

OIL AND GOD

OIL AND GOD

Sustainable Energy Will Defeat Wahhabi Terror

Elie Elhadj



Universal Publishers
Irvine • Boca Raton

Oil and God: Sustainable Energy Will Defeat Wahhabi Terror

Copyright © 2018 Elie Elhadj

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical reviews and certain other noncommercial uses permitted by copyright law.

Universal Publishers, Inc.

Irvine • Boca Raton

USA • 2018

www.universal-publishers.com

978-1-58112-607-5 (pbk.)

978-1-58112-605-1 (ebk.)

Typeset by Medlar Publishing Solutions Pvt Ltd, India

Publisher's Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Elhadj, Elie.

Title: Oil and God: Sustainable Energy Will Defeat Wahhabi Terror/Elie Elhadj.

Description: Irvine, CA: Universal Publishers, 2018. | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2018932500 | ISBN 978-1-58112-607-5 (pbk.)

| ISBN 978-1-58112-605-1 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Wahhābiyah--Saudi Arabia--Influence. | Terrorist organizations--Middle East. | Arab Spring, 2010--Influence. | Renewable energy sources--Political aspects. | Petroleum industry and trade--Political aspects. | BISAC: POLITICAL SCIENCE/Terrorism. | BUSINESS & ECONOMICS/Industries/Energy.

Classification: LCC BP195.W2 E44 2018 (print)

| LCC BP195.W2 (ebook) | DDC 297.8/14--dc23.

To

My Daughter Sarah

For Her Big Heart in Helping Syria's Refugees

SYNOPSIS

Religious extremism in the Middle East surfaced after the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire in 1918. What caused the transformation from a tolerant Sunni Hanafi empire to the ferocious religious wars which now plague the Middle East?

Oil and God is an unabashed realpolitik study of the culprits. It analyses the complex relationships between and among the different players in Middle Eastern affairs and the stake each has in the region's sectarian wars. The book explores the roots of the current jihadist movements, Wahhabi culture, the Arab Israeli conflict, the Khomeini revolution, and the sectarian wars in Iraq and in Syria.

Oil and God examines the tensions that fuel events such as the Arab Spring and the different histories, cultural values, and religious priorities that underlie the level of success each country has had on its trajectory to democracy with the credibility of an insider.

Oil and God relates US oil geopolitics to Saudi Arabia's symbiotic union with Wahhabism. The terrorists of 9/11 were Wahhabis. The book investigates why the US occupied Iraq, not Saudi Arabia.

Oil and God contends that hegemony over oil exports is world hegemony and that US control over Saudi oil is a non-lethal weapon of mass destruction. The book holds that national security concerns of the big oil importers, China, continental Europe, India, and Japan, will drive renewable energy development to end oil imports. When that happens, US

protection of Riyadh will wane, Saudi cash will dwindle, Wahhabi terror will diminish, and democracy will have a chance to take root in Arab lands.

Oil and God is a must read for students, academics, business people, journalists, and politicians.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	<i>xi</i>
<i>Chapter Summaries</i>	<i>xiii</i>
CHAPTER ONE	
<i>Oil and God in Brief</i>	1
CHAPTER TWO	
Islam, Arab Masses, and Arab Rulers' Exploitation of Islam to Stay in Power	23
CHAPTER THREE	
Beliefs, Development of Shari'a Laws, and Sects	33
Chapter Three—Appendix 1: Elevation of the Prophetic Sunna to a Source of Law Equal to the Qur'an	53
CHAPTER FOUR	
Combating Jihadism	59
CHAPTER FIVE	
The Effect of Saudi Oil on Derailing the Arab Spring's Reforms	73

CHAPTER SIX

The Al-Saud Wahhabi Governance 133

Chapter Six—Appendix 1: An Estimate of the Number
of the Direct Descendants of King Abdulaziz Al-Saud 167

CHAPTER SEVEN

**The US Invasion of Iraq, the Empowerment of Iran,
and the Opening of Sunni/Shi'ite Gates of Hell** 169

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Bible Faces the Qur'an in Palestine 217

Chapter Eight—Appendix 1: Letter from PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat
to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin 242

Chapter Eight—Appendix 2: The Arab Peace Initiative—Full Text 245

CHAPTER NINE

**Sectarianism, Dictatorship, and the Destruction
of Most of Syria** 247

Epilogue 327

Bibliography 331

Index 341

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

After a thirty-year career in finance and banking in New York, London and Riyadh, I became a student again in order to seek answers to questions on the cultures, politics and reform prospects of Arab countries. I was fortunate to join London University's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in 1998, where it was possible to access focused and relevant regional scholarship.

My research examined the contrasting political economies of water in Saudi Arabia and Syria, published in 2006 under the title: *Experiments in Achieving Water and Food Self-Sufficiency in the Middle East, the Consequences of Contrasting Endowments, Ideologies, and Investment Policies in Saudi Arabia and Syria*.

Concurrently, I wrote *The Islamic Shield, Arab Resistance to Democratic and Religious Reforms*, published in 2006, updated in 2008. *The Islamic Shield* argued that Arab resistance to religious reforms would make it almost impossible for a Muslim Martin Luther to emerge.

Oil and God follows *The Islamic Shield*. It incorporates two events that shook the Middle East since the September 11, 2001 attacks by 19 Wahhabi terrorists on New York and Washington D.C. The first is the Arab Spring of 2011. The second is the empowerment of Iran since 9/11/2001.

SOAS is a community of gifted researchers, a uniquely eminent center for scholarship. During and since my SOAS years of study, Professor Tony Allan has been inspirational. A giant thinker and the consummate gentleman, I shall forever remember the many hours of engaging discussion

we have had over the past two decades. I have benefited from discussions with members of Professor Allen's SOAS/King's College Research Group.

I am grateful to Peggy, my wife, who expertly edited the manuscript and energized the journey of my writing. Last, but certainly not least, is the contribution made by my daughter Sarah. Her enthusiasm for knowledge on the Middle East and her many questions helped clarify what might have otherwise been vague.

CHAPTER SUMMARIES

Chapter One: *Oil and God* in Brief

The first chapter summarizes *Oil and God*. It explains the factors that shape the book. Given the strong attachment of Middle Eastern Muslims to Islam, two policy implications are concluded. First: religious minorities must never rule over the majority—witness the calamitous destruction of Syria at the hands of the Assad family's 10% Alawite minority. Secondly, if governments in the Arab world are to become representatives of the people, and respectful of the rule of law and human rights, democracy is a must. As examples of the undemocratic Middle East, Saudi Arabia's exploitation of Wahhabi Islam and the ayatollahs' exploitation of Shi'ism in Iran are described.

The book argues that oil hegemony means world hegemony. For Washington, it is important to influence/control the oil politics of Saudi Arabia, the world's biggest oil exporter and swing producer, not because America needs Saudi oil, but to assert Washington's superpower status. Control over a big proportion of world's oil exports is like a non-lethal weapon of mass destruction (WMD). The nexus of US politics, Saudi oil and God is discussed, and the delicate and complicated US/Saudi relationship is considered from both American and Saudi viewpoints.

Oil has protected the al-Saud regime before and after 9/11. The Bush administration ignored Wahhabi culpability. Instead, it occupied Iraq,

which led to Iran's control over Iraq and the empowerment of the ayatollahs in the Middle East.

The combination of oil and God allows Saudi Arabia's kings to act like hostage takers, forcing oil-importing countries to tolerate their regime to avoid the risk of oil interruption. It is only when demand for imported oil by US rivals, like China; the world's largest oil importer, continental Europe, India, and Japan is replaced by sustainable sources of energy such as solar, wind, hydropower, and nuclear fusion, that Wahhabi terror will be defeated.

Oil and God is shaped by the interaction between the effects of two epic events since 9/11/2001. The first is the Arab Spring. Beginning in 2011, it planted a resilient seed in the heads of Arabs that parliamentary democracy is compatible with Islam, a serious blow to the Wahhabi doctrine, which teaches that democracy is a Western conspiracy to destroy Islam. The second event is the empowerment of Iran since 9/11 by US presidents G.W. Bush and Barack Obama.

Today, Saudi Arabia is caught between the democratic values of the Arab Spring and the Wahhabi ideology of al-Qaeda and the so-called Islamic State. To claim the high religious ground, the al-Saud regime is expected to maintain the fundamentals of the Wahhabi culture it introduced in 1932. To maintain its grip on power, the regime will not adopt an iota of genuine democratic reform.

Chapter Two: Islam, the Arab Masses, and Arab Rulers' Exploitation of Islam to Stay in Power

Chapters Two and Three are intended to enhance understanding and appreciation of the pivotal role Islam plays in the private lives of Muslims, and the politics of the Middle East.

Chapter Two addresses the strong attachment the Arab peoples has to Islam. It explains how moderate Muslims, Islamists, and jihadists relate to the Islamic text. The chapter explains how Arab rulers use the palace ulama (Muslim scholars thought to have serious knowledge of theology and sacred law) to exploit the Qur'anic Verse 4:59 in order to turn blind obedience to their benefactors into a form of piety. The belief in predestination helps the ulama to remind the faithful that, even an unjust ruler is ordained by God. Chapter Two looks at how jihadist leaders justify rebellion against the Muslim ruler, in a challenge to Verse 4:59.

Chapter Three: Islamic Beliefs and Sects

The third chapter outlines the basic beliefs a good Muslim must adhere to. The belief in predestination and the fear of innovation are addressed.

Chapter Three compares the process of Sunni law-making with Shi'ite law-making. It describes the four sources of Sunni law: The Qur'an, Prophetic Sunna, Analogical Deduction, and Consensus of the ulama. This contrasts with only three sources of Shi'ite law: The Qur'an, Prophetic Sunna (according to Shi'ite sources), and Shi'ite ulama's intellectual reasoning.

This chapter discusses the concept of the infallible Shi'ite Imams, the doctrine of the return of the Hidden Twelfth Imam to the Earth, the effect the doctrine has had on the reporting of the Shi'ite Prophetic Sunna, the delegation of the Hidden Imam's boundless authority and infallible judgment to Shi'ite ulama. All of these constructions are anathema to Sunni ulama.

Also discussed in Chapter Three is Grand Ayatollah Khomeini's revolutionary assertion that the senior-most Shi'ite cleric, as the deputy of the Hidden Imam, has the right to oversee all religious, social, and political affairs of Iran. This doctrine handed Khomeini and his successors absolute theocratic authority/dictatorship.

The Appendix to Chapter Three considers how the Sunni ulama elevated the Prophetic Sunna into a source of law equal to the Holy Qur'an.

Chapter Four: Combating Jihadism

Notwithstanding the imperative of obedience to Muslim authority in Verse 4:59, jihadists invoke Hadith injunctions that sanction rebellion against an Islamic ruler if he becomes impious or unjust.

This chapter attributes the breeding of suicide bombers to charismatic political leaders mixing an explosive cocktail made up of three ingredients: Jihad injunctions, predestination dogma, and the promise of houris (beautiful damsels) in paradise. The cocktail alone is safe. To explode, it needs a spark. The spark can be any number of despairing domestic and/or foreign triggers.

To combat jihadi terror, Chapter Four advocates deactivating these combustible ingredients and defusing the sparks. The chapter concludes that as

long as oil is the main source of global energy, the combustible cocktail is unlikely to be deactivated and the sparks are unlikely to be defused.

Chapter Four concludes that representative democracy can be an effective medicine to combat the appeal of jihadism. It also considers how the Muslim Brotherhood's embrace of representative democracy might defeat Wahhabi terror.

Chapter Five: The Effect of Saudi Oil on Derailing the Arab Spring's Political and Islamic Reforms

The fifth chapter asserts that the Arab Spring is not expected to sweep through the Arab world smoothly. Oil will stand in the way of reforms in Saudi Arabia and Egypt until it is driven out of world markets by renewable energy. Meanwhile, however, non-oil exporters like Tunisia and Morocco will be able to develop democratic governance without outside hindrance.

The US has been protecting the al-Saud regime for the past 70 years. Why? To control Saudi oil production and price politics and make global oil supply a part of its arsenal of non-lethal weapons of mass destruction. Not even Wahhabi culpability for 9/11 was sufficient to challenge US protection of the al-Saud regime. Instead, President George W. Bush devastated Iraq, an adventure that empowered Iran. President Obama further empowered Iran with his policies in Iran, Iraq, and Syria.

Chapter Five argues that Washington will protect the al-Saud regime despite its dictatorial rule, hatred-of-the-other culture, human rights abuses, and gender inequality. Ease of dealing/controlling one absolute king who owes his throne and life to US protection is far simpler and more effective than managing scores of parliamentarians and political leaders in a democratic setting. Washington will not pressure the Saudi King to reform for fear that pressure might weaken his control over Saudi Arabia and disrupt oil exports.

Given the strong cultural and societal connections between Egypt and Saudi Arabia, Egypt will not be allowed to evolve democratic rule either. Riyadh, with help from Washington, will keep democracy away from Egypt in the future, just as they did since 1952, except for the year between June 30, 2012 and July 3, 2013, under the democratically elected president, Muhammad Morsi.

Chapter Five presents the view that the Muslim Brotherhood's embrace of parliamentary democracy in Egypt could have ushered in an era of modernizing Shari'a (Islamic law). How? In a poor country like Egypt, modern laws to reduce poverty and raise employment must be enacted. The new laws would, of course, be labeled as un-Islamic by Islamists. The debates would open taboo subjects, suppressed under blasphemy laws and cultural norms for centuries. The debates would go a long way to modernizing Shari'a laws.

Chapter Six: The Al-Saud Wahhabi Governance

Chapter Six describes the five constituencies that form the Saudi power pyramid: The al-Saud royals, Wahhabi ulama, tribal sheikhs, the defense and national security establishment, and merchant families. It considers how Wahhabism evolved during the twentieth century, boomeranged on 9/11, then metastasized into increasingly violent terror groups: Boko Haram (Nigeria), the so-called Islamic State (Iraq and Syria), al-Qaeda (regional), Shabab (Somalia), and the Taliban (Afghanistan).

A hopeful sign is the recent emergence of certain Saudi ulama as agents of political change, calling for elections and separation of government powers. The chapter ends with an argument invoking Verse 42:38 and Prophetic Ahadiths (plural of Hadith; or, words of the Prophet) to counter the Wahhabi palace ulama's contention that democracy is incompatible with Islam.

Chapter Seven: The US Invasion of Iraq, the Empowerment of Iran, and Opening Sunni/Shi'ite Gates of Hell

Chapter Seven explores the reasons that could have driven the G.W. Bush administration (2000–2008) to wreak its revenge for the 9/11 attacks on an innocent country, Iraq, instead of Saudi Arabia.

The chapter argues that wittingly or unwittingly, Mr. Bush handed Iraq to Iran on a silver platter without Iran having to fire a shot. President Obama (2008–2016) added to Bush's performance. He embraced Iran's sectarian proxy prime minister in Baghdad, Nouri al-Maliki (2006–2014); midwived the P5+1 nuclear agreement (signed in July 2015); prematurely

removed all US troops from Iraq (December 2011), and handed Syria to Iran. The cost to the US was huge. The cost to Iraq and Syria was far greater.

The march of Shi'ism opened the gates of hell in the Muslim Middle East. These wars have already destroyed, not only most of Iraq, but also most of Syria and Yemen, killed and injured more than five million, and created more than fifteen million refugees. Now that Pandora's Box has been opened, the Shi'ite/ Sunni wars will rage for decades.

Chapter Seven examines Iran's strategic influence in Iraq and what lurks behind Iran's desperate drive to control the Shi'ite dominated southern Iraq and the Baghdad government.

It ends with addressing Iraq's superior religious credentials in the world of Shi'ism to that of Iran and the stronger attachment of Arab Shi'tes to Iraq than Iran.

Chapter Eight: The Bible Faces the Qur'an in Palestine

Chapter Eight focuses on the root cause of the Palestinian/Arab-Israeli conflict and on contemplating a solution based on a single state for Arabs and Jews. The chapter starts by describing Islam's veneration of Judaism. The Qur'an praises Abraham as the first Muslim, and describes Islam as the "religion of Abraham."

Two events embittered the Arab peoples. The first was the Sykes-Picot Agreement (May 19, 1916). It was secretly negotiated by London and Paris to carve up the Levant between them. The second was the Balfour Declaration (November 2, 1917). The British Foreign Secretary, Lord Balfour, offered lands Britain never owned in Palestine to the Zionist Federation.

To justify offering Palestine as a Jewish home, Zionist leaders promoted the slogan: "A land without people to a people without land." However, as far back as 1893, the lowest estimate of the number of Palestinians was 410,000.¹ According to the 1922 census, Mandatory Palestine had a population of 673,000 Palestinians (589,000 Muslims plus 84,000 Christians) and 71,000 Jews.²

¹MidEastWeb.org, "The Population of Palestine Prior to 1948." <http://www.mideastweb.org/palpop.htm>

²Ibid.

The founding of modern-day Israel was based on a biblical covenant, which politicized the Bible. In reaction, the Qur'an was politicized. Unless the Bible is depoliticized, wars between Arabs and Jews could go on for a thousand years.

Chapter Eight argues that a purely Jewish Israel is impossible to attain, unless the Palestinian Israeli citizens simply vanish. It also argues that a two-state solution is not viable, due to a myriad of thorny issues: Jerusalem, borders, security for Israel and Palestine, water rights, Jewish settlers, the status of the Palestinian Israelis, and the right of return for the refugees.

Instead, a single, democratic, and secular state for Palestinians and Jews based on equal citizenship and constitutional protection of religious, ethnic, and national identities promises to be a better long-term prospect. President Trump's decision on December 6, 2017, to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital has effectively put an end to the two-state solution, leaving the single-state as the only alternative.³

The Palestinians did not take anything from Israel. For a durable long-term peace, Israel should not stonewall the Oslo Accords and the Arab Peace Initiative.

As the Palestinian problem festers, downtrodden Palestinians and Arabs, exploited by charismatic politicians, will turn to God for deliverance. Israeli policies have been driving increasing numbers of otherwise moderate Muslims toward Islamism and jihadism.

The chapter ends by quoting an essay written by Avraham Burg, former speaker of Israel's Knesset (1999–2003) and a former chairman of the Jewish Agency titled "The end of Zionism".

Chapter Nine: Sectarianism, Dictatorship, and the Destruction of Most of Syria

Chapter Nine addresses the Syrian revolution; what led to it, weaponizing it, Islamicizing it, the myriad parties involved in it, the horrendous toll of it, and finally a likely solution.

The chapter argues that in religion-gripped Syria, it is unsustainable for a non-representative totalitarian, Assad-ruled 10% Alawite minority to

³The White House, "Statement by President Trump on Jerusalem", (December 6, 2017). <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/statement-president-trump-jerusalem/>

rule over and abuse the 75% Sunni majority forever. It has already brought disaster.

The Assad regime stands on three pillars. The first is multiple brutal security forces. Amnesty International documented 38 types of terrifying torture methods used by the regime. The second is exploitation of Sunni Islam. The palace clerics threaten the faithful with God's wrath if they fail to obey Assad blindly, exploiting Verse 4:59. The third is a bombastic war of words against Israel to justify the alliance with Iran and the imposition of emergency laws since 1963 that terrorize the populace.

Fifty years of police state cruelty were challenged on March 18, 2011 with small protests in the city of Dar'a. Within a few days, Assad had weaponized the protests. He ordered the army to shoot to kill. To avoid the ire of Western public opinion for killing unarmed civilians, he Islami-cized the revolution. In a Machiavellian strategy of blackmail legitimacy, he released hardened jihadists from prisons, to make the East and the West choose between tyranny or the jihadists.

The Assad regime has decapitated organized opposition for the past 50 years. There were no political parties or community leaders to lead the uprising. Some 1,500 different groups appeared on the battlefield.⁴ The revolution suffered from relying on Saudi Arabia and Qatar. The two states hate each other. They are US protectorates. President Obama ignored both.

Obama's intentions against the revolution became clear quickly. He prevented the supply of anti-warplane guns and repudiated his own red line on Assad's use of chemical weapons on August 21, 2013. Without US support, the revolution was doomed. Most of Syria was destroyed, with two thirds of Syria's 20-million population dead, injured and displaced. By aiding in the destruction of Syria, Obama empowered Iran beyond the Bush years.

Only Moscow and Washington can resolve the Syrian calamity, most likely through a barter exchange, a cease fire arrangement to be monitored by a U.N./Arab force, removal of Assad, democratic elections, and a truth and reconciliation commission. It would be sensible to create a democratic system of governance with self-ruled regions within a federal Syria, based on sectarian and ethnic lines: Alawites, Christians, Druzes,

⁴Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI), *Understanding Iran's Role in the Syrian Conflict*, Edited by Anisheh Bassiri Tabrizi and Raffaello Pantucci, (August 2016), P. 33. https://rusi.org/sites/default/files/201608_op_understanding_irans_role_in_the_syrian_conflict_0.pdf

Isma'ilis, Sunnis, Arabs, Armenian, Assyrians, Circassian, Kurds, Syriacs, and Turkman.

The US can take advantage of Syrians' hatred of Assad and Russia to arm a new Syrian army from amongst the 12 million Syrians displaced inside and outside the country, and who lost homes and relatives. Washington could turn Syria into an Afghanistan for Russia without the involvement of American troops, save for advisors and weapons. Whether the Trump White House would choose to invoke this option is uncertain, given Mr. Trump's mysterious fascination with Mr. Putin.

CHAPTER ONE

OIL AND GOD IN BRIEF

What's in a Book's Title?

The title to this book is inspired by certain facts:

- In a world addicted to oil, hegemony over oil means world hegemony. In the hands of the US, influence/control over Saudi oil export volumes and pricing politics is a non-lethal weapon-of-mass-destruction.¹ The oil weapon adds to the two other non-lethal weapons of mass destruction in the US arsenal: Dominance in global food exports and trade, and the US dollar as the main reserve currency for world central banks.²
- The 1945 security-for-oil understanding between Saudi Arabia's King Abdulaziz al-Saud and US President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Thus far, the understanding has survived six kings (all children of Abdulaziz) and 13 US presidents.³

¹A lethal weapon of mass destruction destroys life and property within the affected area. An oil embargo brings the entire economy of an enemy to a standstill, while preserving life and property.

²65% of world reserve currencies is denominated in US dollar. As the world's main currency used to measure value and settle trade transactions, all Eurodollar interbank dealings, including the dollar payments resulting from forex transactions must clear in New York's *Clearing House Interbank Payment System (CHIPS)*. On an average day, 270,000 transactions totaling around \$1.5 trillion are cleared. CHIPS helps US authorities enforce US sanctions against foreign countries.

³Adam Taylor, "The First Time a US President Met a Saudi King," *The Washington Post* (January 27, 2015). https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2015/01/27/the-first-time-a-u-s-president-met-a-saudi-king/?utm_term=.72453beb4c18

2 Oil and God

- To claim legitimacy, the al-Saud kings have been exploiting an extreme reading of the Qur'an and Prophetic Sunna (acts and words of the Prophet Muhammad) by Wahhabi ulama (clerics/scholars) for the past century. They preach hatred of the other, jihad injunctions, predestination dogma, and the promise of houris (beautiful damsels) in paradise for the martyrs. On 9/11/2001, this combination turned nineteen Wahhabi jihadists into flying bombs.

It should be emphasized that the belief in God's tenets alone can be a force for good in the private life of an individual. Also, oil alone is innocuous. It is the combination of oil politics and manipulation of God's dictums by palace clerics that is toxic.

Unless noted otherwise, reference to Saudi Arabia throughout the book implies the rest of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member states as well. Formed on May 25, 1981, the GCC includes Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and United Arab Emirates.

Conclusions

Oil and God argues that the Arab Spring planted a resilient seed in the heads of the Arab masses: Parliamentary democracy is compatible with Islam. This idea is a serious blow to the Wahhabi indoctrination that democracy is a Western conspiracy to destroy Islam. The Arab Spring holds the promise of democratizing and modernizing Shari'a laws in non-oil exporting Arab countries that are far away from Saudi Arabia, like Tunisia and Morocco (see Chapter Five: *The Arab Spring—The First Wave: Non-Oil Exporting Countries* and Chapter Nine: *The Arab Spring*).

As for Saudi Arabia, matters are different. *Oil and God* argues that as long as oil imports by America's rivals, like China, continental Europe, India, and Japan is strong, Washington will want to influence/control Saudi oil production volume and price politics, not because the US needs Saudi oil, but because oil can be a strategic non-lethal weapon of mass destruction in Washington's hand (see Chapter Five: *Washington's Middle East Politics is the Politics of Oil*). To this end, the US has for the past seventy years, protected the al-Saud regime, despite its non-representative, archaic, totalitarian reign, its deep institutional corruption, its hatred-of-the-other indoctrination, its gender inequality and human rights abuses,

its cruel penal code, and worldwide Wahhabi proselytization. To protect the oilfields and the king, some 35,000 American soldiers are stationed in air force and naval bases in Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates.

Oil protected the al-Saud regime before 9/11 and after 9/11. Even after Wahhabism boomeranged on 9/11, killing over 3,000 in the United States and costing an estimated \$2 trillion,⁴ and after 15 of the 19 Wahhabi terrorists turned out to be Saudis, the Bush administration looked the other way.⁵ Instead, Bush bombed Iraq back to the stone-age in a misadventure that ended in Iran's control over Iraq and the empowerment of the ayatollahs of the city of Qom (see Chapter Seven). Mr. Obama empowered Iran further. He pursued policies in Iraq beneficial to Tehran (see Chapter Five) and handed Syria to Iran (see Chapter Nine).

Since 9/11, the handing of Iraq and Syria to Iran emboldened Iran's Supreme Ayatollah. Proxy Shi'ite/Sunni and Arab/Persian wars between Iran and Saudi Arabia followed, killing, injuring, and displacing millions, and devastating most of Iraq, Syria, and Yemen. Whether this horrific destruction is deliberately connected to 9/11 or not, the fact remains that since 9/11, the Muslim Middle East has been burning with no end in sight.

Aside from influencing/controlling Saudi oil politics, why does Washington protect the al-Saud kings? Two reasons: first, it is easier to manage one man, the king, who owes his life and throne to US protection than it is to manage the dozens of politicians in a democratic setting; secondly, the fear that pressuring the king to reform might weaken his hold on power and disrupt oil exports (see Chapter Five: *The Delicate and Complicated US/Saudi Relationship*).

Benefits from renewable energy are cumulative. The first phase, the subject of this book, argues that once America's rivals and big oil importers like China, continental Europe, India, and Japan generate sufficient energy from renewable sources to stop the importation of oil, Saudi Arabia will cease to be of much interest to Washington, Wahhabi cash will diminish, and jihadist terror will decline.

In the second phase, as renewable energy drives oil out of global demand, the environmental benefits will become enormous.

⁴Institute for the Analysis of Global Security, "How much did the September 11 terrorist attack cost America?" (2003–2004). <http://www.iags.org/costof911.html>

⁵It is hard to think that the Saudi government was involved in the recruitment or execution of the attacks. Rather, they were criminal acts by individual terrorists, bred by the Saudi Wahhabi way of life.