Ethiopia and Russia. The successful resistance against an alien intruder gave the Muslims of these countries self-confidence, which turned to rejection of the Western-dominated international order of nation states.

The menace of non-state terrorism organized along the civilizational faultline is far from receding. Al-Qaeda, the global network of Islamist cells, survived the destruction of the Taliban regime. For millions of Muslims around the world its leader, Usama bin Laden, turned into something of a latter-day Robin Hood, and thousands want to follow in his footsteps. Even if al-Qaeda and its operatives are completely destroyed, its spirit will haunt world society for quite a while. The reason for this is not least the fact that America's relationship with the Arab and Muslim worlds is deteriorating. The aggressive attitude towards Iraq is seen as one more example of the humiliation of the Arab and Muslim world at the hands of an arrogant West. On top of this, the lack of clearly defined strategic objectives in the US in the war on terrorism reveals a serious weakness of the superpower. In 1999, Caspar Weinberger, the then US Secretary of Defense, announced, in the context of NATO's attack on Yugoslavia, that a necessary condition for military action should be 'clearly defined political and military objectives' (Halliday 2002: 33). Three years later, the war on terrorism fell short of fulfilling this condition. Many political commentators point to a crucial discrepancy in the definition of 'strategic objective'. A year after the 11 September attacks, *Foreign Affairs* magazine dedicated a whole issue to this problem with the major argument being that 'there was still very little clarity about the real direction of US foreign policy and the war on terror' (Hirsh 2002: 19). Such lack of a clear strategy has cast a shadow over the future of any superpower since the time of the Roman Empire. 'In any case the pursuit of empire is a prescription for certain failure: every great empire in history, no matter how enduring, has

fallen eventually to its own hubris, having built up a tide of resentment among its subjects and enemies' (Hirsh 2002: 43).

The administration of George W. Bush identified the elements of its 'new grand strategy', which included a 'commitment to maintaining the unipolar world', 'a general depreciation of international rules, treaties, and security partnerships', and also 'recasting the terms of sovereignty' in order for the United States to be prepared 'to intervene anywhere, anytime to pre-emptively destroy the threat' of undeterrable groups of terrorists who menace the world with the use of weapons of mass destruction (Ikenberry 2002: 49–55). It is here that the two key issues – the fight on terrorism and the risk of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction – become entangled in the new grand strategy. It was in this way that the fundamentalist, Usama bin Laden, and the secular nationalist dictator, Saddam Hussein, two adversaries by definition, became identified as the prime enemies of America, with all the confusion that this situation created.

If security is understood to be a social value, because it means preserving the ultimate value, human life, as well as social wealth, the West today faces a choice between two fundamental values in its relations with certain regimes in the zone of contact: security or democracy. Democratization in the contemporary Muslim countries has a strong pro-Islamic bias. Electoral results in Algeria and Turkey show just the tip of the iceberg. Even in Bosnia, the Bosnian Muslim nationalist activist, Aliya Izetbegovic, the first elected president of independent Bosnia, had once argued, in his Islamic Declaration, that modernization and democratization in a Muslim society were impossible without reference to Islam (Izetbegovic 1985). Most supporters of populist Islamism interpret democracy as an inherent feature of the original form of Islam, while they attribute the corruption and authoritarianism of the post-colonial regimes to the bankrupt secular experience. The choice of the West in troubling situations, in many countries of the Muslim world, remained in favour of supporting international stability, including support of oppressive but anti-Islamist and anti-terrorist regimes. Despite well-documented evidence of human rights abuse in cases when military-backed regimes interrupted the democratic process and shunned popular Islamist parties in Algeria and Turkey in the 1990s, there was no effective protest coming from abroad. A shift to more authoritarian but secular and predictable regimes was preferred to protests which would have helped the Islamists come to power through the democratic procedure of general elections (Entelis 1996: 74–7). 'It is better to have a strong regime in power than a liberal government, if it is indulgent and relaxed and penetrated by communists', George Kennan said during the Cold War (Schmitz 1999: 149). Islamists took over from the communists the position of the opponent in the strategic paradigms advanced by Western security experts. Laxity to Islamism was gradually substituted by the perception of it as a threat. The change of Western

attitudes to the Islamic bias of the Pakistani government from laxity to strong pressure, in the fall of 2001, or the reassessment of the relationship with the Saudi regime, are the most important cases in point.

Religious minorities and security

Guy Héraud argues that the division of the world into nation states is the major cause of the problems of minorities. Minority problems 'are an inherent feature of the organization of the planet in states; they are born and prosper with it' (Héraud 1991: 41). Héraud's reasoning applies to religious minorities as well. Discrimination, harassment and oppression of minorities are recurrent themes in extremist appeals for violent action. Conflicts are often caused by security dilemmas between majorities and minorities, which see each other as a threat. Indeed, a leading psychological reason for terrorist action is the perceived, and not always justifiable, feeling of victimization. In recent history, Serbian, Chechen, Kosovar Albanian, and other nationalists who use the rhetoric of religion have resorted to violent struggle, preaching to their communities that they are the victims of conspiracy by 'the other', who is inherently intolerant and aggressive. Pim Fortuyn, the charismatic, right-wing, gay Dutch politician, who was assassinated in May 2002 days before elections he was set to win, argued that Islam was an immutably intolerant religion. On the other side of the divide, many Muslims see the conflicts with Christians and Westerners – in the Middle East, Bosnia, Iraq and in the colonial countries – in terms of constant victimization. Everyone sees the fundamentalist on the other side, and not on his own. Both side's accusations reach the point of absurdity, yet they enjoy strikingly growing popularity.

Almost all cases of conflict in the Christian–Muslim frontier are linked to the logic of political opposition between nation states and minorities. Political leaders who have chosen the path of violent action in Bosnia, Kosovo, Chechnya, Cyprus, Palestine, East Timor, and other places of conflict in the zone of Christian–Muslim contact are led by ideas of national independence, building territorial nation states, or ensuring better representation of the minority in the existing state. Because of this logic, some large religious communities may even refute the idea of defining them as a minority in their state. The five million or so Copts in Egypt, for example, feel that they are the original population of the Nile valley and an inherent part of the modern Egyptian nation. They oppose assertions that would qualify them as a minority in the Egyptian state in terms of international law, probably because they fear raising their cultural distinction to a political level and exposing themselves to violence. Nationalism in the post-Ottoman space has retained its strong cultural overtones, and consequently, the stronger the nation-state building efforts, the more people's identity is subject to pressure towards homogenization.

There is no agreement among security experts about the causes of the

recent upsurge of communal conflicts in the zone of Christian–Muslim contact. Some suggest that this is the revival of ancient communal hatred, others explain these conflicts by the rational-choice behaviour of members and leaders of the various communities. A third approach focuses on cultural identity and political myths about 'the other', which are used by political leaders in search of the means to mobilize their communities (Arfi 1998: 151–203). I have argued elsewhere (Apostolov 1997: 37–51, 2002) that the causes of the problem of religious minorities in the zone of contact, and especially in the post-Ottoman space, are social and political, and do not pertain to religious and communal traditions. In their minds, people relate religious minority problems to politics rather than religious beliefs. In a similar vein, the identity of religious communities in the eastern Mediterranean is primarily political, and so too are the conflicts. Ideology is used to the extent that it serves concrete political ends. Political identity, in general, is split among many fields, and religion is one of them. Political loyalties (and independent polities) often converge around confessional identities (Geertz 1993: 258–9). In this sense, the rise of nationalism in many countries merely meant adjusting ancient communal structures to the nation-state model, while hanging on to old grievances and problems. It is for this reason that the contemporary nation-state system offers no ready solutions to the old problem of religious minorities.

Nevertheless, the fragmented identities in the eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans, inherited from the past, are not inevitably conducive to conflict. The major reason for conflict is the inability to build appropriate political institutions that can accommodate distinct communal identities. The contemporary system of states is not suited to solving the existing tensions, and when there are no institutions to guarantee the security of the individual, people stick to their traditional communal identities. The question is how to improve the social and political organization inside the existing states, and also among states in regions where various communities have lived together for centuries. The Middle East and the Balkans have a tradition of both conflict and accommodation among confessional communities. In this sense, communal violence has often been the result of particular ill-fated political regimes in plural societies, as the cases of Bosnia and Lebanon have unmistakably shown. After all, the purpose of political organization and authority is to help create a political system that is able to provide security for all communities in a given state or region.

Comparing data about minorities around the world, Jonathan Fox argues that religion plays a more important role in politics and communal conflicts in the Middle East than elsewhere, yet his research 'rules out Islam as an explanation for the disproportionate importance of religion in Middle East ethno-religious conflicts' (Fox 2001: 38). One potential explanation of the influence of religion is its historical role in politics at the heart of the zone of Christian–Muslim contact. In addition, this is the

most autocratic region in the world, probably because of the historical and political traditions of the Christian–Muslim frontier, and autocratic regimes are more likely to discriminate against religious minorities. Empirical evidence shows that 'the more diverse a country's religious population, the more violent its domestic conflicts tend to be' (Fox 2001: 32). Minority conflicts in the Middle East, the Balkans, and the Caucasus are similar to ethnic conflicts around the world in that political agendas, preconceptions, and even popular academic theories simply make use of religion and religious difference. The conflicts are essentially political conflicts for power or for independence of a specific community. The overall reason for the influence of religion in politics in the region is most probably in the history and political culture of the Christian–Muslim frontier. In this sense, communal conflict is more probable in the highly fragmented societies of the zone of Christian–Muslim contact than in other regions. Religious issues simply influence the dynamics of ethnic conflict, and give a concrete shape to discrimination against ethnic minorities. In the countries of the former Ottoman Empire, which built on the principle of communal separation in the *millet* system, religion is, by tradition, readily invoked in political discourse. Religious discrimination is, surprisingly, very likely against minorities that are otherwise culturally similar to the majority group. On the one hand this cultural proximity makes the majority elite believe that they can easily assimilate a captive minority; on the other, antagonism here is simply another case of Freud's 'narcissism of small differences'. As a consequence, religious minorities that seek autonomy are more likely to suffer discrimination than ethnic or national minorities which pursue the same objective.

As both religion and autocracy have been present in Middle Eastern politics for centuries, people tend to accept them as normal. Nevertheless, the Middle East has a remarkable record of preserving its religious minorities. It was only the arrival of the Western model of the nation state that led to a drive to more cultural homogeneity. In eastern Europe, where religion was suppressed under communism, minorities tended to react with more violence against religious discrimination. Turks and Pomaks, in Bulgaria, went on the streets to protest; Abkhazians (half of whom are Muslim) in Georgia and Chechens in Russia rebelled; and Albanians in Kosovo both protested and rebelled, raising the issue of political autonomy. The dissident consciousness of confessional minorities has always been a thorny issue for leaders of young nation states. They see minority confessional identity as obsolete and transitory, as something easy to manipulate and change. They consider national consciousness as a dominant norm in the age of nation states – hence the ambitions to eliminate unhealthy religious diversity by assimilating confessional minorities. This has been the case, for example, in Bosnia, where Serbs and Croats deemed feasible the assimilation of Serbo-Croatian-speaking Muslims in greater Serbian and Croatian nation states. Similar attitudes of majorities

to intercommunal groups with weak identities characterize the situation of the Pomak Bulgarian-speaking communities in several Balkan countries, the Uniates in Romania, and the Christians in a number of Arab states. Very often, the identity of a religious minority does not seem to be an irreplaceable part of the social life of its members. Charles Tilly qualifies such identities as 'disjoined' (Tilly 1998). This is the case of the Bulgarian-speaking Muslim Pomaks, for example, whose social mobility can make them identify with the Bulgarians (on linguistic and ethnic grounds), the Turks or the Albanians (on the basis of religion), or the nationality of the state of which they are citizens (Bulgaria, Greece, Macedonia, Turkey or Albania). 'Disjoined' identities of religious minorities make them an easy target for assimilation policies.

The small states in the zone of contact have always suffered from insufficient resources to guarantee their security. Consequently, they have been keen to obtain such resources through other means – for instance from external support through alliances, and patron–client relations with stronger neighbours or great powers. The same logic applies to religious communities. Religious minorities also seek protectors from outside. Clientelism, the perennial problem in Balkan and Middle Eastern security politics, also influences the dynamics of ethno-religious conflict. Confessional proximity between local communities and external forces that are likely to intervene in local conflicts raises the chance of starting violent confrontation. All this has created a dangerous mosaic of constantly changing alliances and configurations of the balance of power.

Various solutions to the problem of political and social accommodation of religious minorities have been tried in practice in the zone of Christian–Muslim contact. Several millions of Egyptian Copts found a *modus vivendi* in a combination of participatory nationalism, which was the mobilizing force in the national liberation upheaval in 1921, and acceptance of the political marginalization of the community thereafter. Participatory nationalism is strong in Palestine, where the Christian communities have provided both influential figures in the extremist wing of the Palestinian national movement, such as George Habash and Nayif Hawatmeh, and key mediators with the Israelis and the Americans, such as Hanan Ashrawi and Edward Said. There are many situations in the zone of Christian–Muslim contact, in the age of nation states, where two neighbouring nations and nation states target a certain community sitting on the fence for assimilation. Such situations have a very strong risk of confrontation, as the case of the Serbo-Croatian rivalry over the identity of the Bosnian Muslims has shown. Lebanon and Bosnia-Herzegovina are recognized states in which various communities coexist, but each community remains a minority. Consociational democracy has seemed to be the best solution to the problems of Lebanon and Bosnia. Nevertheless, it proved to be very difficult to build a democratic system based on consensus in these countries, probably because of their traditional political culture. The two

countries ultimately adopted different solutions. After fifteen years of civil war Arabism finally made its way into the Lebanese heart, and this serves now as a foundation for the renewed construction of a Lebanese nation state. By contrast, a typical Balkan nationalism led to the partition of Bosnia into three territorial and political entities – Serbian, Croatian and Bosnian Muslim. This situation differs from the one in Albania, where nationalism has seemingly eclipsed the religious division into a Muslim majority of 70 per cent and minorities of 20 per cent Christian Orthodox, and 10 per cent Catholics. Yet even in Albania there is a strong confusion in the national identity of part of the Greek Orthodox community.

A general conclusion that can be drawn from this section is that the nation state, as it stands today, can hardly serve as a framework for the accommodation of various religious minorities, and lead to their integration into a national society. The international community should consider establishing better political arrangements, on national and regional levels, which would provide possibilities for more participation of minorities in the political and economic life of national societies and world society. Today's nation state can be an element in this solution, but it cannot be the solution itself.

Demographic change and insecurity on the frontier

Many people interpret changes in population ratios between Christians and Muslims as a source of concern about societal security. They feel that their culture and identity come under threat when large numbers of 'others' enter their state. Such concerns refer to three levels of demographic dynamics: within a single country (e.g. Egypt, Lebanon, Serbia or France); in a particular region (the Middle East, the Balkans, Southeast Asia, etc.); or in the global migration movements between Muslim and Christian countries. Even if economic differences between countries and between regions remain a key reason for migration from the poor (Muslim) 'South' towards the affluent (Christian) 'North', conflict-stricken societies are, by and large, the greatest source of migrants. The large influx of Muslims from Bosnia, Kosovo, Algeria, and Iraqi Kurdistan to western Europe in the 1990s illustrated this point. Internal conflicts send out waves of refugees because of open warfare and discrimination against minorities, both of which create tension at a time when everyone is talking about individual and collective freedom.

In the age of nation states, most minorities in the zone of Christian–Muslim contact fear that they are subject to pressure for cultural assimilation. Alarming publications about the decline of Christian populations in the Middle East draw a gloomy picture of shifting population ratios in Egypt, Turkey, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and the holy cities of Palestine. Between 1946 and 1983, the Christian population in Nazareth fell from 60 per cent to 40 per cent, and in Bethlehem from 80 per cent to 33 per

cent. Christians in Jerusalem outnumbered Muslims in 1922, but they now make up only 2 per cent of the city's population. In the same period, the number of Christians in Turkey decreased from 2 million to only several thousands, and in Lebanon from over half the population in the 1930s to only about 30 per cent in 2000. Hilal Khashan points out that the Middle East's 12 million Christians, at the turn of the twenty-first century, 'will likely drop to 6 million in 2025. With time, Christians will effectively disappear from the region as a cultural and political force' (Editor's Introduction 2001: 3). This will not only cut short a millennia-old Christian presence in the region where the Christian religion was born, but it will also transform the countries of the area from societies of contact between Christianity and Islam into nation states with a culturally homogeneous population. This process was already completed in Turkey by the 1920s. The effect of the dramatic decline of the share of Arab Christians on the political relations of the Arab countries with the rest of the world, and on the choice between 'secularism' (as in Turkey) or Islamist militancy (as in other Muslim countries, such as Algeria or Saudi Arabia) is difficult to foresee.

The problem of changing population ratios was critical in the Balkan crises. Data on demographic changes in Serbia and Kosovo influenced public opinion, especially in Serbia, before the bloody conflicts in the 1990s (see Table 7.2). While the population of Serbia as a whole grew from 6 528 000 to 9 779 000 between 1948 and 1991, that of Kosovo, where the majority was Muslim Albanian, grew from 728 000 to 1 956 000. In the beginning of the 1990s Albanians accounted for more than 80 per cent of the total population growth rate in the former Yugoslavia, even if they constituted but a small portion of the population (Penev and Kuburovic 1998).

Population censuses took place every ten years, and their results worried Serbian nationalists. The Serbs felt that they had endured centuries of bitter oppression at the hand of (Turkish) Muslims and acquired their national independence and state territory with heavy sacrifices, and were not prepared to give away the sacred cradle of their people, Kosovo, to a rapidly growing Albanian Muslim population. Moreover, the Muslim Slavs in the Novi Pazar Sandjak province, shared by Serbia and Montenegro, also demonstrates a higher growth rate than Serbia proper – 1.5 per

Table 7.2 Population growth rates in Serbia

Period	*Serbia as a whole (%)*	*Serbia proper (%)*	*Kosovo (%)*
1948–1953	1.41	1.34	2.28
1981–1991	0.49	0.20	2.10

Source: Penev, G. and Kuburovic, A. (1998) 'Natural population movement', *Yugoslav Survey*, 39(1): 3–28.

cent per year since 1945. In the same line of reasoning, there is a curious distinction between reproductive patterns among Albanians in Kosovo and Albanians in the Albanian state. Families in Albania, especially in urban areas, typically have two children. In Kosovo and Macedonia, Albanian families are much more numerous. A teacher from Tirana told me once, 'Kosovar Albanians have many kids, because they feel at war with the Slavs'. Higher birth rates might have been perceived as a winning strategy, in the long run. Many Serbs see the Kosovo conflict along the same lines.

On a broader scale, many Europeans regard the contemporary demographic explosion in the Muslim world as a security threat. The differences in the figures in the left and the right columns of Tables 7.3 and 7.4 may lead to two different interpretations regarding Christian–Muslim relations. First, one may conclude that migration from the overcrowded and younger Muslim South to the richer and ageing Christian North is a

Table 7.3 Annual population growth differences across the Mediterranean frontier from 1975 to 2000

South		North	
Country	*Percentage*	*Country*	*Percentage*
Morocco	2.2	Great Britain	0.2
Algeria	2.5	France	0.5
Tunisia	2.0	Germany	0.2
Libya	3.1	Italy	0.1
Egypt	2.2	Spain	0.5
Turkey	2.0	Austria	0.3
Syria	3.1	Sweden	0.3
Saudi Arabia	4.1	Switzerland	0.5
UAE	6.6	Greece	0.6
Pakistan	2.8	United States	1.0

Source: UNDP (2002) *Human Development Report 2002: Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World*, New York: United Nations, pp. 162–5.

Table 7.4 Annual population growth differences across the Central Asian frontier from 1975 to 2000

South		*North*	
Country	*Percentage*	*Country*	*Percentage*
Uzbekistan	2.3	Russian Federation	0.3
Kyrgyzstan	1.6	Belarus	0.3
Tajikistan	2.3	Ukraine	0.0
Turkmenistan	2.5	Georgia	0.3
Azerbaijan	1.4	Armenia	1.2

Source: UNDP (2002) *Human Development Report 2002: Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World*, New York: United Nations, pp. 162–5.

normal phenomenon that keeps the balance – i.e. it keeps the economy in the North working and unemployment in the South low. The huge difference in incomes fosters this trend. This is the demographic factor in the push for globalization – the poor part of the world is getting younger and the richer part is getting older, and migration is a safety valve. Second, many people in the industrialized countries explain the same trend in terms of tension that can translate into conflict. Immigration can, arguably, represent a threat to their civilizational values and social and economic stability. In the Arab countries alone, the population rose from 100 million in 1965 to over 280 million in 2000. With the local economies in stagnation, the demographic expansion sends growing waves of emigrants to the north. The age structure of the population is another problem. In 1992, more than 45 per cent of the population of Arab countries was below the age of fifteen, creating problems for education and employment (Abdel Monem Said Ali 1996: 40). Migration has been one of the important points of discord in the Barcelona process, which is meant to promote cooperation and security in the Mediterranean. The European countries insist on adopting rules for 'orderly' migration, while their southern counterparts argue for guarantees for the rights of immigrants. Development assistance efforts by the European Union to the countries of the southern rim of the Mediterranean remain inadequate and, ironically, even engender the circumstances that fuel emigration. The economic push for emigration is thus irresistible. For the Arab countries, the importance of remittances from guest workers in the West to their families is second only to revenues from oil exports. In Morocco, for example, in 1990 such remittances reached $2 billion, while foreign direct investment amounted to only $165 million (White 1999: 841). In addition, as a result of the common agricultural policy of the European Union, agricultural production has increased in the European Union but fallen in the Maghreb countries since the 1980s as the direction of agricultural trade flows has changed.

Egypt's population exceeded 68 million people in 2001, up from 38.8 million in 1975, which was not so much above the figure of 30 million that specialists cite as the population of Egypt in 514 (Hollingsworth 1969: 311; UNDP Human Development Report 2002: 164). This means that the real population boom in Egypt has taken place during the last twenty-five years of the twentieth century, breaking a millennia-old pattern (see Figure 7.1). A new baby is born in Egypt every 23.5 seconds and, if the rate is maintained, the population figure of 67.9 million in 2000 will be doubled by 2029. Egypt might be a particular case, as a large Muslim Arab country, but it clearly indicates a general trend for the Muslim world.

Christian–Muslim relations in Southeast Asia bear noticeable similarities to those across the Mediterranean. Australia, the majority of whose population of 20 million belongs, in cultural, economic, and racial terms, to the Western world, feels uneasy about the demographic imbalance with

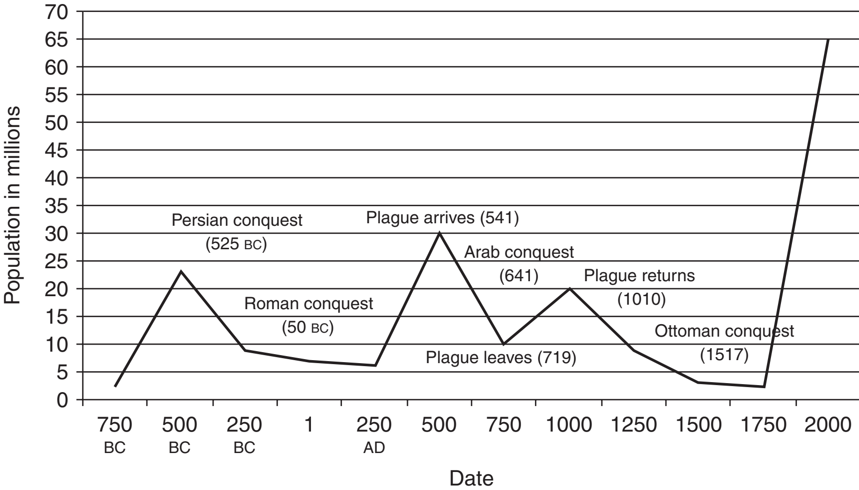


Figure 7.1 Breaking the pattern – the population of Egypt since antiquity.

Source: UNDP (2002) *Human Development Report 2002: Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World*, New York: United Nations, p. 164.

its two predominantly Muslim neighbours to the north: Indonesia (212m) and Malaysia (22m). The Australians feel nervous about their vast, scarcely populated territories adjacent to the Indonesian archipelago. This fear has become a key element in the government's strategies and popular attitudes to international relations and immigration policy. The huge difference in revenues also attracts immigrants from the north. In 2002 Australia was rated fifth on the UNDP Human Development Index (HDI), before the United States, Japan and Switzerland. It has an annual population growth rate of 1.3 per cent, while Malaysia (fifty-ninth on the HDI) has a population growth rate of 2.4 per cent, and Indonesia (110th on the HDI) a population growth rate of 1.8 per cent (UNDP 2002: 162–4).

In conclusion, the fear of population growth of 'the other' makes people strengthen their nation states, restrict immigration, and maltreat religious minorities. Serbs, Turks, Egyptians and Australians worry about the cultural homogeneity of their nation states. Strengthening the nation state alone can hardly solve the problem in the long run. Modernization and globalization increase migration as a balancing factor between regions with different demographic dynamics, while mutual suspicion strengthens the functional frontier between communities with different cultures. Once more, world society needs innovative arrangements to solve the problem internationally in a democratic way. The International Organization on Migration has recently started organizing regional con-

ferences on migration in the regions of Christian–Muslim contact, yet this is only a beginning.

The globalization of Islamist extremism

The following section looks at the evolution of the specific link between the nation state and terrorism, i.e. the evolution of confessionally motivated extremism, from a 'modern' struggle of a given community for political autonomy in a given territory to a 'postmodern' globalization of both terrorism and responses to it. In this sense, such organizations as Hamas, which considers itself part of the Palestinian national liberation movement, are essentially different from the al-Qaeda network, which embodies the conflictual aspect of the postmodern functional frontier in world society.

Classical terrorism associated itself with political struggle in a single state, with national liberation movements or leftist and rightist ideologies in a single country. Terrorists engaged in battle against an existing state structure in the search of creating another state structure. Christian nationalists in the Balkans who fought for independence in the nineteenth century, Armenian groups which time and again blew up the cars of Turkish diplomats, the Macedonian Slav who killed the Yugoslav King Alexander and French foreign minister Aristid Briand in 1934, the Jewish terrorists who planted bombs in British occupied Palestine, and the Kurdish guerrillas of Abdullah Öcalan – all of these rejected an existing state regime in the pursuit of another. As a continuation of internal politics by other means, traditional terrorism knew certain limits, and implied a form of dialogue between aggressor and victim. How can one expect, one day, to join the community of states (in the way the Palestinian Liberation Organization, the PLO, evolved into a Palestinian Authority under one and the same leader) if one does not recognize the system of nation states as a whole? The Islamic Hamas would probably have become simply the strongest opposition party integrated in the Palestinian polity, had it not been for the deterioration of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and the autocratization of the Yassir Arafat regime. Even if connected to radical Shiism internationally, the Lebanese Hizbullah always talked to journalists and politicians because, in the end, it saw itself as a partner to the other political parties in the Lebanese Republic.

The new form of terrorism heralded by the rise of al-Qaeda and the terrorist attacks around the world in 2000–2003 is an essentially different phenomenon. Transnational Islamic extremism poses a much larger threat to the international community. Not only does it seek to intimidate onlookers; it also wants to force the West to leave the Middle East. The new type of terrorist attacks touch upon the system of values created by the West and adopted by other countries. Terrorists want to reorganize the balance between Western and non-Western societies, as they believe it

is tipped to the side of the West. Consequently, the new terrorists direct their attack against the Western-dominated nation-state system, and offer in exchange simply the vague ideas of an international theocracy. They target the sense of exceptionalism in the United States – the conviction that the United States is superior in any sense – which has become the pillar of the unipolar world since 1989. The question is, to what extent has the new terrorism touched upon these values and structures?

At the end of the twentieth century, the phenomenon that François Heisbourg called 'hyperterrorism' grew beyond the limited nationalist basis of earlier terrorist acts into a global ideology and practice that has taken root in the postmodern, functional frontier. The creation of the al-Qaeda network by Usama bin Laden in 1998 demonstrated a new challenge to the nation-state system. Strobe Talbott, a US diplomat from the Clinton era, characterized al-Qaeda as a symbol of globalization – the ultimate non-governmental organization, a transnational actor empowered by the global revolution in communications, which pursued interests divorced from any national basis (Hirsh 2002: 32). The global network of Islamist political organizations shook the stability of international order, using millennia-old channels of Christian–Muslim relations, and also the myths and prejudices entangled in these relations. The 'nationally' organized Islamism, which had emerged out of the fight against existing state regimes in particular countries, has grown in scale and reach, lifting in the process the tacit taboo on mass destruction (Heisbourg 2001: 127). Al-Qaeda's leaders seek to destroy their enemies and defeat their system of values. In this situation the enemy also perceives just one reaction: total destruction of the terrorist. This is the vicious circle of the globalization of terror.

The mechanism of how al-Qaeda secretly organized its leadership and mobilized support remained an enigma. Before 2001, people like Usama bin Laden did not give significant signs of a possible grand-scale anti-Western thrust – probably because initially they had very narrow objectives, such as the liberation of Afghanistan. Many observers believe that a series of factors opened bin Laden's mind to a grander design, namely toppling corrupt rulers in the Muslim world, establishing Islamist regimes, and driving the influence of 'Christians and Jews' out of the region. A factor that prompted this transformation was his discontent with the deployment, in 1990–1991, and for the first time in history, of American troops in his holy place of origin – Saudi Arabia – under the pretext of protection against Saddam Hussein's aggressiveness. There were more than accusations of blasphemy in this. Bin Laden was deeply offended by those whom he saw as the corrupt rulers of his country. While he was fighting the Soviets in Afghanistan, a clique of decadent and corrupt cronies invited the American imperialist quietly to occupy his country: the country of the two Islamic Holy Places, Mecca and Medina. Americans had already been helping themselves to the Arabs' oil riches for decades, but

they had met firm rejection from the Saudis regarding establishing military bases in their kingdom. Now, the Iraqi threat gave the US an unprecedented opportunity to convince the Saudi elite, but not the Islamists. A second factor was the personal influence on bin Laden of the Egyptian Aiman Zawahiri, who developed his country's traditional religious zeal into a global ideology, using bin Laden's money. Paradoxically, the third element of the globalization of the terrorist movement was the effect of the rapid expansion of global communications and information technology. The new Islamists make use of global technologies, knowledge, communications and financial mechanisms, sometimes even better than do the 'legal' non-governmental organizations. Easily accessible means of transportation have made the terrorists very mobile, allowing them to hide with equal efficiency in the open societies of the West, in such 'black holes' as Somalia, Afghanistan, Chechnya, and Bosnia, and in any Third World country. The ability to maintain technically advanced communications among its different cells is the backbone of the global Islamist network. The Internet created a medium for the distribution of their message without nation-state control. Hizbullah has mastered the skill of marketing and promotion through its websites. We have still not fully realized the potential of terrorists to create havoc by genuine explosions in the channels of e-business and e-banking. Islamists have grown from passive to active users of modern communications. The foremost example is the perfect organization of the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001 by a group of disciplined airplane hijackers.

The Islamist movement started in Egypt, with the Muslim Brotherhood of Hassan al-Banna, in the 1930s, and made a spectacular advance, especially after 1970. It affected not only countries doomed by high population growth, poverty, and inequality, but also modernizing and rich states that could hope to achieve Western-style prosperity, such as Iran, Malaysia, Turkey, Algeria, and even Saudi Arabia, whose ruling elite declares itself the protector of global Islamic values. Radical Islamism used the unsettled political situation in such places as Afghanistan, Palestine, Central Asia, Chechnya, Somalia, the Southern Philippines, and Kashmir in order to establish bases for global action. In the contemporary deficit of ideologies, which can indicate directions for social organization, Islamists reach out and present new political strategies to the public. They offer ideas of how to resist the unjust global dominance of the West, which victimizes Muslims, and the corrupt secular regimes at home. Unlike the traditional fundamentalist *ulama,* the new radical Islamists offer a programme of political struggle, social revolution, and national liberation (as in Palestine, Chechnya and Bosnia). Such developed states as France have particular concerns about the Islamist threat. France is home to millions of Muslims, who make up 9 per cent of its population, and many of whom keep family ties in the former French colonies of North and sub-Saharan Africa. Algerian Islamist militants carried out attacks in France in the

1990s, and Islamist terrorists repeatedly hit French targets after September 2001. Eleven French military engineers were killed in Pakistan in May 2002, the French oil tanker *Limberg* was hit by a suicide attack off the coast of Yemen in October 2002, and in December 2002 police arrested suspected Islamic militants recruiting young French Muslims to al-Qaeda. Germany, Britain, the United States, and the other Western states witness increasing Islamist activism in their constantly growing Muslim immigrant communities, yet their responses to the terrorist menace increasingly diverge, underlining the lack of a coordinated strategy on how to deal with non-state threats in Christian–Muslim relations.

The financing of the global network of terror also comes from the channels of globalization – liberalized trade and financial services. The Islamists used these as a basis to create screen companies in trade, shipping, and finance, and to channel money for their subversive activities throughout the world. Hizbullah, for example, has business networks in Greece, Turkey and Cyprus. Trading companies, such as Impexor in Paris, have become a major supplier of arms to the Algerian Islamists. Al-Qaeda's attacks are financed by Islamic banks and non-governmental institutions, which were managing about 15 billion US dollars of Islamist money in 2001 (Heisbourg 2001: 139–41). Large freighter vessels, which belong to al-Qaeda's leaders and are difficult to track as they do not need to stop in ports for refuelling, operate to finance the organization, and can also be used for terror attacks (Vesely 2003). The system of Islamic solidarity and financial transactions called al-Baraka, the financial institution Dar al-Mal al-Islami, and the *zakat* principle in Islam (which requires each Muslim to pay 2.5 per cent of his income to the poor) have also served as instruments of financing the global extremist movement, often without the knowledge of the payer (as it happens in other processes of globalization).

The name of the global terrorist network, al-Qaeda, can be translated as 'the base'. It was meant to become a global platform (basis) on which all groups of Islamist extremists were to come together. Thus, in a perverse case of globalization, Islamism has also grown global. Documents found in Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban showed how far bin Laden had advanced in moulding Muslim militants from various countries into a global army targeting the West. Between the mid-1990s and 2001, young recruits belonging to different militant groups from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Yemen, Chechnya, Somalia, Libya, Sudan, Syria, Morocco, Algeria, Jordan, Turkey, Iraq, Kuwait, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrghyzstan, Turkmenistan, Bosnia, Bangladesh, China, Malaysia, the Philippines, Russia, Britain, Canada, and the United States joined al-Qaeda's international brigades in Afghanistan. They trained at camps in Afghanistan, which were run by their home organizations, yet all of them followed harmonized courses that combined religious indoctrination with intensive drilling for guerrilla warfare. At least three groups used the same Arabic-

language manual on terrorist warfare: al-Qaeda, the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, and the Pakistani Harkat al-Ansar (or Harkat al-Mujahedeen – the group that executed the American journalist Daniel Pearl). This 'Islamist international' used a combination of languages, including Urdu, Tajik, Dari, Pashto, Uzbek, Russian, and English, even if a key place was reserved for Arabic, the language of the Koran and of the Arab ideologues of al-Qaeda. Like any army, al-Qaeda's brigades built an *esprit de corps*. The base in Afghanistan, between 1996 and 2001, was the embodiment of bin Laden's vision of global *jihad*, which he put above the nation-state logic. Radical leaders and foot soldiers met there to network and bond, sharing ideas about their religious doctrine and the military tactics of the movement. Afghanistan under the Taliban provided shelter to the movement, as its structure was quite distinct from the nation-state model and allowed for the existence of a parallel, international, Islamist centre of power. Central to the message of al-Qaeda was the re-establishment of the caliphate, which symbolizes both the era of Islam's ascendancy and the idea of a universal theocratic Muslim state which rules across ethnic and racial borders. Bin Laden and his lieutenants see the caliphate as the only remedy to the quandaries of the Muslim world today: internal struggles, economic underdevelopment, and political dependence on oppressive regimes and the West.

The new wave of Islamism, in existence since 1979, has challenged the West in a number of ways. First, it has put in question the stability of Third World regimes that have become an integral part of the global market, such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Egypt. Second, much of the political rhetoric of the Islamist movement is saturated with anti-Western, anti-Christian, and xenophobic statements. This in turn leads communal relations into a vicious circle of intolerance on a global scale. On the other side of the divide, intolerance seemed, in 2002, to be the instant reaction of some of the most powerful world leaders to almost anything that they considered un-Western, un-Christian, and even unprofitable, and this bred even more resentment and radicalism. Third, Islamist ideology inevitably contains a social radicalism, which appeals to the masses but frightens the West and the conservative regimes in most Muslim countries. Islamism is a fairly modern phenomenon, which is both a religious reform movement and a political ideology, that includes a social element of protest by have-nots against an oppressive order (Zeidan 2002: 11). The 1979 Islamic Revolution in Iran, for example, had much in common with the other revolutions of the twentieth century: social unrest was the fruit of structural inconsistencies – notably, the unequal distribution of newly acquired wealth from oil exports. Arguably, the revolution started as a usual upheaval of social discontent, and obtained an Islamic form, leadership, and objectives only in the course of events, when the well-organized clergy jumped onto the running board of the chaotic revolt (Halliday 1996: 42–75). In general, examples of people joining forces with militant,

fundamentalist movements in order to raise their social lot are not limited to Islamism. This was the logic, for example, of recruiting fighters in the Christian militias in Lebanon and Bosnia.

The reaction of the West to the new terrorist challenge came quite late. The West was not prepared to face a non-conventional enemy that was so different from the hypothetical adversary – a state or a coalition of states – for whom defence strategies were developed. The threat to the international state order became clear on 11 September 2001, and the reaction of the United States and rest of the West was not only a military and political campaign to punish the perpetrators; there was also a major change ranging from the methods of intelligence gathering to military grand strategy, and even rejection of the role of the United Nations as the highest instance of international law. The rapid success of the military operation in Afghanistan in the fall of 2001 had to be completed with a broader and more important objective: breaking the international networks of terrorism. Yet this second goal still has to be realized. One of the main problems here is the already mentioned lack of clearly defined strategic objectives in the war against terrorism and the campaign against rogue states such as Iraq. Some of the promises made in the immediate aftermath of the 11 September attacks – for example, that the West would focus on development in order to fight the social causes of terrorism – were quickly forgotten. The idea of fighting inequality, underdevelopment, and discrimination – the primary causes of the psychology of confrontation – was never taken seriously. Responding to the enemy with force and securing economic interests remained a priority for some Western leaders. Even if smashing the regime of Sadam Hussein in Iraq, and the hardening of the position of the Israeli government towards the Palestinians, have no direct link to the global relations of Christianity and Islam, the fact is that they raise the sense of confrontation on both sides of the frontier. Russia's involvement added another element to the globalization of the response to terrorism. Its president, Vladimir Putin, was among the first world leaders who stated their readiness to support and cooperate with the United States in the fight against terrorism. He made anti-terrorist and anti-Islamist solidarity a priority in Russia's relations with the West. He quickly abandoned complaints about the 'hegemonic ambitions' of the United States in Central Asia, and urged his allies in the region to provide bases for the US troops to move on Afghanistan. Russia's willingness to block the creeping destabilization of its southern confines, largely populated by Muslims, urged it to turn towards cooperation with the West in this region, and to participate more actively in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

The functional frontier between Christians and Muslims, defined by what politicians say and by how people perceive themselves, exists beneath the surface of the international order of nation states. US subsidies for food prices in Pakistan in the fall of 2001, humanitarian aid to Afghani

civilians, personal visits by the US President and British Prime Minister to Islamic foundations and Muslim leaders, and support for establishing a Palestinian state (before attacking Iraq) had one objective: convincing the hundreds of millions of Muslims around the world that the US was not their enemy. This is a tactical weapon in the struggle against a nebulous enemy – Islamism. Washington has reconsidered its intelligence strategy by increasing operational activities in the field, where fundamentalists have established their hunting grounds. Yet one still has to see whether the new overall strategy will contribute to political reform in the Muslim countries where radicalism continues to grow. Despite the assurances of American and British leaders, some Muslims see the Western assaults on Afghanistan, Iraq, and terrorism as a war against Islam. Similarly, ordinary Americans look with suspicion at Muslims, whether living next door or on the other side of the world. When, after 11 September 2001, US politicians and military stood up to Islamist terrorism, they in fact stepped beyond the relationships with nation states and national politicians.

In most Muslim states that have emerged from the colonial era fractured both internally and internationally, the underlying political and social context is not reassuring. Impatient elites have initiated modernization programmes, disrupting millennia-old traditions. Unequal distribution of new wealth, coupled with corruption and incompetence, has shaken the foundations of the secular regimes. In Turkey, the rise of popular Islamism may have been much stronger had it not been for the reaction of the military. Yet the followers of Recep Erdogan in Turkey and Abdurrahman Wahid in Indonesia are moderate in comparison with Islamists in some Arab countries, as well as in Iran and Pakistan. Many people see the real cause of the current crisis between Islam and the West in the misery and humiliation of millions of Muslims in the Middle East, South Asia, and Africa at the hands of both corrupt regimes and foreign oppressors. Internal opposition in Saudi Arabia points to the paradoxically high external debt of this oil-rich state as the clearest sign of a rotten regime. Saudi Arabia's total external debt reached 22.2 per cent of its GDP in 1998 (15.7 per cent in 2000), despite the colossal oil revenue (ESCWA 2001: 144). Mismanagement, grave distortions in the distribution of national wealth, and a confusing relationship with Islamist forces around the world exposed the stability of the regime and its network of international alliances to a severe strain. It should not come as a surprise that Saudi opposition targets the ideological core of the regime – fundamentalist Islam – and raises its own version of fundamentalism in response. The stability of the Saudi regime, based on an odd combination of oil riches, pseudo-puritanism with reference to Islam, and a strategic relationship with the West, should not be taken for granted.

This situation gives rise to frustration and discontent among those in the Muslim world who think that America and the West arrogantly

support corrupt regimes, and strip their countries of precious natural resources in return. Toppling despotic governments at home is the primary objective of Islamist extremists. The true intention of attacking Westerners and the West is to inflame the 'Muslim street'. Egyptian Islamists kill foreign tourists at the most famous sites in the country – the Egyptian Museum, the pyramids, and the temple of Hatshepsut at Luxor – so as to discourage others from coming. The objective is to cut a major source of income for the regime in Cairo, thus leading to its subsequent economic collapse. The same objective led to the Islamist bombings of a historic synagogue in the Tunisian island of Jerba and of a nightclub on the Indonesian island of Bali in 2002, when nearly 200 Westerners were killed. The loss of millions of dollars of revenue from the drop in tourism hit the local Hindu workers, who were increasingly at odds with Indonesia's Muslims, but also the corrupt oligarchs, related to the toppled dictator Suharto, who had heavily invested in the tourism sector of Bali. These cases show the grains of unpredictable and uncontrollable popular movements of protest and ambitions for power beneath the Third World state structure. Extremism often emerges as a response to worsening economic conditions, when social tension translates easily into communal violence. This is the case of communal violence in Egypt and many other countries of Christian–Muslim contact, where the heterodox becomes the target of people's frustration with economic distress. The places of Christian–Muslim contact show Muslims just how poor and powerless they can be in comparison with rich Western visitors (businessmen, tourists, soldiers, and politicians), and provide a reservoir of potential recruits to Islamist movements – Afghanistan, southern Egypt, Algeria, Sudan, the southern Philippines and, recently, Saudi Arabia, with its imbalanced distribution of wealth, and where the declared Islamist values are in rampant contradiction to the practices of a decadent elite.

The roots of radical Islam in Turkey are also in the structural discrepancies in the distribution of new wealth. Islamic extremist organizations in Turkey, such as IBDA-C and the Turkish Hizbullah, rose from the unequal development among the various regions of the country. IBDA-C and Hizbullah are popular among new urban settlers in the industrialized areas of the Aegean and Marmara coasts. These migrants come from the poor central and eastern provinces of Turkey, and become disillusioned about the opportunities presented by industrial growth. IBDA-C, founded in 1989, carried out bombings in discos, bars, and churches in Istanbul: the symbols of decadent Western culture. The origins of Turkey's Hizbullah are not so clear. There is evidence that it was founded in collaboration with the military and security structures of the Turkish Republic to attack Kurds and leftists (Human Rights Watch 2000). As with many other Islamist movements, however, Turkey's Hizbullah soon spun out of control and allegedly started planning to overthrow the secular Turkish state. In early 2000 the government cracked down on this puppet organization,

which had either escaped from its control or had simply become redundant after the capture of the Kurdish leader Abdullah Öcalan.

The impact of security relations in the frontier zone on the rest of the world

For historical and psychological reasons, security relations in the zone of Christian–Muslim contact have a particular importance in the formation of public opinion and government strategies around the globe. Consequently, events in the region strongly affect world politics and security, in the way that Ariel Sharon's visit and the clashes in the old city of Jerusalem in September 2000 hardened Israeli and Palestinian positions in their conflict, provoked an unprecedented rise of religious extremism in the region, and inflamed public opinion around the world. This section illustrates the ways in which relations in the zone of contact send out waves that influence security in the rest of the world. One line of reasoning is that confessional and communal conflicts are more likely in the zone of conflict, which is a breeding ground for extremist movements. A second supposition is that the region lacks a clear security regime, and this has an impact on global instability. The psychological linkages of Muslims, Christians, and Jews around the world to the religious traditions of the Middle East are a channel of communication through which the complex relationships in the region affect relations in world society.

One of the interesting implications from the data in Table 7.1 concerns the attitude to security in several predominantly Christian countries – Cyprus, Greece, Croatia, and Bulgaria, to which one may easily add Serbia and Montenegro. In the 1990s, these countries spent a bigger portion of their GDP on the purchase of arms than did the large Western powers. This reflects the higher sensitivity to security in the mentality of the Balkan Christian nations. The same pattern exists in the predominantly Muslim states in the zone of contact, such as Albania, Jordan, and Egypt, which have for decades spent higher portions of their budgets on defence than have Muslim countries situated further from the frontier. Only after the Gulf War of 1990, and the rise of confrontation with Islamist opposition, did the states of the Gulf raise their defence spending to unprecedented levels. The recent history of the various areas of Christian–Muslim contact has been characterized by persistent violent conflicts, such as the implosion of the plural societies of Lebanon and Bosnia, the division of Cyprus, the separatist movements in Kosovo, Chechnya, Eritrea, southern Sudan, East Timor, and the southern Philippines, and the unprecedented rise of Islamist extremist movements. People look at these conflicts, and make conclusions about the global relations among civilizations.

Owing to these conflicts, there is a specific attitude to the zone of the frontier as a zone of trouble. Yet this zone is not homogeneous; it is a spectrum with various types of security arrangements. First, Greece and

Turkey are NATO members. Bulgaria and Romania have been allowed to join the Atlantic alliance, primarily because of the need of the United States for new allies in the war on terrorism. Yet the 2003 Iraqi crisis, in the heart of the zone of contact, has ironically created deep cracks in the edifice of the Atlantic alliance. Second, some Balkan and former Soviet countries participate in the Partnership for Peace initiative with NATO, without being its members. All of the Balkan countries have joined the OSCE, as a security regime based on norms and principles, and have been loosely linked for several years to the European security structure through the Stability Pact for Southeastern Europe. Third, there are multilateral structures of cooperation in some regions, such as the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) and 'the Barcelona process', which basically lack the norms that characterize an international regime (Youngs 1999; Guazzone 2000). The issues discussed at the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership meetings are diffused between economic, political, and social spheres, and security cooperation is not labelled as a priority. Fourth, there are strategic bilateral security arrangements between individual Western powers and individual countries in the zone of contact. Finally, the West has troubled relations with so-called 'rogue states' in the Christian–Muslim zone of contact. Paradoxically, trouble can become a useful commodity in grand politics, and thus afflict international stability. There are arguments, for example, that the United States has invented the image of Iraq as a 'threat' in order to trick the Saudis and other regimes of the region into allowing American troops to be stationed on their soil, for protection against Iraqi invasion. Saddam Hussein thus gave the pretext for the realization of an objective pursued in vain since World War II – to obtain permission from the most conservative Arab regimes to set up military bases on top of one of the world's most demanded assets – oil.

During the days of Israel's final retreat from South Lebanon in May 2000 I was in Beirut, and I asked an eminent personality, close to Prime Minister Selim al-Hos, whether Lebanon could build a new security arrangement for itself by establishing something of the kind of a Partnership for Peace agreement with the West. His answer was that such a scenario could never work because of inevitable opposition by Syria and some Lebanese politicians. Western security relations with important Muslim states beyond the Mediterranean, such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, or Indonesia, are bilateral and lack even the basic elements of a security regime, probably because of the historically fragmented international structure of the region. One also has to distinguish among at least three different levels of security, corresponding to states, communities, and fundamentalist movements, each of which has its own security priorities and dynamics. A notable example of the distinction between security of the state and security of society, from the experience of the Christian–Muslim frontier, is Turkey's relationship with the West. The Turkish state has been readily accepted as a partner to the West in NATO; yet on the level

of societal integration there is reluctance to accept the country as a European Union member, or to grant German (European) citizenship to Turkish *Gastarbeiters*.

Another channel through which global attention focuses on the Christian–Muslim frontier is the triangular relationship of power among Islam, Western, and Eastern Christianity in the areas of contact. The triple rivalry in the Black Sea and eastern Mediterranean persisted after the demise of the Ottoman, Austrian, and Russian Empires. The Turkish nation state, for example, continued to play the West against the Soviet Union after 1920. Atatürk signed a treaty of friendship with Lenin's Russia, and gained its active support, at the Lausanne conference in 1923. The Truman Doctrine in 1947 moved the United States into the position of the Western power in the triangle, a position once occupied successively by Austria, France and Britain. Turkey acquired a high strategic importance for the West during the Cold War. A series of secret agreements with the United States in the 1950s allowed the USA to establish an extensive military presence in Turkey. This relationship, however, was not free of tension. American criticism over the Cyprus issue since 1964, and the US arms embargo between 1974 and 1977, were accompanied by significant improvements in Ankara's relations with the USSR. The Soviet policy-makers, who pledged support for developing countries that championed 'nationalist' capitalism, provided 3.4 billion US dollars to Turkey between 1960 and 1990 – more than they gave to any other non-communist state, with the exceptions of India and Afghanistan (Sayigh and Shlaim 1997: 256–7). Only the advent to power of Turgut Özal's Motherland Party in Turkey in 1983 re-established a clear alignment with the United States and the West. The rise of 'moderate' Islamists in Turkish politics in 2002 led to Turkey's return to a more independent stance in the 2003 Iraq–US crisis.

Afghanistan, where the state began falling apart in the 1970s, was the locus of another triangular relationship with heavy consequences. Once a point of contact and rivalry between Russian and British imperialism in the Muslim world, Afghanistan revived, after 1979, the image of a triple struggle in the Muslim, Western and Eastern Christian triangle of powers. During the Soviet invasion, Islamist fighters, with assistance from the West, revitalized the concept of *jihad* as a weapon against the Soviet infidel. Islamist politics continued to plague the country even after the Soviets withdrew. In a spectacular twist of foreign policy, after 11 September 2001 President Putin became a key ally of the United States in their anti-terrorist battle, targeting the destruction of the Islamist regime in Afghanistan. In exchange, the West brushed away its criticism of Russian human rights abuse in the war against Islamist rebels in Chechnya. This triangular rivalry stretched throughout the southern confines of Russia. The United States supported the anti-Russian policy of Orthodox Georgia, while Russia backed the breakaway Georgian province of Abkhazia, half of

whose population is Muslim. In Central Asia, where Russia had complained for over a decade about American inroads into the new, independent republics, Russia's President Putin invited US troops to take on the terrorist threat.

Turmoil in the regions of Christian–Muslim contact is a serious concern not only for Europe, but also for the Muslim world. Islamist movements and certain governments consider conflicts involving Muslim minorities in the Balkans, the Middle East, and the former Soviet Union as part of their international political agenda, on which they have to act. The Islamist factor becomes a really important threat in situations where state and society have been destabilized (Fuller and Lesser 1995: 4). This has indeed been the case in Afghanistan, Somalia, and Lebanon, but also in Algeria and Iran. With the weakening of the Soviet-backed regimes in the Arab world, such countries as Saudi Arabia suddenly realized that the rise of anti-Western Islamist radicalism in their territory has become a major security challenge for them (Kechichian 1999: 233).

Finally, the idea that the Christian–Muslim frontier is a logical southern and southeastern limit of the European Union is another form of projecting local security relations into global politics. This is arguably a new frontier that 'is not a series of promises, but a series of problems' (Drevet 1986: 5). Paul Cornish and Geoffrey Edwards argue that as the European Union enlarges, it will increasingly enter into contact with what they call 'zones of intractable conflict' (Cornish and Edwards 2001). The cultural, economic and political rift across the Mediterranean will become more apparent, while the European Union remains closer to the image of a club of comfortably well-off developed states, rather than a security organization. In the future, Europe may have to accept certain risks and go for involvement in the 'zones of insecurity' rather than occasionally acting as an external peace-enforcer. This is the essence of Europe's dilemma with regard to its Muslim neighbour – a dilemma demonstrated at the summit on enlargement in December 2002 in Copenhagen, when Europe stood before the question of whether to accept the predominantly Muslim Turkey as its member, and transform it into a barrier against Middle Eastern insecurity, or simply put the frontier before it. Europe could make Turkey its shop window and example for the Muslim world, or reject it under the pretext of its poor human rights record, its un-European political behaviour, and its serious problem with poverty. These problems are augmented by Turkey's high rate of population growth. The country had 40 million inhabitants in 1975; this grew to 67 million in 2000, and is expected to become 79 million in 2015 (UNDP 2002). In December 2002, allowing Turkey to join the European Union would have meant not only an addition of one more country; the 70 million Turks, almost entirely Muslim, will significantly alter the structure of the population in the European Union. For Europe, Turkey's accession would have meant internalizing the frontier with Islam. Some

argued that this would have been a good option, allowing the Europeans to keep the potential of Islamist extremism under control. Using this argument, Turkey stepped up pressure on the European countries to admit her. By contrast, most Europeans felt that if Turkey could threaten to switch to Islamist politics even before entering, it could use this weapon much more effectively when inside the Union. Hence Europe rejected the Turkish bid in December 2002, risking the strengthening of the image of a civilizational divide.

The structure of the first wave of expansion of the European Union, to the east and south, emphasized once again the cleavage between Europe and the Muslim 'other': three small states with Christian heritage – Malta, Cyprus and Slovenia – were invited to join the Union in 2004, Orthodox Bulgaria and Romania will have to wait, while Muslim Turkey was kept out. Four other Balkan states, which have not even been considered for accession – Albania, Serbia and Montenegro, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina – lie close to the southern frontier of the European Union. They are deeply marked by their communist past and the wars for the Yugoslav succession; the major reasons for their lack of integration with Europe. The trends of the frontier, however, are also evident here. Albania is following in the path of Turkey: predominantly Muslim in population, having undergone a rigid secularization, it has become a strategic partner of the United States in a troubled region. Between 1999 and 2003, the rump Yugoslav federation (Serbia and Montenegro) demonstrated the ambiguity of the old Yugoslavia: a conglomerate of confessional groups, torn between East and West, between a self-confident anti-Western Serbia and a weaker pro-Western Montenegro. As a rule, Europe's regions and countries neighbouring the Muslim world – Greece, Spain, Portugal, and southern Italy, but also the candidates Bulgaria and Romania – are less developed than the rest of Europe. All these states and regions are recipients of European aid, and have centuries of difficult relations with Islamic powers. Given their historical background, it should not come as a surprise that, in the United Nations, Spain, Bulgaria, Portugal, Romania, and Italy backed the bellicose stand of the United States and Great Britain in the standoff against Iraq in 2003, while popular opinion in Europe stood firmly against war with Iraq. Largely because of their propensity for conflict, the countries of the Christian–Muslim zone of conflict are still looked down upon as 'the other' even by their co-religionists.

I will conclude this chapter by stressing that the nation state remains the key element in the world security order (re-establishing the stability of the nation-state system remains the best remedy to trouble in international security at present), yet the nation state should not be taken as the only rule in the structure of world society. Two major points emerge from this chapter. First, the understanding of international security at the Christian–Muslim frontier should not be limited to relations among

states, but should also look at large, non-state, political actors and relationships. There is a civilizational bias in security relations across the frontier – in the definition of allies, opponents, and strategic goals – and the importance of this tendency has risen since the end of the Cold War. The psychology of the Christian–Muslim frontier has clear implications for the way security planners shape national strategies and international alliances. The loss of the clarity of the Cold War structure and the rise of Islamism on the scene of global politics have accentuated the problem. The terrorist attacks in September 2001 shook the foundations of the global system of nation states, and the restoration of the stability of this system became a primary objective of statesmen around the world, sometimes at the expense of democratic and human rights. Yet the West found it difficult to define its strategy in its response to terrorism. The lack of a clearly defined strategic objective of the United States in the 'war on terrorism' revealed a weakness of the superpower. Even what could have been seen as the logical goal – restoration of stability in the global system of nation states – was not adopted and followed in a clear way. Building nation states, as partners one could deal with in the Balkans, Afghanistan, Central Asia, the Caucasus, Lebanon, and Iraq, was a necessary but never officially recognized and pursued task.

The second point is that 'soft' issues in international security (threats to identity, culture, societal values, etc.), to which the Christian–Muslim frontier is related, have to be considered very seriously if people really want to address the deeper causes of conflict and confrontation in the contemporary world. Violent conflicts between minorities and majorities, which threaten the stability of states, as well as popular fears from demographic explosions and mass waves of alien immigrants, stem from fears that 'the other' threatens one's identity, social values, and security. The fragmented identities in the zone of contact, which we have seen in the historical chapters, weaken the system of nation states in the zone of Christian–Muslim contact. There are important psychological links within the global Christian and Muslim communities, and these are major channels of communication in world society. It is through these channels of communication that the globalizing relationship between Christianity and Islam focuses on instances of violent conflict, and especially on events in the Middle East – the historical heart of the frontier, and a cradle of the three global monotheist religions. The expansion of modern means of communication made the problems in the Christian–Muslim frontier a tangible reality for millions of people. The new means of information brought not only a sense of civil society, democracy, and transparency into the Arab world, but also images of suffering in Palestine, and of humiliating acts committed by the West, into everyone's home. These images increased the feeling of distinction, if not hatred, for 'the other'. Finally, security relations in the contemporary era, including those between Christianity and Islam, are dynamic, constructed under the influence of very dynamic eco-

nomic, political and other factors. The events of September 2001 have shown that the alternative between violent conflict and cooperation in these relations is open. It depends on how people with power will construct these relationships. What is changing is the nature of power in the postmodern world, and its new, functional frontiers. In the next chapter, we will turn to the last element in the description of the frontier – its economic dimension.

8 The economic dimension of the frontier

So far we have looked at the construction of the Christian–Muslim frontier in the history of political organization, in people's minds and in security relations among nations and communities. What about the economic aspects of relations between Christians and Muslims? Do people construct the civilizational frontier in their economic relations as well? The preceding chapters have focused on the concept of the civilizational frontier between Christianity and Islam in terms of theorizing identity and cultural relations. There is another argument, however, which regards communal conflict as the fruit of rational-choice behaviour of communal elites. They use the rhetoric of opposition among civilizations in order to mobilize their communities for political action and advance their egoistic, material objectives (Arfi 1998: 153–8). The following chapter examines these economic ramifications of the relations between the two cultural complexes focusing on two basic themes. First, the different economic performances of the countries of the two cultural complexes are a factor that nourishes the idea of confrontation among civilizations. The second theme is the role of the exclusive behaviour of interest-based, rent-seeking coalitions in strengthening the confrontational image of the frontier. These groups have a vested interest in keeping the political entities of the zone of contact small, easy to manipulate, and easy to profit from. Such behaviour reinforces the political and social fragmentation of the zone of contact, and it largely defines the economic dimension of the zone of the Christian–Muslim frontier.

Macroeconomic disparity across the frontier

The data on the economic and social performance of the countries of the Christian–Muslim zone of contact seem to indicate a striking relationship to their cultural background. Selected indicators of the Human Development Index (HDI) of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP 2002), which are displayed in Table 8.1, point to such a relationship. The countries in the table are clearly clustered in several groups: developed countries in the European Union and the United States, which

Table 8.1 Rating countries in the zone of contact according to the UNDP Human Development Index (HDI) 2002

2002 HDI ranking	*GDP in billions of US dollars*	*Per capita GDP in purchasing power parity (PPP) US$*	*External debt as % of GDP (1997)*	*Annual population growth rate (1975–2000)*	*1995 current account balance in millions of US dollars*
1 Developed states in the West ('high human development')					
6 United States	9837.4	34 142	–	1.0	−148 230
12 France	1294.2	24 223	–	0.5	−16 443
13 United Kingdom	1414.6	23 509	–	0.2	−4632
17 Germany	1873.0	25 103	–	0.2	−20 976
24 Greece	112.6	16 501	–	0.6	−2864
26 Cyprus	8.7	20 824	–	1.0	−213
2 Catholic states of the frontier zone ('high human development')					
29 Slovenia	18.1	17 367	26.0	0.5	−37
35 Hungary	45.6	12 416	55.0	−0.2	−2535
48 Croatia	19.0	8091	35.2	0.4	−1712
3 Christian Orthodox states of the frontier zone ('medium human development')					
60 Russia	251.1	8377	28.7	0.3	11 288
62 Bulgaria	12.0	5710	101.3	−0.4	334
63 Romania	36.7	6423	30.2	0.2	−1636
65 Macedonia	3.6	5086	70.8	0.8	
4 Predominantly Muslim states in the historical zone of contact and predominantly Christian states in Asia** ('medium human development')*					
71 Saudi Arabia*	173.3	11 367	13.5	4.1	−8108
75 Lebanon**	16.5	4308	32.8	0.9	
76 Armenia**	1.9	2559	38.0	1.2	−279
77 Philippines**	74.7	3971	53.0	2.4	−19 800
79 Kazakhstan*	18.2	5871	19.5	0.5	
81 Georgia**	3.0	2664	27.4	0.3	
85 Turkey*	199.9	6974	47.1	2.0	−2339
92 Albania*	3.8	3506	28.1	1.1	−12
5 Predominantly Muslim states of Asia and North Africa ('medium human development')					
95 Uzbekistan	7.7	2441	11.2	2.3	
97 Tunisia	19.5	6363	62.8	2.0	−737
98 Iran	104.9	5884	9.6	3.0	
99 Jordan	8.3	3966	121.0	3.7	
110 Indonesia	153.3	3043	65.3	1.8	−7023
115 Egypt	98.7	3635	39.0	2.2	−254
123 Morocco	33.3	3546	59.5	2.2	−1521
6 Mixed societies in Africa ('low human development')					
139 Sudan	11.5	1797	182.4	2.5	−500
148 Nigeria	41.1	896	75.6	2.9	
157 Eritrea	0.6	837	9.1	2.2	
168 Ethiopia	6.4	668	159.0	2.6	−28

Sources: United Nations Development Programme 2001: 141–200.
United Nations Development Programme (2002) *Human Development Report 2002: Decaying Democracy in a Fragmented World*, New York: United Nations, pp. 190–1.
United Nations Economic and Social Council (1999) *World Economic and Social Survey 1999: Trends and Policies in the World Economy*, New York: United Nations, pp. 261–94.

are hosts to important Muslim communities; Catholic and Orthodox Christian countries in the historical zone of contact; mixed societies in the zone of contact and Muslim states of Asia and North Africa; and mixed societies in Africa. These groups are clustered around two poles, associated to the two civilizational complexes, and the states of the zone of contact are situated between them. The data in Table 8.1 is based on the 2002 issue of the UNDP *Human Development Report*, yet an analysis of the Human Development Index since the mid-1990s has shown no major changes in the configuration of the table – the indicated ratings and groups have remained practically the same. Moreover, the data regarding per capita GDP and the external debt burden of the countries in the various groups closely follow the trend indicated by the Human Development Index of the UNDP.

For various historical reasons, the countries in the two large cultural complexes, Christianity and Islam, have reached different levels of economic development. Cultural difference alone did not determine the difference in economic performance and thus in the wealth of nations, something that even Max Weber has clearly pointed out in his works on economic performance and social ethics determined by religion. Cultural difference only acted as a long-term catalyst for major socio-economic processes that developed in distinct cultural complexes. It is wrong to attribute the slower economic progress of Muslim countries and the lack of adequate social progress of most Muslim immigrants to the West only to their religion. However, it would be odd if Islam had nothing to do with it either. The existence of a disparity in the economic performance today between the two groups of states and communities gives a strong impetus to the opposition between civilizations.

The major macroeconomic indicators of the relations across the Mediterranean demonstrate a disparity in factor endowment. In terms of energy, Europe remains dependent on imports from the Muslim countries, while the Middle East has developed a strategic dependency on its own exports of oil and gas. In the opposite direction, the transfer of technological and consumer products has also created a relationship of dependency. One of the catastrophic scenarios for international security planners depicts an explosion of this relationship. It would include a rise of political, economic and social problems, leading to an upsurge of fundamentalist activities in the Middle East. This would trigger a drop in oil exports, in foreign investment, and a consequent vicious circle of social unrest, the collapse of secular regimes, and economic pressure on millions of people to emigrate to the West, which is particularly reluctant to accept them (Cordesman 1999: 2–3).

Extremism in Christian–Muslim relations has tangible economic consequences. The terrorist attacks that rocked America on 11 September 2001 have also shaken the world economy. The immediate economic effect included financial losses of more than $16 billion for businesses and

the government, $11 billion in rescue and clean-up, and countless billions of dollars for increased security in the United States and other countries. In just the United States, companies spent about $40 billion on security during the first year after the attacks (Foroohar 2002: 44). The significant drop in consumer confidence in the United States in September 2001 clearly demonstrated the importance of political events linked to global Christian–Muslim relations for economic behaviour and growth. Consumer confidence in the United States grew by 40 per cent from 1985 to mid-2000, and was still 14 per cent above the 1985 average in August 2001. Yet in October 2001 this indicator was just 85 per cent of the 1985 average, and stayed at that level for many months. In Europe the drop was less evident but still present – at the end of 2001, consumer confidence was 10 per cent lower than the level at the beginning of that year.

The negative effect on trade flows, global productivity levels and global economic growth seems to be much more important and spread over a long period of time. World trade, which grew by 12 per cent in 2000, was flat in 2001 and rose by a mere 2 per cent in 2002. Of course, the signs had been there before September 2001, yet the blow critically contributed to the crisis. The heightened security environment in international trade raises the risk of new barriers to trade and discrimination. The US Container Security Initiative, for example, is expected to hit mainly the weaker players in international trade, such as the less developed countries and small and medium-sized enterprises. This initiative requires exporters to the United States from around the world to comply with US container security standards and checks before shipping the containers to the United States. Goods from 'safe' large ports will be fast-tracked into America, and smaller ports and weaker players will lose trade and the revenue from it.

The former Yugoslavia represented another case of durable group inequality, especially in the decade preceding its violent dissolution. This is clearly illustrated by the spectacular differences in income among the various religious and ethnic groups. Yugoslavia, a state that exemplified the Christian–Muslim frontier in the modern age, demonstrated a sharp discrepancy among groups and regions with different traditional cultures. Illustrating a clear split among the three basic religions in Yugoslavia, the per capita national income (in Yugoslav dinars) in 1981 was distributed very unequally (see Table 8.2).

The spiritual divide between the Christian and Muslim worlds is often seen as a factor reinforcing the psychological division between the rich North and the poor South. No matter how irrational it may seem, this factor still represents a serious security risk for world society. In the autumn of 1997, at the height of the Asian financial crisis, Mohathir bin Mohamed, Prime Minister of Malaysia (the predominantly Muslim country that had done best without oil exports) blamed the West and the billionaire of Jewish origin, George Soros, for the temporary misfortunes of the Malaysian economy. 'We are Muslims', and they 'are not happy to

Table 8.2 Income of the various communities in the former Yugoslavia in 1981

Ethnic and national groups	*Average per capita national income for Yugoslavia in dinars*	*Percentage of average for Yugoslavia*	*Predominant confessional identity*
Slovenes	158 353	177.0	
Hungarians	117 913	131.8	
Yugoslavs[a]	110 861	123.9	Catholic Christians
Poles	106 507	119.0	
Croats	105 316	117.7	
Serbs	85 071	95.1	
Montenegrins	80 745	90.3	Orthodox Christians
Roma[b]	67 654	75.6	
Macedonians	63 448	70.9	
Bosnian Muslim Slavs	60 236	67.3	Muslims
Albanians	34 099	38.1	

Source: Mertus J. (1998) *Kosovo: How Myths and Truths Started a War*, Berkeley: University of California Press, p. 24.

Notes

a Citizens of all groups of Yugoslavia were encouraged to identify themselves as Yugoslavs. Among the few who did so were mostly members of the Communist nomenclature. This fact explains why this multi-ethnic group (the only exception to the correlation religion–income level illustrated by the table) had a relatively very high level of income.

b The Roma were the other ethnic group spread around all republics. Although not very religious, among the members of this group there were adherents to all religions represented in Yugoslavia, but mostly Islam and Orthodox Christianity.

see Muslims making progress' (Riès 1998: 112–13). Leaders both in the West and in the East need a scapegoat to blame when things go wrong, including the state of their economy. The usual suspect when addressing an audience of fellow members of a community is 'the other'.

Nevertheless, macroeconomic data alone can explain neither the distinctive characteristics of the Christian–Muslim zone of contact nor the communal conflicts there. It is more important to identify the sources of this distinctiveness in the microeconomic behaviour of various actors. Maxime Rodinson (1966), for example, has argued that capitalism has its place in Islamic countries and societies in the same way as in other societies in the modern age, but this place has traditionally been related to trade and not to production. Indeed, the number of university graduates in the Arab countries has grown from several thousand in the 1950s to 1.6 million now, but most of them have sought careers in economics (trade) or the public sector (Abdel Monem Said Ali 1996: 40). Moreover, clear efforts will be needed in all countries of the zone of contact in order to redirect the use of education for productive activities and away from activities seeking rents for groups of people endowed with power. The next section looks exactly into this specific trait of the zone of contact: the abundant 'national' distributional coalitions, which are closely related to the social and political fragmentation of the zone of the frontier.

Distributional coalitions – a specificity of the frontier zone

Special interest groups that use nationalist or confessional rhetoric in order to establish control over small and isolated political entities are abundant in the zone of Christian–Muslim contact. Small and isolated, independent political units are easier to milk. Mancur Olson points out that there are substantial differences among nations regarding the extent to which such interest-based groups are established and operate in society (Olson 1982: 35). Strong special interest groups in the eastern Mediterranean have always appeared in the shadow of one or another structure of political power, and this feature is often attributed to the bureaucratic traditions of the Byzantine and Ottoman past. I would like to emphasize here the importance of the linkage between special interest groups and the traditional fragmentation of the zone of the frontier between Christianity and Islam. Small groups of people have always employed nationalist or religious slogans in order to get hold of political power and use it to obtain material gains for themselves. This feature is not unique to the region, yet the social value attributed to such behaviour is disproportionately high here. Consequently, people pay more attention to distinctions from 'the other'.

Political entrepreneurs often make use of the specific group identity of their communities in order to secure control over political power and, consequently, to redistribute the income of their societies. The traditional loyalty of the individual to his social corporation was preserved in various forms in the region, and gave impetus to the emergence of special interest groups. Gertjan Dijkink writes about the origins of this phenomenon in Serbia: 'besides the attitudes of civil defence (militias) that stem from the anti-Turkish resistance, a certain warlordism with its organization into clans, leadership aiming at personal enrichment, could have been passed down to the society of the newly independent Serbia in 1839' (Dijkink 1996: 115). Traditional social structures, such as the patron–client chains in Lebanon, political parties of the type of the communist parties in the Balkans, and the baathist parties in Syria and Iraq, as well as various social institutions with limited access for members of one or another community, have played an important role in the distribution and redistribution of national income in the area. Even following the end of communism, the loyalty of civil servants to one another still reflects a deeply embedded social practice that nourishes corruption in the economic relationship between the state and the private sector. According to a recent study on Bulgaria, civil servants at the country's finance ministry believe that it is normal to protect their colleagues in the highly corrupt customs offices instead of launching an anti-corruption campaign (Rose-Ackerman 1999: 107, 113). Olson's theory about special interest group formation reflects evidence from economically developed democracies. Yet this theory has important implications for other countries, and has specific validity in the zone of the Christian–Muslim frontier.

The activities of special interest groups, which lobby for the redistribution of the social product to their benefit, carry a significant cost for society. This cost varies from country to country and from region to region. Special interest groups lay claim to disproportionately large shares of the social pie when they become strong and organized enough to undertake collective political action. They occupy influential positions in society, but then re-distribute the national income among their members instead of for the public good. The ability of such distributional coalitions to monopolize power, to create barriers to entry into their markets and social institutions and, consequently, to prevent innovations causes a dynamic inefficiency which slows down economic growth. Indeed, the distributional coalitions that control economic activity in the countries of the Christian–Muslim zone of contact through bureaucratic political organization incur a serious cost to society.

The departmentalization of the area of the Christian–Muslim frontier into local political entities that seek self-sufficiency is a key feature of social organization. In each country strong local-interest based groups seek control over the economic activities of their society, while trumpeting some kind of small-scale 'patriotism'. This is a mechanism of the 'balkanization of markets' (Eaton and Lipsey 1997: xv-xvi), when economic agents are interested in limiting or sealing off access to domestic markets and creating a patchwork of independent political and economic units. One of the implications is that they seek profits from trade with richer and developed but distant economies, while neglecting benefits from integration with the neighbours. Competition among the Balkan states for Western or Russian investments, trade and infrastructure projects, often denying access to them to their neighbours, is commonplace. This mentality is detrimental to any sense of regionalism, and to the social development of these countries. Regionalism, defined as interrelation and integration among a subset of nations, and based on preferential trade and other economic agreements, is generally a second-best choice for economic agents. It needs a conscious effort if it has to be realized (Bhagwati 1997: 163). If political and economic elites do not have the will for regional integration, as in the Balkans and the eastern Mediterranean, and even promote policies that hamper it, the result is a huge loss in social wealth, and continuous division. The region has witnessed for more than a century the creation of additional barriers to trade and transportation, which are caused by the 'balkanization of markets'. Relatively small countries are cut away from their neighbours as a result of the activities of distributional coalitions, which twist the notion of national interests to their own benefit. The rigid fragmentation of the zone of Christian–Muslim contact and the utilization of this fact by local distributional coalitions seriously hamper the possibility of making this frontier zone a region of dynamic development.

Mancur Olson argues that nations witness the reduced lobbying activi-

ties of distributional coalitions and faster development in two cases. The first case refers to sometimes unconscious but always violent processes of social unrest. Revolutions, foreign occupation, and other sources of general disturbance of established social relations tend to wipe out existing distributional coalitions that have grown in numbers and influence in society during a time of peace. The violent elimination of distributional coalitions creates a basis for fast economic growth, as in the case of Japan or Germany after World War II. By contrast, the growth of distributional coalitions (ranging from professional associations to clubs for sports and pastimes with limited access), accompanied by a strengthening taste for leisure activities were the reasons, in Olson's view, for the decline of British power. Second, there can be a subjective will among the established elites and even in the special interest groups (industrialists or trade unions) to abandon the opportunity for redistributing national income in the name of achieving a higher growth rate for society as a whole. This might have been the case in such countries as Sweden and Switzerland, which have witnessed long periods of peace, but there the constitutional and social systems have limited the possibility of special interest groups passing legislation to the detriment of the interests of society. The idea is to construct social and economic relations that exclude the possibility of redistributing the social product in an egoistic manner. In the United States, distributional coalitions did not prevent a remarkable economic growth for several reasons. First, growth in the US has occurred over a long period of time – much longer than in Iran, Algeria, Turkey or Malaysia, for example. Second, it needed a relatively long time to organize the mass of immigrant workers. Thirdly, industrialization in the US was carried out in the most egalitarian society at the time. Durable inequalities appeared later, and actually became a retardant to growth in an already rich society.

The communist countries in the Balkans demonstrated high growth rates immediately after World War II, with Albania holding the lead with impressive figures. Yet the boom slowed down when the Soviet-sponsored party nomenklatura, which benefited from very exclusive rules of membership in the Communist Party, firmly established itself. As a result, the countries in the area demonstrated much lower growth rates in the later decades of the short-lived communist era. In some countries of central Europe, the fall of communism played the role of the Olsonian revolution in the sense mentioned above. Yet no such revolutions took place in the Balkans and many countries of the former Soviet Union, where the communist nomenklatura and secret services managed to retain power by winning the first free elections (Romania and Bulgaria) or adopting a staunchly nationalist rhetoric and practice (all over the former Yugoslavia, in the Caucasus, and other areas). The nomenklatura and the former secret services transformed their political power into an economic one without constraint. Obviously, the specific political culture of the zone of

Christian–Muslim contact, or zone of post-Ottoman societies, as described in one of the previous chapters, played an important role in this process. The traditionally strong link between political position and relations in government, and access to profitable economic activity and gains from it, date back to the Ottoman period. One of the reasons for the inability of the Balkan countries to transform and demonstrate higher growth after the fall of communism in 1989 was the preservation of the old special interest groups, which were often merely inherited from the communist period. Certain groups within the nomenklatura, such as officers in the security services or high-level party officials, their children and relatives, reorganized with a view to monopolizing access to the new private economy and to profitable links with the West.

One of the illustrations of the unusual strength of distributional coalitions is the higher concentration of population and economic activity in capital cities, close to the centres of power. This underlines the link between political power and the economic prospects of the individual. The population of the capital of Bulgaria, Sofia, grew between 1945 and 1989 from 436 623 to 1 120 925, while the overall population of the country increased only from 7 million to 9 million people. The population of the Romanian capital increased from 1 041 807, which was already a large figure, to 1 807 239 for a total population growth from 15.9 million to 21.5 million. The population of the Albanian capital Tirana quadrupled, growing from 50 950 to 238 057. The most spectacular expansion was demonstrated in Belgrade, from 365 766 to 1 087 915 between 1945 and 1984, while the population of Yugoslavia increased just from 15.8 million to 22.4 million. Cairo is another notable example. Its population grew from 2 million in 1947 to 6 789 500 in 1996 (11 per cent of the total population of Egypt), to a large extent due to the centralization policy started by President Gamal Abdul Nasser in the 1950s and 1960s. The regime obliged people to travel thousands of kilometres from their native provinces to Cairo for routine bureaucratic services, such as getting a passport to go abroad. This practice is still in place in the beginning of the twenty-first century. Athens also showed a high population growth, mainly because of migration from the provinces and the islands to the capital city and its port, Piraeus, between 1945 and 1955. Yet this tendency was reversed after the accession to the European Community, which brought to Greece its regional development programmes and funding. As a matter of comparison, one might note that such European capital cities as Stockholm had hardly any population increase between 1945 and 1989, and even Prague's growth in the communist era was much less significant than that of the capital cities in the zone of contact (Goyer and Draaijer 1992: 500–5). It is true that some other capital cities in southern Europe, such as Madrid and Rome, demonstrated high growth, but this may also be explained by the specifics of Mediterranean culture.

Conclusion

In the late 1990s, when I started my research on the Christian–Muslim frontier as an element of global social order, the idea sounded attractive to those who were already prepared to listen. Yet, as with the PhD thesis of a friend of mine, written on the political role of Islam in Afghanistan, my work evoked the smiles of my international economist colleagues. At the time that I finished this book, in January 2003, the World Economic Forum in Davos was focusing for a second consecutive time almost exclusively on the war on (Islamist) terrorism, and on the US plans to attack Iraq. Many things changed in the global relations between Christianity and Islam between 1999 and 2003. As in 1990, the 2003 US-led war against Iraq was a central event in the world. Yet, in this second event, the possible reaction of Islamists was a key variable in the plans and conduct of the war. There were many warnings that Islamic extremists would exploit the assault on Baghdad to attract followers and step up the resistance against humiliating Western interferences in the Muslim world. Indeed, the founding statement of the international Islamist organization, al-Qaeda, emphasized the significance of the West's confrontation with Iraq. Allegedly, it showed Washington's strategic ambition – to occupy the Arab and Muslim countries, and lay its hands on their oil reserves. The tensions of the first years of the twenty-first century are likely to have repercussions on relations in global society for at least a generation. The references to religion, used by both the US and the Iraqi leaders, implicated the Christian–Muslim frontier in the 2003 Gulf War. The George W. Bush administration clearly linked its attack on Iraq with its response to the Islamist terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, thus giving the war against a dictatorial but secular regime a strong confessional flavour.

The acts and words of top politicians have had strong implications for Christian–Muslim relations since September 2001, and this is the most convincing illustration of the argument presented in this book – that these relations are socially constructed, and people can influence them. The question is in what direction – towards conflict or cooperation? Political leaders of empires, nations states and communal militias have always used conflicts involving Christians and Muslims in order to strengthen

their grip on political power. Yet history has shown that conflict is not inevitable, and that Christians and Muslims can find ways and institutions of accommodation. We live in an age when building political institutions that accommodate different identities is becoming a global undertaking. Obviously, leadership is needed in this exercise. However, since the dawn of civilization, leadership has been a give-and-take relationship. Unilateral actions, as in the 2003 attack on Saddam Hussein's Iraq, raise serious questions about the ability of anyone, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, to provide leadership in the difficult process of accommodating Christians and Muslims on a global scale. At least three large cracks appeared in the 2003 Iraq crisis: between the Arab and the Anglo-Saxon world; within the European Union; and between Europe and the United States. The best way to heal the first and deepest of these cracks is to find a solution to the Palestinian problem.

In this book, I have briefly illustrated the history of the construction of the Christian–Muslim frontier – first in the movement of the imperial borders from Mecca to Vienna, then in the colonial empires in Asia and Africa, and lastly in the interspersing of communities in the contemporary world. Why do people build, in their minds and in practice, the Christian–Muslim frontier? This book's answer is that people create civilizational frontiers because they need a structure for their social relations. In order to understand the civilizational frontier, one needs to turn to 'the identification of group interests and "extra-rational" – that is, social and moral rather than material – motivations' for collective action (Fiorini 2000: 18). The civilizational frontier between Christianity and Islam exists because people use it as a necessary element in their sense of orderliness. For thirteen centuries the frontier has been the cornerstone of political identity and international order in a chain of multi-ethnic empires in the Mediterranean and eastern Europe. It has been a reference through which people define the cultural and spiritual limits of their specific societies. It has created conditions in which they feel members of a society, and where they can educate their children within a specific cultural and spiritual tradition. Theorists of constructivism in the study of international relations argue that human interaction can transform the world, if social actors adopt dynamic interpretations of that world (Adler 1997: 322). In this sense, the Christian–Muslim frontier has always been a dynamic factor in history and geopolitics. People have used it in order to structure their societies, and to change the circumstances in which they live. Yet the outcome of this activism has always depended on the attitudes that people adopt. The alternative between conflict or cooperation in Christian–Muslim relations depends on how people construct these relations.

The historical overview in this book has demonstrated how the movement of imperial borders, from Mecca to Vienna, shaped the Christian–Muslim zone of contact – a fragmented region without regionalism, encompassing various communities and states today. The history of the

frontier is a history of the construction of various forms of social and political relationships between Christians and Muslims. This is the reason for the fragmented character of society in the region. The confrontation of the Arabs and the Ottomans with the Byzantine, Austrian, and Russian Empires, the *dhimmi* and *millet* systems, the creation of nation states and, now, of a global functional frontier among increasingly interspersed communities – these are episodes in people's historical search for social organization. People need the frontier in order to define the concrete society of which they are part, and which gives them individual and collective security. This is why they imagine the frontier – a mental construction that helps them build their social order. In international security, the distinction from 'the other' helps people to define who their potential allies and enemies may be. Security relations in the contemporary world are influenced by civilizational biases. Even in the sphere of economics, the different behaviour and performance of different groups of people are elements of orderliness in world society. By creating the civilizational frontier people create order, and in this sense they are masters of this frontier, and not *vice versa*.

I would like to conclude this book with several remarks about the link between the concept of the Christian–Muslim frontier as a constructed social relationship and the idea of world society. The world society approach to international relations argues that the exclusive emphasis on state-centred power politics in international relations is outdated. It has, arguably, been overcome by influential transnational forces and interactions, and people with different cultural backgrounds around the world are increasingly conscious that they make part of one whole – a world society with its new problems and challenges.

A key issue here is the role of the nation state in the contemporary world. In modern times the nation state has become central in people's ideas about global social order; it is considered to be the optimal available form of social organization that delivers public good. The state ideal is based on 'the idea of a social contract, the idea of an open market in which operators of armies and states offer services to willing consumers, the idea of a society whose shared norms and expectations call forth a certain kind of government' (Tilly 1985: 169). The territorial state is imagined as the building block of a stable and, hopefully, peaceful international system. According to Kant (1957): 'Originally, no one had more right than another to a particular part of the earth.' The right of a people to its state territory:

> is only a right of temporary sojourn, a right to associate, which all men have. They have it by virtue of their common possession of the surface of the earth, where, as a globe, they cannot infinitely disperse and hence must finally tolerate the presence of each other.
>
> (Kant 1957: 21)

Yet the state should not be regarded as an end in itself, not only because it often brings forth egoistic interests, conflict, and personal ambitions, which made Charles Tilly compare nation-building and state-building with organized crime (Tilly 1985). The division of the world into nation states is not the only principle of global social organization. The large cultural and religious complexes studied in this book are another type of building block in the colourful edifice of world society; both states and large cultural complexes are expressions of a universal search for order in human society. This is the basic social 'need' that justifies the Christian–Muslim frontier.

The influence of needs (rather than interests), communication, and values on international relations and world society is a recurrent theme in the works of the Australian diplomat and academic John W. Burton, a participant in the San Francisco Conference that established the United Nations in 1945. His ideas did not enjoy popularity in the second half of the twentieth century, mostly because they were not in line with the dominant trend in international relations theory, Realism, which focused on the egoistic interests of states operating under anarchy. Yet there is no point in arguing which factor, need or interest is more important in the construction of world society; they should be seen in a systemic unity, determining the actions of states, cultural groups, and individuals. Interest has played an important role in the construction of Christian–Muslim relations, as we have seen in the two last chapters. Today's economic fragmentation of the zone of Christian–Muslim contact, where local leaders reinforce the distinctions from 'the other' in order better to milk small and isolated political entities, is purely based on interest.

Another issue that has received controversial interpretation is the role played by rapidly expanding communications, and problems in communication, in the occurrence of conflict. Communication generally means messages and transactions, but also knowledge of and sympathy for kin groups in other regions or countries. This is, for example, the form of communication within the global Jewish, Muslim, Christian Orthodox, Catholic, or Protestant communities, which are separated by boundaries and political barriers. It was through this channel of communication that the historical zone of contact (between Mecca and Vienna) produced patterns of relationships that were reproduced in the 'peripheral' areas of Christian–Muslim contact, such as West Africa, the shores of the Indian Ocean, and, recently, the cosmopolitan societies in the West. There can also exist antipathetic communications, including demonstrations of hostility, which prevent the flow of other messages and transactions. Burton considered conflict as a natural element of world society and a form of communication that people must enjoy. He believed that in an ideal situation of complete information and efficiency in decision-making, states would avoid all dysfunctional conflict. States sometimes find themselves involved in wars not because of an aggressive intent, but because of mis-

judgement or ignorance about the longer-term response of the other (Burton 1972: 49). Obviously, there is more to conflict prevention and conflict resolution than simply improving information-sharing – better communication between Hitler and Chamberlain would never have prevented World War II. The challenge of communications in contemporary world society goes beyond the problem of an imperfect exchange of information. In the functional frontier between Christianity and Islam, which increasingly acquires global dimensions, the rapid progress of the means of communication has simply brought 'us' and 'them' closer to each other. Modern communications have made cultural differences more evident, and potential conflicts closer to people's everyday lives. They have made weapons, including such unusual ones as hijacked airplanes, electronic means of propaganda, and even weapons of mass destruction, more accessible to non-state actors. Modern communications have not reduced the chances of conflict; they have just changed the character of conflict. They have raised the level of awareness of potential conflicts, but they have also played an important role in the internationalization of the problem of terrorism. The values, expectations, sympathies, and also the hostilities of people in some parts of the world, are easily transmitted around the rest of it, and this is a sure sign of a nascent global society.

The significance of values is the third major topic in the literature on world society. The world in the age of globalization is witnessing a stunning resurgence of particularistic, ultimate values, sometimes described as various forms of 'fundamentalism'. Such ultimate values have always been part of politics, and they have also been instrumental in the establishment of world society. Nevertheless, these values have been coupled with the establishment of a hegemony of certain more powerful nation states, to the detriment of others. Power conflicts, in which the strongest states in the world have been involved, have set the stage for value politics that are destabilizing world society (Swatos 1992).

This book has touched upon issues that may provide the focus for further research. Nevertheless, my objective has been to create a coherent picture of the frontier between Christianity and Islam from the brief analysis of its various dimensions: historical, geopolitical, psychological, strategic, and economic. The shape of the frontier between Christianity and Islam, in world society, is of a zone of contact rather than a line of confrontation. Conflict or confrontation should not be taken for granted in Christian–Muslim relations; the alternative for cooperation has always remained open. I have referred many times in this book to Jean Gottmann's ideas that frontiers are the product of human imagination, and that their function is to introduce order in human society. The social purpose of the Christian–Muslim civilizational frontier, elusive as it is, is to define the societal and spatial limits of certain forms of social organization. Whether conflict or cooperation will prevail in Christian–Muslim relations depends

on the way each generation constructs its relations with 'the other'. Violent conflicts involving Christian and Muslim communities around the world make people aware of their global linkages, yet this does not make conflict a necessary element in the emergence of global society. People should concentrate instead on avoiding an interpretation of the frontier in terms of damaging confrontation, but should see the frontier as a bridge, or a supporting wall in the edifice of world society, as much as they perceive it as a divide.

The construction of the civilizational frontier is a psychological process, which helps people to situate themselves in a concrete cultural and social setting. It is a mechanism that shapes individuals' sense of security, as members of a group. The need to feel a member of a global cultural community becomes even more important in the contemporary cosmopolitan societies, where the membranes separating their various facets are increasingly diffused, but hinder the fusion of cultural communities. The world thus faces the old paradigm of Ottoman society, where the various confessional communities mixed without touching. In this sense, the Christian–Muslim frontier, understood as a zone of contact of separate communities, is expanding – it encompasses new territories in the post-modern world of all-pervading communications.

People build their social institutions around a certain cultural identity. For example, the Lebanese system of political confessionalism, with its distribution of posts according to religious group affiliation, and the Bosnian society, divided into three political entities where almost everyone votes for the ethnic party of his or her community, are two extreme cases, but they demonstrate a general problem: conflict in the Christian–Muslim zone of contact is often due to people's and their leaders' inability to build the necessary institutional framework for accommodating various religious and political identities. Many violent conflicts in the zone of contact are examples of the failure of authoritative social institutions to accommodate various groups' needs for recognition and self-expression. The history of communal opposition does not help solve the problem. People need to be members of an 'in-group', and political leaders use this in mobilizing their communities. The purpose of the historical chapters in this book was to show that religious group identity in Christian–Muslim relations has always been an essentially political identity. Consequently, the solutions to such conflicts should be political and institutional, and they should deal with perceived or real discrimination and inequality. National and regional institutions, which can accommodate different identities, will form the real democratic basis of international society, rather than simply strengthening the existing nation states and the system of nation states. Norms of accommodation between groups with different identities are making their way in world society, but such global norms and governance should not be based on unilateral dictate or on exclusive reliance on the nation-state principle of constructing international rela-

tions. They should be based on the principles of inclusiveness and participation for all. The usefulness of the United Nations lies precisely in its experience in global participatory democracy. The record of this organization may not be brilliant in such cases as the former Yugoslavia or Kosovo (the excuse of the UN bureaucrats is that everything is decided by the UN member states, and they should take the blame), yet the United Nations still has a role to play in paving the way to participatory democracy in world society.

'The total failure of political institutions' in the Arab and Muslim worlds, as Fareed Zakaria (2001: 29) put it, is the real reason for today's Islamic fundamentalist threat. As a consequence, the whole world changed after the terrorist attacks of September 2001, in the sense that people's faith in the solid foundations of the global system of states was deeply shaken, giving way to a growing sense of insecurity. This new vulnerability shook first the United States, but it also penetrated the psychology of Christian–Muslim relations on all levels – from individual security to communal relations, local conflicts and, finally, relations among states or large cultural complexes. Quite indicative in this sense is the change of attitude to Iraq and its regime between 1990, when the first Bush administration in the United States sought to preserve the existing secular state regime against the perspective of disintegration and chaos, and 2003, when the second Bush administration adopted its doctrine of pre-emptive strikes aimed at destroying, and subsequently reconstructing, the Iraqi regime.

By contrast, political reform that addresses the roots of local conflicts in the Christian–Muslim zone of contact will, obviously, improve the individual security of many people, and this will also affect the global relationship between Christians and Muslims. The less the political system of the state is adequate for people's needs, the more they will turn to alternative solutions to their societal and security dilemmas. A major political and institutional reform would be needed, in the zone of contact, at the state and regional levels, in order to give every community the possibility of participating in the historical decisions that affect it. This would limit the amount of leeway granted to people who are thirsty for power and the redistribution of social wealth for their benefit, and their ability to recruit followers among discontented co-religionists. Proper institution-building can, hopefully, address some of the major causes of conflict in the zone of contact. Such positive action is feasible because the very essence of evolution in human civilization is, in the words of Sigmund Freud, the exchange of the instinct of aggressiveness 'for a portion of security' (Freud 1993: 66). It is necessary to restructure and reinforce the institutional foundations of a system that brings together groups with distinct cultural identities – a system that should not be limited to guaranteeing cultural rights to minorities, such as the freedom of worship, speech, and association, but should also encourage more political participation and dialogue involving all groups.

The political biases of the Christian–Muslim frontier are present both in leaders' decision-making and in mass consciousness. The politics of the Christian–Muslim frontier have become an expression of people's need for a reference to some form of social order. The empires of the frontier – Byzantine, Arab, Ottoman, Austrian, Russian, and Persian – always had a concrete religious legitimization. Nation-state building in the zone of contact often rested upon a ruling Christian or Muslim majority. The Christian–Muslim frontier has also been a channel of political protest: contemporary Islamism identifies itself as a counter-hegemonic movement, the vanguard of the Third World in its resistance to Western domination. Like other frontiers in the history of mankind, the Christian–Muslim frontier is part of a set of forces that foster the dynamism of global society, and such forces can be either devastating or creative. The rise of Islamism is a reaction to globalization and to the Western-derived nation-state model. The Islamists are also modern in their own way, in the sense that they emphasize contacts with ordinary people, and seek to reflect their problems and aspirations. Islamist parties today are often in closer contact with neighbourhood communities and local interests than the central authorities in some Muslim countries. Their subsidiary organizations run welfare programmes and provide social services for the poor, students, and women, and they are sometimes more successful than the 'modernizing' secular regimes.

Francis Fukuyama admitted, in the *volte-face* exercise that closes his essay 'The End of History?', that history as we know it (the history of ideologies) was unlikely to stop with the end of the Cold War, and society would need new forms of opposition of ideologies. The revival of the Christian–Muslim frontier, at the turn of the twenty-first century, may simply be a confirmation of his thoughts. Nevertheless, the role of the civilizational frontier is to bind the separate societies of the world into a world society rather than to serve as a simple separator. A German or an Egyptian might tend to interpret events in Kosovo, East Timor, the Middle East, or Afghanistan from the perspective of their personal experiences of Christian–Muslim relations, yet the fact that they watch and read news about the same global crises, that they reason about the world in terms of these crises, makes them part of one society. One of the paradoxical effects of the Islamist terrorist acts in 2001–2002 has been to make common civilization easier to define, because so many nations and states – in all continents – felt they had become a target of the extremists. In this sense, inclusive idealism is 'a countervision that will dispel the lingering attractions of Islamism, especially for younger generations in places such as Iran and the Palestinian territories' (Hirsh 2002: 27). The United Nations is just a step in the realization of this inclusive idealism.

The interpretation of the Christian–Muslim frontier as a zone of contact can apply to other civilizational frontiers in the contemporary world – Hindo-Muslim, Confucian and Muslim, Hindo-Confucian, etc.

Throughout this book I have argued that the choice between conflict and cooperation in the Christian–Muslim zone of conflict is open, as it depends on how people construct their concrete social and political relations. The same is valid in the other zones of contact. The world functions through the civilizational frontiers, which are an important factor in building social organization and order. People's cultural and religious backgrounds have become part of their modern identities – communal, national, and civilizational (such as European identity). The frontier is a barrier and a bridge, an area of mixed populations, and, above all, a functional element in the structure of world society. The concept of the civilizational frontier can help us understand the socially constructed essence of international relations, thus laying a bridge from the subject, as it stood in the twentieth century, to the theories of world society (Adler 1997: 322). I have argued that international relations are socially constructed, and they can be constructed in a cooperative way. The functional frontier, among cultural communities in an increasingly globalized world, can be interpreted as a barrier among atomistic agents. Yet, as a functional element of social organization, the frontier should not be seen as an element necessarily conducive to conflict, but as an agency that can be manipulated. What is needed is a concerted effort so that 'fundamental loyalties will be willingly shared by the state and the agencies of the world community' (Claude 1971: 383), and a clear effort to strengthen the sentiment of human solidarity will become a conscious basis for the construction of a world society.

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