

Islam and Terrorism

Kerby Anderson provides various perspectives on the link between Islam and terrorism, including how Americans and Christians can think about its encroachment on our culture.

Clash of Civilizations

In this article we will be looking at Islam and terrorism. Before we look at the rise of Muslim terrorism in our world, we need to understand the worldview conflict between Islam and western values. The Muslim religion is a seventh-century religion. Think about that statement for a moment. Most people would not consider Christianity a first century religion. While it began in the first century, it has taken the timeless message of the Bible and communicated it in contemporary ways.



In many ways, Islam is still stuck in the century in which it developed. One of the great questions is whether it will adapt to the modern world. The rise of Muslim terrorism and the desire to implement sharia law illustrate this clash of civilizations.

In the summer of 1993, Samuel Huntington published an article entitled "The Clash of Civilizations?" in the journal *Foreign Affairs*.[\[1\]](#) Three years later Samuel Huntington published a book using a similar title: *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. It became a bestseller, once again stirring controversy. It seems worthy to revisit his comments and predictions because they have turned out to be remarkably accurate.

His thesis was fairly simple. World history will be marked by conflicts between three principal groups: western universalism, Muslim militancy, and Chinese assertion.

Huntington says that in the post-Cold War world, "Global

politics has become multipolar and multicivilizational.”^{2} During most of human history, major civilizations were separated from one another and contact was intermittent or nonexistent. Then for over 400 years, the nation states of the West (Britain, France, Spain, Austria, Prussia, Germany, and the United States) constituted a multipolar international system that interacted, competed, and fought wars with each other. During that same period of time, these nations also expanded, conquered, and colonized nearly every other civilization.

During the Cold War, global politics became bipolar, and the world was divided into three parts. Western democracies led by the United States engaged in ideological, political, economic, and even military competition with communist countries led by the Soviet Union. Much of this conflict occurred in the Third World outside these two camps and was composed mostly of nonaligned nations.

Huntington argued that in the post-Cold War world, the principal actors are still the nation states, but they are influenced by more than just power and wealth. Other factors like cultural preferences, commonalities, and differences are also influential. The most important groupings are not the three blocs of the Cold War, but rather the major world civilizations. Most significant in discussion in this article is the conflict between the Western world and Muslim militancy.

Other Perspectives on Radical Islam

In the previous section, we talked about the thesis by Samuel Huntington that this is a clash of civilizations.

Bernard Lewis sees this conflict as a phase that Islam is currently experiencing in which many Muslim leaders are attempting to resist the influences of the modern world (and

in particular the Western world) on their communities and countries. This is what he had to say about Islam and the modern world:

Islam has brought comfort and peace of mind to countless millions of men and women. It has given dignity and meaning to drab and impoverished lives. It has taught people of different races to live in brotherhood and people of different creeds to live side by side in reasonable tolerance. It inspired a great civilization in which others besides Muslims lived creative and useful lives and which, by its achievement, enriched the whole world. But Islam, like other religions, has also known periods when it inspired in some of its followers a mood of hatred and violence. It is our misfortune that part, though by no means all or even most, of the Muslim world is now going through such a period, and that much, though again not all, of that hatred is directed against us.[\[3\]](#)

This does not mean that all Muslims want to engage in jihad warfare against America and the West. But it does mean that there is a growing clash of civilizations.

William Tucker believes that the actual conflict results from what he calls the Muslim intelligensia. He says "that we are not facing a clash of civilizations so much as a conflict with an educated segment of a civilization that produces some very weird, sexually disoriented men. Poverty has nothing to do with it. It is stunning to meet the al Qaeda roster—one highly accomplished scholar after another with advanced degrees in chemistry, biology, medicine, engineering, a large percentage of them educated in the United States."[\[4\]](#)

His analysis is contrary to the many statements that have been made in the past that poverty breeds terrorism. While it is certainly true that many recruits for jihad come from impoverished situations, it is also true that the leadership comes from those who are well-educated and highly

accomplished.

Tucker therefore concludes that we are effectively at war with a Muslim intelligentsia. These are essentially “the same people who brought us the horrors of the French Revolution and 20th century Communism. With their obsession for moral purity and their rational hatred that goes beyond all irrationality, these warrior-intellectuals are wreaking the same havoc in the Middle East as they did in Jacobin France and Mao Tse-tung’s China.”[\[5\]](#)

Threat from Radical Islam

It is hard to estimate the extent of the threat of radical Islam, but there are some commentators who have tried to provide a reasonable estimate. Dennis Prager provides an overview of the extent of the threat:

Anyone else sees the contemporary reality—the genocidal Islamic regime in Sudan; the widespread Muslim theological and emotional support for the killing of a Muslim who converts to another religion; the absence of freedom in Muslim-majority countries; the widespread support for Palestinians who randomly murder Israelis; the primitive state in which women are kept in many Muslim countries; the celebration of death; the honor killings of daughters, and so much else that is terrible in significant parts of the Muslim world—knows that civilized humanity has a new evil to fight.[\[6\]](#)

He argues that just as previous generations had to fight the Nazis and the communists, so this generation has to confront militant Islam. But he also notes something is dramatically different about the present Muslim threat. He says:

Far fewer people believed in Nazism or in communism than believe in Islam generally or in authoritarian Islam specifically. There are one billion Muslims in the world.

If just 10 percent believe in the Islam of Hamas, the Taliban, the Sudanese regime, Saudi Arabia, Wahhabism, bin Laden, Islamic Jihad, the Finley Park Mosque in London or Hizbollah—and it is inconceivable that only one of 10 Muslims supports any of these groups' ideologies—that means a true believing enemy of at least 100 million people.{7}

This very large number of people who wish to destroy civilization poses a threat that is unprecedented. Never has civilization had to confront such large numbers of those would wish to destroy civilization.

So, what is the threat in the United States? Let's take one number and one percentage for an estimate. There are about 4 million Muslim-Americans in the U.S., and we are often told that nearly all are law-abiding citizens. So let's assume that percentage is even as high as 99 percent. That still leaves one percent who believe in jihad and could pose a threat to America. Multiply one percent by 4 million and you get a number of 40,000 individuals that Homeland Security needs to try to monitor. Even if you use a percentage of one-tenth of one percent, you still get about 4,000 potential terrorists in America.

That is why it is important to understand the potential threat we face from radical Islam.

Islamic Tipping Point

When the Muslim population increases in a country, there are certain social changes that have been documented. Peter Hammond deals with this in his book, *Slavery, Terrorism, & Islam*. Most people have never read the book, but many have seen an email on one of the most quoted parts of the book.{8}

He argued that when the Muslim population is under five percent, the primary activity is proselytizing, usually from

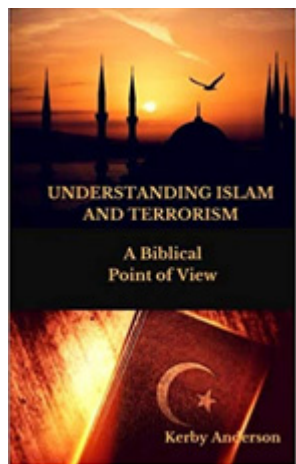
ethnic minorities and the disaffected. By the time the Muslim population reaches five percent or more, it begins to exert its influence and start pushing for Sharia law.

Peter Hammond sees a significant change when a Muslim population reaches ten percent (found in many European countries). At that point, he says you begin to see increased levels of violence and lawlessness. You also begin to hear statements of identity and the filing of various grievances.

At twenty to thirty percent, there are examples of hair-trigger rioting and jihad militias. In some countries, you even have church bombings. By forty percent to fifty percent, nations like Bosnia and Lebanon experience widespread massacres and ongoing militia warfare. When at least half the population is Muslim, you begin to see the country persecute infidels and apostates and Sharia law is implemented over all of its citizens.

After eighty percent, you see countries like Iran, Syria, and Nigeria engage in persecution and intimidation as a daily part of life. Sometimes state-run genocide develops in an attempt to purge the country of all infidels. The final goal is "Dar-es-Salaam" (the Islamic House of Peace).

Peter Hammond would probably be the first to say that these are generalizations and there are certainly exceptions to the rule. But the general trends have been validated through history. When the Muslim population is small, its leaders focus on winning converts and working to gain sympathy for Sharia law. But then their numbers increase, the radical Muslims leaders takeover and the Islamic domination begins.



In this article we have been looking at the challenge of Islam when it comes to jihad and terrorist activity. I document all of this in my new book, *Understanding Islam and Terrorism*. The book not only deals with the threat of terrorism but also takes time to explain the theology behind Islam with helpful suggestions on how to witness to your Muslim friends. You can find [more information](#) about my book on the Probe Ministries website.

Sharia Law and Radical Islam

A foundational practice of Islam is the implementation of Sharia into the legal structure. Sharia is a system of divine law, belief, or practice that is based upon Muslim legal interpretation. It applies to economics, politics, and society.

Sometimes the world has been able to see how extreme the interpretation of Sharia can be. Muslims have been put to death when they have been accused of adultery or homosexuality. They have been put to death for leaving the religion of Islam. And these are not isolated examples.

Sharia law is very different in many respects from the laws established through the U.S. Constitution and the laws established through English Common law. In an attempt to prevent Sharia law from being implemented in America, a number of state legislatures have such bans on Sharia law. Voters in other states have approved a ban that has been struck down by a federal appeals court.

Although opponents argue that these Sharia law bans are unnecessary, various studies have found significant cases of Sharia law being allowed in U.S. courts. One report with the title, "Sharia Law and the American State Courts"[\[9\]](#) found 50

significant cases of Sharia law in U.S. courts just from their small sample of appellate published cases. When they looked at state courts, they found an additional 15 cases in the trial courts and 12 more in the appellate courts. Judges are making decisions deferring to Sharia law even when those decisions conflict with the U.S. Constitution and the various state constitutions.

How should we respond to the increased use of Sharia law in America? One simple way to explain your concern to legislators, family, friends, and neighbors is to remember the numbers 1-8-14. These three numbers stand for the three amendments to the U.S. Constitution that prevent the use of Sharia law.

The First Amendment says that there should be no establishment of religion. Sharia law is based on one religion's interpretation of rights. The First Amendment prohibits the establishment of any national religion (including Islam).

The Eighth Amendment prohibits "cruel and unusual punishment." Most Americans would consider the penalties handed down under Sharia law to be cruel and unusual.

The Fourteenth Amendment guarantees each citizen equal protection under the Constitution. Sharia law does not treat men and women equally, nor does it treat Muslims and non-Muslims equally. This also violates the Constitution.

These are just a few ways to argue against Sharia law. As Christians, we need discernment to understand the religion of Islam, and boldness to address the topic of radical Islam with biblical convictions.

Notes

1. Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs*, Summer 1993, 22-49.
2. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the*

- Remaking of World Order* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), 21.
3. Bernard Lewis, "The Roots of Muslim Rage," *Atlantic Monthly*, September 1990, www.theatlantic.com/doc/prem/199009/muslim-rage. Accessed 7/8/2018.
4. William Tucker, "Overprivileged Children," *American Spectator*, 12 Sept. 2006, spectator.org/46473_overprivileged-children/. Accessed 7/8/2018.
5. Ibid.
- Dennis Prager, "The Islamic Threat is Greater than German and Soviets Threats Were," 28 May 2006, www.dennisprager.com/the-islamic-threat-is-greater-than-german-and-soviet-threats-were/. Accessed 7/8/2018.
6. Ibid.
7. Peter Hammond, *Slavery, Terrorism, & Islam: The Historical Roots and Contemporary Threat* (San Jose, CA: Frontline, 1982), 151.
8. Shariah Law and the American State Courts, Center for Security Policy, 5 January 2015. www.centerforsecuritypolicy.org/2015/01/05/shariah-in-american-courts-the-expanding-incursion-of-islamic-law-in-the-u-s-legal-system/. Accessed 7/8/2018.

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Islam in the Modern World: A Christian Perspective

Islam is a global threat unlike anything ever seen before in the history of the world. Its frighteningly different paradigm of conquest and disrespect for any non-Muslim people and

cultures needs to be grasped in order to deal with it. When contrasted with the biblical worldview of Christianity, Islam presents a radically different view of God and mankind. Kerby Anderson highlights some of the radical differences between the Christianity of the Bible and the Islam of the Koran.

Islam and the Clash of Civilizations

Islam is a seventh century religion. For a moment, think about that statement. I doubt anyone would consider Christianity a first century religion. You might acknowledge that it began in the first century, but you wouldn't probably describe it as a religion of the first century because the timeless principles of the gospel have adapted to the times in which they are communicated.

In many ways, Islam has remained stuck in the century in which it developed. One of the great questions of the twenty-first century is whether it will adapt to the modern era. Certainly many Muslims have done so, but radical Muslims have not.

Perhaps the leading scholar on Islam in this country is the emeritus professor from Princeton University, Bernard Lewis. This is what he had to say about Islam and the modern world:

Islam has brought comfort and peace of mind to countless millions of men and women. It has given dignity and meaning to drab and impoverished lives. It has taught people of different races to live in brotherhood and people of different creeds to live side by side in reasonable tolerance. It inspired a great civilization in which others besides Muslims lived creative and useful lives and which, by its achievement, enriched the whole world. But Islam, like other religions, has also known periods when it inspired in some of its followers a mood of hatred and violence. It is our misfortune that part, though by no means all or even most, of the Muslim world is now going through such a period, and that much, though again not all, of that

hatred is directed against us.{1}

This certainly does not mean that all Muslims want to engage in jihad warfare against America and the West. But it does mean that there is a growing clash of civilizations.{2}

Bernard Lewis continues:

In the classical Islamic view, to which many Muslims are beginning to return, the world and all mankind are divided into two: the House of Islam, where the Muslim law and faith prevail, and the rest, known as the House of Unbelief or the House of War, which it is the duty of Muslims ultimately to bring to Islam.

It should by now be clear that we are facing a mood and a movement far transcending the level of issues and policies and the governments that pursue them. This is no less than a clash of civilizations—the perhaps irrational but surely historic reaction of an ancient rival against our Judeo-Christian heritage, our secular present, and the worldwide expansion of both. It is crucially important that we on our side should not be provoked into an equally historic but also equally irrational reaction against the rival.{3}

This is the challenge for the twenty-first century. Will Islam adapt to the modern world, or will there continue to be a clash of civilizations?

Muslim Intelligentsia

Not everyone accepts the clash of civilizations analysis. William Tucker, writing in the *American Spectator*, believes that the actual conflict results from what he calls the Muslim Intelligentsia.

He says that “we are not facing a clash of civilizations so much as a conflict with an educated segment of a civilization

that produces some very weird, sexually disoriented men. Poverty has nothing to do with it. It is stunning to meet the al Qaeda roster—one highly accomplished scholar after another with advanced degrees in chemistry, biology, medicine, engineering, a large percentage of them educated in the United States.”{4}

This analysis is contrary to the many statements that have been made in the past that poverty breeds terrorism. While it is certainly true that many recruits for jihad come from impoverished situations, it is also true that the leadership comes from those who are well-educated and highly accomplished.

William Tucker believes that those who wish to engage in jihad warfare against the U.S. and the West bear a striking resemblance to the student revolutionaries during the 1960s on American universities. He calls them “overprivileged children” who he believes need to prove themselves (and their manhood) in the world. He also believes that “this is confounded by a polygamous society where fathers are often distant from their sons and where men and women barely encounter each other as young adults.”

Tucker says that our current conflict with Islam is not a war against a whole civilization. He point out that the jihad warriors are despised as much in their own countries as they are in the West. “Egyptians are sick to death of the Muslim Brotherhood and its casual slaughter. The war between Fundamentalists and secular authorities in Algeria cost 100,000 lives.”{5}

He concludes that we are effectively at war with a Muslim intelligentsia. These are essentially “the same people who brought us the horrors of the French Revolution and 20th century Communism. With their obsession for moral purity and their rational hatred that goes beyond all irrationality, these warrior-intellectuals are wreaking the same havoc in the

Middle East as they did in Jacobin France and Mao Tse-tung's China."

Certainly we are facing a clash of civilizations between Islam and the West. But it is helpful to understand Tucker's analysis. In any war it is important to know who you are fighting and what their motives might be. This understanding is one more important piece of the puzzle in the war on terrorism.

Extent of the Radical Muslim Threat

What is the extent of the threat from radical Muslims? This is hard to guess, but there are some commentators who have tried to provide a reasonable estimate. Dennis Prager provides an overview of the extent of the threat:

Anyone else sees the contemporary reality—the genocidal Islamic regime in Sudan; the widespread Muslim theological and emotional support for the killing of a Muslim who converts to another religion; the absence of freedom in Muslim-majority countries; the widespread support for Palestinians who randomly murder Israelis; the primitive state in which women are kept in many Muslim countries; the celebration of death; the honor killings of daughters, and so much else that is terrible in significant parts of the Muslim world—knows that civilized humanity has a new evil to fight.[\[6\]](#)

He argues that just as previous generations had to fight the Nazis and the communists, so this generation has to confront militant Islam. But he also notes something is dramatically different about the present Muslim threat. He says:

Far fewer people believed in Nazism or in communism than believe in Islam generally or in authoritarian Islam specifically. There are one billion Muslims in the world. If just 10 percent believe in the Islam of Hamas, the Taliban,

the Sudanese regime, Saudi Arabia, Wahhabism, bin Laden, Islamic Jihad, the Finley Park Mosque in London or Hizbollah—and it is inconceivable that only one of 10 Muslims supports any of these groups' ideologies—that means a true believing enemy of at least 100 million people.{7}

This very large number of people poses a threat that is unprecedented. Never has civilization has to confront such large numbers of those would wish to destroy civilization.

So what is the threat in the United States? Columnist Douglas MacKinnon has some chilling statistics. While he recognizes that most Muslims in the U.S. are peace-loving, he begins to break down the percentages. He says:

[I]f we accept the estimate that there are 6 million Muslim-Americans in our country, and 99% of them are law abiding citizens who are loyal to our nation, then that means that there may be—may be—1% who might put a twisted version of Islamic extremism before the wellbeing of their fellow Americans. When you stop to think that 1% of 6 million is 60,000 individuals, that then seems like a very intimidating one percent. Let's go to the good side of extreme and say that 99.9 percent of all Muslim-Americans would never turn on their own government. That would still leave a questionable 1/10th one percent—or 6,000 potential terrorist sympathizers.{8}

You can see that even the most conservative estimate of possible jihad warriors in this country results in a scary scenario for the future.

Women in Islam

One of the areas where Islam has had difficulty in adapting to the modern world has been in its treatment of women. While some Muslim leaders actually claim that Islam actually liberates women, contemporary examples prove otherwise. Women

who lived under Taliban rule in Afghanistan or who live under Sharia law in many Muslim countries today do not enjoy equal rights.

While it is true that many Muslims do respect and honor women, it is not true that those ideas can be found in the Qur'an. Here are just a few passages that illustrate the way women are to be treated. According to the Qur'an, women are considered inferior to men: "Men have authority over women because God has made the one superior to the other" (Sura 4:34). The Qur'an also restricts a woman's testimony in court. According to Sura 2:282, her testimony is worth half as much as that of a man.

Polygamy is sanctioned in Islam, and practiced in many Muslim countries. Sura 4:3 says, "If we fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly with the orphans, marry women of your choice, two or three or four; but if we fear that ye shall not be able to deal justly with them, then only one, or a captive that your hand possess, that will be more suitable, to prevent you from doing injustice."

Women in many Muslim countries cover their faces. The justification for that can be found in the Qur'an that teaches that women must "lower their gaze and guard their modesty: that they should not display their beauty and ornaments except what must ordinarily appear thereof: that they should draw their veils over their bosoms and not display their beauty except to their husbands, their fathers" (Sura 24:31).

Women in many Muslim countries cannot leave their house alone. Again, this is part of Islamic law. It states that a "husband may forbid his wife to leave the home."[{9}](#) It also places other requirements. For example, "a woman may not leave the city without her husband or a member of her unmarriageable kin accompanying her, unless the journey is obligatory, like the hajj. It is unlawful for her to travel otherwise, and unlawful for her husband to allow her to."[{10}](#)

Not only was this practiced in Afghanistan under the Taliban, it is found in countries like Saudi Arabia. In that country, women cannot drive nor can they leave their home without being accompanied by a male family member. Amnesty International reports that women in Saudi Arabia “who walk unaccompanied, or are in the company of a man who is neither their husband nor close relative, are at risk of arrest on suspicion of prostitution” or other moral offenses.[{11}](#)

Church and State in Islam

Islam and the West differ on many fundamental issues, but one of the most significant is whether the institutions of church and state should be separated. Hundreds of years of Western tradition have demonstrated the wisdom of keeping these institutions separated and the danger that ensues when the ecclesiastical and civil institutions are melded into one.

Bernard Lewis explains that no such separation exists in Islam:

In [the Islamic] world, religion embraces far more than it does in the Christian or post-Christian world. We are accustomed to talking of church and state and a whole series of pairs of words that go with them—lay and ecclesiastical, secular and religious, spiritual and temporal, and so on. These pairs of words simply do not exist in classical Islamic terminology because the dichotomy that these words express is unknown.[{12}](#)

Since the words (and the concepts) do not exist in Islam, it becomes difficult to see how to form democracies in the Muslim world. Essential to the functioning of these governments is a belief in the separation of powers. This would not only include a horizontal separation of powers (executive, legislative, and judicial), but a religious separations of powers (ecclesiastical and civil).

Chuck Colson says that “Islam is a theocratic belief system. It believes in not just a state church, but a church state. And so, it doesn’t advance like Christianity does. These are radically different views of reality.”[\[13\]](#)

This leads to another fundamental difference between Islam and Christianity. As we have discussed in previous articles,[\[14\]](#) Islam historically has advanced by force or compulsion. Chuck Colson puts it this way: “Christianity advances by love, it advances by winning people over, it advances by the grace of God; radical Islam advances by force.”[\[15\]](#)

Even within Muslim countries, Islam advances by compulsion. But it is important to point out that the Qur’an (2:256) says “there is no compulsion in religion.” But that really depends upon your definition of compulsion.

A closer look at Islamic law demonstrates a veiled threat that many believe is tantamount to compulsion. For example, Muhammad instructed his followers to invite non-Muslims to accept Islam before waging war against them. If they refused, warfare would follow or second class status. They would be inferiors in the Muslim social order and pay a special tax. This tax (known as the jizya) is required in Sura 9:29. If they pay it, they may live, but if they refuse to pay it, warfare will ensue.

While those of us in the West would consider this compulsion, the traditional Muslim interpretation of this would be that this would fit into the category of “no compulsion.”

Notes

1. Bernard Lewis, “The Roots of Muslim Rage,” *Atlantic Monthly*, September 1990, www.theatlantic.com/doc/prem/199009/muslim-rage.
2. See my article “The Clash of Civilizations,” Probe Ministries, 2002, probe.org/the-clash-of-civilizations/.
3. Lewis, “The Roots of Muslim Rage.”

4. William Tucker, "Overprivileged Children," *American Spectator*, 12 Sept. 2006, spectator.org/46473_overprivileged-children/.
5. Ibid.
6. Dennis Prager, "The Islamic Threat is Greater than German and Soviets Threats Were," 29 May 2006, <http://tinyurl.com/yy7jcg>.
7. Ibid.
8. Douglas MacKinnon, "Home grown terrorists," 25 Aug. 2006, townhall.com/columnists/douglasmackinnon/2006/08/25/home-grown-terrorists-n1239612.
9. "Umdat al-Salik, (manual of Islamic law), m 10.4
10. Ibid., m 10.3
11. Amnesty International, "Saudi Arabia: End Secrecy End Suffering: Women," www.amnesty.org/en/documents/MDE23/016/2000/en/.
12. Bernard Lewis, "Window on Islam," *Dallas Morning News*, 9 July 2006, 4P.
13. Interview with Chuck Colson, "Worldviews in Conflict: Christianity & Islam," *Intercessors for America Newsletter*, September 2006, Vol. 33, No. 9.
14. See Don Closson, "[Islam and the Sword](http://probe.org/islam-and-the-sword/)," Probe Ministries, 2002. probe.org/islam-and-the-sword/.
15. Colson, "Worldviews."