For weak or authoritarian states, uncovering the roots of violent ethnic or sectarian conflict is a major concern as it is the key to maintaining political stability and security.

**WWII influence**

During the post-World War Two era, much of the Muslim world regained autonomy. The newly emergent nations, such as Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Pakistan and Syria were created by European colonial states with artificial or arbitrarily drawn boundaries that shared few similarities with the Ottoman boundaries that once existed. As such, when political leaders attempted to build the new nation, they ran into the issues of political legitimacy and national identity.
Saudi Arabia

The nation integrated the beliefs, norms and values of the indigenous populous into a national identity with a sense of a shared moral purpose and mutual trust.

Wahhabis claim to be the “true Sunnis,” and, in principle, Wahhabism is both a religious and political movement. Wahabbism is a movement that strives to purify Islam by returning Muslims to the “original principles” of Islam.

In fact, Saudi Arabia has based its entire governing system on the legitimacy of its religious creed. When al-Wahhab found refuge with Ibn al-Saud, a local chieftain from Najd, al-Saud saw Wahhab’s teachings as a “means to overturn Arab tradition and convention...a path of seizing power.” Together, they formed an alliance that allowed al-Saud control over military, political and economic matters and established al-Wahhab as the sole religious figure in charge of religious creed.

What was truly unique about this political revival was that the twentieth century witnessed the “emergence of a state imposed on people without a historical memory or unity or national heritage which would justify their inclusion into a single entity.” The significance of this was monumental. Ibn Saud was able to use Islam to unify the politically divided rival tribes and peoples under a single consolidated authority. He combined his secular position as a victorious tribal leader with his religious status as the head of the Wahhabi order.

Ibn Saud understood the culture and traditions of the region and recognized that although tradition demanded that the newly integrated tribes be loyal to him due to his military prowess, their loyalties could be just as easily withdrawn. Thus, he created a reason for the people to be committed to him in a higher form of loyalty, and this was via the use of the puritanical Wahhabi doctrine. Ibn Saud built mosques for the communities and sent the ulama into them to disseminate the Wahhabi code. He also provided the communities with material assistance via the supply of agricultural equipment and arms. Ibn Saud provided the tribes with a desire and sense of mission, for their commitment to Ibn Saud became enshrined and bound to their commitment to the expansion of their belief and faith.

As the partnership between the Wahhabi religious establishment and the House of Saud grew, the ulama began to indiscriminately issue religious justification to Saudi rule via use of religious statutes. This set the ultimate precedent that the Saud family and those related to them via marriage had a monopoly of religious and political power. Saudi Arabia’s role as the “Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques” continues to make it vital for Saudi Arabia’s religious rhetoric to be deemed victorious in the battle of ideology and belief in the Muslim world.