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By Vartan Gregorian, President

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Report of the President

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Report to the Board of Trustees:

In anticipation of developing programmatic initiatives, the following report provides a brief survey of Islam, including its tenets, institutions, evolution and historical role, along with some insights into the current state of Muslim societies and the challenges they face.

Islam: A Mosaic, Not a Monolith

Although more than a year has passed since the attacks of September 11, 2001, most Americans still have such a sketchy knowledge of Islam that we probably need to keep ourselves focused on President George W. Bush's repeated reminders that terrorists, not Muslims or Arabs, are the enemy. That reasoned message, however, is often drowned out by noisy ones from some Muslim clerics who call America the "Great Satan" and some political theorists who interpret the war cries of some militant Islamists as the start of a "clash of civilizations."[1] Provocative messages always gain a disproportionate amount of public attention, but they must be carefully considered and put in context, especially in the aftermath of September 11.

It will surprise many Americans that Islam is the world's and America's fastest-growing religion. It continues to grow at a rate faster than that of the world's population. If current trends continue, according to some estimates, it will have more adherents by the year 2023 than any other.

Most Americans tend to think of Islam as exclusively a religion of Arabs. But Muslims are as diverse as humanity itself, representing one in five people in the world. Only 15 percent of the world's 1.2 billion Muslims are Arabs, while nearly one in three Muslims lives on the Indian subcontinent. The largest Muslim nation is Indonesia, with 160 million Muslims among its 200 million people. Muslims represent the majority population in more than 50 nations, and they also constitute important minorities in many other countries. Muslims comprise at least 10 percent of the Russian Federation's popula-

tion, 3 percent of China's population and 3 to 4 percent of Europe's population. Islam is the second largest religion in France and the third largest in both Germany and Great Britain. Although estimates vary widely, Muslims represent 1 or 2 percent of the United States population, and some say there are more Muslims than Jews or Episcopalians in America. Religious, cultural and population centers for Muslims, then, are no longer limited to such places as Mecca, Cairo, Baghdad, Teheran, Islamabad, Kuala Lumpur, Jakarta, Fez and Damascus—they also include Paris, Berlin, London and now New York, Detroit, Los Angeles and Washington, D.C.[2]

Many Americans do not know that there are Christian Arabs as well as Muslim Arabs. Indeed, some of the oldest Christian churches—including the Coptic Orthodox, Jacobite and Maronite churches—rose, functioned, and still do, in Arab countries.

Given America's role as a magnet for immigrants, it is not surprising that the United States is one of the best reflections of Muslim diversity. "It is of the greatest interest and significance that the Muslim *umma*, or community, of North America is as nearly a microcosm of the global umma as has ever occurred since Islam became a major religion," writes Lawrence H. Mamiya.[3] American Muslims bring a rich ethnic heritage from South Asian countries such as India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Afghanistan; Southeast Asian countries such as Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines; all Arab nations, Iran and Turkey. American Muslims also add their African, Caribbean and European heritage to the nation's mix.[4]

With the United States currently being the world's sole military and economic superpower, I believe that we as a society have a responsibility—for our own sake as well as for others'—to know the complex nature of the world, its incredibly rich variety of races, nations, tribes, languages, economies, cultures and religions. Today, of course, Islam has become one of the major topics of discussion and controversy in the United States and elsewhere. Yet there is a disconnection between our passions about Islam and our knowledge of it.

It has become essential for us to understand Islam as a religion, its unity, diversity and culture—and to appreciate the legacy of Islamic civilizations, their role in the development of modern civilizations, the roles of Muslim nations and the challenges they face, and their future place and role in the world. Of course, this is much easier said than done, especially because in America today there is unfortunately no deep national commitment to history and heritage—not our own, and certainly not that of the world at large.

A Survey of Islam

To understand Islam, one has to appreciate the central role of Prophet Muhammad ibn Abdallah (570–632) in the formation and propagation of Islam as a religion. Muhammad was an Arab merchant, respected and wealthy, who belonged to the Qureish tribe in Mecca, then a great trading and religious center of pagan Arabia. His father had died before his birth, and his mother died in his early childhood. He was brought up by his grandfather and, after his death, by his uncle, Abu Talib, whose son Ali ibn Abi Talib became the Prophet's first disciple and later his son-in-law.

Muslims believe that Muhammad, following God's instructions through the Archangel

Gabriel, called humanity to a faith acknowledging *Allah*. Contrary to what many believe, Allah was not a new god, but simply the Arabic word for God—the God of Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad. According to Muslim tradition, the Prophet Muhammad brought a message of continuity with Judaism and Christianity to the polytheistic tribes of Arabia. His message was an uncompromising, non-idolatrous monotheism. The faith was *Islam*, the Arabic verb meaning "surrender" or "submission," as in surrendering to God's will. (Qur'an: "With God, the religion is Islam" and "It is a cult of your father, Abraham. He was the one who named you Muslims.")[5] *Muslim* is the active participle of the verb islam, meaning "I surrender."

In 622, having challenged the polytheist practices in Mecca, Muhammad fled for safety to Yatrib, subsequently named Medina, the City of the Prophet. This event, called the *Hijra*, marks the start of the Islamic era and of the Islamic calendar—2002 A.D. is 1423 A.H. or Anno Hegirae, the Year of the Hijra.[1]

Islam, like Judaism and Christianity, is a prophetic religion. It, too, emphasizes God's relationship to humanity and reveals God's will through the medium of prophets—with warnings of punishment that will befall those who reject the divine message or are guilty of the cardinal sin of idolatry. (The Qur'an: "Say ye: we believe in Allah, and the revelation given to us, and to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, and all the tribes. And, to that given to Moses and Jesus, and that given to [all] prophets from their Lord. We make no difference between one and another of them.")[6]

Muslims believe that the Prophet Muhammad received divine revelations from 610, starting in the ninth lunar month, *Ramadan*, until his death in 632 and that these oracles were transcribed during his lifetime and, within subsequent decades, were officially collected in the *Qur'an*, from the Arabic verb *qara'a*, meaning to recite, read or transmit. The Qur'an, which Muslims consider to be a supernatural text, has 114 chapters, *suras*, of varying lengths, from 3 to 286 lines, and they are arranged not in chronological or narrative order, but rather by their length, with the longest chapter near the beginning and the shortest chapter last.[7] Many non-Muslims will be surprised, on reading the Qur'an, to see the numerous references to biblical stories and figures. Writing about the universality of the Qur'an, the scholar Mohamed Talbi refers to a saying attributed to the Prophet Muhammad that the Qur'an is "God's Banquet," to which everyone is invited, but not obligated to attend—people should come to him out of love, not compulsion.[II] Muslims consider the Qur'an to be the revealed and eternal Word of God and believe that the Qur'an "completes and perfects" the revelations given to earlier prophets, including Moses and Jesus. Muslims maintain that Muhammad was the greatest prophet and that he was the last one.

Muslims also believe that since God spoke to Muhammad through the Archangel Gabriel in Arabic, translations of the Qur'an are hence considered to be mere "interpretations." Even though the vast majority of Muslims do not understand Arabic, only the original Arabic is used in Muslim prayers in the belief that the

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[1] Year 1 on the Muslim calendar starts with the Hijra, which is assumed to have taken place on July 16, 622, in the Julian calendar. Although 1,380 years (2002 minus 622) have passed in the Christian calendar, 1,423 years have passed in the Islamic lunar calendar, because its year is consistently shorter (by about 11 days) than the year used by the Gregorian calendar. The Islamic calendar, used primarily for religious purposes except in Saudi Arabia and some other countries, cannot be accurately printed in advance because it is based on human sightings of the lunar crescent, which vary depending on the observer's location, atmospheric conditions and local weather.

faithful can experience the presence of God by reading the Qur'an aloud. Some of the oldest surviving copies of the Qur'an apparently date from the start of the eighth century, but more than a thousand years passed before questions of spelling, structure of the text and rules for reading were finally formalized with its publication in Cairo between 1919 and 1928.[8]

The fundamental principles of Islam are *Towhid*, unity of God; *Nowbowat*, belief in the prophetic mission of Muhammad; and *Ma'ad*, belief in the day of judgment and resurrection. In addition, Islam has five cardinal tenets, called the *Pillars of Faith*, which all Muslims must observe. They must:

• bear witness, *Shihada*, that "there is no God but God, and Muhammad is his Prophet."

• pray five times a day as a regular reminder of their commitment to Islam. To symbolize the unity of the faithful, the earliest Muslims oriented their prayers toward Jerusalem and, later on, toward Mecca. Muslims must prostrate themselves in prayer, repeatedly touching their foreheads to the ground, to dispel arrogance and promote humility.

• give a portion of their income as tax, *zakat*, and one-fifth of their income, *khoums*, to the poor. The zakat, meaning "purification," is based on the concept that a society cannot be pure as long as there is hunger and misery.

• fast during the day for the whole month of Ramadan to experience hunger—that most visceral suffering of the poor.

• make at least one pilgrimage to Mecca, if physically and financially able.

In addition to the Qur'an and its Five Pillars, the study of Prophet Muhammad's life, known as the *sunna*, became a part of the Islamic faith, law and theology. This occurred because Muhammad was considered to be the Perfect Man, and though he was not deemed divine, his life eventually became a source of inspiration and a guide to practicing Muslims. "By imitating the smallest details of his external life and by reproducing the way he ate, washed, loved, spoke and prayed, Muslims hoped to be able to acquire his interior attitude of perfect surrender to God," writes Karen Armstrong.[9]

The sunna, the oral history of the Prophet, is the second most important source of Islamic law, after the Qur'an. The third source is the *hadith*, which consists of thousands of references to Prophet Muhammad's sayings and teachings that are documented through a reconstructed, uninterrupted chain of people, traced to his immediate family and entourage. The entire body of Islamic law is called the *Sharia*, or "the straight path to God." The Sharia has five main sources: the Qur'an, the sunna, the hadith, legal analogies based on the Qur'an and the hadith, and legal decisions that arise from consensus, in the belief that God would not allow the whole community to go astray.[10] (Some strict schools of Islamic law do not accord the latter two sources or even the hadith much weight.)

II Talbi also writes that unlike some other religions, Islam does not blame Eve for Adam's alienation from God. There was no temptress, no concept of original sin—hence, a woman did not cause the fall of humanity. There were no serpents dividing men and women. In the Qur'an, Talbi points out, God created man and woman as *zawjaha*, a couple, one entity with the same soul. Talbi questions the interpretation of a line in the Qur'an that is often used to justify men having authority over women, and he also points out there is no Qur'anic obligation for women to cover their hair. The Qur'an asks that both men and women live decent, virtuous lives and that both enjoy the same justice. *See* Mohamed Talbi, *Universalité du Coran* (Arles: Actes Sud, 2002), pp. 7, 17, 22, 44, 47, 48. For a revisionist and modern interpretation of the position of women in Islam, *see* Fatima Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam* (Reading, Mass: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1991). *See also* B.F. Musallam, *Sex and Society in Islam: Birth Control before the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), for a provocative account of the impact of birth control on the social, economic and demographic history of Islamic society.

The Qur'an singles out Jews and Christians as "People of the Book" and sets them apart from non-believers. After all, Jews and Christians, like Muslims, worshiped the transcendent God of Abraham. But the "Book" mentioned is not the Bible; it refers to a heavenly text, written by God, of which the Qur'an, according to Muslims, is the only perfect manifestation.[11]

As in Judaism and Christianity, Abraham, *Ibrahim*, occupies a central place in Islam. Abraham is at the root of all three religions: just as Jews trace their lineage to Abraham and his wife, Sarah, through their son, Isaac, the Arabs trace their genealogy to Abraham and Hagar—Sarah's Egyptian maid—through their son, Ishmael.[12] In the Qur'an, Abraham is recognized as the first Muslim because he surrendered to God rather than accept the idolatrous religion of his parents. There are more than 60 references to Abraham in the Qur'an, and he is called *Hanif*, a "True Monotheist," *Khalil*, a "Friend of God," and even Umma, "Muslim community," for initially he was the entire faith community. In every Muslim prayer, Ibrahim is mentioned.[13] Muslims believe that it was Abraham and Ishmael, *Ismail*, who rebuilt Islam's holiest shrine in Mecca—the *Kaaba*, believed to be the oldest monotheistic temple, which some Muslim traditions trace to Adam. The cube-shaped Kaaba is made of stone and marble, and its interior contains pillars and silver and gold lamps; it is entered only twice a year for a ritual cleansing ceremony.[14]

Moses is also considered to be a great prophet. His confrontation with the Egyptian pharaoh, his miracles in the desert and his ascension to the mountain to receive God's commandments are all acknowledged in the Qur'an.[15]

For Muslims, Jesus, *Isa*, is a great prophet and messenger of God—the promised Messiah who brought "the Word of God and Spirit from Him." Jesus is considered the son of the "sinless" Virgin Mary, *Maryam*, who is mentioned more often in the Qur'an than in the Bible.[16] Muslims believe that Jesus preached the Word of God and worked miracles; but like Jews, Muslims reject the Christian concept of Jesus as the divine son of God. Muslims consider that blasphemy, for they believe there is only one divinity, God. The crucifixion of Christ is mentioned in passing only, and the Qur'an states that Jesus did not die, but was rescued by God and taken to heaven.[17] In the end, Jesus and other prophets will descend to be at the final judgment. Muslims also believe that Jesus' true message had to have been distorted by his followers and that the Prophet Muhammad was sent to bring the definitive message of God.[18]

Of course, there are many important similarities and differences among the religions. To mention just a few more: Jews don't accept the New Testament, but Muslims do. The miracles of Jesus, his virgin birth and his second coming are accepted in Islam, but not in Judaism. Both Judaism and Islam put great importance on living according to a system of law—for Jews, the law is the Halakhah; for Muslims it is the Sharia.[19] In Christianity, which has the concept of original sin, humans are born as sinners; but in both Judaism and Islam, sin is not present at birth and accrues only through sinful activity. Both Judaism and Islam share similar dietary restrictions, including bans on eating pork or blood, though the Islamic rules are generally less restrictive than Judaism's.[20] And, as with Christian and Jewish children, Muslim children are freely given biblical names: Solomons and Sulaimans, Sarahs and

Sirahs, Josephs and Yusufs, Marys and Maryams, Jesuses and Isas, Johns and Yahyas, and Davids and Davuds, to cite a few.

The Phenomenal Spread of Islam

The early spread of Islam is one of the most dramatic chapters in all history. By 632, when Islam was only decades old and just solidifying into a religion, almost all the tribes of Arabia had converted to Islam or joined Prophet Muhammad's confederacy. Within less than a century of Islam's birth, the Muslim community had grown by conquest into one of the largest empires—one that lasted longer and, indeed, was bigger than the Roman Empire.[III] By 712, Muslim conquests extended from the Pyrenees to the Himalayas,[21] from the Iberian Peninsula in the west to the Indus Valley and Central Asia in the east.[22] Muslims advanced into Europe until stopped in 732 by Charles Martel, king of the Franks, in the Battle of Poitiers in western France.[23]

Historians point out that Islam arose at the right time and place. In the sixth and early seventh centuries, a power vacuum emerged after protracted wars between the Persian and Byzantine empires had weakened both. As Muslims conquered Palestine, Syria, Egypt and Armenia, they promoted conversion to Islam in several ways. They gave polytheists the option of conversion or death (the Qur'an: "Slay the polytheists wherever you find them. But if they repent, and perform the prayer, and pay the alms, then let them go their way; God is all-forgiving, all-compassionate").[24] Jews and Christians were not required to become Muslims; however, if they did not convert, they were tolerated as subjects but not given equality and were required to pay a burdensome tax, *jizya*, ostensibly to pay for Muslim protection. There were also voluntary conversions not only for religious reasons, but also for the practical reasons of securing social and economic advantages in an Islamic society. For many converts, Islam might have had a comforting familiarity, embracing as it did monotheism and biblical messages that Judaism and Christianity had spread for many centuries before Muhammad began preaching around 610. St. John of Damascus, who first chronicled Islam in the eighth century, regarded Islam not as a new religion, but as a branch of Christianity.[25]

Historians emphasize that Islam also spread rapidly because of its extraordinary acceptance of diversity from the beginning—reminding us that Islam grew organically and not as an inflexible religion. In some conquered lands of the Byzantine empire, we know that the inhabitants had been persecuted, sometimes oppressed and heavily taxed by Christian rulers, and some minorities naturally welcomed the new Muslim rulers with their relatively tolerant religious policies. Islam also appeared to be far more accommodating than Christianity to other cultures—so accommodating, in fact, that apart from the Five Pillars, the practice of Islam varied enormously from place to place and often included practices and beliefs that were not consistent with the Qur'an.[IV] The rich legacy of Islamic civilizations, historians argue, is due in part to its exceptional absorptive quality and relative tolerance for different cultures and ethnic traditions of civilizations from southern Europe to Central Asia.

[III] The Muslim conquests began under the second Caliph, Omar ibn Khattab, and expanded under Muawiyyah ibn Abi Sufyan of the Bani Ummayah tribe, founder of the Umayyad dynasty (661–680), who moved the Muslims' capital from Medina to Damascus. *See* Karen Armstrong, *Islam: A Short History* (New York: The Modern Library, 2000).

Early Divisions in Islam

Unlike Christians, who consider the Church to be the mystical body of Christ, Islam did not sustain a centralized organization. Instead, Prophet Muhammad's *khulafah*, Caliphs or successors, provided leadership, but succession disputes frequently arose and divided—and redivided—the faithful. Religious authority became increasingly dispersed among the *ulama*, scholars and clerics, in numerous Islamic denominations spread throughout Muslim realms.

The debate over succession began immediately after Prophet Muhammad's death, for he had left no indisputable instructions about the rules of succession or whether spiritual leaders were political leaders as well. Since Muhammad did not have a son, one faction wanted the Caliph to be elected from the ranks of respected leaders in the umma, the Muslim community. A rival group contended that the leadership should be confined to the Prophet's immediate family and descendants. His closest surviving male relative was Ali ibn Abi Talib, who was both a cousin and the husband of his daughter, Fatima, as well as the father of two of Muhammad's grandchildren, Hasan and Husayn.[26]

We know from history that, in this instance, election won out over heredity. But before the century was over, much Muslim blood was to be spilled in civil wars tied to the widening rifts over succession and legitimacy. Muhammad's first successor was Abu Bakr, a compromise candidate because he was an honored leader as well as one of Muhammad's fathers-in-law. Abu Bakr was the first of the four "Rightly Guided Caliphs," as the first leaders are known. All four had been close companions of the Prophet and were considered authoritative sources of information about the Prophet's life and teachings.[27] Abu Bakr died a natural death, but the next three Rightly Guided Caliphs were all assassinated: Umar ibn al-Khattab in 644; Uthman ibn Affan in 656; and Ali ibn Abi Talib, Muhammad's son-in-law, in 661. These assassinations sparked violent conflicts or outright wars.

Indeed, the theological and political consequences of these struggles over succession were far-reaching. After Ali's assassination, *Shiat Ali*, the Party of Ali, created its own *Shii* branch of Islam. Initially, the break was over the succession dispute, with the Shii favoring a succession based on blood ties to the Prophet. Muslims who favored an elective system came to be known as *Sunni*, taking their name from sunna, which in this context refers to the customs, actions and sayings attributed to the Prophet and the first four Caliphs.[28] (Otherwise, sunna refers only to the Prophet's sayings and deeds.)[29] Early divisions in Islam ultimately resulted in scores of Muslim denominations.[30]

But calling this break a dispute over succession does not nearly tell the whole story. In his recent book, Khalid Durán notes, "The conflict between Sunnism and Shi'ism resembles that between Judaism and Christianity. Just as Christians have held Jews responsible for the killing of Christ, Shi'is hold Sunnis responsible for the killing of 'Alî and his sons, Hasan and

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[iv] As an example of Islam's flexibility, Hindus in the Indian subcontinent converted to Islam and continued to observe numerous class distinctions, ranging from noblemen to untouchables, even though such practices clearly contradicted Qur'anic injunctions for an egalitarian society. Caste systems continue to operate in Muslim India; *see* Celia W. Dugger, "Indian Town's Seed Grew into the Taliban's Code," *The New York Times*, February 23, 2002, p. A3. The issue of slavery also posed challenges for Islam. *See* Allan G. B. and Humphrey J. Fisher, *Slavery in the History of Muslim Black Africa* (New York: New York University Press, 2001), and Ronald Segal, *Islam's Black Slaves: The Other Black Diaspora* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2001).

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[Husayn]." *'Âshûrâ'*, for example, is a religious holiday for both Shii and Sunni, but while the Shii mourn the anniversary of Husayn's assassination, the Sunni have joyful celebrations commemorating God's mercy in delivering the Israelites from Egyptian bondage—Passover in Judaism.[31]

Islam also developed a mystical component, called *Sufism*, that drew followers—as well as fierce and sometimes violent adversaries—from both Shii and Sunni Muslims. Sufism is named after the coarse shirts of wool, *souf*, worn by early ascetics who were reformers and, according to some mainstream Muslims, heretics.[32]

Even a thumbnail sketch of each of the three main Muslim denominations conveys a sense of Islam's complexity as a religion:

Sunni Muslims

The Sunni represent the overwhelming majority of Muslims, but Sunni doctrine has long been a source of dispute. In the eighth and ninth centuries, there was a major theological conflict among the Sunni that has echoed throughout Islamic history. On one side, some schools of theology were led by *Mu'tazilite* scholars in Basra and Baghdad. They used rational proofs for God and the universe, as they sought to harmonize reason with Muslim scriptures, proclaiming—blasphemously, to some—that the Qur'an was man-made and was not an eternal truth revealed by God.[v] The Mu'tazilite scholars called for a rational theology, arguing that God has a rational nature and that moral laws and free will were part of the unchangeable essence of reason. The movement was the result of the encounter of Islam with earlier civilizations—Persian and Greco-

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[v] There is relatively little contemporary research about the origins of the Qur'an, and to some degree, research efforts have been dampened by both "political correctness" and fear of retribution—such as Ayatullah Khomeini's 1989 *fatwa* (decree) condemning Salman Rushdie to death for writing *Satanic Verses*. But a number of scholars have taken a revisionist look at Islamic history. *See* Patricia Crone and Michael Cook, *Hagarism: The Making of the Islamic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Patricia Crone, *Meccan Trade and the Rise of Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987); and Patricia Crone, in Francis Robinson, ed., *The Cambridge Illustrated History of the Islamic World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). Patricia Crone, a professor of history at the Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton University, says it is paradoxical that Muhammad, who many believe to have been an illiterate merchant in a remote and pagan land, would have known so much about Abraham, Moses and other prophets—unless, she says, one believes, as faithful Muslims do, that the Archangel Gabriel revealed this history to Muhammad. For a discussion of trends in scholarly work in revising Islamic history, *see* Martin Bright, "The Great Koran Con Trick," *New Statesman*, December 10, 2001, pp. 25–27. Bright's summary of revisionist conclusions suggests: "That we know almost nothing about the life of Prophet Mohammad; that the rapid rise of the religion can be attributed, at least in part, to the attraction of Islam's message of conquest and jihad for the tribes of the Arabian peninsula; that the [Qur'an] as we know it today was compiled, or perhaps even written, long after Mohammad's supposed death in 632 A.D. Most controversially of all, the researchers say that there existed an anti-Christian alliance between Arabs and Jews in the earliest days of Islam, and that the religion may be best understood as a heretical branch of rabbinical Judaism."

The *New Statesman* also quotes a terse rebuttal from Ziauddin Sardar, a Muslim intellectual: "Eurocentrism of the most extreme, purblind kind, which assumes that not a single word written by Muslims can be accepted as evidence." Suggesting that the Qur'an had human authors is, of course, as blasphemous to Muslims as the Qur'an's denial of Jesus' divinity is to Christians.

A new scholarly work, written under the pseudonym Christopher Luxenberg and recently published in Berlin (Verlag Das Arabische Buch), was recently discussed on page 1 of *The New York Times*. Luxenberg argues that the Qur'an is based on earlier Christian Aramaic manuscripts, which were later misinterpreted by Islamic scholars. Luxenberg notes that the original text of the Qur'an was written without vowels or accent marks, requiring Islamic scholars in the eighth and ninth centuries to make clarifications—and, he says, allowing errors to be introduced. For example, he asserts that Aramaic descriptions of paradise, which seem to be echoed in the Qur'an, portray paradise as a lush garden with pooling water and trees with rare fruit, including white raisins—raisins, *not* virgin maidens, as promised in the Qur'an and, nowadays, allegedly offered as a lure by militant Islamists to suicide bombers in Palestine. Other historians note that there is no sign of the Qur'an until 691, or 59 years after Muhammad's death. *See* Alexander Stille, "Scholars Are Quietly Offering New Theories of the Koran," *The New York Times*, March 2, 2002, p. A1.

For a Muslim response to questions of the Qur'an's authenticity, *see* Abdur-Raheem Green, "Uncomfortable Questions: An Authoritative Exposition," *Muslim Answers*, www.muslim-answers.org/expo-01.htm, and www.muslim-answers.org/expo-02.htm.

Roman—and especially with the traditions of Greek philosophy.

A few early Caliphs tried to enforce this rational approach as the exclusive interpretation of Islam. Had they been successful, they would also have solidified their authority not only as political leaders, but also as the final arbiters of religious law. But in 848, after several decades of Mu'tazilism being the Caliphate's official doctrine, Caliph al-Mutawakkil succumbed to widespread opposition from the ulama, the religious establishment. As the Caliphate saw its religious authority chipped away, the Caliphs' claim to rule as successors of the Prophet came under increasing attack from the ulama. The resulting loss of a central religious authority meant that, for Sunni Muslims, there would be many interpreters within the ulama at many theological centers in many regions.

Shii Muslims

Shii believe that Ali, the Prophet's son-in-law, was divinely inspired and infallible in his interpretations of the Qur'an and the Prophet's teachings and that only his descendants possessed the sacred blood ties and religious knowledge to qualify as *Imams*, the Shii's exemplary leaders.

Hence, according to Shii theology, called *Imami*, the line of succession passed through Ali and Fatima; and the Imam could be any male descendant of their sons, Hasan and Husayn. Difficulties arose after Ali and Fatima's elder son, Hasan, died in 669, and their second son, Husayn, along with relatives and friends, was assassinated in 680 in the Battle of Karbala, after challenging the authority of Caliph Yazid ibn Muawiyyah to rule and

asserting his right to the Prophet's succession. Ali's third son (with another wife), Hanafiyya, died in 700. Shii sects developed around each son, the *Hanafids*, the *Husaynids* and the *Hasanids*. Other denominations also emerged around other branches of the Prophet's clan.

Succession disputes were intensified when there was more than one male descendant; in one instance, Muhammad al-Baqir, the fifth Imam, denied his brother's claim to be Imam by asserting that he, like prior Imams, had a mystical ability to interpret the Qur'an and had also been anointed by his father. His brother, Zayd ibn Ali, challenged that view and developed his own following.[33] The *Zaydis* are one of three major Shii sects:

The Zaydis. They believed that the Imam could be *any* male descendant of Ali and Fatima's sons, Hasan and Husayn. The Imam was also expected to be a learned man, namely an expert in Islamic law, as well as an able warrior. But unlike some other sects, they did not believe the Imam was infallible. More than one Imam can be present, in different territories, and an Imam can be deposed if deemed sinful. During times when there was no Imam—as is the case now in Yemen, where most Zaydis live—spiritual leadership was vested in Zaydi scholars until a new Imam arrived.

The Ismailis. In the eighth century, there was a Shii conflict over which son of Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq should succeed him: Ismail ibn Ja'far or his younger brother, Musa al-Kazim. Each brother developed his own following. Ismail's followers—Ismailis—revere him as the last of Ali and Fatima's descendants. The Ismailis, unlike the Zaydis, consider the Imam infallible. Another major succession dispute, also between two brothers, arose in the 11th century and split the Ismailis into two major

Ayatullah, meaning "sign of God," is used only among Shii in Iran; it first appeared in the 18th century, invented by a king who, like monarchs everywhere then, coined and sold titles, including ayatullah.[35] (Ayatullah 'Uzma Ruhollah Khomeini, who led the 1979 revolution in Iran, was often called "Imam." This was an innovation because, unlike in Sunni Islam, in Twelver Shii Islam the term *Imam* refers only to the twelve Imams. Ayatullah Khomeini stressed the point that he was imam only in the sense of prayer leader and spiritual guide and nothing more.)[36]

denominations—one led today by the Aga Khan and another denomination known as the Buhura Ismailis.[34] Many smaller Ismaili sects appeared as well.[VI]

The Twelvers. While the Ismailis followed Ismail ibn Ja'far and his descendants, the Twelver Shii followed the lineage of his brother, Musa al-Kazim. The Twelver Shii had many conflicts with Sunni Muslims, who kept several of the Twelver Imams under house arrest. Many Imams were apparently poisoned as well, including the 11th Imam. The 12th Imam, a young boy, disappeared in 874. Followers of the 12th Imam—hence, Twelvers—believe that God rescued him, that he was "occluded," taken up, and that he will return as a messiah to restore peace and justice in the world. Until he returns, political and religious authority are exercised, fallibly, by the clergy; in order of rising rank, they include *mujtahids, hujjatu-l-islam, ayatullah, ayatullah 'uzma* and, the highest rank, *marja'-e-taqlīd,* the one who sets the norms to be followed.

The Shii, and especially the Twelvers, have developed a vast and complex religious hierarchy that may be comparable, in some ways, to the structure of Christian churches. In this regard, the Shii are also very different from the Sunni, who, somewhat inconsistently, have many religious leaders but no religious hierarchy of such complexity; they consider Islam to be a decentralized religion.[37] Indeed, it is this decentralization that gives rise to persistent questions about who has authority to speak for Islam.

Twelvers believed that religious principles could be found through use of God-given reason, though these principles could not contradict the Qur'an or sayings of the Prophet or the twelve Imams—for these sacred texts were believed to contain all the rules of reason. The Twelver legal school was developed by Imam Ja'far al-Sadiq, the sixth Imam—hence the name *Ja'fari* for the law school. The Ja'fari accorded equal weight to the behavior and

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[VI] A radical, militant wing of Ismailis did not shy away from assassinating Sunni leaders in the 11th century. They were called *Hashishin*—hence our word *assassin*—because, their enemies claimed, these fighters used the drug hashish before they attacked, always with daggers and often losing their own lives in the process, lore has it. (Karen Armstrong, *Islam: A Short History* [New York: The Modern Library, 2000], pp. 69, 87; *see also* Bernard Lewis, "The Revolt of Islam," *The New Yorker*, November 19, 2001, p. 61.) Another Shii sect, the *Druze*, in western Syria and Lebanon, is named after an Ismaili missionary, al-Darazi, who proclaimed the divinity of the sixth Fatimid Caliph, Abu 'Ali al-Mansur al-Hakim, who ruled in Egypt in the 11th century. The Druze, who were attacked by both Sunni and Shii as heretics, were so secretive that the tenets of their faith were not widely known until early in the 19th century (*see* Jane I. Smith, *Islam in America* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1999], p. 64).

sayings of the infallible Imams and to those of the Prophet. In addition, other ulama advocated varying levels of independent reason as acceptable in applying the hadith and Qur'an to issues of the day. On one side, the *Usulis* felt free to use analogies and rationality in interpreting the sacred texts; at the other end of the spectrum, the *Akhbaris* insisted on a strict, literal reading. The Twelver denomination has about 140 million members in more than a dozen nations today. Twelver Shiism became the official religion of Iranians during the Safavid empire in the early 16th century. Currently, there are also Twelvers in Pakistan, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain and other oil-rich countries.[38]

Sufi Muslims

Within its many denominations, Sufism developed in the 10th century as an early effort to reform Islam, in part by emphasizing spiritual rewards in the afterlife rather than material gains in this life, and in part by challenging literal, legalistic approaches to Islam and the Qur'an. Sufis seek to commune directly with God through meditation, ritual chanting and even dance (the *Mevlavi* Sufis were famously known as the whirling dervishes). Some Sufis even worshiped Jesus and others worshiped Muhammad—practices considered polytheistic and blasphemous to mainstream Muslims, who sometimes persecuted the Sufis.[39] Yet Sufis often served as Islam's most energetic missionaries in addition to their many contributions to Muslim literature, especially love poetry, in Arabic, Turkish, Persian and Urdu.[40] Khalid Durán calls Sufism Islam's "counterculture."[41]

This cursory description of Islam's denominations illustrates the wide and deep theological divisions within what might appear from the outside as a monolithic religion. These divisions, in turn, led to extremely complex and varied theological and political differences even within mainstream Sunni Islam.

Stopping New Efforts to Interpret the Qur'an and Hadith

The efforts of the ulama to formalize Islamic doctrine for mainstream Sunni Muslims led to the emergence of four prominent schools of Islamic law in the eighth and ninth centuries. The four Sunni schools made a religious science out of hadith by checking the authenticity of each link in the chain of sources of oral history and by resolving discrepancies in reports on the Prophet's words and deeds.[VII] The schools, still influential today, are the *Hanafi* (named after Abu Hanifah, who was born in Central Asia), which is now followed in parts of South Asia, Turkey, the Russian Federation with the exception of the North Caucasus, southeastern Europe, China, Central and West Asia and parts of the Middle East; *Maliki* (named after Malik ibn Anas), which is followed in North and West Africa and in some southern parts of the Middle East; *Shafi* (named after Muhammad ibn Idris al-Shafi),

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VII   This research is a daunting task, as suggested by the following hadith, which is a narrative about sins, that was passed down through half a dozen sources: "Hisham ibn 'Ummar said that Sadaqa ibn Khalid told him that 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Yazid told him that 'Atiya ibn Qays al-Kilabi told him that 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Ghanm al-Ash'ari told him that Abu 'Amir or Abu Malik al-Ash'ari who, by God, did not lie to him, said that he heard the Prophet saying: 'Among my people, there will be some who will consider illicit sex, wearing silk, drinking wine, and playing musical instruments as permitted. There will also be some people who will dwell near the side of a hill. Someone will deliver their roving animals to them, coming to them out of a need. They will say to him to come back tomorrow. God will plot against them at night and will let the hill crush them and He will change the rest of them into monkeys and pigs leaving them like that until the day of resurrection.'" Andrew Rippin and Jan Knappert, eds. and trans., *Textual Sources for the Study of Islam* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 74.

which is followed in the coastal areas of South Asia, East Africa, East Asia, Egypt and some parts of the Middle East; and *Hanbali* (named after Ahmad ibn Hanbal), which is followed mostly in Saudi Arabia.

The schools varied in their amount of lee-way in interpreting Sharia, Islamic law, and whether those interpretations could be made by individual scholars or had to be endorsed by a consensus of scholars.[42] The Malikis and the Hanbalis read the scripture and hadith quite literally, scorning the use of human reason as it was employed by the other two, more interpretative schools. The Hanafis used analogy and reason, especially in untangling conflicting statements attributed to the Prophet. The Shafis sought to concentrate on the most authentic oral reports and looked to find a consensus among scholars on interpretive rulings.[43] The issue was—and still is—extremely important, because such interpretations became part of the Sharia, which Muslims consider to be the divinely revealed law of Islam.

In the 10th century, orthodox Sunni ulama argued that there had been enough of this independent reasoning and warned that it could not continue without distorting Islam. They maintained that the Sharia was completely and finally assembled within three centuries of Muhammad's death and it was time to "close the gates of *ijtihad*," or rational interpretation. This argument gained ground and was finally formalized in the 14th century when Sunni ulama agreed that contemporary questions could be answered only by a literal reading of the Sharia and not by new interpretation.[44]

But many Muslim reformers, from the 11th century on, objected to such a "mechanistic," literal approach to scripture and argued that the schools of law were too rigid in defining Sharia. Much debate has centered around the hadith, with reformers questioning the vast number of oral histories, the often conflicting interpretations of the hadith and the ulama's ability to verify the Prophet's sayings as they were passed down through the ages by his friends, family and community members. Reformers in the past, and especially in the 19th century, attempted to portray the hadith as parables, not to be construed as religious doctrine or law—and certainly not to be used to diminish the exercise of God-given reason in addressing contemporary challenges. Different approaches to Sharia not only divided Sunni, but also sharpened the divisions and struggles between Sunni and Shii.[VIII] That is because the Sunni believe the Sharia is complete, while the Shii consider it to be evolving jurisprudence.[45]

Muslim Empires and the Golden Age of Islam

The early formative period of the Muslim empire was followed by the Abbasid Caliphate (750–1258), named after Caliph Abu al-Abbas al-Saffah,[46] who claimed descent from an uncle of Muhammad's.[47] He transferred the seat of power from Damascus to Baghdad and inaugurated what is known as the Golden Age of Islamic civilization. This Golden Age is no mere footnote in Islamic history, for, arguably, "Islamic" civilization was essentially human civilization—one that, like prior Greek and

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[VIII] In the 11th and 12th centuries, the Sunni in Afghanistan crucified Shii Ismaili "heretics," exiled Mu'tazilite scholars and burned their philosophical and scientific books. Sunni Seljuq Turks in Central Asia also sought to stamp out science and philosophy along with other "heresies." Mutual persecution continued unabated during the subsequent rule of the Ottomans, who oppressed the Shii, and the Safavids, who imposed Twelver Shiism as the state religion of Iran in 1501 and deported or executed the Sunni.

Roman civilizations, embraced and thrived on all human achievement. As such, we are just beginning to recognize the enormous influence that Islam's Golden Age had on Western Christendom, as W. Montgomery Watt reminds us:

> It is clear that the influence of Islam on Western Christendom is greater than is usually realized. Not only did Islam share with Western Europe many material products and technological discoveries; not only did it stimulate Europe intellectually in the fields of science and philosophy; but it provoked Europe into forming a new image of itself. Because Europe was reacting against Islam, it belittled the influence [of Muslim scholarship].... So today, an important task for our Western Europeans, as we move into the era of the one world, is to correct this false emphasis and to acknowledge fully our debt to the Arab and Islamic world.[48]

During those five "golden" centuries, Muslim realms became the world's unrivaled intellectual centers of science, medicine, philosophy and education. The Abbasids championed the role of knowledge and are renowned for such enlightened achievements as creating a "House of Wisdom" in Baghdad, the city they built on the banks of the Tigris River. At this Abbasid institute, Muslim and non-Muslim scholars[49]—including Nestorian Christians and star-worshiping Sabians—sought to translate all the world's knowledge into Arabic. Classic works by Aristotle, Archimedes, Euclid, Hypocrites, Plutarch, Ptolemy and others were translated. Christian monks translated the Bible into Arabic, and many Jewish philosophers wrote in Arabic.

Without these Arabic translations, it is interesting to note, many classic works of antiquity would have been lost. Furthermore, from the 11th to the 13th centuries, many Arabic translations of classic works were, in turn, translated into Turkish, Persian, Hebrew and Latin. The 13th-century Catholic theologian St. Thomas Aquinas, for example, apparently made his famous integration of faith and reason after reading Aristotle's philosophy in a translation by Abbasid scholars, including Abu Ali ibn Sina, known in the West as Avicenna.[50] Avicenna was an 11th-century philosopher and physician who wrote an encyclopedia of philosophy and some 200 influential treatises on medicine, including one on ethics, which were widely read in Europe. Abu al-Walid Muhammad ibn Ahmad ibn Muhammad ibn Rushd, better known in the West as Averroës, was a preeminent authority on Aristotle as well as a judge and a physician. This 12th-century philosopher is also known for having synthesized Greek and Arabic philosophies. Meanwhile, al-Farabi tried to show that the ideal political system envisaged in Plato's utopia and in the divine law of Islam were one and the same.

Not merely translators, the Abbasids collected, synthesized and advanced knowledge, building their own civilization from intellectual gifts from many cultures, including the Chinese, Indian, Iranian, Egyptian, North African, Greek, Spanish, Sicilian and Byzantine. This Islamic period was indeed a cauldron of cultures, religions, learning and knowledge—one that created great civilizations and influenced others from Africa to China. This Golden Age has been hailed for its open embrace of a universal science, no matter the source—believing that there was not a

"Christian science," "Jewish science," "Muslim science," "Zoroastrian science" or "Hindu science." There was just one science for the Abbasids, who were apparently influenced by numerous Qur'anic references to learning about the wonders of the universe as a way to honor God. Thus, reason and faith, both being God-given, were combined, mutually inclusive and supportive. Islam was anything but isolationist, and Abbasids connected to all cultural traditions, believing as they did that learning was universal, and not confined to their own domain. Non-Muslims—as well as today's doctrinaire Muslims who preach against "Western" values and "Western" science—may be shocked by the Abbasids' receptiveness to science and philosophies that challenged orthodoxy.

According to Ismail Serageldin, "The search for Knowledge ('Ilm) and Truth (Haq) are an integral and undeniable part of the Muslim tradition. The pursuit of knowledge is the single most striking feature in a system of great revelation such as Islam. The word 'Ilm (knowledge) and its derivatives occur 880 times in the [Qur'an]. But knowledge is not perceived as neutral. It is the basis for better appreciating truth (Haq), which is revealed but which can be 'seen' by the knowledgeable in the world around them. Indeed, believers are enjoined to look around and to learn the truth. The Prophet exhorted his followers to seek knowledge as far as China, then considered to be the end of the earth. Scientists are held in high esteem: the Prophet said that the ink of scientists is equal to the blood of martyrs."[51]

The Abbasids were not alone in the Islamic pursuit of knowledge. Rival Muslim dynasties known as *Fatimids* in Egypt and Umayyads in al-Andalus, or Islamic Spain, were also intellec-

tual and cultural centers during parts of this period.[52] Al-Andalus, captured from its Gothic rulers, became part of the Islamic empire in 714 and rivaled Baghdad and Cairo in scholarship. Córdoba, Andalus's capital, is believed to have had 70 libraries, including one in the Alcázar with 400,000 volumes. Religious freedom, although limited, helped attract Jewish and Christian intellectuals and, interestingly, spawned the greatest period of creativity in philosophy during the Middle Ages as 11th- and 12th-century networks of Muslim, Jewish and Christian philosophers interacted.[53] Andalus was a great literary center, and its poetry about courtly, chaste and chivalrous relationships has even been credited with helping shape European ideas about romantic love.[54]

Together, Abbasid, Fatimid and Andalusi scholars opened up new fields of study and significantly advanced the knowledge of astronomy, architecture, art, botany, ethics, geography, history, literature, mathematics, music, mechanics, medicine, mineralogy, philosophy, physics and even veterinary medicine and zoology. During the Abbasid period, mathematicians pioneered integral calculus and spherical trigonometry, promoted the use of the "Arabic numerals" 0 through 9, and gave the world *al-jabr*, our algebra. In science, the Abbasids revised Ptolemaic astronomy, named stars, developed *al-kemia*, our chemistry, and demonstrated that science was, well, a science. Some may also thank, or damn, Abbasids for *al-kuhl*, our alcohol, which they learned to distill but were subsequently forbidden to drink.

Education was a high priority in Muslim empires during this period. By the 10th century, there were thousands of schools at *mosques*, places for kneeling, including 300 in Baghdad alone. A number of libraries gath-

ered manuscripts from around the world, and schools that would become universities were established. Under the Fatimids, a Cairo mosque that opened for prayers in 972 eventually grew into the University of Al-Azhar, the oldest university in the Mediterranean.[55]

The Abbasids' great learning centers were not confined to Medina, Basra, Kufa and Damascus—and while Baghdad remained the cultural capital of Islamic realms from the 11th century to the middle of the 13th century, we see the proliferation of cultural and intellectual centers in such cities as Jerusalem, Cairo, Kairouan, Fez, Córdoba, Toledo and Seville—as well as in many cities of Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia, such as Nishapur, Merv, Bukhara, Samarkand, Balkh, Herat, Ghazna, Rayy, Shiraz, Hamadan and Isfahan. In other words, Islam never organized itself for action as a civilization except, perhaps, in its formative period.

Fragmentation of Political Power

But even in Islam's Golden Age, we witness fragmentation of political power. For there was not one, but three Caliphates—Abbasids, Fatimids and Umayyads in Spain—that ruled Muslim societies.

In 909, Shii Muslims of the Ismaili denomination established a Caliphate-Imam in Tunisia under leaders who claimed descent from the Prophet's son-in-law, Ali, and his daughter, Fatima—hence their name, Fatimids. As mentioned earlier, the Fatimids' and Umayyads' sponsorship of science and education helped make this period Islam's Golden Age. The Fatimids captured Egypt in 969 and established their capital, al-Qahira—the "Victorious

City"—Cairo.[56] The dynasty's rule at one time extended to the Mediterranean, North Africa, Syria, Iran and India, and it lasted until 1171, when the last Fatimid Caliph was deposed.[57] It was Salah al-Din Yusuf ibn Ayyub, a Kurdish general known in the West as Saladin, who defeated the Fatimids in Egypt and brought the region's population back into the fold of Sunni Islam. Later, Saladin gained fame for defeating the Crusaders and recapturing Jerusalem in 1187. Saladin's Ayyubid dynasty (1171–1250) ruled over Egypt, Syria and Yemen, and it ended when members of its army, predominantly slaves called *Mamluks*, revolted and created their own empire in the Near East.[58]

In 929, 20 years after the Fatimid Caliph-Imam was established, another Caliphate sprang up in al-Andalus, Islamic Spain. Abd al-Rahman III, who traced his ancestry to the Umayyad Caliphate that the Abbasids had overthrown, proclaimed himself Caliph. He assumed the title "Commander of the Faithful" and asserted independence from the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad and the newly independent Fatimid Caliphs. He and his descendants ruled as Caliphs in Córdoba until 1031, when the Caliphate was officially abolished as the central government collapsed amid infighting among regional leaders.[59]

In addition to Caliphates, other regional dynasties—kingdoms unto themselves—rose, fell and reconstituted themselves again and again over the centuries under new rulers. Notable among them in the early centuries of Islam were various Iranian and Turkic dynasties, including the *Samanids* and the *Shii Buyids*. The latter conquered Baghdad but maintained the Abbasid Caliphate.[60]

West and East Clash over Territory

Much has been made of the early encounters between Muslim armies and the Crusaders and the wars' impact on the course of history in the Middle East and subsequent relations between Christians and Muslims. The facts, however, do not fit easily into ideological patterns. We know that the Seljuq Turks invaded the Christian empire of Byzantium, setting off a chain of events that led to the Crusades—which history shows were mostly territorial wars camouflaged in religious garb and language and carried out under the symbol of the cross. Initially, the Byzantine emperor sought help fighting off the Seljuq Turks from Pope Urban II, who in turn wanted to strengthen his moral and political authority by capturing Jerusalem. Muslims had conquered the city in 638, and though they were generally tolerant of non-Muslims, one Caliph-Imam, al-Hakim bi-Amr Allah, had ordered the destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem and some other churches and convents in Egypt and Sinai during his 25-year reign, which ended in 1021.[61]

In launching the "holy war" against Muslims, the Pope declared, "God wills it!" The Church promised Christian soldiers fighting in this war that, win or lose, they would have all sins forgiven and a welcome in heaven—the kind of blanket guarantees that encouraged, and continues to encourage, "holy warriors" of every religion to commit crimes and atrocities. At the time, the Crusaders were known to Muslims for what they were: Franks, a German-speaking Christian empire that ruled present-day France. They led their armies into what would later be called the First Crusade. They captured Jerusalem in 1099, massacring, enslaving or expelling its non-Christian inhabitants—Jews and Muslims alike. But as we know, the Crusades rapidly degenerated into intra-Christian wars,[62] for Europeans were just as eager to seize and plunder the lands of Christian Byzantium as the Muslim Turks had been. It's ironic that, in doing so, the Christian West set the stage for the eventual collapse of the Byzantine empire and its loss to the Ottoman Turks. In 1187, Saladin defeated the Crusaders at the Battle of Hattin and recaptured Jerusalem.[63] As we know, in the Third Crusade, Saladin's troops surrendered, in a stalemate, to Richard I ("the Lion-Hearted") in 1191 on the Mediterranean at the city of Acre. They divided up the territory, with Muslims keeping Jerusalem but promising to accommodate Christian pilgrims.

The fact is that the Crusaders did not terminate the Abbasid Caliphate and its Golden Age of Muslim civilizations. It ended, finally, in 1258, when Baghdad was destroyed by the Mongol hordes, one of the world's most brutal conquerors, who created the biggest empire in history. Their territory extended at various times to Eastern Europe, China, Korea, Mongolia, Persia, Turkestan, Armenia, Russia, Burma, Vietnam and Thailand. Before reaching Baghdad, the Mongols had already destroyed many Muslim cities under the ruthless and skilled leadership of Genghis Khan and his descendants. To encourage their foes to surrender without a fight, the Mongols used "state-of-the-art" military strategies that included the destruction of all stored grain, the obliteration of irrigation systems, the razing of cities and towns, the systematic massacre of local populations, the stacking of victims' skulls in huge pyramids and the use of civilian prisoners as human shields—and even as human bridges, to enable Mongols to cross moats of newly besieged cities.

Rise and Fall of the Ottomans

The emergence of European commercial and political power in the Mediterranean in the 15th century coincided with the rise of the Muslim Ottoman empire. The Ottomans became the most powerful of western Muslim rulers, capturing Constantinople in 1453. They won battles with a highly trained corps of converted slaves and new weapons that used gunpowder. In their march through the 15th and 16th centuries, the Ottomans conquered Egypt, Syria, Hungary, Cyprus and Rhodes, eventually creating one of the largest empires in history.

The Mongol invasion was so catastrophic, it created a sense of doomsday for Muslims—after all, the faithful were being crushed by "infidels," creating a great crisis of confidence. At the same time, some historians have argued, the Mongol invasions, after initially paralyzing Muslim societies, subsequently provided a long stretch of peace—the so-called Pax Mongolica—across a vast stretch of territory that allowed the resilient Muslim societies not only to reemerge, but to flourish.[64] Following their conquests, the Mongols rebuilt many Muslim cities, created dazzling courts and, to some degree, picked up where the Abbasids, Fatimids and Umayyads left off in promoting science, art and scholarship.

Coinciding with the rise of the Ottoman empire, from the 15th century through the 17th century, two other empires emerged: the Safavids in Iran and the Mughals[IX] (Persian for Mongols) in India. Other emergent powers included the sultans of Morocco and the Uzbeks in Central Asia. Actually, even within these realms, we see the emergence of semi-independent dynasties in the regions of the Caspian Sea, the Black Sea, Central Asia, Afghanistan, India and equatorial Africa. The key point is that even at this height of Muslim power, there was no single Muslim umma, or community, and the Turkish, Arabic, Iranian and Indian realms had divided the unity of Islam politically, culturally and economically while retaining only the unity of the fundamental precepts and Five Pillars of Islam.

Indeed, it is one of history's great landmarks that the Mongols converted to Islam—a conversion that saved the Muslim power and realms, changing the course of history. Their conversion was also relatively swift. By the early 14th century, all four of the Mongol realms had adopted Islam.

The first major manifestation of Muslim military weakness occurred in 1571, when

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[IX] One of the most famous Mughal emperors was Akbar the Great (1543–1605), generally considered the founder of the Mughal empire. He is best known for his religious tolerance. He abolished the jizya, the tax on non-Muslims, built his capital around the tomb of a Sufi saint, invited theologians from other faiths to discussions and married two Hindu princesses. "No man should be interfered with on account of his religion," Akbar once said. He even promoted a kind of ecumenical faith that blended Islam, Brahmanism, Christianity and Zoroastrianism, but it did not catch on, and he himself died a Muslim. *See* Vincent Smith, *Akbar, the Great Moghul* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1917), p. 257. *Also see* "Akbar the Great," www.kamat.com/kalranga/mogul/akbar.htm.

Spanish and Venetian fleets defeated the Ottomans in a naval battle off Lepanto, Greece—a victory that was captured in heroic paintings by Tintoretto and Veronese. The second major loss was the Turks' unsuccessful siege of Vienna, in 1683. However, the empire's actual disintegration began with its first territorial concession in the 1699 Treaty of Carlowicz, when it ceded Hungary to Austria,[65] followed by a treaty with France and the Treaty of Küçük Kaynarca in 1774, imposed on the empire by Russia.[66] It was not the loss of territory so much as the fact that, beginning with the treaties, European powers began to obtain economic, commercial and political concessions from the Ottoman empire as well as from the Iranian and Mughal Indian empires. These concessions, known later as capitulations, became the engine of Europe's political, economic and military domination of the Muslim realms. European nation-states were also gaining dominance by modernizing their economies, using new military technologies and centralizing their political authorities.

From the 18th century on, then, we see the gradual stagnation or decline of all three remaining Muslim empires, which were hamstrung by their increasing insularity, their inability to control the flow of trade along international trade routes and their limited ability to take advantage of technological innovation during the Industrial Revolution. Through invasion, colonization or economic dominance, the British controlled much of India, the Russians defeated the Ottomans in Crimea, and France occupied Egypt.[67] The first two major challenges against the Ottoman empire in the Middle East were Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798 and the French occupation of Algeria in 1830.[x]

There are many other factors that contributed to the decline of the Ottoman empire and a number of theories about why it eventually fell. Among them:

• A decline in the effectiveness of the sultans and the quality of their administrations. While the early centuries of the Ottoman empire were marked by some extremely able and sometimes brilliant leaders, this was not the case in the empire's later years, when individuals who lacked the ability and strategic foresight of their predecessors came to power. Among Ottoman rulers, there also developed a sense of complacency and a belief in the infallibility of Ottoman institutions and the inferiority of "the infidels."

• A population explosion, which could not be supported by the land available for cultivation, along with the failure of land reforms that resulted in peasant unrest and social and economic disruptions.

• The failure of the empire to integrate various nations, peoples and regions into a cohesive whole. As a result, the empire remained a collection of different ethnic and religious populations (millets), such as Greek Orthodox, Armenian and Jewish, as well as semiautonomous regions (Arabia, Lebanon, North Africa and the like) without a common, unifying identity or unity of purpose.

- Financial and economic crises at the beginning of the 16th century, which led to the depreciation and debasement of currency, high inflation and unemployment.

- The inability of native merchants in the empire to compete effectively with European joint stock companies that had long-term strategies as well as reserves and the political muscle of the European powers behind them.

- The decline of the empire's military forces.

- The lack of development of cities to serve as economic centers and a base for the rise of a middle class.

- Perhaps most important of all, the rise of 19th-century nationalism in all the regions of the Ottoman empire, involving Christians at first and then, later, even Muslim peoples within the empire, such as Arabs and Turks.[68]

By the early 20th century, Britain, France, Russia and the Netherlands ruled over nearly all Muslim societies, with only Afghanistan, Iran, and a much reduced Ottoman empire retaining their independence.[69]

The Big Debate: Herodians vs. Zealots

The decline of Muslim realms created another crisis of confidence and raised many questions. How should Muslims challenge European colonialism so as to regain, or retain, their independence and political and economic viability? The debate divided along two basic lines: On one side, some argued that the decline was caused by moral laxity and departure from the true path of Islam; these traditionalists called for an Islamic revival. On the other side, there were those who claimed that Islamic societies had not suddenly declined,

but had long faltered owing to a chronic failure to modernize their societies and institutions; these reformers said Muslim societies could be rescued only by modernizing and challenging the West on its own terms. Each option had its risks. Looking to the past for answers risked greater stagnation. Looking to the future risked the loss of indigenous culture—was it possible to modernize without Westernizing? The contest between these two responses still shakes the Muslim world.

Historian Arnold Toynbee attempted to encapsulate the essence of this conflict between modernists and traditionalists not only in Muslim societies, but in all societies. In his 12-volume *Study of History*, Toynbee refers to modernists and traditionalists as "Herodians" and "Zealots," terms borrowed from the Jewish experience. In his theory of history, civilizations rise when people make creative responses to a variety of challenges, including geographic, economic, political and spiritual; and their continuing creativity sustains their civilizations. He theorizes that civilizations fall in a downward spiral, with creativity faltering, challenges not being met, anarchy developing and tyrants taking charge. Ultimately, these declining civilizations are threatened by more creative and dynamic ones. In response, Toynbee says, the threatened people typically follow one of two basic paths: If the Zealot leaders prevail, the civilization responds by isolating itself and trying to revive ideas and practices from an idealized past. If Herodians take the lead, the civilization responds by borrowing its opponents' best tools, synthesizing their best ideas and using the new tools and ideas to compete and regain strength and control. Naturally, in his view, successful civilizations are those that accept the Herodian challenge, while the others ossify or decline.[70]

Of course, not everyone agrees with Toynbee's crystallization of history into two forces—and certainly Zealots or traditionalists do not. But Toynbee is insightful in describing the intense struggles between modernism and traditionalism in Muslim societies that have been occurring, off and on, for more than a century. Moreover, both modernists and traditionalists look at the entire history of Islam, rationalizing past successes and failures in ways that bolster their current theological, ideological and political stances.

Clash of Modernists and Traditionalists

Until the 19th century, the Muslim struggle against colonial powers was considered the domain of secular political authorities, but gradually the struggle was joined by so-called national liberation movements. For while Europe exported colonialism and imperialism to Muslim realms, it could not avoid exporting also the ideas and legacies of the Enlightenment, nationalism, European institutions and political movements—liberal, conservative and radical. As such, the colonialists sowed the seeds of anticolonial movements, which used European ideologies against European dominance. Indeed, generations of nationalist leaders in the Middle East and North Africa were educated in European and even American institutions of higher education—including the American University of Beirut, founded in 1866, and the American University of Cairo, founded in 1919.

It is also not surprising that Muslim nationalists attempted to use Islam and the ulama as organizing tools to mobilize their societies against the colonial powers. (After all, the colonial powers themselves used religion as an effective tool to undermine nationalist and anticolonial movements.) Naturally, these alliances proved to be only temporary and expedient, especially because nationalism was then a new and not well understood concept—and a secular one at that. The idea of a secular nation, separate from the religious community, the umma, was, in theory, alien to Islam. But even though religion and state were not distinctly separated, they had been administered separately by Caliphs and the ulama for centuries.[71] Yet in their shared effort to combat colonialism and imperialism, the ulama and other traditionalists marched, off and on, under the banner of nationalism. As a result, across colonized Muslim societies Islamic revivals proliferated—and while they energized nationalist movements, the revivals also empowered the ulama, positioning them to assume greater authority. Hence, anticolonialism sometimes took on a religious fervor, one that Muslim reformers have often been unable to moderate; mobilizing the ulama was easy, demobilizing them has proven difficult.

Muslim history and theology provided both the necessary language and the justification for a struggle against the European intruders. Muhammad had preached that the umma, the Muslim community, must be totally focused on *jihad*, meaning "to struggle," to live in the way God intended, as laid out in the Qur'an. Throughout Muslim history, the concept of jihad has been used to encourage piety among individuals as well as to wage war to defend the faith or convert "infidels," or both.[XI] If there was prosperity in the umma, it indicated that Muslims were living according to His will; if the umma declined, it was a sign that they had strayed from the Qur'an. Any attack on this religious community, from within or without, was considered an act of blasphemy or an act of aggression that must be checked through jihad.[72]

At the same time, some 19th-century Islamic movements were more interested in reviving Islam than in overthrowing colonial rule elsewhere. Such was the case with Sunni *Wahhabis*, members of a puritanical denomination in the Arabian peninsula. Named after the 18th-century reformer Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, they also called themselves *Muwahhiduns*, Unitarians. They condemned many modern innovations[73] and advocated a strict and literal adherence to the Qur'an and hadith in an effort to practice Islam as they believed it was practiced in the seventh century and, thus, experience the strength Islam had given to early Muslims.[74] The teachings of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab represent the strictest interpretations of the Hanbali school.

In India, the most influential advocate of traditionalism was the Deoband school of thought. Known formally as Darul Uloom Deoband and named after its location in the Delhi region of northern India, the school is considered by some to be second only to Al-Azhar in Cairo as the most important center of traditional Islamic studies. Deoband was established in 1866 by Maulana Mohammed Qasim Nanauti to preserve the Muslim heritage against the encroachments of British colonialism. Yet the school grew from its orthodox Wahhabi beginnings into a more modern school, exhibiting sharp differences with other Muslim traditionalists—and even with its own offshoots in other countries. The Deoband, for example, supported India's secular constitution and religious pluralism.

The school also opposed the partition of the Indian subcontinent and the creation of a Muslim homeland in Pakistan. As Marghboor Rahman, the seminary's vice chancellor, recently put it, "We are Indians first, then Muslims."[XII]

Self-Determination Movements of All Kinds

Nationalist movements in the 19th century were not confined to ruling ethnic majorities in Muslim empires, and minorities soon became enthused with their own nationalist aspirations as well. It is not surprising, therefore, to see Greeks, Albanians, Armenians, Macedonians, Serbs and Bulgarians adopting nationalism as a revolutionary movement in pursuit of a national reformation, autonomy or even independence from the Ottoman empire. Nationalism was an equal opportunity ideology. It was welcomed not only by non-Muslim ethnic groups, but also by minority ethnic groups of Muslims who attempted to find autonomy or independence. Following the Greeks' success in winning independence in 1830, we see all the others heading toward autonomy.

What was far more controversial, however, was the rise of nationalism among Arabs, Turks and other majority ethnic groups of Muslims. Such a development posed a great challenge to the traditional concept of the Muslim umma as a theocracy, with the ulama as its propo-

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[XI] Interestingly, when it comes to preaching about war, the Abrahamic faiths are nearly on the same page. Muhammad's approach to war had much in common with ancient Jewish traditions and the writings of St. Augustine in the fourth century. In *The City of God*, St. Augustine wrote that war—when done in a manner that limits harm and shows mercy to the vanquished—can be justified by the overarching need of a legitimate authority to preserve peace, protect the innocent, repulse invasion or reclaim territory. Islamic and Christian traditions, as well as international law, agree on the principles of just war and its practice, says James Turner Johnson, author of *Just War and Jihad: Historical and Theoretical Perspectives on War and Peace in Western and Islamic Traditions*. "There is no culture conflict here," he says. *See* "Just War Tradition and the New War on Terrorism: A Discussion of the Origins and Precepts of Just War Principles and Their Application to a War on Terrorism," *Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life*, December 2001, http://pewforum.org/publications.

nent—for here was an ideological movement that was breaking Muslims' political ties to the umma, leaving behind only the religious bonds. Thus, nationalism became not only a unifying force, but a fragmenting one as well. For these ethnic Muslim groups were attempting to recreate their own umma—recognizing "national independence" both as a national right and as a Muslim right.

Moreover, in some of these nationalist struggles we even see Christians and Muslims joining together to transcend their religious differences and form new states or secular political parties. We witness a growing awareness of their past glories and talk about their "historical missions," their destiny and the uniqueness of their languages. People saw themselves not just as a religious community, but as a community that shared distinct cultural, ethnic, geographic and historical bonds. In Syria, Christians and Muslims cooperated in forging a national identity based on their common Arabic language and culture; similarly, in Egypt, Coptic Christians and Muslims collaboratively created a nationalist identity based on their love of the land and centuries of overlapping pharaonic, Christian and Muslim cultures.

Even conservative Muslims were reminded that there were historical precedents for bringing together such heterogeneous communities—after all, the Prophet Muhammad's first umma in Medina included pagan, Jewish and Muslim members. In India, too, we see inter-

faith, nationalist coalitions: the Hindu-dominated Congress political party included many prominent Muslim leaders who shared the aspirations for an independent India and opposed partition.

Secular Efforts to Create Unity Flounder

Not only do we see the emergence of secular nationalist movements that challenged European colonialists, but we also see the emergence of secular "Pan-" movements in Muslim realms between the 1870s and 1918. These movements were similar to the Pan-German and Pan-Slav movements in that they attempted to unite ethnic groups that shared a "common blood," language or culture for a common purpose. The Muslim "Pan-" movements included Pan-Turkism, which was an effort to unite all Turkish-speaking peoples, and Pan-Iranism, which was a movement to unite all Persian-speaking peoples. Reaching still further, others called for a Pan-Islamism, a secular movement that could bridge both secular and religious aspirations of Muslims worldwide.[75] To Muslim modernists, these movements were organizing tools to promote political freedom and create large ethnic units that might give them access to natural and other resources for greater strength, economically and militarily. But to the ulama and other traditionalists who supported these movements, they were merely expedient vehicles for unifying the religious community, to recreate the umma as a theocracy.

[xii] Over Deoband's history, more than 65,000 Islamic scholars have studied there for free, and its graduates oversee more than 40,000 *madrasas*, or traditional religious schools. In Afghanistan and Pakistan, Deobandism developed later, after partition of the Indian subcontinent. What we see in these countries is not the evolved form of Indian Deobandism, but instead the orthodox form of Wahhabi Islam with Talibanism grafted onto it. This highly ideological form of Islam was taught in religious schools, including one near Peshawar that trained many of the top Taliban leaders. *See* Kartikeya Sharma, "Scholar's Getaway," *The Week*, July 1, 2001, www.the-week.com/21jul01/life8.htm. *See also* Barbara D. Metcalf, "'Traditionalist' Islamic Activism: Deoband, Tablighis, and Talibs," Social Science Research Council, www.ssrc.org/sept11/essays/metcalf_text_only.htm; and Celia W. Dugger, "Indian Town's Seed Grew into the Taliban's Code," *The New York Times*, February 23, 2002, p. A3.

Sayyid Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani, an Iranian scholar and political activist, was the first theoretician of Pan-Islamism and Muslim modernism, which was a blend of Pan-Islamism, secularism and nationalism.[76] Al-Afghani had seriously challenged the authorities, both Muslim and European, since the 1870s.[77] He had warned about "the danger of European intervention, the need for national unity to resist it, the need for a broader unity of the Islamic peoples [and] the need for a constitution to limit the ruler's power." He ascribed the decline of Muslim power to a combination of European imperialism, autocratic Muslim rulers and a retrogressive ulama that saw no place for Islam in the modern world. Al-Afghani called for engaging as well as confronting the West, creating Muslim-style democracies and reforming Islam—to encourage the creation of new ideas, much as it had done during the Golden Age of science and learning in the Abbasid period.[78] In a "Lecture on Teaching and Learning," given in 1882 in Calcutta, al-Afghani said:

> The strangest thing of all is that our ulama these days have divided science into two parts. One they call Muslim science, and one European science. Because of this they forbid others to teach some of the useful sciences. They have not understood that science is that noble thing that has no connection with any nation, and is not distinguished by anything but itself. Rather, everything that is known is known by science, and every nation that becomes renowned becomes renowned through science…. The Islamic religion is the closest of religions to science and knowledge, and there is no incompatibility between science and knowledge and the foundation of the Islamic faith.[79]

These modernist ideas were not confined to the Ottoman empire or to the Indian subcontinent, Iran or Russia; they even flourished in such isolated lands as Afghanistan. There, Mahmud Tarzi, a modernist who published the first Afghan newspaper—*Siraj al-Akhbar Afghaniyah* (the *Lamp of the News of Afghanistan*)—argued in 1911 that European colonists were pursuing policies that propagated materialism and were designed to sap the strength of Islam. To this end, he said, colonists supported the activities of Christian missionaries, capitalized on and even promoted divisions among the Muslims, and instituted educational programs in their colonies that were aimed at stifling the revival of Islam.[80]

In Tarzi's view, Muslims needed to protect their common heritage by closing ranks behind unified political, cultural, economic and military strategies. He and others were inspired by Japan's stunning defeat of its far more powerful adversary in the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–1905. They reasoned that if a nation like Japan, which lacked many natural resources, could nearly annihilate the Russians' Baltic fleet and defeat its army in Manchuria, then there was hope that Muslim nations, working together in a disciplined way, could recapture their autonomy and power from the Europeans.

The Postcolonial Struggle

During the colonial period, Muslim elites—the rationalists, secularists and modernists, however one might describe them—attempted to build an infrastructure for modern statehood in anticipation of the eventual liberation of their lands. But they had an uphill struggle. Efforts to modernize Muslim economies during colonial periods were skewed by the needs

of the Europeans, who sought raw materials for European factories and a growing colonial market for finished products. In addition, there were internal conflicts, such as the ulama's opposition to modern banking, based on the Qur'anic ban on charging interest. As a result, Muslim countries, not unlike others in Asia and Africa, were not able to successfully meet the multiple challenges of the Industrial Revolution and its aftermath. Muslim nations lacked the capital, among other things, to modernize rapidly. In one instance, Egypt was headed for insolvency after completing an ambitious program—which included building the Suez Canal, 900 miles of railway and vast irrigation projects. Its precarious financial situation gave Britain, which had a controlling interest in the Suez Canal, a reason to protect its investments by occupying the country in 1882.[81] It was not until 1956 that Britain removed all of its troops from Egypt.

Since the 19th century, in spite of the debates between modernists and traditionalists about developments in Muslim societies, we have seen the emergence of many modern Muslim states—complete, of course, with museums, libraries, hospitals, schools, universities and urban skyscrapers, including the world's tallest buildings in Kuala Lumpur.[XIII] The record shows that Islam is not averse to science or technology. The problem is that there are not enough resources to provide Muslim populations with equal opportunities in education and employment and not enough political resilience in many governments to allow the people to participate in the political process. The debate is also about values—how to protect a society's traditional cultural her-

itage and practices in an age of globalization and how to develop a creative coexistence between modernism and traditionalism without Westernization.

Overall, though, most Muslim nations are considered "developing" nations. Despite countless attempts at modernizing along Western models through the 20th century, most Muslim societies have not been able to surmount barriers in worldwide economic competition. A major problem for modernizers, right up to the present day, has been the structure of their education systems. While colonial governments established some Western-style schools, many traditional Muslims responded by expanding religious schools, often with strictly religious curricula.[82] Most rudimentary Muslim religious school systems have long relied on rote learning and concentrated on the fundamentals of Islamic culture and religion, often excluding from the curriculum math, science, history, languages and foreign literature—in short, anything considered Western or foreign.

To put the problems faced by Muslim societies in perspective, then, one should be reminded that the problems they confronted, and still do confront, were not endemic to Muslim societies. Japan, Korea, China and other societies in the 17th through the 19th centuries faced similar challenges. They blamed their decline in power on the West, rejected modernism and sought isolationism as the best way to preserve their independence as well as their historical legacies. In Japan, for example, it was not until the Meiji Restoration in 1868 that modernization and Westernization began to take place. It is also interesting to note that

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[XIII] Earlier this year, in an illustration of modernity, Wafa Fageeh, a professor at Abdulaziz University, performed the world's first transplant of a human uterus with her team at King Fahad Hospital and Research Center in Jiddah, Saudi Arabia. Emma Ross, "First Human Uterus Transplant Performed by Saudi Doctors," Associated Press, March 7, 2002, www.canoe.ca/Health0203/07_uterus-ap.html.

Japan's intellectual dependence on the West lasted for only a generation after European-style universities had been imported.[83]

Today, many Muslims are cognizant of the shortcomings in their institutional development, economies, social progress and systems of education. Referring to primitive religious education in Muslim countries, Mohamed Charfi writes, "The consequences of such teachings on the minds of young people in most Muslim-majority countries have been disastrous." Charfi is a former minister of education in Tunisia, which began modernizing its educational system and curricula in 1989.[XIV] Also excluded from these schools in some societies are girls and women, which, of course, deals a major blow in their respective countries to economic and social development—not to mention to women's rights and the stewardship of the next generation of children.

Muslim countries have also been hamstrung by a shortage of quality institutions in higher education, especially their lack of modern universities with state-of-the-art scientific laboratories and appropriate faculty to train scientists.[XV] The combination of these factors has resulted in a woefully inadequate number of scientists in Muslim countries—by one recent estimate, less than 1 percent of the world's scientists are Muslims, even though Muslims account for almost 20 percent of the world's population.[84] The situation is aggravated by Muslim countries that send students abroad to study, as most of these students do not return, causing a brain drain—as well as lost opportunities for bringing new ideas back to their Muslim homelands. There is no doubt that the educational systems of all Muslim countries need to be strengthened and modernized, which includes encouraging academic freedom for teaching and research.[XVI]

A group of Muslim scholars has recently issued a landmark study about the dire situation in Arab societies. The study, "The Arab Human Development Report 2002," was published in June by the United Nations Development Program and the Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development. It is important to note that the study represents the "unbiased, objective analysis" of "a group of distinguished Arab intellectuals"—nearly 30 scholars in Islamic sociology, economics and culture. It was written by Nader Fergany, a prominent labor economist in Egypt. The project's advisory board included Thoraya Obaid, a Saudi who heads the UN Population Fund; Mervat Tallawy, an Egyptian diplomat; and Clovis Maksoud, who heads the Center for the Global South at American University in Washington. Some of the scholars' assessments about the status of 22 Arab nations:

XIV Writing about the dangers of traditional education, Mohamed Charfi has stated: "Students learn that, in order to be good believers, they should be living under a Caliph, that divine law makes it necessary to stone the adulterer and forbid lending at interest...only to discover, out in the street, a society directed by a civil government with a modern penal code and an economy founded on a banking system. Many Muslim children still learn at school the ancient ideology of a triumphant Muslim empire, an ideology that held all non-Muslims to be in error and saw its mission as bringing Islam's light to the world. And yet young people see their governments working to live in peace with non-Muslim powers. Such discordant teachings do not prepare children to live in a changing world. Osama bin Laden, like the 15 Saudis who participated in the criminal operations of Sept. 11, seems to be have been the pure product of his schooling. While Saudi Arabia is officially a moderate state allied with America, it has also been one of the main supporters of Islamic fundamentalism because of its financing of schools following the Wahhabi doctrine. Saudi-backed madrasas [religious schools] in Pakistan and Afghanistan have played significant roles in the strengthening of radical Islam in those countries." Mohamed Charfi, "Reaching the Next Muslim Generation," *The New York Times*, March 12, 2002, p. A27.

Indeed, Moulana Samiul-Haq, chancellor of the Darul Uloom Haqqania religious school in Nowshera, Pakistan, said in 1998, "Each and every person in this institution wants to be like Osama bin Laden." His school trained most of the Taliban leaders. Andrew Maykuth, "The Taliban's Version of Harvard: 'Each and Every Person in This Institution Wants to Be Like Osama bin Laden,'" September 5, 1998, the *Gazette* (Montreal).

1. Intellectual and cultural isolation: Arab publishers translate into Arabic only about 330 books a year, or one-fifth the number that the Greeks translate into Greek. To put this in perspective, during the past 1,000 years, the entire Arab world has translated into Arabic only as many books as Spanish publishers now annually translate into Spanish. There is also a "severe shortage" of new writing by Arabs. Filmmaking is declining. Internet use is low, lower even than in sub-Saharan Africa, and only about 1 in 100 Arabs has a personal computer.

2. Research and development is minimal: With Arab nations spending less than one-seventh of the world average annual investment in research, in relation to the size of overall national economies, Arab achievements in science and technology are very limited.

3. Productivity is declining: The growth in per capita income has stalled for two decades, to a level just above that of sub-Saharan Africa. About 15 percent of the labor force was unemployed. Forty years ago, Arab productivity was 32 percent of the North American level; by 1990, it had fallen to 19 percent.

4. Education is inadequate: While Arab nations spend more on education than elsewhere in the developing world, more than one in four Arabs is illiterate, and half of Arab women cannot read or write. About 10 million children (6 to 15 years old) do not go to school. Worse still, "There is evidence that the quality of education has deteriorated."

5. Wasteful of human resources: Women are routinely denied advancement in the workplace. "Sadly, the Arab world is depriving itself of the creativity and productivity of half of its citizens."

6. Poverty of opportunities: Due to its overall oil wealth, the Arab region has the (developing) world's lowest level of abject

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xv According to a recent report, "Higher Education in the Arab States" (Beirut, Lebanon: Regional Office for Education in the Arab States, February 2002), the 22-member states of the Arab League had a combined population of 240.7 million in 1999—and 68 million were illiterate. In 1997, the 22 Arab states had a total of only 175 universities, of which 128 were run by governments. Of the 175 institutions, 108 were established between 1981 and 1996, and about half of those new universities were in just three nations, Sudan, Jordan and Yemen. Cost of education per student in 1995/1996 averaged $2,444 a year in the 22 states and ranged from a high of $15,701 in Oman to a low of $515 in Yemen. "Many of the universities have barely taken off; many are poorly staffed, ill-equipped and can barely qualify for the name; many government ones were opened for political reasons, and most of the private [ones] for profit," the report states. Some old universities, like Alexandria in Egypt, are huge: 130,000 students were enrolled in 1995/1996. Curriculum is often limited: In Saudi Arabia, the most common field of study is Islamic law, there are no college programs for general law, business or political science, and opportunities to study the humanities are "very rare." Altogether, the Arab states had more than three million students in higher education during 1996; the vast majority were in bachelor-level programs, and about 12 percent were in two- or three-year programs at technical institutes. The number of students attending college has increased significantly since 1990; in 1997, the "gross enrollment ratio" was 17.3 percent for the male, secondary student population and 12.4 percent for female students, compared to more developed regions, where the ratios were 56.8 percent for the male student population and 65.6 percent for female students.

xvi In Islamabad, some medical students accused a professor of blasphemy, and he was sentenced to death in 2000. Akbar Ahmed and Lawrence Rosen, "Islam, Academe, and Freedom of the Mind," *Chronicle of Higher Education*, November 2, 2001, p. B11.

poverty (measured as incomes of less than $1 a day), yet more than one in five Arabs lives on less than $2 a day. "The Arab region is hobbled by a different kind of poverty—poverty of capabilities and poverty of opportunities."

7. Freedom denied: According to two international indices that are widely used to compare levels of freedom—including free speech, civil rights, political rights, free press and government accountability—the Arab region has the lowest level of freedom of any of the world's seven regions. "The attitudes of public authorities range from opposition to manipulation to 'freedom under surveillance.'"

8. Social and political stagnation: "The wave of democracy that transformed governance in most of Latin America and East Asia in the 1980s and early 1990s has barely reached the Arab states. This freedom deficit undermines human development."

9. High maternal mortality rate: Four times worse than in East Asia.

10. Population explosion: Currently, the 22 Arab states have a total population of 280 million; that is projected to grow to between 410 million and 459 million by 2020. Today, 38 percent of Arabs are under 14 years old.

11. Brain drain: Half of Arab youths say they want to emigrate.

In the study, the scholars conclude: "What the region needs to ensure a bright future for coming generations is the political will to invest in Arab capabilities and knowledge, particularly those of Arab women, in good governance, and in strong cooperation between Arab nations.... The Arab world is at a cross-

roads. The fundamental choice is whether its trajectory will remain marked by inertia...and by ineffective policies that have produced the substantial development challenges facing the region; or whether prospects for an Arab renaissance, anchored in human development, will be actively pursued."[85]

Flashback: The Impact of World War I on Muslim Realms

World War I, in a dramatic way, once again confirmed the answer to the big question: Is there a single, unified "Muslim world"—with one umma, under one Caliph, that transcends political and religious divisions in all Muslim realms? The stage was set in 1914, when the Young Turks of the Ottoman empire joined the Central Powers—the German and Austria-Hungary empires—against the Allied Powers—Britain, France and Russia.

On November 25, 1914, shortly after declaring war against the Allied Powers, the Caliph, Sultan Mehmed V (1844–1918), called for Muslims worldwide to join the Ottomans in their own jihad, or holy war. The proclamation stated, "The Muslims in general who are under the oppressive grasp of the aforesaid tyrannical governments in such places as the Crimea, Kazan, Turkestan, Bukhara, Khiva, and India, and those dwelling in China, Afghanistan, Africa and other regions of the earth, are hastening to join in this Great Jihad to the best of their ability, with life and property, alongside the Ottomans, in conformity with the relevant holy Fatwas."[86]

The Caliph's fatwa, legal decree, failed. The monolithic unity of Islam appeared to be only an idealistic abstraction. National, ethnic, dynastic, regional, cultural, class and tribal

interests proved stronger than the majestic appeal of the Caliph. Not only did Muslims outside of the empire fight *against* the Ottomans in the ranks of their enemies—the British and French forces and their allies—there was also a revolt of Muslims *within* the empire itself. Pursuing ethnic, dynastic and even religious agendas, Muslims in Arabia—including *Hashemites*, the traditional guardians of Islam's holy sites, and puritanical Wahhabis—revolted against the Ottoman Turks, charging them with corrupting Islam.

In the aftermath of World War I, the Caliphate, the last major symbol—or relic—of unity in Muslim societies, disappeared. The Caliphate, which had presumably provided Muslims worldwide with leadership links to Muhammad since his death in 632, was formally abolished in 1924 under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, founder and president of modern Turkey.[87] Subsequent efforts to restore the Caliphate, organized in India and elsewhere, failed.

The Challenges of the 20th Century

Following World War I and the defeat of the Ottoman empire, a struggle between modernists and traditionalists unfolded. On the modernist side, we saw the emergence of some secularized states, including the Republic of Turkey, where Atatürk plunged ahead with modernizing and secularizing the country along Western lines. Islamic law was replaced with Belgian and Swiss civil codes, religious schools were closed, the Sufi order was banned, the Gregorian calendar was adopted, the Roman alphabet replaced the Arabic one and citizens were even required to wear Western dress. Although Turkey's secular transition was abrupt and comprehensive, most postcolonial

Muslim nations kept European-style, secular legal institutions, with Islamic law generally applied only to family law and ritual. Also held over were the colonists' languages: French in North Africa and Lebanon, for example, and English in India, Asia and Malaysia.[88]

Modernization was pursued elsewhere, as in Iran. After a successful constitutional movement and armed struggle, Iranian reformers secured a constitutional monarchy under the reign of Muzaffar al-Din Shah in 1906, and they fought to preserve it under his successors. Following World War I, in 1925, Reza Shah Pahlavi established a new dynasty and imposed a version of the Draconian formula used by Atatürk to modernize. The Shah's aim was to make Iran a modern, secular state. He, too, imposed Western dress codes as well as a secular constitution, a national banking system, a modern army and compulsory education. He revised criminal laws based on French codes and commercial laws based on Belgian models. He also opened modern schools and the University of Teheran. But the Shah kept the Arabic script and Muslim calendar. He built museums, libraries and other cultural institutions to preserve Iran's Persian heritage as distinct from that of the Turks or Arabs. In order to Westernize without opposition from the ulama, he co-opted them through financial subsidies and administrative appointments—and occasionally did away with resistant clerics. His policies were continued under his son, Muhammad Reza Shah Pahlavi.

On the traditionalist side, Saudi Arabia emerged as one model for a religious state. In 1932, Abdul-Aziz ibn Saud united four tribal provinces to create the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia—a monarchy that uses the Qur'an and its script for social and economic equality to serve as the nation's constitution.[89] Most of its

citizens are members of the orthodox, Wahhabi sect of Sunni Muslims. Islam is also the official state religion in a handful of states, including Jordan, Iran, Yemen, Morocco, Kuwait and Egypt. In pointing that out, it is worth noting that most of the world's Muslims live in secular states with varying degrees of separation between state and mosque.[90]

Elusive Unity

Following World War II, the United Nations in 1946 ended the mandate system, which had left the territories of the defeated powers in World War I under the mandate, or direction, of the victors, to be governed until they were deemed ready to govern themselves. When the UN recognized independent states in Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, there was an opportunity for secularism, with a modernist agenda, to emerge as the dominant force. That was not to be, however, as the partition of Palestine to create the state of Israel in 1948 opened a new chapter of conflict in Middle East politics, as well as in Muslim politics more generally. Muslim states now had to struggle to balance dynastic, secular, nationalist and religious forces that were unleashed by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

But even as Israel emerged as a polarizing force, there was often more outrage than unity, indicating that nationalist, ethnic, regional and cultural divisions were deeper than any impulse for unity. The Arab League, which was created in 1945, could not manage these international forces or overcome many differences within Arab nations. While it became a symbol of unity, it was not an effective agent of creating unity. The Arab League was to be a forerunner of a Pan-Arab movement: some strides were made by several states and various

political parties to form regional, political, economic and military alliances, but those efforts were nearly all unsuccessful.

For example, in 1958 a number of Arab states decided to form political mergers, yet they quickly fell apart. They included the United Arab Republic, consisting of Syria, Egypt and Yemen, which lasted only three years (though Egypt used the name until 1971); and the Arab Federation, consisting of Iraq and Jordan, which lasted about six months before ethnic and dynastic interests tore it apart. In 1964, a plan to create an economic counterpart to the European Union failed to unite Algeria, Libya, Morocco and Tunisia. Even collaborative Muslim efforts suffered from disunity. In the Six-Day War of 1967, in which Egypt, Jordan and Syria joined forces against Israel, we see that shared national interests brought the three Arab states together. Their unity was short-lived. The war ended with a victorious Israel as the occupying power in the Golan Heights, the West Bank, Gaza, Sinai and East Jerusalem.

Their defeat and loss of territory, known as "the Disaster," did not unify Muslim nations, but sowed seeds of further disunity. It also reopened the debate between modernists and traditionalists as to which was the best way to combat not only Israel, but also Western influence. Modernists contended that the defeat demonstrated the need to shift the modernization efforts into high gear. Traditionalists argued that the defeat highlighted the shortcomings of secular nationalism as well as the failures of solely using Western technologies and institutions as models for organizing and defending Muslim societies. True unity, they argued, could be accomplished only through a religious revival.

Moreover, the position of the ulama, clerics in the religious establishment, was strengthened during the Cold War. They received support from conservative secular nations as well as Western powers, both of which considered the ulama as bulwarks against Communism. The ulama received additional support from the West, which denounced the Soviet Union for denying Muslims in Central Asia and elsewhere the freedom to practice their religion. Not only was it in the West's interests to mobilize Muslim states against the Soviets and Communism, it was also in the ulama's interest to oppose the godless "evil empire." These combined efforts lent legitimacy to the ulama and eventually contributed to their militancy.

But even while the ulama flourished, nearly all unity efforts, as political or religious strategies, continued to flounder. Only one tiny union from the postwar period, the United Arab Emirates, survived after being created in 1971–1972, with territory about the size of South Carolina. From the 1970s on, no other unity effort has succeeded. These aborted efforts include the Federation of Arab Republics, consisting of Libya, Egypt and Syria in 1972; a plan to merge Egypt and Libya in 1973; and Libyan proposals to merge with Tunisia in 1974, Chad in 1981, Morocco in 1984, Algeria in 1987 and the Sudan in 1990.[91] Instead of successful mergers, we witness other Arab states fighting among themselves for territory, wealth and power—most notably in the Iran-Iraq war of 1980–1988. During the Persian Gulf War, as well, we see most Arab states fighting Iraq under the United Nations banner, with no Muslim allies in Iraqi trenches.

 The fragmentation of unity was not confined to Arab nations, as we see similar divisions in the Indian subcontinent during its

partition. There were Muslims who wanted a unified India, and others who were fearful of being overwhelmed by a Hindu majority after India became independent.[92] Nevertheless, the British-sponsored partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947 gave Muslims a homeland in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan—but left more than 100 million Muslims in India. Although religion once again was used to rally support for the partition, Pakistan was founded and organized as a completely secular state—and, to emphasize that, the word *Islamic* was removed from Pakistan's official name in 1962. The partition, of course, was troubled from the start. Sir Cyril Radcliffe, who had never previously visited India, was given only five weeks to draw new national boundaries across a vast and bitterly disputed territory. The result was a tragic loss of millions of lives (including the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi), displacement of millions of refugees and the 1947 India-Pakistan war over Kashmir, which has provided the basis for more violent conflicts and war between India and Pakistan.

Despite the travails of the new state and the common suffering of both Muslims and Hindus, Pakistan emerged with great promise. Its leaders thought of it as a modernist and democratic model for other Muslim countries, with secular courts, schools and other institutions, thanks largely to Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the founding father of Pakistan. Speaking as Governor-General to members of Pakistan's first Constituent Assembly in 1947, he said: "Now, if we want to make this great State of Pakistan happy and prosperous we should wholly and solely concentrate on the well-being of the people, and especially of the masses and the poor. If you will work in co-operation, forgetting the past, burying the hatchet, you are bound to succeed."[93]

As we know, a subsequent war over Kashmir in 1965 did not resolve the territorial dispute, and the 1971 war over East Pakistan led to that region's independence as Bangladesh. Islam once again proved to be not strong enough to hold together this Muslim realm, separated as it was not only by geography, but also by regional, ethnic and cultural interests.

1970s Bring Muslims War, Revolution and Division

During Europe's colonial dominance in Muslim realms, the blame for a lack of economic and social justice—not to mention democracy—could be left at the door of the colonial powers. Following the end of colonial rule, delayed progress in the Middle East was rationalized by the unfolding of the protracted Israeli-Palestinian conflict. But that could not explain the lack of social progress in other Muslim societies, including those in North Africa, Iran, Indonesia, Malaysia and even Pakistan.

Great wealth from oil created another source of bitter contention between Muslim nations—where, for example, oil-rich Saudi Arabia today has almost four times the per capita income of Jordan. The oil wealth ignited a debate about whether natural resources belong to the entire umma or only to local populations, states and their rulers.

In the 1970s, the entire political scene changed in the Middle East and in South Asia.

After East Pakistan broke away and became Bangladesh, Pakistani strategists faced the grim prospect of their shrinking country being squeezed by a hostile India and, later in the 1970s, by an expansionist, Soviet-backed regime in Afghanistan. The insecurity of

Pakistan—a very young state—reached alarming heights. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Pakistan's president from 1971 to 1973, had begun a process of Islamizing the secular state's institutions as a way to consolidate his political base. Dangerously, he also initiated steps to develop nuclear weapons, following India's lead in 1968.[94] "There was a Christian bomb, a Jewish bomb, and now a Hindu bomb. Why not an Islamic bomb?" Bhutto said.[95]

Needless to say, the prospect of an "Islamic bomb" thrilled Islamist militant movements and confirmed militant Westerners' worst suspicions.

Under President Mohammad Zia ul-Haq, who succeeded Bhutto (and had Bhutto executed in 1979), the process of Islamization and nuclear weapons development continued. With some success, Zia neutralized American criticism of his nuclear program by citing the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and a need to contain the influence of the 1978–1979 Islamic revolution in Iran. In these efforts, Zia enlisted the help of the Saudis, Wahhabis and Americans.[96]

We should not forget that Bhutto's and Zia's dream of an "Islamic bomb" was not confined to Pakistan, prompting Muslim intellectuals such as Ali A. Mazrui to discuss the magnitude of this danger. "Islam in despair could be pushed to nuclear terrorism as a version of the Jihad. Such terrorism—probably aimed against Western interests—may well be the outcome of Western and Israeli insensitivity to the fairness and justice inherent in Islamic civilization."[97]

Pakistan tested a nuclear weapon in 1998, and by some estimates, there may be more than 100 nuclear weapons, total, in India and Pakistan today. Along the way, the issue became whether the purpose of Pakistan's

nuclear arsenal was to even the balance of power with India or whether it was to create an "Islamic bomb," one to be used for Islamist causes and for "rectifying" injustices faced by Muslims everywhere.

In Iran, we witnessed Muslims' pent-up frustrations explode into a 1978 ulama-led revolution, which in turn reverberated in many Muslim nations. Led by Ayatullah Ruhollah Khomeini, the Iranian revolution replaced the pro-Western monarchy with an Islamic republic in 1979. The revolution, the ensuing hostage crisis and America's inability to rescue the hostages all strengthened the prestige of Ayatullah Khomeini.[XVII] It was Khomeini who blamed America for threatening the umma with materialism and cultural temptations, and it was Khomeini who called for a holy war against "the Great Satan," the term he coined for the United States.[98]

On the one hand, the revolution became a source of inspiration to other militant Islamists, who saw that a resurgent Islam could "defeat" the United States, displace a U.S.-backed secular ruler and usher in a model for a religious state. On the other hand, conservative Muslim states and their rulers saw the revolution as a threat—not a religious threat, but a political threat that could create all kinds of new alliances, conflicts and even wars within the Middle East. In the West, many encouraged conservative states to contain the Khomeini revolution and, indeed, welcomed Iraqi opposition to Iran as a barrier to the expansion of the Iranian revolution. For if the revolution had been successfully exported to other Muslim countries, it would have lent geopolitical credence to the possibility of an Islamist threat to the West and its dependence on Middle East oil.

We recall that Khomeini fomented revolution and sharply criticized "decadent and corrupt" secular governments in Muslim countries. Bemoaning secularization, he once said: "Unfortunately, we have lost Islam. They have completely separated it from politics. They cut off its head and gave the rest to us.… As long as Muslims remain in this situation, they cannot reach their glory. The glory of Islam is that which existed at the beginning of Islam." Referring to early Muslims and his view of Islam's continuing mission, Khomeini said, "They destroyed two empires with their few numbers because they wanted to build human beings. Islam does not conquer. Islam wants all countries to become Muslim, of themselves. That is, Islam seeks to make those people who are not human beings, human.… Islam exists to correct society, and if a sword is unsheathed, it is unsheathed to destroy the corruptors who do not allow society to be corrected."[99]

The third landmark event of the 1970s, coming on the heels of the Iranian revolution, was the 1979 Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. It provided yet another opportunity for militant Islamists, conservative states and the United States to form an alliance of convenience against the Soviets. Their invasion was all the more offensive to Islamists because Afghanistan, by having defeated the British empire in three wars, was one of only a handful of Muslim countries that had remained independent in the age of imperialism. The United States, through its allies in the Gulf

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[XVII] The new Iranian government, dominated by conservative clerics, declared war against liberals, radicals and some minorities, including the followers of Bahai World Faith. The Bahai, whose members believe in the integration of all world religions, were accused of having collaborated with the Shah, Israel and the United States. Their assets were seized, and one leader, Ayatullah Sadduqi, declared the Bahai to be *mahdur ad-damm*, or "those whose blood may be shed." Robert E. Burns, *The Wrath of Allah* (Houston, Tex.: A. Ghosh, 1994), www.hraic.org/some_islamic_history.html.

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and Pakistan, provided money, logistical support and highly sophisticated weapons to *mujahedin*, "holy warriors," from many Muslim societies. Thus, the United States helped create what may have been the first Muslim legion to fight against the "infidel" and imperialist Soviet Union. The U.S. policy also strengthened the position of Pakistan as a base of operations and as a training ground for militant Islamists. In doing so, of course, the United States greatly strengthened Islamist militancy movements, including the Taliban.

A lesson from these three situations in the 1970s is that the internal tensions and geopolitical interests of Muslim nations defied external efforts at imposing any kind of unity scheme. Even the temporary alliance against the Soviets left a bitter legacy that included 20 years of civil war between Muslims in Afghanistan.

Religious Revivals

Along with these developments, there was an ongoing struggle among groups of Muslim traditionalists. There were religious revivalists, who sought to revive a strict practice of Islam to bring about moral reform. Other traditionalists (to be discussed later) wanted to revive Islam as both a religion and an ideology—hence the terms *Islamism* for "political Islam" and *Islamists* for its adherents.

Islam's religious revivalists, much like fundamentalists in other religious revivals worldwide, often express alienation and anger about the "ravages" of secularism, perceived amorality and loss of "traditional values" in the modern world.[XVIII] To this list, Islamic revivalists add the desire to preserve their traditions and culture by opposing the homogenizing forces of globalization and popular Western culture.[XIX]

All fundamentalists—in the folds of Christianity, Judaism, Islam and other religions—typically call for returning to the roots of their religions and giving literal interpretations to selected passages of their holy texts and scripture. By their very nature, fundamentalists and revivalists consider their doctrines to be the truest and superior to all others; hence, they reject any ecumenical compromise or tolerance for other religious ideas as an unacceptable form of moral relativism.

[XVIII] This contemporary religious revival era began, some say, with concurrent fundamentalist movements in the United States and elsewhere (Karen Armstrong, *Islam: A Short History* [New York: The Modern Library, 2000], pp. 164, 165, 166; *see also* Karen Armstrong, *The Battle for God* [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2000]). As the United States has become more secular, the growth in membership among major religions has been disproportionately among fundamentalist Protestants, conservative Catholics and Orthodox Jews. So it is not surprising, as Michael Lind writes ("Which Civilisation?," *Prospect*, November 2001), that both Democratic and Republican candidates in the 2000 presidential election were evangelical Protestants and both said they had "found Jesus." Similarly, the Democratic vice-presidential candidate was an Orthodox Jew, who had once said that nonbelievers could not be good citizens. As Lind writes, "By the 1990s, right-wing Protestants, Catholics and Jews were setting aside their differences to wage political war on secularism and humanism," which he defines as a tradition in which humanists seek guidance in knowledge, history and science, not supernatural religion, to resolve social problems. Lind continues, "The extension of the political alliance of 'people of faith' to reactionary Muslims, who share their opposition to feminism, gay rights, abortion, contraception and freedom from censorship, is the logical next step.... Both orthodox Christianity and orthodox Islam are intolerant religions which divide humanity into believers and infidels." And both orthodoxies value faith over reason, Lind points out, recalling that Luther once declared, "Reason is the Devil's whore."

Fundamentalists revitalize religions and raise important questions about the legitimacy of secular laws, ethical norms and economic systems. But they tend to be uncompromising, rigidly doctrinaire and willing to roll back many of civilization's achievements, claimed by others to be progressive, including human rights, freedom of speech and intellectual freedom.

Much like fundamentalist movements worldwide, Islamic revivals also lack uniformity. Actually, there are a large number of Islamic revivals, which reflect the religion's vast array of denominations, sects and subsects as well as its members' specific ethnic and national identities. Islamic revivals, it is generally believed, surged after Israel's 1967 victory. Proponents say revivals are an inherent part of Islam, inspired by the Muslim belief that the religious community declines only when it strays from the Sharia, Islamic law, and that the Qur'an provides God's exact instructions for correcting immorality in private and public life. As the 20th century drew to a close, Islamic revivals had become an international phenomenon, growing from a grassroots movement into the mainstream of society—rich, poor, educated and illiterate. Illustrative of the depth of interest in Islamic revivals, an estimated two-thirds of all doctoral candidates in Saudi Arabia are now in Islamic studies.[100]

As mentioned, Islamic revivalism differs from the political movement called Islamism. While revivalists see the religious reform as an end in itself, Islamists see the Islamic revival as a means to a political goal—namely, the reorganization of the state, by peaceful or violent means, depending on whether the Islamists are moderate or militant.

Islamists: Mixing Liberation Politics and Religious Revival

Islamism is anything but a unified movement, as Islamist views range across the entire spectra of both religious and political thought.

Jillian Schwedler describes this well: "Islamism is not a single idea; it has been articulated in response to historical phenomena as diverse as colonialism, new forms of migration, the creation of nation-states, the suppression of labor, leftist mobilization and Western political and economic hegemony." She adds, "Islamists may be divided into radical and moderate camps, the former aiming to create an Islamic state through revolution and the latter willing to pursue their political agendas within existing (and often quasi-democratic) state institutions." Schwedler reports that "only a tiny percentage of Muslims engage in political projects that can properly be called Islamist. Far more identify with ideologies that are distinctly nationalist, socialist, communist, or democratic." [101]

Islamism, in effect, represents another political promise for "liberating" Muslim societies, joining other mass political movements that

XIX   In a March and April 2002 survey of Arab and Muslim residents of Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Indonesia, Iran and Pakistan and, for comparison, residents of France and Venezuela, Zogby International found high levels of approval for American culture, science and technology. In Iran, for example, 75 percent said they liked to watch American movies, while the French were the least likely of those surveyed to say they liked Hollywood. "It's not our people or values or culture Arabs [and Muslims] don't like. It's U.S. policy," James Zogby, the pollster, told reporters. "And it's not our movies and satellite TV that hurt America; those are helping us." Interestingly, younger Arabs as well as Muslims and Arabs who use the Internet had a more favorable view of the United States than their elders and non-Internet users. Yet very few of those polled said they approved of U.S. policy toward Palestine, including only 1 percent of Kuwaitis, 2 percent of Lebanese, 3 percent of Egyptians and Iranians, 5 percent of Saudis and Indonesians and 9 percent of Pakistanis. Support in France wasn't much higher: 12 percent. *See* www.zogby.com for reports.

have evolved over the years. As we have seen, the first hope was that secular nationalism would "liberate" Muslims. But while independence fulfilled political aspirations, it did not deliver social justice or modernization or usher in free democracies. Islamists say that nationalism sowed the seeds of disunity and conflict among Muslims by stressing the character and destiny of each Muslim society—instead of promoting a supranational Islamic unity.

During the colonial and postcolonial periods, as well as during the Cold War, socialism and Marxism were heralded as the only sure way of achieving these societal goals. But Islamists pointed out that local adaptations of socialism in Libya, Iraq, Syria, Egypt and elsewhere failed to fulfill their agendas. Islamists see socialism as being secular and materialistic, encouraging class warfare and the devaluation of Islam's traditions and ethical values. As an example, they cite the fate of Muslims under oppressive Soviet rule.

After the demise of the Soviet Union, capitalism and the opening of free markets in Eastern Europe and in Muslim societies were hailed as the next best way to bring about socioeconomic justice and democracy. Of course, free markets were no panacea. Islamists say that capitalism merely broadens the gap between rich and poor, disrupts traditional patterns of life and prompts a desertion from Islamic history and values.

As to democracy, Islamists cite its contradictions and the gap between theory and practice, especially in Algeria and Turkey. When election results favored the status quo, the elections were considered valid; when an Islamist party won, the results were nullified. Such violations of the spirit of electoral democracy, along with other arbitrary practices, have given

Islamists grounds to denounce secular democracy, unregulated markets and materialism as utter failures or unsuitable to their societies' values.

Islamists consider secularism to be a political and social failure. They advocate placing politics under the aegis of religion—by replacing secular nationalist governments, as well as their laws and institutions, with Islamic ones. In this connection, Islamists have mobilized public opinion and pressured some secular governments—including those of Nigeria, Libya, the Sudan and Pakistan—to start replacing secular laws with Sharia, Islamic law, which regulates everything from banking rules to school curricula. As Muslim countries reintroduce Sharia, the Islamists hope that secular differences among states will begin to evaporate—and that Islamic law will eventually bring about a common ground and an international Muslim unity as well.

Islamist efforts advance not one, but many kinds of idealistic, moderate and extremist ideas. Moderate Islamists, for example, want a transcendent Muslim umma—confusing, as they do, Muslim solidarity with Muslim unity on all issues. As we have seen, such unity has never been achieved. If such complete unity could not be achieved in the early centuries of Islam, it will be even more difficult to achieve now by transcending all differences in class, race, ethnicity, culture, region and national identity. After all, even if some of the boundaries of Muslim states were artificially imposed by colonial powers, the borders have created their own reality after 50 years. And the fact is that since 1979, not a single Muslim state has followed Iran's revolutionary model.

Islamist extremists, for their part, have their own international agendas. Unable to unify any Muslim realm behind their militant cam-

paigns, they have attempted to form a confederacy of like-minded extremists in many Muslim countries. These extremists see themselves as responsible to no state, not even to the ulama, and they act as freelance warriors in the name of Islam. They hope to grow their movements by winning sympathy and support in Muslim realms, championing and occasionally fighting for popular Muslim causes in Palestine, Kashmir, Bosnia, Kosovo, Chechnya, Nagorno-Karabagh and elsewhere. Some of these militant Islamists are similar in some ways—including in the transparent futility of their goals—to 19th-century anarchists, who hoped their terrorism and assassinations would start a movement to overthrow governments, all of which, by their definition, were oppressive.

While they advocated universal goals, militant Islamists in the meantime have had some limited successes in pursuing narrowly focused goals within their own societies. The Islamic Salvation Front won elections in Algeria, but, as mentioned, their victories were undemocratically nullified by the military.[xx] In other Muslim realms, which have been jolted by population explosions and mass migrations to urban centers,[102] Islamism has presented itself as a viable alternative to ineffective governments in providing economic and social justice.

Currently, one of the most prominent Islamist groups is the Ikhwān al Muslimūn, the Muslim Brotherhood. It is reputed to be the Middle East's largest social movement, combining religious piety with political advocacy, along with the provision of a vast array of nonprofit services, including health clinics, hospitals, factories, schools, children's scouting programs and adult education.[103] The organization's membership includes a cross section of Muslim society, including well-educated, middle-class moderates. Its leaders are sharply critical of Western imperialism and capitalism as well as corrupt Muslim governments, but they work within the system and participate in electoral politics. One recent election slogan, "Islam is the solution," sums up the group's belief that social justice and economic improvements will require a social revolution based on an Islamic revival.[104]

Founded in 1928 in Egypt by Hassan al-Banna, the Brotherhood began with his aggressive message: "It is the nature of Islam to dominate, not to be dominated, to impose its laws on all nations and to extend its power to the entire planet." Even though the Brotherhood denied, and continues to deny, any involvement in terrorism or subversion, an attempted assassination of Egypt President Gamal Abdel Nasser was attributed to the Brotherhood, and Nasser subsequently jailed its leaders and banned the organization as a political party in 1954. But its members have gotten around the ban by campaigning in elections as independents, and the organization continued growing in Egypt and has formed branches in other Muslim countries as well.[105]

One of the leaders jailed in Egypt in 1954 was Sayyid Qutb, who is considered the father of modern militant Islamism. Curiously enough, he was radicalized by a 1948–1949 trip to the United States, which he took as an

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[xx] The Islamic Salvation Front's victories in Algeria resulted from winning a plurality of votes, only 3.25 million of 13 million votes cast. It is worth noting that only half of the Islamic Salvation Front's supporters approved of the establishment of an "Islamic state," according to a survey at the time. Outside of Iran, no Islamist party has won a majority of votes in any national election, Max Rodenbeck reported in 1998 in the *Washington Quarterly*. Even though Islamist parties probably attract many "protest" votes against mainstream parties, Islamist parties outside of Iran have not received more than 30 percent of the vote in internationally monitored elections in such nations as Yemen, Pakistan, Turkey and Jordan. Max Rodenbeck, "Is Islamism Losing Its Thunder?" *Washington Quarterly* 21, no. 2 (spring 1998): 177.

official in the Egyptian Ministry of Education to learn about our education system. He was infuriated by anti-Arab prejudice, but he was also shocked by women's freedom and church services—which he described as "entertainment centers and sexual playgrounds." When he returned to Egypt, he joined the Muslim Brotherhood.

For Qutb, according to Derek Hopwood, writing in the introduction to *Islam and Modernity*, "Islam and the West were incompatible, two camps between which coexistence was impossible. There could only be a struggle between believers and non-believers, between secularism, capitalism, and Islam. Modernization to him was the triumph of the West and the defeat of Islam…. He thought that the West, with its emphasis on science and technology, was obliterating the validity of religion."[106] Qutb predicted the death of capitalism and criticized all attempts to reconcile Islam with contemporary society.

Qutb was a prolific and best-selling writer—while in prison he completed a 30-volume commentary on the Qur'an entitled *Fi Zalal al-Qur'an (In the Shadow of the Qur'an).* He became a persuasive advocate for jihad, or holy war, as he used Islamic history to develop rationales for Muslims to overthrow governments they considered to be corrupt, Westernized or in violation of Islamic law.

His main concern was the "welfare" of Muslim countries, but he wrote polemics against Christians, Jews and "Western ways."[107]

Qutb spent 10 or 11 years in prison and, ultimately, was hanged in 1966 at the age of 60. His militant Islamist views, however, influenced an entire generation of militants, including the Taliban and al-Qaeda.[xxi]

Today, while the Muslim Brotherhood officially opposes terrorism, it calls openly for armed confrontation against Israel on behalf of the Palestinians. The Brotherhood has been linked to the emergence of some extremist organizations such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad.[108]

The Taliban's brand of jihadic Islamism involved calling on Islamists from around the world to create an Islamic state, based on the most puritanical and medievalist reading of the Qur'an, by leaders who had received only an elementary religious education in Pakistani refugee camps.[109] They gained control of most of Afghanistan in 1996 using religious discipline, tribal support, Pakistan's logistical and military aid and financial support from Saudi Arabia and the Gulf states. Even the United States welcomed the Taliban as a stabilizing force, only to be disappointed by their excesses and lack of any plan for strengthening the economy or establishing a representative gov-

[xxi] Robert Irwin, writing in the *Guardian*, connects Qutb with his disciples in the Taliban and al-Qaeda. Irwin writes: "Qutb seems to have rejected all kinds of government, secular and theocratic, and on one reading at least, he seems to advocate a kind of anarcho-Islam. On the one hand, his writings have exercised a formative influence on the Taliban, who, under the leadership of the shy, rustic Mullah Omar, seem to have been concentrating on implementing the Shari'a in one country under the governance of the Mullahs. On the other hand, Qutb's works have also influenced [al-Qaeda], which, under the leadership of the flamboyant and camera-loving Bin Laden, seems to aim at a global jihad that will end with all men under direct, unmediated rule of Allah. In the context of that global programme, the destruction of the twin towers, spectacular atrocity though it was, is merely a by-blow in [al-Qaeda's] current campaign. Neither the US nor Israel is Bin Laden's primary target—rather it is Bin Laden's homeland, Saudi Arabia. The corrupt and repressive royal house, like the Mongol Ilkhanate of the 14th century, is damned as a Jahili scandal. Therefore, [al-Qaeda's] primary task is to liberate the holy cities of Mecca and Medina from their rule. Though the current policy of the princes of the Arabian peninsula seems to be to sit on their hands and hope that [al-Qaeda] and its allies will pick on someone else first, it is unlikely that they will be so lucky." Robert Irwin, "Is This the Man Who Inspired Bin Laden?," *Guardian*, November 1, 2001, www.guardian.co.uk/g2/story/0,3604,584478,00.html. *See also* Malise Ruthven, *A Fury for God: The Islamist Attack on America* (London: Granta, 2002).

ernment—not to mention that they allowed Afghanistan to become a haven for al-Qaeda. The Taliban used sophisticated weapons and communications equipment—some of it left over from the U.S.-backed fight against the Soviet Union—but otherwise their outlook was starkly anti-modern.

The Taliban hung televisions from trees. They banned music, picnics, wedding parties, pet birds, paper bags, the wearing of white socks, the shaving of beards, magazines, newspapers, most books and children's toys. They closed schools for girls and banned women from working outside their homes. They cut off women's thumbs for wearing nail polish.[110] They executed Muslims who left "the faith," including members of the Shii denomination called *Hazaras*. UNICEF reported that half of Afghan children had personally witnessed torture.[111] This "human rights catastrophe," as Amnesty International called it, was carried out in the name of purifying Islam as a theocracy.[112]

But even before September 11, the Taliban had been rejected as extremist by mainstream Muslim nations. Of the 56 member nations in the Organization of the Islamic Conference, only 3 states recognized the Taliban—Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates—and by November 2001, none did.[113] At one time, Iran even threatened to invade Afghanistan and eliminate the Taliban for having persecuted Shii citizens and killed Iranian diplomats, but international pressure, including that from the United States, prevented it.[114]

For many people, especially Westerners, it is often difficult to distinguish between activist *Islamist* parties, which promote Islam as an ideology in a theocratic state, and *Islamic* parties, whose traditional members want their *secular* political systems to reflect the moral prin-

ciples of their religion. In Indonesia, for example, Abd al-Rahman Wahid, the leader of one of the world's largest Islamic organizations, Nahdatul Ulama, won in the 1999 elections that followed the demise of General Suharto's military regime. By comparison, an Islamist party that campaigned for replacing secular laws with Sharia won only 1.7 percent of the vote.[115] For his part, Wahid did not advocate a program of Islamizing the secular system or institutions, and he subsequently left office according to a democratic process in 2001.[116] Nahdatul Ulama, founded in 1926, and Muhammadiyah, founded in 1912, are Indonesia's mainstream parties, with a combined membership of between 60 million and 80 million. Since September 11, these two relatively tolerant and liberal parties have been working together to refute the messages from extremist groups, including Laskar Jihad and its few thousand members.[117]

A Faltering Mass Movement?

As a mass movement, Islamism has struggled with its many competing constituencies and agendas. Starting in the mid– to late 20th century, according to Gilles Kepel, Islamism grew with support from three critical constituencies: intellectuals who promoted an Islamist theocracy; devout middle-class professionals who had fared poorly in the postcolonial period and wanted to rectify that by having a greater voice in an Islamist government; and large numbers of disgruntled, rebellious urban youths who saw secular regimes as hopelessly corrupt and unsalvageable.

The movement's greatest success was Ayatullah Khomeini's Islamist revolution in Iran. Islamist movements gained international momentum as Iran attempted to export its

revolution to other Muslim societies. The leading conservative force to stop the spread of the revolution was Saudi Arabia's dynasty and the orthodox Wahhabi ulama. After all, these Sunni Muslims could not afford to see a Shii model for an Islamic state gain momentum as *the* model. As a result, the Saudis began exporting their own model, which combined a secular monarchy with puritanical Wahhabism—along with generous financial aid for Islamist organizations, religious schools and social services in Pakistan, Central Asia and elsewhere. The Saudi strategy had the benefit of winning public support at home, in other secular Muslim nations and even in the United States—while at the same time encouraging Islamists to exhaust their energy for militant campaigns outside the Saudi kingdom.

The rivalry between Iran and Saudi Arabia kept the two distinct Islamist movements alive and, in a collaboration during the 1980s, the movements joined together in a jihad against the Soviets in Afghanistan. After the Soviet defeat, though, the movement fractured as its constituencies split because of their inherent disagreement over goals and strategies—with the youthful and battle-hardened mujahedin, "holy" warriors, wanting to violently replace corrupt systems with Islamic states, and the middle classes wanting to peacefully "paint the system green," as Kepel says, referring to Muslims' symbolic use of green, the color of the Prophet Muhammad's flag. In Kepel's

assessment, Islamism declined as a mass political movement as violence and terrorism spread around the world; as the Taliban in Afghanistan and another Islamist regime in the Sudan evolved into military dictatorships; and as Iran's electorate asserted its will by electing moderate leaders to ease rigid religious rules and promote liberal democratic processes.[XXII] The "high season of jihad," Kepel says, was ending in many Muslim countries between 1995 and 1997. To Kepel, the terrorist attacks on September 11 represented not a growing threat from Islamism, but the reverse, a symbol of Islamism's "isolation, fragmentation and decline." He acknowledges that Islamist terrorism still poses a threat, but he predicts that without public support, these extremists will ultimately fade away. It is an optimistic view, but one hopes his analysis is correct.[118]

Yet in the midst of these competing mass movements, we have seen the emergence of a third kind of militant Islamism, one that does not need a mass movement to accomplish its goals with terrorism. These are Islamists who have no return addresses. They have emerged when the vulnerabilities of our global societies and sophisticated technologies can be used to wreak havoc for specific, general and sometimes even unspecified goals.

We also know full well that the use and abuse of religion, including Islam, as an ideological weapon is not new and is not likely to go away. Even Lenin, in 1919–1920,

[XXII] Islamist political systems, after all, set themselves very difficult standards to meet, Max Rodenbeck has written. "The basic tenet of Islamism—that government should be accountable to God's rules—may ultimately prove the movement's greatest weakness," he wrote. "It is easy enough to point out other people's infringements of those rules. It is a far more difficult thing to observe them, all the time, yourself. Unless of course, it is you who defines the rules—but the history of Islam shows that no one since the time of the Prophet has been able to monopolize the interpretation of the scriptures that contain *shari'a's* rules. The cry that is so often directed by Islamists at governments—'Your way is not the way of Islam'—can be and is indeed raised by rival movements against each other. So has it been for fourteen centuries and so, doubtless, will it continue to be. And yet the practical message implied by today's Islamist challenge, which is that governments in most Muslim countries are not accountable enough to anyone, is well worth considering. These are governments which, in the words of Nazih Ayubi, tend to combine omnipotence with incompetence. In seeking to make them accountable to God, Islamism has also pushed them to be more accountable to their people." Max Rodenbeck, "Is Islamism Losing Its Thunder?" *Washington Quarterly* 21, no. 2 (spring 1998): 177.

attempted to use Islam as a vehicle for what was called the "national liberation" of the peoples of the East. During the Cold War, of course, the United States and the West used Islam to contain Communism. Iran and other Muslim nations have used Islam to promote capitalism and defend private property, with the ulama and politicians pointing out that the Prophet Muhammad was a merchant. We have also seen Islam used to support socialism and dictatorships—even to the extent that during the Persian Gulf War in 1991 the secular, socialist party of Saddam Hussein added *Allah Akbar*, "God is Great," to the Iraqi flag.[119] Later, in the mid-1990s, Hussein banned the serving of alcohol in public places and established a radio station dedicated to religious programs.[120] So it is not surprising that now there are many individuals and groups, both secular and Islamist, attempting to use Islam as a mobilizing tool as well as a vehicle for their particular political ideologies, beliefs or interests—however far-fetched they may be.

Strategies for Promoting Islamism

Parties that exploit Islam receive a wide audience for their messages largely because there are so many unresolved political issues left over from the postcolonial and post-Communist eras. Following the demise of the Soviet Union—and 150 years of Russian and Soviet efforts to dominate, marginalize and even eliminate Islam—Islamists found a great opportunity to fill the power vacuum in Central Asian republics.[121] Elsewhere, we have seen a widespread sense of outrage over the treatment of Muslims in Kashmir, Palestine, Chechnya, Bosnia and Kosovo. So it is we hear some militant Islamists say, essentially: God has given us many people, wealth and intelligence. We need to organize ourselves into a

great force, equipped with nuclear weapons, because that is the only way the great powers will help rectify "historical injustices."

In this connection, it is not surprising, therefore, that moderate and militant Islamists have seized on some major issues to galvanize support:

1. The 50-year saga of the Palestinian conflict, including the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and the plight of the refugees, has provided Islamists with a compelling narrative to win the sympathy of Muslims worldwide. Islamists have used that public sympathy to undermine secular Arab regimes, which are blamed for their inability to resolve the Palestine issue by defeating or containing Israel. Islamists also exploit the plight of Palestinians as a way to destroy confidence in the United Nations and the great powers, accusing them all of being unable or unwilling to enforce various UN resolutions pertaining to the conflict and the creation of a Palestinian state.

2. Kashmir—another blood-splattered, half-century-old issue—has given Islamists yet another tragic situation to exploit. They point to the "mistreatment" of Muslims and the inability of the UN and great powers to respond to the "legitimate aspirations of the people of Kashmir" by granting them the right of self-determination.

3. In addition, the presence of "infidels"—U.S. military forces—in the Arabian peninsula is a very sore point for many Islamists. They frequently portray the U.S. presence as an insulting, aggressive intrusion on the umma near the very home of the Prophet and holy cities of Islam.

Islamists dismiss or ignore all efforts by the United States and other Western nations to protect Muslim and human rights.[XXIII] Actually, Islamists argue that the "continuing horror" in both Palestine and Kashmir is due to an anti-Muslim "conspiracy" between the great powers and some of their "client" states—including not only Israel and India, but also pro-Western Arab and Muslim states. This "collusion," Islamists say, is what prevents a "just resolution" of these festering issues. And, in an extraordinary abuse of Islam, militant Islamists and non-Islamists, as well, have promoted suicide bombing as a form of martyrdom.[XXIV]

Making matters worse, Islamists are not alone in exploiting the Palestinian and Kashmiri issues. Various regimes in the Middle East and South Asia have used these hostilities as justification for vast military expenditures—citing the heightened requirement for self-defense or even the possibility of needing to confront Israel, Pakistan or India. But, of course, some political parties and regimes have used these issues to rationalize a military buildup that strengthens their hold on political power—and as an excuse for failing to address the socioeconomic needs of their people.

Clearly, a just resolution of the issues in Palestine—and an international order guaranteeing it—is crucial for the stability of the Middle East and the long-term safety of Israel. As President Bush noted recently, "It is untenable for Israeli citizens to live in terror. It is untenable for Palestinians to live in squalor and occupation…. Permanent occupation threatens Israel's identity and democracy. A stable, peaceful Palestinian state is necessary to achieve the security that Israel longs for."[122] Many people, even in Israel, have called for a Palestinian state, but many questions remain unanswered, including what kind of state and government structure the Palestinians want.[123]

Kashmir is another powder keg, and resolution of the dispute is critically needed to prevent a nuclear war between Pakistan and India. With these issues resolved, and, thus, the removal of excuses for excessive military budgets, ruling regimes will have to address long-neglected domestic priorities—or face the consequences of political upheaval.

That said, while the resolution of these issues would bring peace and stability, it would not immediately solve enormous domestic

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[XXIII] When Islamists condemn the "West's indifference" toward the plight of Muslims, they conveniently ignore American and European efforts in Chechnya, Bosnia and Kosovo. They also ignore U.S. support of Afghans in their struggle with the Soviet Union and the U.S.- led international coalition that rescued Kuwait, with its largely traditional Muslim population, from the harsh grip of secular, socialist Iraq.

[XXIV] Amir Taheri, author of *The Cauldron: Middle East Behind the Headlines* (London: Hutchinson, 1988), recently described the religious problem with promoting suicide bombers as Muslim martyrs. In "Semantics of Murder" (*Wall Street Journal*, May 8, 2002), he noted that Islam expressly forbids suicide as an "unpardonable sin," along with cannibalism, murder, incest and rape. As a result, Taheri says, the "apologists of terror" have stopped using *entehari*, meaning "suicidal," and have coined the term *etsesh'had*, which literally means "affidavit," to convey the idea of "martyr-like." They do not use *shahid*, the word for "martyr" or "witness," as it is imbued with religious meanings. Allah, after all, is considered the First Shahid, and in Islamic history only a dozen or so Muslims have been considered shahid for having fallen in battle while defending the faith. For suicide bombing to be formally accepted in Islam, Taheri says, the practice would have to be defined, given rules, justified by Islamic law and then approved by a consensus among Muslim communities—"something the prophets of terror will never secure." Yet, as Taheri himself notes, this barrier has not stopped many Muslim politicians: "Foreign ministers from 57 Muslim countries met in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, this month with the stated intention of defining terrorism and distancing Islam from terror. Instead, they ended up endorsing the suicide bombers." Also worth noting is Shibley Telhami's observation in *The New York Times* ("Why Suicide Terrorism Takes Root," April 4, 2002, p. A23) that suicide bombing in Palestine has become a secular tactic as well. "From nonreligious young women to members of the semi-Marxist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine to the secular Al Aksa Martyrs Brigades, groups and individuals have begun emulating the suicides of Hamas, the radical Islamist group…. Like all terrorism, suicide bombings must be delegitimized by Arab societies and stopped because no ends can justify these horrific means. At the same time, there has to be a way of dealing with the realities that have made suicide bombings acceptable to a large number of Palestinians and others." *See also* Malise Ruthven, *A Fury for God: The Islamist Attack on America* (London: Granta, 2002).

problems. On the contrary, it would initially focus public attention on the need to deal with internal factors, including corruption, misrule, endemic inequalities, lack of political participation and inadequate health, education and welfare systems. Nor would peace in Palestine and Kashmir solve other inter-Muslim tensions and conflicts over irredentist ethnic and nationalist movements or disputes about borders and resources such as oil and water. Nor, of course, will all the militant Islamists pack their bags and retire. After all, radical ideologies do not always spring from poverty and despair; on the contrary, they attract individuals who often have relatively good educations and incomes.[xxv] Though their numbers would be diminished as they lost public support, some extremists would certainly look for other issues to stir up and exploit as they continued to dream about creating some great militant Islamic state that would unite the entire umma.

A "Clash of Civilizations"?

Is there a monolithic Islam? If so, does it pose a real threat to the West? Yes to both questions, according to clash-of-civilization theorists, most notably Samuel P. Huntington in *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* and in his more recent writing. He follows Arnold Toynbee's scholarship but deduces a different conclusion. Civilizations, instead of becoming bridges of understanding, become walls of separation, destined to spur clashes, he says.

Huntington theorizes that wars of politics and ideology have, with the fall of Communism, yielded to wars between cultures. "Cultural commonalities and differences shape the interests, antagonisms and associations of states," he writes.[124] In forecasting the West's decline, he contemplates that Muslim and Asian countries will align themselves against the West and there will be some "swing" civilizations, including Japan, Russia and India. A single form of virulent Islamism, in this theory, then, has replaced Communism, giving us Cold War II. The "Green Menace," we are told, has replaced the "Red Menace."

Huntington and others who write about a "clash of civilizations" do not recognize that class, tribal, family, personal, ethnic, cultural, economic and national interests have always defied a unity of purpose that transcends all these divisions. As a matter of fact, as we have seen, instances when the Muslim world was a unified monolith have been extremely rare. Throughout Islamic history, the gravitational pull of regional, dynastic and, since the

[xxv] The terrorists who participated in the September 11 attacks, for example, were mostly well-educated men from middle-class families in Saudi Arabia. Recent studies also confirm that a relatively high level of education and income is common among members of terrorist organizations in many parts of the world, including Hezbollah in Palestine, Gush Emunim in Israel, the Japanese Red Army and Italy's Red Brigades. Alan Krueger and Jitka Maleckova, "Education, Poverty, Political Violence and Terrorism: Is There a Causal Connection?," May 2002 study, www.wws.princeton.edu/~rpds/education.pdf. *See also* Robert J. Barro, "The Myth That Poverty Breeds Terrorism," *BusinessWeek*, June 10, 2002, p. 26.

19th century, nationalist interests have consistently outweighed the spiritual affiliations of some idealized, transcendent, organic umma. If history is a guide, it shows that in Islam, as in most major religions, there is a broad gulf between the ideal of unity and the realities on the ground.

Even during the Golden Age of Islam, at the height of the Abbasid empire, there were rival caliphates in Córdoba and in North Africa, as well as ethnically based Turkic and Iranian dynasties that challenged Baghdad's authority and at times reduced the Caliph to a mere figurehead. Subsequently, there were divisions among the Mughal empire, the Shii Safavid empire and the Ottoman empire. Those who theorize about "clashing civilizations" conveniently ignore that civilizations are not monolithic entities. Even during the period of the Crusades and in subsequent centuries, we see "unholy alliances" between Islam and the West—between Muslim rulers and principalities and their Christian counterparts against fellow Muslims and fellow Christians. As late as the 16th through the 19th centuries, various European Christian powers attempted to secure the alliance of the Ottoman or Persian empires against each other.[XXVI]

The 20th century—humanity's bloodiest, with war and genocide taking the lives of an estimated 167 million people[125]—not only shattered the "unity" of the West, it also swept up Muslim societies in civil wars and violent internecine conflicts. Ancient divisions, conflicts and rivalries both in the West and in Muslim societies are conveniently ignored by purveyors of a conflict among civilizations because these divisions blur or complicate the neat theories that create powerful myths about powerful enemies. But let us not forget the hostilities between Sunni and Shii Muslims; Iranians and Iraqis; Iranians and Arabs; Iranians and Turks; Iranians and the Taliban; Egypt and the Sudan; Egypt and Libya; the Sudan and Somalia; Mauritania and Morocco; Berbers and other Moroccan tribes; and Pakistan and Bangladesh, along with the tribal wars in Afghanistan and the struggles of Kurds in Iran, Turkey and Iraq.[126]

Even al-Afghani, the first theorist of Pan-Islamism, was not advocating war with the West—he was a modernist who sought Muslim unity to promote a progressive society based on science, liberty and equality for all partners.

Let us remember that there is neither a single accepted Islamic theology, nor a single interpretation of Islamic law, nor a single issue around which all Muslim societies are willing to place their people, future or fortune. Even the preservation of Muslim holy places—cities like Mecca and Medina—has sometimes been a bitter source of divisive politics among Muslims, especially the Saudi rulers and Hashemites, the former guardians of the holy places.[127]

The fact is that there is no unified "Muslim world" or unified Muslim ideology—just as we know there is no unified "Christian world" or unified Christian ideology, no unified

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[XXVI] For example, after Philip II of Spain conquered Portugal, his archenemy, Queen Elizabeth I of England, opened diplomatic negotiations with the Ottoman empire. She called Philip "that arch-idolater" and befriended Sultan Murad of the Ottoman empire as "the unconquered and most puissant defender of the true faith against the idolaters." *See* Lord Kinross, *The Ottoman Centuries: The Rise and Fall of the Turkish Empire* (New York: Morrow Quill Paperbacks, 1977), pp. 321, 324. For a further discussion of Muslim/Christian alliances, *see* Fawaz A. Gerges, *America and Political Islam: Clash of Cultures or Clash of Interests?* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), chapter 3, "Islam and Muslims in the Mind of America."

"Buddhist world" or unified Buddhist ideology, no unified "Jewish world" or unified Jewish ideology.

Muslim diversity and division is a historical fact, and as Schwedler puts it, "To the extent that Islam represents a single collective identity, that identity is characterized by so many complexities and diversities as to be virtually useless analytically." Put another way, Edward W. Said asks: "How really useful is 'Islam' as a concept for understanding Morocco *and* Saudi Arabia *and* Syria *and* Indonesia? If we come to realize that, as many scholars have recently noted, Islamic doctrine can be seen as justifying capitalism as well as socialism, militancy as well as fatalism, ecumenism as well as exclusivism, we begin to sense the tremendous lag between academic descriptions of Islam (that are inevitably caricatured in the media) and the particular realities to be found within the Islamic world."[128] With any reflection, then, we can see that it is outlandish to make sweeping generalizations about 1.2 billion people on the basis of their religion alone.

Paradoxically, there is agreement between those nostalgic Cold Warriors who see the "Green Menace" replacing the "Red Menace" and militant Islamists who seek to create a worldwide Muslim unity: both like to see Islam as a monolith. The cold warriors conflate militant Islamism with all of Islam, while militant Islamists dream of a Pan-Islamic movement that creates *one* Muslim umma under *one* Caliphate, or one authority, ruling from the Atlantic Ocean to the China Sea. The latter is not a new idea—surfacing for the most part soon after the demise of the Ottoman Caliphate in 1924—but the idea, whether it's considered utopian or totalitarian, has made little headway in nearly 14 centuries. We cannot and should not underestimate the power

of secular states, institutions and cultures. Nor should we ignore the weight of history that stands firmly in the way of both a transcendent umma and a neatly delineated "clash of civilizations."

Amartya Sen, the 1998 Nobel Prize winner in economics, points out that Huntington and other clash-of-civilization theorists grossly confuse civilization with religion—and then grossly oversimplify the world's religions. Huntington's description of India as a "Hindu civilization" is, Sen declares, "an epistemic and historical absurdity." India's Muslim population, Sen notes, is greater than the combined populations of Britain and France. There are also significant populations of Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists. Christians arrived in India two centuries before they arrived in Britain, and Jews came with the fall of Jerusalem a thousand years ago. Sen writes:

> The reliance on civilizational partitioning fails badly.... First, the classifications are often based on an extraordinary epistemic crudeness and an extreme historical innocence. The diversity of traditions *within* distinct civilizations is effectively ignored, and major global interactions in science, technology, mathematics and literature over millennia are made to disappear so as to construct a parochial view of the uniqueness of Western civilization.

> Second, there is a basic methodological problem involved in the implicit presumption that a civilizational partitioning is the uniquely relevant distinction, and must swamp other ways of identifying people....

> Third, there is a remarkable neglect of the role of choice and reasoning in decisions regarding what importance to attach to the membership of any particular group, or to

any particular identity (among others). By adopting a unique and allegedly predominant way of categorizing people, civilizational partitioning can materially contribute to the conflicts in the world. To deny choice when it does exist is not only an epistemic failure (a misunderstanding of what the world is like); it is also an ethical delinquency and a political dereliction of responsibility....

In a well-known interview, Peter Sellers once remarked: "There used to be a 'me' but I had it surgically removed." In their respective attempts to impose a single and unique identity on us, the surgical removal of the actual "me" is done by others—the religious fundamentalist, the nationalist extremist,… the sectarian provocateur. We have to resist such an imprisonment. We must insist upon the liberty to see ourselves as we would choose to see ourselves.... The central issue, in sum, is freedom.[129]

Muslim Quests for Democracy

Apart from the challenges presented by globalization, the biggest challenge for moderate Islamists seems to be figuring out how to adapt the principles of democracy to their cultures and traditions. As John Esposito and John Voll write, "Religious resurgence and democratization are two of the most important developments of the final decades of the twentieth century." Moreover, the authors state, "The demand for democracy, the growth of prodemocracy movements, is now evident throughout much of the Muslim world."[130]

But why has the process of democratization and modernization been so slow, or, in some places, nonexistent? Shireen T. Hunter summa-

rizes the debate taking place both in Western and Muslim societies:

Some believe that because of its fusion of temporal and spiritual realms, Islam is incompatible with modernity and democracy. This group also notes that all religious systems that put divinely inspired law and ethics above those developed by humans are intrinsically incompatible with rationalist thinking, and thus also with modernity and democratization.

Others note that in reality there was a much clearer distinction between politics and religion in the Muslim world than that which existed in Christendom until the advent of the Age of Reason. The question is whether Islam is any more dogmatic than other religions. The first group believes the answer to this question is yes, while the latter maintains that the answer is no.

An impartial reading of the history of both the Muslim world and the West shows that the processes of modernization and democratization have more to do with stages of economic change and their social and cultural consequences than with peculiarities of different religions.... Nevertheless, literalist and reductionist interpretations of key Islamic injunctions have been used by some Muslims to prevent the advancement of both processes. The challenge is to encourage the more progressive and liberal trends within Islam in order to help in the Muslim world's move toward modernization and democracy.[131]

Reminding us of some of the historical context for this debate, Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, a political dissident from the Sudan who teaches at Emory School of Law, recently said that 19th- and 20th-century politics, not

religion, largely explains the slow pace of modernization and democratization. "Every Muslim country today was either colonized by the West or subjected to tremendous Western control," he said. "Colonialism was not in the business of promoting democratic values or institutions. And after independence, you get oppressive regimes that are supported by Western powers for strategic interests. So people never had a chance to develop these values and processes.... Post-colonialism, not Islam, is what's really at issue here. Islam just happens to be the religion of a people who have been denied the possibility of experimenting and learning."[132]

In any event, we now see much experimenting and learning taking place in many Muslim societies. And, of course, discussions about whether democracy is compatible with Islam are not unique to Muslim nations, as similar questions have been raised in the past about many other nations, including Russia and China. Even the nature of democracy is subject to debate, for there is no universally accepted, single operating model of democracy. Nor, of course, is the West free from intolerance in their democracies; Catholics, for example, are still prevented from serving as prime ministers in Britain.[133] But the generally accepted principles of democracy, among most Muslim societies as well, include representative government, free political parties, free elections, free press, protection of minorities, a balance of power among the executive, independent judiciary and legislative branches of government—and, above all, the rule of law.

Democracy is not a total stranger to Muslim societies—and in some ways, they have been leaders.[XXVII] For while the Taliban refused to allow women even to leave their homes alone, never mind refusing them the right to vote—next door, in Pakistan, women not only had the right to vote, but could be elected to high office. During the last 20 years, women have held the highest elected offices in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Turkey and Indonesia.[134] But even in these enlightened states, female leaders like Indonesia's current president, Megawati Sukarnoputri, often face intense criticism from conservative political and religious leaders.[135]

In the Muslim debate about democracy, modernists and traditionalists have very different ideas about democracy. Some traditionalists, in principle, see no separation between state and religion, with God being the sovereign authority, not the people. Other Muslim scholars and rulers—especially the monarchs and dictators—have often rejected Western-style democracy as being too divisive and too centered on the individual and the temporal, materialistic world. They cling to the old notion that their authority comes not from the people alone, but also from their historic role as defenders of the Muslim faith and communities.

Some even welcome Benito Mussolini's notion of a state and its single official party as an "antiparty party"—one party in charge of every aspect of society, including religion. As Mussolini wrote, "The Fascist State organizes

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[XXVII] Westerners tend to hear a disproportionate amount of news about the Persian Gulf's emirs, sheikhs and sultans, but there are a wide variety of political systems operating in Muslim nations. In addition to democracies in Bangladesh, Turkey and Senegal, there are emerging democracies in Albania and Indonesia. There are also other complex political systems: authoritarian states with democratic elements in Algeria, Egypt and Azerbaijan; authoritarian regimes in Iraq, Syria and Libya; monarchies in Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates; monarchies with some democratic elements in Jordan, Malaysia and Morocco; a theocracy with democratic elements in Iran; and, finally, systems in flux, such as the shift in Nigeria from military to civilian rule and Pakistan's suspension of democracy by the military. *See* the *CIA World Factbook* (2001) and U.S. State Department, as cited in "A Spectrum of Governments in the Islamic World," *The New York Times*, November 23, 2001.

the nation, but leaves a sufficient margin of liberty to the individual; the latter is deprived of all useless and possibly harmful freedom, but retains what is essential; the deciding power in this question cannot be the individual, but the State alone."[136]

According to one of the most famous traditional political theorists, Abu al-Ala al-Mawdudi, the ideal Islamic state would be the "kingdom of God" or a theocracy.[137] In this kingdom, "the entire Muslim population runs the state in accordance with the Book of God and the practice of His Prophet. If I were permitted to coin a new term, I would describe this system of government as 'theo-democracy,' that is to say a divine democratic government, because under it the Muslims have been given a limited popular sovereignty under the suzerainty of God."

Modernist scholars, including Rifa'a al-Tahtawi in 19th-century Egypt, often believed that Western ideas were compatible with Islam because these scholars recognized Islam's large contributions to Western civilization. In this way, modernist scholars put great emphasis on the exercise of reason and knowledge—in every area, including understanding Qur'an and the Prophet's sayings and searching the entire history of Islam for insights.

Another important modernist and religious reformer was Muhammad Abduh (1849–1905). He and other scholars—notably Sayyid Jamal ad-Din al-Afghani in the Middle East and Sayyid Ahmed Khan and Muhammad Iqbal on the Indian subcontinent—called for reopening the "gates of ijtihad," interpretation of holy texts, as a critical step in modernizing Islam. Abduh, who became the Grand Mufti in Egypt in 1889, wrote that the Qur'an was not entirely God's

Word, but also included the Prophet Muhammad's own fallible human thinking on the organization of society and its institutions. Thus, he argued that one could be both a pious Muslim and a modernist. He once wrote, "The Book gives us all that God permits us, or is essential for us, to know about His attributes. But, it does not require our acceptance of its contents simply on the ground of its own statement of them. On the contrary, it offers arguments and evidence.... It spoke to the rational mind and alerted the intelligence."

Abduh and his protégé, Rashid Rida (1865–1935), published *al-Manar*, a journal that helped to inspire modernist intellectuals from North Africa to Indonesia.[138]

At the start of the 20th century, Abduh and al-Afghani founded a reform movement called Salafiyyah (from *salaf as-salihiin*, meaning "the pious ancestors") that gained influence in many Muslim realms. Salafiyyah sought modernization within Islamic principles and reason. Interestingly, its followers included Qasim Amin (1863–1908), who wrote two books with feminist themes: *The Emancipation of Women*, and *The New Woman*.[139]

More recently, Mahmoud Mohammad Taha, founder of a prodemocracy movement in the Sudan, maintained that there had to be a clear separation between religion and state if religious practice and public discussion were to thrive. He was hanged for heresy in 1985. Abdullahi Ahmed An-Na'im, at Emory School of Law, considers Taha a mentor and says, "The [Qur'an] is a powerful sacred text, but we must recognize that our understanding of it is both historically conditioned and shaped by human agency."[140]

There are other Muslim intellectuals who are trying to cope with the major challenges facing Islam, especially as these relate to the interaction between modernity and tradition. For example, Muhammad al-Ghazali, a former member of the Muslim Brotherhood, has come out for selective modernization, especially in regard to science and technological progress, while reserving the right to disagree with some philosophical elements in the West. Perhaps the most impressive Muslim intellectual today is Mohamed Talbi. He believes that balance is possible and inevitable between faith and reason, that faith is the choice of the individual and does not conflict with or constrain reason. "There is," he says, "no meaning to faith if there is no freedom or choice. The renewal of Islam is more to do with questions of the social and political order than with questions of theology which remain entirely sound. Muslims have suffered because they have used Islam politically." Talbi also considers that all knowledge is provisional, therefore all knowers must live with some degree of uncertainty with respect to their knowledge. Thus he rejects absolutism. Talbi is also an advocate of pluralism and religious tolerance, for man, he says, is by nature a pluralist.[141]

Talbi is not alone. There are at least five other major Muslim intellectuals who have taken up the difficult issues around Islam and modernity. Mohamed Charfi, the former minister of education of Tunisia, has written eloquently on Islam and liberty, Islam and the state and Islam and the law, but most important of all, he has highlighted the necessity to modernize the educational systems of all Muslim countries as an urgent and essential matter in order to ensure the progress of Muslim societies. He stresses that Islam has been misinterpreted, that it is not incompati-

ble with either reason, science, progress or modernity.[142]

The other outstanding intellectuals who, along with Talbi and Charfi, are in the forefront of grappling with the intellectual challenges facing Islamic societies are, interestingly, also North African. One is Mohammed Arkoun, whose works—*Lectures du Coran* (Tunis: G.-P. Maisonneuve et Larose, 1991, 2nd ed.), *Rethinking Islam: Common Questions, Uncommon Answers* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1993) and *La pensée arabe* (Paris: PUF, 1996)—have stimulated timely and widespread intellectual dialogue. Abdou Filali-Ansary is equally influential; his works, which include *L'Islam est-il hostile à la laïcité?* (Morocco: Le Fennec, 1996; Sindbad, 2002) and *Par souci de clarté: A propos des sociétés musulmanes contemporaines* (Morocco: Le Fennec, 2001), are the subject of international debate.

Yet another important voice is that of 'Abd al-Karim Soroush, whose writings include *Reason, Freedom and Democracy in Islam* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000). He has criticized the "sanctimonious piety" of those who have sought to use religion to assert authoritarian power and "to disguise some of their less pious, self-serving economic interests." Soroush points out that while the establishment claims that politics is serving Islam, the reverse is actually true: currently, it is religion that is being manipulated to serve politics. Therefore, many religious interpretations are becoming corrupted by political and economic interests. Soroush also is an uncompromising champion of human rights. He says, "A religion that is oblivious to human rights (including the need for humanity for freedom and justice) is not tenable in the modern world. In other words, religion needs to be

right not only logically but also ethically…we cannot evade rational, moral and extrareligious principles and reasoning about human rights.… A rule that is not just is not religious."[143]

Fatima Mernissi, who teaches sociology at the University of Mohammed V in Rabat, Morocco, has raised fundamental issues about women and Islam, concluding in her book *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam* (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1991) that the quest for women's full participation in the political and social affairs of their countries "stems from no imported Western values, but is a true part of the Muslim tradition."

Modernists also maintain that Islam is imbued with ancient traditions that lay the foundation for a secular democracy. They include the principles that Muslims consult others for mutual understanding in making decisions; that they seek consensus through collective judgment (though in practice this has often meant seeking consensus among Islamic scholars); and that as times and circumstances bring new problems, humanity has the God-given rational faculty to find answers by independently consulting the Qur'an and the Prophet's teachings.[144] "The principles of Islam are dynamic, it is our approach which has become static," the reformer Altaf Gauhar has written.[145] In a compromise position, some scholars argue for a gradual introduction of democracy, learning from the "deficiencies" and "inefficiencies" of Western democracies in order not to repeat them, while also maintaining social stability.

Muslim societies and states, thus, face many challenging questions. How can they cope with the principles of democracy, such as voting and the rule of the majority? And what if in secular societies Islamist parties win democratic elections—should they then be banned, as they have been in Turkey and Algeria? Then again, why should members of an Islamist party respect the spirit of democracy if it does not allow them to win "free" elections? Similarly, how could one guarantee that an Islamist party coming into power would relinquish it if that party, in turn, is subsequently challenged and defeated at the polls? Do Islamists favor "one person, one vote, one time"?[146]

Clearly, then, the delicate relationship between mosque and state as well as the principles of Islamic and secular law will be paramount in all Muslim discussions about democracy. Related to that is another democratic necessity: an informed electorate. The question is whether Muslim states will mandate freedom of speech and free education as rights for all and, if they do, whether they have the means to meet such goals. If they cannot or will not provide an adequate secular school system, will they relegate education, by default or decree, to the clerical establishment and its schools, the madrasa, with their peculiar and parochial curricula?

Time to Deal with Tough Questions

Jalal al-Din Rumi, the 13th-century Sufi scholar—and, interestingly, America's best-selling poet today—once wrote: "Start a huge foolish project, like Noah." [147] The worldwide challenge, not only for Muslim societies, but for all societies and democracies, is to come to grips with economic justice and freedom as well as the interplay of modernism and traditionalism, secularism and religion, and individual rights and societal or collective rights.

For Muslim societies, the immediate challenge is assuming responsibility for modernizing their economies and governing structures. In this connection, General Pervez Musharraf, Pakistan's leader, recently challenged his people to consider fundamental options: "The day of reckoning has come. Do we want Pakistan to become a theocratic state? Do we believe that religious education alone is enough for governance? Or do we want Pakistan to emerge as a progressive and dynamic Islamic welfare state?" Militant Islamists, he added, "did nothing except contribute to bloodshed in Afghanistan. I ask of them whether they know anything other than disruption and sowing seeds of hatred. Does Islam preach this?" [148]

There is a healthy debate in Muslim societies about the proper role of religion in the state. Questions include: How can Muslim authorities reconcile the disagreements among secular law, tribal law, local customs, Islamic law and international law? Does Islamic law transcend the others or accommodate them? What about dogmatic, militant Islamists? What is their place in democratic society? How does Islam discourage or prevent ordinary citizens and groups from presuming to interpret Islamic law and issuing legal opinions—and calls for holy war? What is the definition of a national liberation movement?

How is such a movement distinguished from terrorism? What is the position of Islamic societies on suicide, which most religions—including Islam—condemn as a sin?

ISLAM HAS BEEN HIJACKED, ONLY MUSLIMS CAN SAVE IT, was the headline in the *National Journal* above a story stating that the Muslim leaders' response to the September 11 attacks had been "mixed, muddled and muttered." [149]

But what is missing, as I see it, is not a shortage of individuals expressing outrage—for there have been many, from many unexpected as well as welcome sources, including Ayatullah Ali Khameneì, Supreme Jurist-Ruler of Iran, and Sheikh Abdul-Rahman al-Sudais at the Grand Mosque in Mecca. [XXVIII]

No, there has not been a lack of individual responses, but apart from the press releases from established organizations like the League of Arab States and the Organization of the Islamic Conference, there have been no collective, substantive and authoritative responses from religious and political leaders that explicitly define, condemn and outlaw terrorism as well as set punishments for those who wage terrorism. This is because, I believe, many Muslims and their religious and spiritual institutions are deeply conflicted: they can rationalize and perhaps even support suicide bombing against civilians in Israel as a form of legitimate "resistance" against an occupying force, [XXIX] but, ironically and, I believe, morally inconsistently—they denounce the suicide attacks in the United States as being "against all human and Islamic norms," to quote from a statement released by Islamist leaders, *including* Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, founder of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), which claims responsibility for many of the suicide bombings in Israel that have indiscriminately murdered more than 250 people of all ages and

faiths in streets, strollers, buses, restaurants, dance halls and grocery stores.[150]

The relationship between religion and civil rights also poses troubling and difficult questions for many Muslim societies. Do Muslim leaders support maintaining secular constitutions or abandoning them in favor of Sharia? If so, what happens to sizable, non-Muslim minorities who are citizens of nations such as Nigeria? Are there enough favorable conditions, economic pressures and political will to enable Muslim nations to cooperate, much like members of the European Union, to create regional economic unions or even a Muslim common market among all Muslim realms? Is the unity of Muslims reflected only in their stance on Jerusalem, or is it confined to the plight of Palestinians, Kashmiris, Chechens, Bosnians and Kosovars? Can there be a Muslim World Bank, which shares the wealth of rich Muslim countries with poor ones in some form of international investment? These are terribly complex questions, with no easy answers.

Another immediate and pressing issue, of course, is the status of women. At a time when women are assuming greater roles around the world, in general, and in Muslim nations, in particular, there is a major, unavoidable debate about how to ensure the rights of women. Why do they have fewer rights than men—to travel, to drive, to marry, to divorce, to inherit, to work?[151] (In 2000, women in Khartoum were forbidden to work in many public places, and the next year Sudan's president refused to recognize a UN treaty on women's rights on the grounds that it violated family law in Sharia.)[152] Should women be silenced in public because traditionalists consider the female voice sexually provocative?[153] Should women

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[xxviii] Muslim leaders who condemned the September 11 attacks included the following:

Sheikh Muhammad Hussain Fadlallah, the spiritual leader of the Hezbollah, who was accused by the United States of ordering the 1983 truck bombing of the U.S. Marines barracks near the Beirut airport that killed 241 American servicemen, condemned the September 11 attacks as being incompatible with Sharia, Islamic law, for the perpetrators ("merely suicides," not martyrs) killed innocent civilians in a distant land where the victims could not be considered aggressive enemies. John F. Burns, "Bin Laden Stirs a Struggle Among Muslims About the Meaning of Jihad," *The New York Times*, January 20, 2002.

Sheikh Mohammed Sayyed al-Tantawi of Al-Azhar Mosque and University in Cairo said, "Attacking innocent people is not courageous; it is stupid and will be punished on the day of judgment." U.S. State Department, Network of Terrorism, http://usinfo.state.gov/products/pubs/terrornet/print/quotes.htm.

Ayatullah Ali Khamenei, Supreme Jurist-Ruler of Iran, said, "Killing of people, in any place and with any kind of weapons, including atomic bombs, long-range missiles, biological or chemical weapons, passenger or war planes, carried out by any organization, country or individuals, is condemned.... It makes no difference whether such massacres happen in Hiroshima, Nagasaki, Qana, Sabra, Shatila, Deir Yassin, Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq or in New York and Washington." University of North Carolina web site, Statements Against Terror, www.unc.edu/~kurzman/terror.htm.

Iran's President Muhammad Khatami said, "The horrific attacks of September 11, 2001, in the United States were perpetrated by [a] cult of fanatics who had self-mutilated their ears and tongues, and could only communicate with perceived opponents through carnage and devastation." University of North Carolina web site, *op. cit.*

Chief Mufti of Saudi Arabia Abdulaziz bin Abdallah al-Ashaykh said, "A form of injustice that cannot be tolerated by Islam...they will invoke the anger of God Almighty and lead to harm and corruption on Earth." University of North Carolina web site, *op. cit.*

More than 40 Muslim scholars and Islamist leaders, including Mustafa Mashhur of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt; Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, founder, Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) in Palestine; Rashid Ghannoushi, President of the Nahda Renaissance Movement in Tunisia; and Fazil Nour, President of PAS-Parti Islam SeMalaysia in Malaysia, issued a statement saying: "The undersigned, leaders of Islamic movements, are horrified by the events of Tuesday 11 September 2001, in the United States which resulted in massive killing, destruction and attack on innocent lives.... We condemn, in the strongest terms, the incidents, which are against all human and Islamic norms." University of North Carolina web site, *op. cit.*

The League of Arab States condemned the attacks, and its Secretary-General, Amre Moussa, said, "It is indeed tormenting that any country or people or city anywhere in the world be the scene of such disastrous attacks." University of North Carolina web site, *op. cit.*

Dr. Abdelouahed Belkeziz, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, whose members represent 57 states, condemned the attack as "brutal acts that ran counter to all covenants, humanitarian values and divine religions foremost among which is Islam." University of North Carolina web site, *op. cit.*

be forced to marry their rapists to avoid "disgracing" their families, as they are in parts of Turkey? [154] Should they be denied the vote because Muslim traditionalists claim in some societies that they introduce an "irrational element" in politics—an outlandish claim that was similar to claims that deprived Swiss women of the vote until 1971—Switzerland was the last Western country to introduce women's suffrage. [155] And yet, as we know, women can not only vote, but have also been elected to the highest political offices in some other Muslim countries.

There are many issues surrounding traditional Islamic education systems. Should schools teach only religion? Or should they allow "Western" science to be taught as well? Why is it permissible to convert Christians to Islam while forbidding Muslims conversion to Christianity—and even subjecting them to the death penalty in some Muslim nations? In the Sudan, where Sharia is in force, anyone— Muslim or non-Muslim—who "commits apostasy" can receive the death penalty, and other religious offenses can be punished by amputation, stoning, flogging and crucifixion. [156] The question is, how can a religion modernize itself? Also, what is the place of minorities? How should Muslim societies deal with the issue of self-determination movements, such as the Kurds in Turkey? How will they protect

the rights of Muslim minorities like the Shii in Saudi Arabia and Afghanistan and the Sunni in Iran—as well as the Christians, Jews and other religious minorities? Are minorities in Muslim countries to be tolerated only, or given equality? If so, do Muslim governments have the authority or the political will to stop school systems from using high school textbooks that teach contempt for non-Muslims? [xxx] Will they stop religious schools from fostering hostility toward Jews and Christians? [157] And how should we deal with similar instances where Christians are fomenting anti-Muslim and anti-Jewish hatred?

In addition, Muslims face a new challenge—that of immigrant communities in Europe, Latin America, the United States and Australia. How should Muslims reconcile their religious commitments with their political commitments to secular systems in their adopted countries? Writing about these issues, Bat Ye'or notes that "problems of integration and cohabitation…will arise between Western societies and Muslim immigrant populations, if the latter adhere to a religious legal code which the Western democratic societies reject." [158]

Modernization and globalization raise even more questions about the interplay of religion, culture, economy, education and technology. Is

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[xxix] In Palestine, there is real soul-searching as to the best means of resisting the Israeli occupation and whether or not suicide bombing is counterproductive as a kind of "resistance of last resort." Surveys indicate that about half the Palestinian population supports suicide bombing, and a much larger majority opposes arresting Islamists who organize the bombings. The tide may be turning, however slowly. In June, a group of 55 Palestinian politicians and scholars ran a newspaper advertisement for several days that called for reconsidering "military operations that target civilians in Israel." It asked for a halt in "pushing our youth to carry out these operations." The letter did not condemn the suicide missions but argued that they were not "producing any results except confirming the hatred…between the two peoples" and jeopardizing the "possibility that two peoples will live side by side in peace in two neighboring states." After a few days, more than 500 had signed on to the statement, some via the Internet; a rebuttal gained about 150 signatures. James Bennet, "Gingerly, Arabs Question Suicide Bombings," *The New York Times*, July 3, 2002, p. A1.

[xxx] Changing a tradition of intolerance can be difficult. In Saudi Arabia, the government has introduced plans to remove intolerant passages from textbooks. As a result, there has been "a lively debate in Saudi newspapers, with prominent conservative clergyman Sheik Saleh al-Fawzan, the author of many texts used in Saudi religious curricula, and Education Minister Mohammed Ahmed Rasheed trading insults," wrote James M. Dorsey. "Saudi Leader Seeks to Rein In Clergy," *Wall Street Journal*, March 14, 2002, p. A9.

it possible to modernize without "Westernizing" or "democratizing," as many Muslims wish? Can a society take Western technology without taking in some Western values? And besides, are "Western values" really Western? Or are they universal values similar to those that prevailed in the Golden Age of Islam? Those who believe that societies can modernize without Westernizing betray a certain naiveté in this age of the Internet and the information revolution. There is no way to have a "safe" modernization, as there can be no "immunization" against ideas. Modernization has always brought unintended consequences.

The Necessity of Knowledge

We live in historic times, but, by and large, Americans are ahistorical, concerned only with the present and often unappreciative of underlying forces that helped create this present—and that will likely influence our future. As George Will wrote recently, "When Americans say of something, 'That's history,' they mean it is irrelevant."[159] Unfortunately, it is not.

Today, we can regret but not be surprised that we as a society know so little about the world, including the actual divisions and affinities of the three Abrahamic faiths. In a 2000 survey, only 1 in 14 Americans claimed to really understand Islam's basic tenets; hopefully, this ratio has improved since then.[160] But a more recent survey found that one in four high school students was unable even to name the ocean that separates North America from Asia.[161]

It is clear, however, that we cannot be ignorant about the history of one-fifth of humanity. Nor can we ignore the common bonds among the three Abrahamic faiths.

Sadly, we have seen an insistent bigotry in the United States. Paul Weyrich and William Lind write, in their booklet entitled *Why Islam Is a Threat to America and the West*, that "Islam is, quite simply, a religion of war." Lind goes further, saying that American Muslims "should be encouraged to leave. They are a fifth column in this country." Columnist Ann Coulter has written, "We should invade their countries, kill their leaders and convert them to Christianity."[162] These sentiments are not limited to commentators in the United States; some have emerged in Europe; Oriana Fallaci, for instance, the Italian journalist, has written a stridently anti-Muslim book, *Rage and Pride* (New York: Rizzoli International, 2002), which has become widely popular. In her book, Fallaci offers the opinion that the Qur'an "authorizes lies, calumny, hypocrisy."[163]

Worse still are the inflammatory and widely broadcast statements by some American religious leaders. In a speech broadcast by *NBC Nightly News*, Franklin Graham, the Christian evangelist's son, declared last November that Muslims pray to a "different God" and that Islam "is a very evil and wicked religion."[164] On CNN in February 2002, the Reverend Pat Robertson, founder of the Christian Coalition, said, "I think people ought to be aware of what we're dealing with." Speaking of Muslims, he said, "They want to coexist until they can control, dominate and then, if need be, destroy." He said the Prophet Muhammad preached hate and violence, adding at one point, "I think Osama bin Laden is probably a very dedicated follower of Muhammad. He's done exactly what Muhammad said to do, and we disagree with him obviously, and I'm sure many moderate Muslims do as well, but you can't say the religion is a religion of peace. It's not."[165]

Speaking at the annual Southern Baptist Convention in June 2002, the Reverend Jerry Vines went so far as to call the Prophet Muhammad a "demon-possessed pedophile," saying that his 12th wife had been a child bride. Vines is pastor of the First Baptist Church in Jacksonville, Florida, and is a past president of the convention, whose members comprise the largest (16 million) and arguably most politically active Protestant denomination in the country. Vines said that "Allah is not Jehovah" and stated that pluralism wrongly equates all religions. "Jehovah's not going to turn you into a terrorist that will try to bomb people and take the lives of thousands and thousands of people." Vines's statement elicited criticism from both Muslim and Jewish organizations.[166]

Not only are these ministers' statements off-base, they are incendiary and divisive as well. Nor do they reflect our much hailed American value of tolerance and religious freedom. After all, if we don't practice tolerance at home, we cannot with great righteousness demand that it be practiced elsewhere in the world. Appealing to religious agendas or religious divisions, moreover, has often led to dire consequences including the ravages of religious wars that devastated Europe and the waves of anti-Semitism that eventually resulted in the Holocaust. We would also do well to avoid using selected passages of ancient doctrines and texts—of Islam or any religion—to infer the views of a religion's adherents today. (As we know, the New Testament embraces slavery—"Slaves, obey your earthly masters with fear and trembling"—and God, in the Book of Joshua, commands Israelites to kill all the Canaanites and their children. In the 13th century, Pope Boniface VIII proclaimed that acceptance of his complete authority was "utterly necessary for the salvation of every living creature.")[167]

Clearly, more education and mutual understanding are necessary. And while this may seem like a worthy goal, it may not be easily achieved in the current charged atmosphere surrounding any discussion of Islam. A case in point is the recent controversy over the University of North Carolina (UNC) requiring incoming freshmen to read *Approaching the Qur'an: The Early Revelations*, by Michael Anthony Sells (Ashland, Ore.: White Cloud Press, 1999), and to write an essay on it. (Students could also write an essay on why they chose not to read it.) Fox News Network's Bill O'Reilly, who hosts a nationally televised talk show, compared the assignment to teaching Hitler's *Mein Kampf* in 1941 and questioned the purpose of making freshmen study "our enemy's religion." The university is now being sued for assigning the book amid claims that UNC "indoctrinates students with deceptive claims about the peaceful nature of Islam." In fact, the book makes no general claims at all about Islam.[168]

What is particularly disturbing about the debate over having students read *Approaching the Qur'an* is that it seems to raise doubts about the role of a university, which has always been to provide a forum for the free and open discussion of ideas and precepts. (Even the U.S. Supreme Court, in 1967, took note of the importance of unhindered dialogue in an educational setting, calling the classroom "the marketplace of ideas.")[169] In fact, it seems to raise doubts about the value of knowledge itself: after all, those who study orthodoxies and heterodoxies have always relied on the pursuit of knowledge to light their way. It would seem a self-evident notion that gaining knowledge means gaining increased under-

standing, not rushing down the garden path to indoctrination. Shielding ourselves from the holy book of 1.2 billion Muslims is not going to help us in any way begin to build a bridge from our society to others that we have been unacquainted with for far too long—or even to better acquaint ourselves with the growing Muslim community in our own country. History teaches us innumerable lessons about ideas and beliefs that at first seemed frighteningly "other" and impossibly different to different groups of people, but that with time became part of the complex tapestry of culture and practice that most of us have come to accept as an integral part of the world in which we live, even as we continue to hold to our own traditions and religions.

It is also clear that we are as ignorant of Muslim societies as they are of ours. Muslims should know about the evolution of our institutions, cultures and values. This is not an easy task, especially since literacy rates are generally low in Muslim nations, allowing news, facts and rumors to rapidly mix. How can we dispel prevailing memories of colonial rulers and, with them, notions of conspiracy and paranoia, actual and mythical? In the colonial past, *all* Muslim problems, social and political, were often attributed to the "all-powerful, all-knowing" British empire, its agencies and agents. Following World War II, America seems to have inherited that mythological mantle—namely, that since we are a superpower, everything that happens or does not happen in the world, especially as it affects Muslim societies, is the result of U.S. action, inaction or acquiescence.

In this connection, therefore, it is not surprising that al-Jazeera—the satellite news outlet that claims a global television audience of 35 million Arabic speakers—broadcast a seri-

ous debate about whether the United States had staged the September 11 disaster as part of a conspiracy against Islam and China.[170] Such speculation is not confined to the media. Even a highly influential school of Islamic law spreads conspiracy theories. The news service and web site of Darul Uloom Deoband—which is, as mentioned earlier, one of the largest institutions for teaching and propagating Islamic law—promoted similarly incredible rumors when it reported about the September 11 terrorist attacks: "While the possibilities can not be ruled out [of] the involvement of American citizens, in this act, on the other hand a strong opinion is that the said horrible deed was hatched by the Israeli Secret Service Mosad as informed by the various sources. As [many] as four thousand Jews [were] found absent in the World Trade Center on that fateful day, moreover the assets were collected by them before the attack. What[ever] is the reason behind that, it must be investigated throughout the country." [171]

Unfortunately, paranoia and wacky conspiracy theories are hardly an exclusive staple of Muslim societies. A best-selling book in France—which this spring broke the national record for first month's sales, previously held by Madonna's *Sex*—was Thierry Meyssan's *l'Effroyable Imposture (The Horrifying Fraud).* He dismisses official accounts of the September 11 terrorist attacks as "a loony fable" and theorizes that the U.S. government and military executed the attacks by remote control, as part of a strategy to invade Afghanistan and Iraq. "If the energy lobby was the main beneficiary of the war in Afghanistan, the biggest victor of Sept. 11 was the military-industrial lobby," Meyssan writes. "Its wildest dreams have now been fulfilled." Nearly 20 translations of the book, including an English one, are due out this fall.[172]

The Critical Need for Intranational and International Dialogues

Adhering to conspiracy theories and blaming external forces are easy ways to rationalize inaction and the status quo. Assuming responsibility and confronting problems head-on are always difficult for all rulers, regimes and political parties, including those in Muslim countries. To analyze our mutual misconceptions, our mutual stereotyping and our political and ideological differences, we must start new and honest dialogues as well as renew support for existing dialogues.[173] This is needed not to merely affirm our respective positions, but to explore and to challenge them. As Winston Churchill once joked about this deadly serious matter, "To jaw-jaw is always better than to war-war." He was right, of course.

In the United States—where we cherish religious tolerance, the concept of citizenship and respect for ethnic heritage—an internal dialogue is necessary for engaging and understanding various Muslim communities in our midst as well as those abroad. Such dialogue should help us avoid the errors of ignorance as well as those of categorizing an entire religion and all of its adherents as our current and permanent enemy because of the acts of an individual or individual group. Otherwise, as Esposito writes in *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?,* "The demonization of a great religious tradition due to the perverted actions of a minority of dissident and distorted voices remains the real threat, a threat that not only impacts on relations between the Muslim world and the West but also upon growing Muslim populations in the West itself."[174]

In Muslim societies and within the American Muslim community, there needs to be a healthy and honest dialogue between modernists and traditionalists and between the educated, secular elite and their clerical counterparts. At a time when there is a resurgence of religion and religiosity around the world, states, societies and intellectuals can ignore the importance of religion only at their peril. For to dismiss the role of religion in our societies is to dismiss its role in promoting and sheltering particular ethical values as well as its role in politics and in social movements. Isolating religion, or subjecting it to benign neglect, or trying to manipulate or "purchase" the cooperation of its leaders are not real solutions, though. Indeed, we need a dialogue that promotes understanding to prevent religion from becoming the tool of specific political parties or that of secular states.

Unfortunately, many secular states have neglected the education of religious leaders, even as their education and awareness of different traditions and legacies have gained new importance. We also know that the use and abuse of religion is not just a Muslim issue, but an international one.

Global dialogues among peoples, cultures, religions and civilizations are greatly needed. They would reveal where people converge and where they diverge, and they would explore misunderstandings and genuine differences due to clashing cultural, religious and other values and interests. In that spirit, at a 1998 United Nations discussion of these issues, Iran's President Mohammad Khatami made some welcome comments.

Speaking directly about the need to improve our mutual knowledge of each other's civilizations and create a meaningful dialogue between them, Khatami subsequently elaborated his views in a CNN interview: "We intend to benefit from the achievements and

experiences of all civilizations, Western and non-Western, and to hold a dialogue with them. The closer the pillars and essences of these two civilizations [American and Islamic] are, the easier the dialogue would become…. Islam is a religion which calls all humanity, irrespective of religion or belief, to rationality and logic...relations among nations must be based on logic and mutual respect." [175]

Since every religion asserts its own uniqueness, claims of absolute truth and even superiority, the challenge before us all—Muslims and non-Muslims, in America and around the world—is one of understanding and accommodation: How can each group maintain and develop its own set of values and at the same time coexist and interact with other value systems, religions and cultures—both within our own secular democracy and internationally? One hopes that out of dialogue will come understanding and respect, and out of respect will come tolerance.

In 1999, Pope John Paul II reached out to President Khatami and discussed ways to promote a true dialogue between Christians and Muslims. The Pope called their meeting "important and promising," and Iran's President came out of the meeting saying that all religions are "not quintessentially different." [176]

We also heard many encouraging words about tolerance in 2000, when more than 1,000 religious leaders from 110 countries gathered at the United Nations in New York for the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders. Some excerpts from their written statements:

His Excellency Dr. Mustafa Ceric, Raisu-I-Ulama of Bosnia-Herzegovina: "The threat is not in Islam but in our spiritual disability

to meet universal moral demands; evil is not in the West but in our cultural insecurity. It is time that Islam be seen as a spiritual blessing in the West, and the West be seen as a call for an intellectual awakening in the Muslim East."

His All Holiness Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew, Archbishop of Constantinople, New Rome, and Ecumenical Patriarch: "Whenever human beings fail to recognize the value of diversity, they deeply diminish the glory of God's creation."

Honorable Ela Gandhi, granddaughter of Mahatma Gandhi and a member of Congress in South Africa: "The different faiths are but different paths to the same end…. The sooner we realize this important message, the sooner we will be able to save mankind from a painful and horrendous doom—a doom of war and of natural disasters as a result of the excessive use of armaments of all types and the resultant destruction of nature."

The Reverend Billy Graham: "Those of us who are Christians affirm that all humans are created in the image of God, and God's love extends equally to every person on earth, regardless of race, tribe or ethnic origin…. Every act of discrimination and racism, therefore, is wrong, and is a sin in the eyes of God."

His Holiness Tenzin Gyatso, XIV Dalai Lama: "Within the context of this new interdependence, self-interest clearly lies in considering the interests of others. We must develop a greater sense of universal responsibility. Each of us must learn to work not just for our own self, family, or nation, but also for the benefit of all humankind."

Chief Rabbi Israel Meir Lau, Chief Rabbi of Israel: "Judaism not only educates towards tolerance and understanding between observant and non-observant Jews, but also believes in tolerance between Jews and other religions and peoples, because all of us, all of humanity, were created in one image, the image of the Creator of the Universe. We all have one Father, one God who created us."

His Grace Reverend Njongonkulu Ndungane, Archbishop of Cape Town: "In order to live with diversity and to enjoy its riches, there is much healing to be done and, foremost, the healing of fears that lurk in the deepest recesses of our minds and hearts. We need to admit these fears in order to achieve unity in diversity and diversity in unity and to appreciate one another's giftedness. But sometimes it is our very giftedness that becomes a threat to others, and only our brokenness that unites us.… The only way to overcome fear is through a love that really wants the best for others. To look at those with different backgrounds and see them as God sees them.… There is an old saying that if you want peace, work for justice. I believe that our greatest challenge as the world's religious leaders is to consistently remind our political and business counterparts that peace is not the absence of war or conflict. It is the presence of those conditions in society that ensure basics, such as food, shelter, clothing, access to health care, clean water and education. Peace is about giving facility and nurturing a spirit of love."[xxxi]

While many of the religious leaders at the peace summit addressed the need for religious tolerance, it is interesting to note that many limited their remarks to racial and ethnic intolerance. We assume that was simply an oversight, because religious tolerance is often a critical component of racial and ethnic tolerance.

In addition, while we see efforts to promote religious tolerance, some efforts fall short of being inclusive of all religious ideas or modern, secular societies. Leaders of the Russian Orthodox Church and Islamic leaders, for example, have been working to improve relations by stressing their common traditions and values and experiences under Soviet oppression. A joint statement, released by Orthodox and Muslim leaders in the Republic of Tatarstan, captures this feeling: "At the close of the 20th century, in which horrible wars (including religious ones) and persecutions for the faith have ceased, when often in the same cell were tortured the mullah and the Orthodox priest—we should draw from this the lesson of this terrible century, and enter

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[xxxi] Other memorable comments by the religious leaders include the following:

Sri Daya Mata, President and Sangmata, Self Realization Fellowship: "God is not the least bit interested in where we were born, which religion we follow, or what color our skin is. But He does care about how we behave."

Reverend Bishop Vashti M. McKenzie, African Methodist Episcopal Church: "There are many things that divide us: different doctrines, different dogmas, different tenets, different belief systems. But if we search hard, I believe we will also find some common grounds in our differentness without violating the uniqueness of our belief systems. Now, in the 21st century, we can begin to uncover the things that bring us together rather than dwell on the things that tear us apart."

Venerable Sheng-Yen, Buddhist leader: "The best way to protect ourselves is to transform our enemies into friends. And this is at the heart of Buddhist teaching."

His Excellency Dr. L. M. Singhvi, Jain scholar: "Tolerance is a state of mind, a set of norms and a pattern of behavior. It is another name for human understanding.… Tolerance is, in the ultimate analysis, the only way to unshackle humanity from egocentric pride and prejudice, from hatred and violence, from racial discrimination and religious fanaticism."

Sacred Rights: Faith Leaders on Tolerance and Respect (New York: Millwood Publishing, 2001).

into the 21st century with the clear understanding that peace on our planet is greater than thoughtless airings of the question, 'Which faith is better.'" This ecumenism, however, seems to be very limited.

One of the views shared by Muslim and Orthodox traditionalists is antagonism toward conversion, carried out by proselytizing missionaries of any faith. As Talgat Tadzhuddin, Chief Mufti of European Russia, has described the "problem": "They [missionaries] catch the souls of the young, the weak, tearing them away from their families, from a sense of love for their Fatherland, from their communities…the position of the Central Spiritual Administration of the Muslims of Russia…is in complete agreement…with the position of the Russian Orthodox Church."

Another shared view, unfortunately, is their opposition to secular and modern societies. Speaking of Muslim-Orthodox cooperation, Patriarch Alekseii II, Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, said, "Together, we must respond to such alarming phenomena as secularization, moral crisis of society, attempts to build up a monopolar world, and to use globalization for economic, cultural, religious and information dictatorship." [177]

It is worth noting that one of the most courageous steps toward religious tolerance was taken in 1965, when, for the first time, the Vatican recognized Muslims as being part of "God's salvation plan." Apart from the thousand-year delay, the Second Vatican Council's announcement, known as *Nostra Aetate*, was most welcome.

Although many quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Muslims in the course of history, the council "urges all to forget the past and strive sincerely for mutual

understanding.… All peoples of the Earth constitute a sole social community."

This issue was further elaborated in the third clause of the declaration:

"The Church looks with esteem at the Muslims who adore the only God, living and existing, merciful and omnipotent, Creator of the Heavens and the Earth, who has spoken to man. They seek to submit themselves with all their heart to God's decrees, even hidden, as did even Abraham submit himself, to whom the Islamic faith gladly refers. Although they do not recognise Jesus as God, they nevertheless venerate him as a prophet; they honour his Virgin Mother, Mary, and sometimes they even invoke her with devotion. What is more, they wait for the day of judgement when God will reward all men resurrected. Thus, they too hold in esteem moral life and pay homage to God above all with prayer, charity, and fasting."

At the time, these sentiments received a favorable response. In 1967, for example, Ahmad Omar Haslim, rector of Al-Azhar University, appealed to Muslims and Westerners to join together in seeking the common good, rather than continuing to avoid each other as a strategy to prevent conflict. "After all the suffering and indescribable affliction that humanity has gone through," he said, "we hope that humanity will be pervaded with a feeling of peace in which all religions, and principally Islam, will contribute." [178]

A similarly optimistic conclusion was reached by Arnold Toynbee. In discussing the rise and fall of civilizations, he did not try to reduce the complexities to one or two factors, but rather saw historic change as an organic process involving all the variables of life. Yet he predicted that this natural process would ulti-

mately bring about the convergence of all civilizations. "In order to save mankind we have to learn to live together in concord in spite of traditional differences of religion, class, race and civilisation. We must learn to recognise and understand the different cultural configurations in which our common human nature has expressed itself." This is indeed a strong challenge, but as he said, "A strong challenge often provokes a highly creative response." [179]

The time has come for the world to recognize that Jews, Christians and Muslims are the children of Abraham—and, according to the Qur'an, that our different religious communities are part of God's plan. The Qur'an: "For every one of you [Jews, Christians, Muslims], We have appointed a path and a way. If God had willed, He would have made you but one community; but that [He has not done in order that] He may try you in what has come to you. So compete with one another in good works." [180]

Five years ago, when I came to Carnegie Corporation, we reviewed the foundation's priorities and future course of action. One of the topics that we highlighted was Islam's emergence as a major religion in America and the imperative need for us to understand its structure, history and evolution. Two Carnegie conferences, held prior to September 11 and attended by scholars and some Muslim American leaders as well, focused on the complex nature of Islam and the enormous diversity within the American Muslim community. Also discussed were the inherent conflicts that Muslim immigrants in particular must resolve to become an integral part of our social fabric. American Muslims, we know, represent a cross section of the world's population, with all of its ethnic, cultural, linguistic and socioeconomic

patterns, not to mention the many differences between native-born, newly converted and immigrant Muslims.

Two important themes emerged from the conferences: first, the need to promote public understanding about the rich legacy and diversity of Islam and, second, the need to ease the participation and integration of Muslim citizens, particularly recent immigrants, into our society and democracy. It was one of the Founding Fathers of our democracy, James Madison, who emphasized that religious pluralism is not a threat to the stability of the United States, but, rather, a positive force in America. He said the rights of individuals and those in the minority are better protected in a diverse society, since even those in the ruling majority, by necessity, must represent a combination of interests and perspectives. In a free society, the security of civil rights must be the same as that for religious rights.

In this connection, Carnegie Corporation has begun to explore ways to improve the American understanding of Islam as a religion, the characteristics of Muslim societies in general and that of American Muslims in particular. We are examining ways to promote intergroup and interfaith understanding within our pluralistic democracy. In addition, we are seeking to identify the means to facilitate multilateral dialogues between Western and Muslim intellectuals, professionals and clerics as well as between Muslim secular intellectuals and theologians. These are ambitious objectives that I hope Carnegie Corporation will help organize the means to achieve, in cooperation with our United States and European sister institutions, and, whenever possible, involving our counterparts in Africa, the Middle East, South Asia and Southeast Asia.

These dialogues and conferences will produce a variety of critical, scholarly and yet accessible texts on many of the issues raised in this report. It is my belief that such studies will establish a common vocabulary and terms of reference for Muslims and non-Muslims alike. This, in turn, one hopes, will provide a bridge between American Muslims and Muslim immigrants as well as Muslims in their countries of origin. Dialogues and national conversations could help inform the American understanding of the one-fifth of humanity that follows the precepts of Islam. In addition, I am convinced that the American Muslim community can help Muslim societies around the world to better understand America's pluralistic democracy, its institutions and aspirations.

The 20th century has been the age of ideology and total war. We have witnessed the ravages of two world wars, racism, chauvinism and xenophobia; we have seen ideologues on the left and the right who have defended and rationalized political systems intended to deliver "perfect societies" and "perfect nation-states." In the process, they colonized, categorized and dehumanized entire peoples, nations and races. They gave us oppression, concentration camps, ethnic cleansing, genocide and, of course, the unspeakable horror of the Holocaust.

The new century, hopefully chastened by the bloody record of the past hundred years, will resist all ideologies—old, new or renewed —that attempt to use religion to sow the seeds of division, hatred and violence, be it in the form of Islamaphobia, anti-Semitism, anti-Christianity, anti-Catholicism, anti-Protestantism, anti-Hinduism or anti-Buddhism, to name but a few. The new century should reject attempts to use religion as a tool of secular ideologies or use it to justify terrorism, mass murder or assassination, often in the name of a just and merciful God. Racism, chauvinism and xenophobia should not be given respectable shelter by any religion. Societies should reject the degradation of their religions. Religious intolerance is especially repugnant in the United States, which was founded on religious tolerance. It is also deeply and particularly tragic when intolerance pits Muslims, Jews and Christians against one another— members of the three Abrahamic faiths, which have so much in common, including the belief that God created human beings in His own image.

The message of Saadi of Shiraz, the 13th-century Persian poet, is one that both Muslims and non-Muslims should take to heart. As he reminds us:

The children of Adam are limbs of one another
And in their creation come from one substance
When the world gives pain to one another
The other members find no rest.

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