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
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Islam

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Lesson 8
Islam

Rick White, Ph.D.
University of Colorado, Colorado
Springs

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
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Islam

- Monotheistic religion predicated on belief that there is only one God, and Muhammed is his prophet.
- World's 2nd largest religion with 1.8 billion followers, 24.1% of the world population.
- Fastest growing major religion in the world.

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Tenets

- **God is merciful, all powerful, and unique.**
- God guides mankind through scripture revealed by his prophets.
- The prophet Muhammed revealed the word of God in the **Quran**.
- **Islam guides the faithful to a life of goodness and piety.**
- Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem are home to the three holiest sites in Islam.

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Muhammed

- 570 – 632 CE
- Merchant who at age 40 began reporting revelations sent from God by the archangel Gabriel.
- Implored people of Mecca to abandon polytheism.
- Persecuted, he fled to Medina, where he became both a religious and political leader.
- After years of conflict, Mecca capitulated in 629, and by time of his death, the tribes of Arabia were united under Islam.

Note: Generally the image of the Prophet is not depicted in deference to the greater importance of the Word of God; it's the message, not the messenger who is central to Islam.
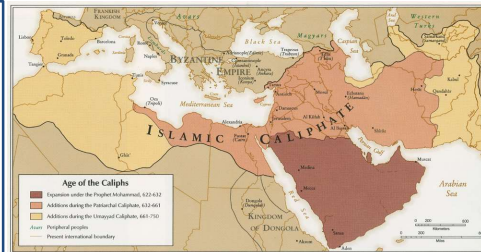
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Caliphate

- Arab armies carried Islam across Arabia, Africa, and Asia to create the Caliphate by 750 CE.
- Islam enjoyed a Golden Age over next 500 years as it became the leader in art, science, & literature.
- The Caliphate reached its zenith after conquering Constantinople and making it the capitol of the Ottoman Empire in 1258.
- After long decay, the Ottoman Empire disintegrated in WWI, and the Caliphate was abolished in 1924.
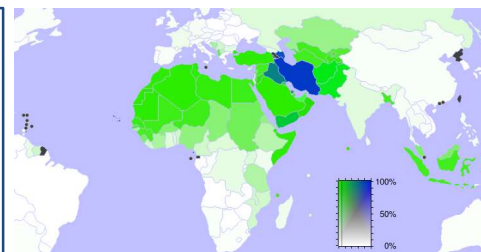

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Denominations

- Shia Muslims believe the Caliph must be a lineal descendant of the Prophet Muhammed.
- Sunni Muslims believe that faith and wisdom are the necessary determinants for electing Caliph.
- 75%-90% of all Muslims are Sunni.
- Iran is a Shia Muslim state.

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8/25/2020

US Friction

- Jerusalem is where Muhammed ascended to Heaven and received his mission from God.
- Jerusalem was taken by Israel during the 1967 Six-Day War.
- The US has staunchly supported Israel since UN formation in 1948.
- In 1949 1967, and 1972, Israel defeated combined Arab armies.
- US accused of unfairly supporting Israel and furthering plight of the Palestinians.

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US Target

- 1973 OPEC Oil Embargo
- 1979 Iranian Hostage Crisis
- 1983 Marine Barracks Bombing
- 1985 TWA Flight 847 Hijacking
- 1985 Achille Lauro Hijacking
- 1987 USS Stark Attack
- 1993 Twin Towers Bombing
- 1996 Khobar Towers Bombing
- 1998 African Embassy Bombings
- 2000 USS Cole Attack
- 2001 9/11 Attacks

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Osama Bin Laden

- Born 1957 to wealthy Saudi family.
- Left university in 1979 to fight Soviets in Afghanistan.
- Founded Al Qaeda in 1988; Soviets withdrew in 1989.
- Angered by US force deployment to Saudi Arabia in defense against Saddam Hussein.
- Declared war on US in 1996.
- Sponsored attacks against African Embassies, USS Cole, & 9/11.
- Escaped Afghanistan in 2001.
- Killed in Pakistan, 2011.

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ISIL

- After ousting Taliban in 2002, US invaded Iraq in 2003.
- Iraqi forces were defeated in six weeks; Saddam Hussein fled.
- Country erupted into civil war; 4,424 troops killed before US formally withdrew in 2011.
- In 2014, US forces returned to Iraq to confront ISIL.
- Successor to Al Qaeda, ISIL fights to create new Caliphate.

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Taliban

- Nominal Afghan government before being ousted in 2002.
- Fundamentalist Muslims.
- Ran afoul of UN when they destroyed Buddhist statues.
- Ran afoul of US when they refused to extradite Bin Laden.
- Taliban fight to regain power.
- US remains to build strong central government to keep country from reverting to terrorist safe haven.

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Situation

- US forces withdrawn from Saudi Arabia in 2003.
- US implicated in dispute between Arabs and Israel.
- US military campaigns in SW Asia seen as targeting Muslims.
- Western values seen as threat to traditional Muslim piety.
- Al Qaeda, ISIL, & Taliban are sworn enemies of the US.
- They wage asymmetric warfare with goal of driving US influence out of SW Asia.

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Perspectives

- Al Qaeda, ISIL, and Taliban are religious extremists.
- They are a very small minority at odds with the majority of peace loving Muslims.
- **Killing innocent civilians is antithetical to teachings of Quran.**
- **In Medina, Muhammed established the "Ummah", the "one community" for Muslims, Jews, and Christians alike.**

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Threat

- Despite the fact Al Qaeda brought homeland security to the forefront of US policy concerns, they are no greater a threat than any other dissident group or individual upset with US government.
- Same for ISIL and Taliban.
- **The greater threat to homeland security stems from the relative ease for inflicting domestic catastrophic destruction due to the inherent vulnerability of critical infrastructure to cyber attack.**

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Homeland Security

It's not about motive**, it's about means and opportunity.**

Means

Domestic
Catastrophic
Destruction

Opportunity   Motive

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Conclusion

Questions?

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