

from the September 11 bombers only in efficiency.”

While President Bush's comments were well-intended, they were baseless assertions. It may be true that most individual Muslims living in America sincerely love this country. But it is a fact that as of the printing of this issue no major Muslim group in America has spoken out against terrorism without qualification.

“Islam is an imperialist religion,” Paul Johnson explains, noting that the Koran encourages believers to battle non-Muslims “until they embrace Islam.” In recent years, adherents have brought this tendency to the fore in an especially politicized form of the Muslim religion. Scholars call it Islamism, which Martin Kramer of Tel Aviv University defines as “Islam reformulated as a modern ideology.”

Daniel Pipes, director of the Middle East Forum, states that “Islamists see their adherence to Islam primarily as a form of political allegiance. Though usually pious Muslims, they need not be. Plenty of Islamists seem in fact to be rather impious.” Those who assume that the vodka-swilling, porn-buying, nude-club-visiting September 11 hijackers couldn't possibly be devoted to any Islamic cause should be interested to learn that Ramzi Yousef, major planner of the first Trade Center bombing in 1993, spent his time in the Philippines “gallivanting around Manila's bars, strip-joints, and karaoke clubs, flirting with women.” Osama bin Laden, too, is reported to have been a regular in the nightclubs of Beirut during the period when his Islamic fervor was blooming.

Islamic extremists may constitute only a minor percentage of the worldwide Muslim population; certainly it is true that not all Muslims support terrorists. But all of today's terrorists bent on destroying Western civilization are Muslims. The actions of September 11 were not the result of 19 individual sick minds, but of sick societies. Yes, horrible monsters spring from Christian nations as well. But the vital distinction lies in how societies respond to their evildoers. America executed Timothy McVeigh. Large parts of the societies from whence sprang the September 11 hijackers celebrated them as martyrs.

The leaders and supporters of the Soviet Union, as glaring and massive a threat to world freedom as they were, still held the basic moral assumptions about human life that C. S. Lewis believed universal. The most vile Communists, indifferent to the human tragedies they helped create, still cared whether their family members lived or died. That's why Mutual Assured Destruction—the Cold War gospel that neither side would launch a nuclear attack so long as it was clear that doing so would bring a deadly counterattack—worked.

MAD won't work with our latest enemies. There is nothing with which to threaten them, because there is nothing they fear. They *want* to die for the sacred cause of exterminating Americans, Jews, and Westerners. They know no mercy. They attack civilians, women, even children as indifferently as soldiers. They do not care how many of their own people suffer and die. A day after the attacks on New York and Washington, the civilian population of Kabul began to flee Afghanistan's capital for fear

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of U.S. retaliation. The Taliban, instead of being concerned for the safety of its citizens—the majority of whom are likely too ignorant, poor, and miserable to

have even heard of the Twin Towers before—urged the wretched masses to stay and fight—i.e., be blown to pieces for the sake of providing cover for the Taliban. The Islamic terror campaign is different from any enemy the West has ever faced, and, because there is no conventional way to fight it, more dangerous.

There are few moral values that these killers share with us. They inhabit countries where slaughtering women and children brings honor to men. There are people who live profitably among free nations and accept the kindness of their citizens, all the while plotting their ruin. There are leaders, popular ones, who will use poison gas on their own people. One might just as well imagine a country where two and two made five. Yet such countries are our new enemies.

In Syria, Libya, Iraq, Algeria, Iran, the Sudan, Afghanistan, the idea of hospitality means harboring mass killers; official slavery exists to this day within some of these borders; mutilations are state policies; women are kept as human house pets; and Americans are killed for sport. “In part of Nigeria and Sudan, and in Asia, notably in Indonesia,” warns Paul Johnson, “non-Muslims are given the choice of conversion or death. And in all countries where Islamic law is applied, converts, whether compulsory or not, who revert to their earlier faith, are punished by death.” With the exception of Turkey, fundamentalist theology “has increased its grip on both the rulers and the masses” throughout the Islamic world.

It isn't just Westerners who fear the menace of militant Islam. Algerian ambassador to the U.S. Osmane Bencherif has stated that “It is misguided policy to distinguish between moderate and extremist fundamentalists. The goal of all is the same: to construct a pure Islamic state, which is bound to be a theocracy and totalitarian.” “An Islamist state is, almost by definition, a rogue state,” observes Daniel Pipes. “Islamists in power means that conflicts proliferate, society is militarized, arsenals grow, and terrorism becomes an instrument of state.”

The Cold War is over, but the battle of good vs. evil rages stronger than ever. At some point in the future, the human thirst for liberty and self-determination may sweep even the Islamic world. But today, a fresh enemy is at civilization's gate, and it's time we recognized him.

## The Muslim World Has Fallen Behind

By Hillel Fradkin

Osama bin Laden and other radical Muslims look at the present condition of the world not just in contemporary terms, but in light of the whole 1,400-year sweep of Islamic history. They cite medieval authorities as frequently as living experts; ancient battles as readily as recent ones. To understand today's Islamic radicals it is necessary to appreciate how unappetizing civilization's current trends look to them.



Saddam Hussein

Keep in mind that for at least 1,000 years after Islam's founding in 622, Islamic states and their rulers were the most powerful entities in the world, far more impressive than any of their European and Christian rivals. At the turn of the previous millennium, the great cities of culture, learning, and science were Cordoba, Baghdad, and other urbane Arab

metropolises. That is emphatically no longer the case.

To the contrary, today's Muslim nations are weak and, by and large, failed states. Whatever importance they possess derives almost entirely from where they are located—atop the largest proven reserves of oil in the world.

For a long time, the Islamic empire stretched from the Pyrenees to Indonesia, including most everything in between. As recently as the sixteenth century the most powerful state in the world, including Europe, was Muslim: the Ottoman Empire. As recently as the seventeenth century, the Ottomans came remarkably close to capturing Vienna. Had they done so, all of Europe could have come under Muslim rule.

But things turned out differently. For the last two or three centuries the Muslim world has been in retreat—politically, militarily, and economically. To the west, Muslim states were forced to give up rule in Europe; in the east they were pushed out of India. For a period, Muslims even had to submit to the rule of non-Muslims in North Africa, the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia.

Today, all Muslim nations are self-governing and with few exceptions are officially Muslim states. Geographically speaking, the Muslim world is not grossly smaller than it was at its height. But politically, Muslim countries are shadows of their former selves.

This situation is not only a function of the rapid progress of their competitors and adversaries. The Islamic world itself has stopped improving; Muslim leaders have not appropriated those aspects of modernity that made their rivals strong. Worse still, Muslims have intermittently tried to adopt *defective* forms of modernization—especially various types of socialism. What they have not lastingly tried is democratic capitalism. Almost all Muslim countries are still ruled by some form of autocracy—some softer, some harsher—and most of their autocrats are corrupt.

The Muslim world has a truly glorious past—not only politically and militarily but also intellectually and spiritually—and a diminished and humbling present. The natural consequence is disappointment, shame, even despair. The contrast with life in today's powerful advanced democracies like the United States is stark and often embittering.

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Of course, there are many peoples and countries which have lost the preeminence they once enjoyed. The city of Rome, after all, once ruled the world. In modern times, England and France rose to great power, then declined. The French, in particular, still find it hard to bear their reduced position, but these peoples have “moved on.” Why then does the diminished political station of Islamic countries so often yield fanaticism, rage, and terrorism?

The clearest explanation is that the Muslim faith assigns religious value to political success. The Koran presents Islam as the worthy successor, indeed the superior, of its monotheistic predecessors, Judaism and Christianity. Islam, unlike Christianity, has a political mission at its very heart. In contrast to Judaism (with which it shares a political element) Islam has a universalizing and missionary impulse. It looks forward eventually to a world united under Islam.

The original political and military successes of Islam served to confirm and reinforce the importance of political mission within its religious teachings. This has made Islam's more recent weakness especially troubling and freighted with greater significance than the ordinary rise and fall of state fortunes. Today's fanatics and terrorists have put an extreme interpretation on these circumstances. It is not merely history which has gone awry, they say, but the very constitution of the world. Demonic forces must be loose. How else is one to understand the current weakness of Mohammed's home lands? Satan himself must be at work—in the form of America, the Great Satan. America has achieved what has heretofore been unprecedented—“the occupation of the land of the two Holy Places,” Arabia, the very birthplace of Islam.

To be sure, only a minority of Muslims share this interpretation, and a still smaller number are prepared to act on it with terror and violence. Still, the view is sufficiently popular to be convenient for Muslim tyrants—like Saddam Hussein, who has his own, hardly pious, reasons for wanting the U.S. out of the Arabian peninsula.

Regrettably, demonizing views of the U.S. have also been given a platform in the press of several “moderate” Muslim countries, fanning popular resentment and hatred toward everything American. Faced with indigenous resistance to their own regimes, the rulers of nations like Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Pakistan have found it useful to let the U.S. be the bogeyman, distracting their populations from problems at home. This may backfire spectacularly. It is certain to make our war against terrorism more difficult.

## Islamic Militancy is on the Rise

By David Wurmser

The response of today's Muslims to the frustrating reality of being surpassed by Western civilization in nearly all ways has followed three different paths. The first response has been to look at the West and understand that its ideas can be successfully applied to Muslim regions. Unfortunately, this “borrow from the West” school has split between those who embrace the idea of freedom—such as Nobel Prize winner Naguib Mahfouz—and those who prefer modernity's twisted twin: totalitarianism. A