Lecture 4 “Religion, religious extremism, terrorism”

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Outline

Religion is now widely recognized as an important factor in the phenomenon of global terrorism. However, it’s a point of contention whether we can call it a cause of terrorism or not. Some say religion is the cause of terrorism. Others insist that religion is not related to terrorism at all. How should we take up the topic of religion and terrorism? I will address in my lecture the following themes and questions.

I. Is religion a cause of terrorism?
   Is poverty “the root cause”?  
   Is politics or capitalism “the real cause”?
   If religion is “a cause,” how and to what extent?

II. Diversity religions, multifaceted nature of each religions
   Various notions of “Religion”
   Legalism and spirituality
   Internal faith and social praxis
   Liberalism-secularism and its critics
   Separation of church and state, unity of religion and state
   Religio-political relations in history
   Religion and war
   Relationship with “non-believers”
   What divides religious extremism from “true” religion?

III. Aum Shinrikyo and terrorism
   Buddhism, politics and war
   Japanese secular society and religion
   Affluent society and the rise of new religions

IV. Christian fundamentalism and terrorism
   Christianity in its original form and its relationship with politics
   Politics and religion in history
   Approaches to non-believers
Modern Christianity and fundamentalism

V. Radical Islamism and terrorism
   History of Islam and politico-military foundation
   Religion, power and rule
   Status of non-believer
   Concept and history of Jihad in a closer look
   Polarization of religious interpretation on Jihad

VI. Measures on the religious side of terrorism and their critics
   Is economic aid relevant?
   Is democratization panacea?
   Is the dissemination of the “true” understanding of religion a proper way?
   Education: but what kind of education?

Reading materials:

For further reading: