Lecture 3: Historical Roots of Modern Terrorism
A KISS History of Modern Terrorism

A. We can trace the word “terrorism” to French Revolution and Jacobin Reign of Terror (1792-1794), though individual acts of terror-violence can be traced back at least to ancient Greek and Roman republics.

B. David Rapoport (2007) describes four waves in the history of modern terrorism:

1. **Anarchism**: believed the state to be the source of all evil—if eliminated there could be justice and heaven on earth; they assassinated heads of state in Russia, France, Italy and US to get their way...their excesses eventually spelled their doom (People’s Will in Russia, Anarcho-Syndicalists in America)
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2. **Anti-Colonialism/National Liberation**: wanted independence from Western imperialists following WWII—the ANC in South Africa and the IRA in Northern Ireland are two such examples; the ANC and IRA eventually both took power.
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3. **Left-Wing Radicalism**: these groups wanted to eliminate capitalism and bring about communism and a radical redistribution of power and wealth along class lines. Groups such as the Red Army Faction of Germany and FARC (still fighting) in Colombia are examples.
4. Religious Terrorism: 4th wave is the current crop of religious terrorists who believe the world is decaying into a morass of greed and moral depravity, mostly because of Western (read the U.S.) influence which is corrupting and despoiling the regimes and peoples who are the descendants of the prophet Mohammad; al Qaeda, Hizbollah, Hamas, are exemplars of this creed...
What all these terrorist organizations and terrorists share in common is a utopian vision for changing the world as well as a willingness to use violence to achieve those ends... they all see themselves as heroes, fighting for justice and fairness...

The interesting aspect of religious terrorists like Osama bin Laden and Ayman al Zawahiri is their goals:

1. They see terrorism as a necessary means of defending their faith
2. and (2) of reconstructing the Caliphate under the rule of Shariah
3. To achieve these ends, it is critical to drive the “head of the snake,” or “the far enemy” out of the region so they can focus on destroying the near enemies