

## President Polk and the Taking of the West

**President James K. Polk went to war with Mexico and got California and other lands in the West. The war's aftermath brought forward issues of the citizenship status and property rights of Mexicans who remained in the new American territories.**

Since the 1820s, Mexico had encouraged Americans to settle in its state of Texas. By the 1830s, Americans outnumbered native Mexicans in Texas by four to one. When a new Mexican constitution did away state rights, the American settlers rebelled and established an independent country in 1836. Mexico, however, did not formally recognize the Republic of Texas.

Texas claimed the boundary with Mexico was at the Rio Grande River. Mexico argued that it was at the Nueces River. The land in between these rivers included thousands of square miles and a few hundred settlers, few of whom were Texans.

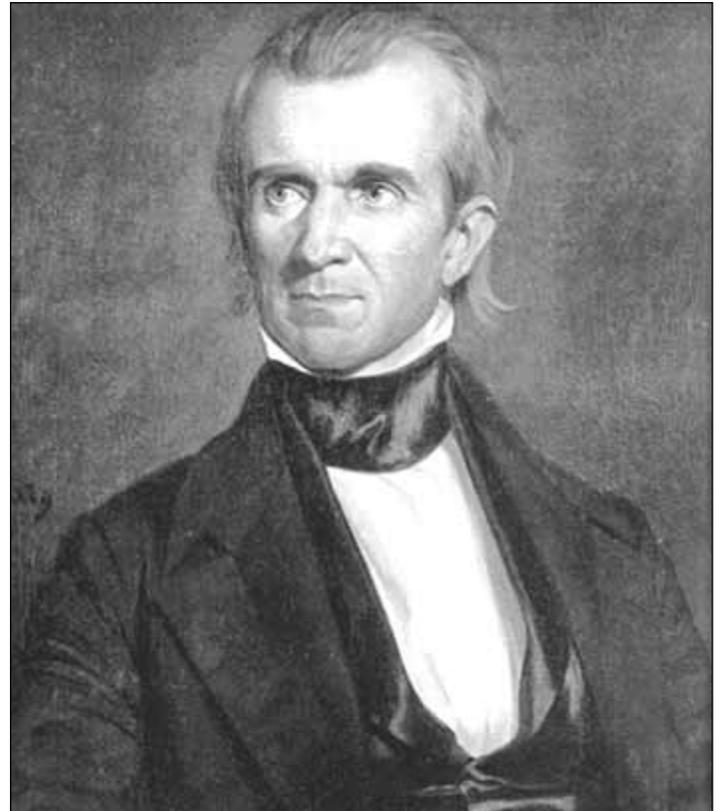
In 1845, Congress voted to annex Texas and admit it as a state. Shortly afterward, James K. Polk took office as the new U.S. president. Polk was a Democrat and a strong advocate of national expansion.

President Polk had a short list of "great measures" he intended to accomplish. Among them was the acquisition of Mexican California. Gold had not been discovered there yet, but Polk wanted California and its magnificent San Francisco Bay as the American gateway to trade with China and other Asian nations. Polk was worried that other nations, such as England or France, might take California if the United States did not act.

### Using Texas to Get California

While Texas was ratifying its annexation to the United States, an American naval officer apparently tried to provoke a war with Mexico. Commodore Robert Stockton attempted to persuade Texas officials to move their militia into the disputed land

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*James K. Polk, the 11th president of the United States, served one term in office. His greatest accomplishment was acquiring the Southwestern states, including California, from Mexico after the Mexican War. (Library of Congress)*

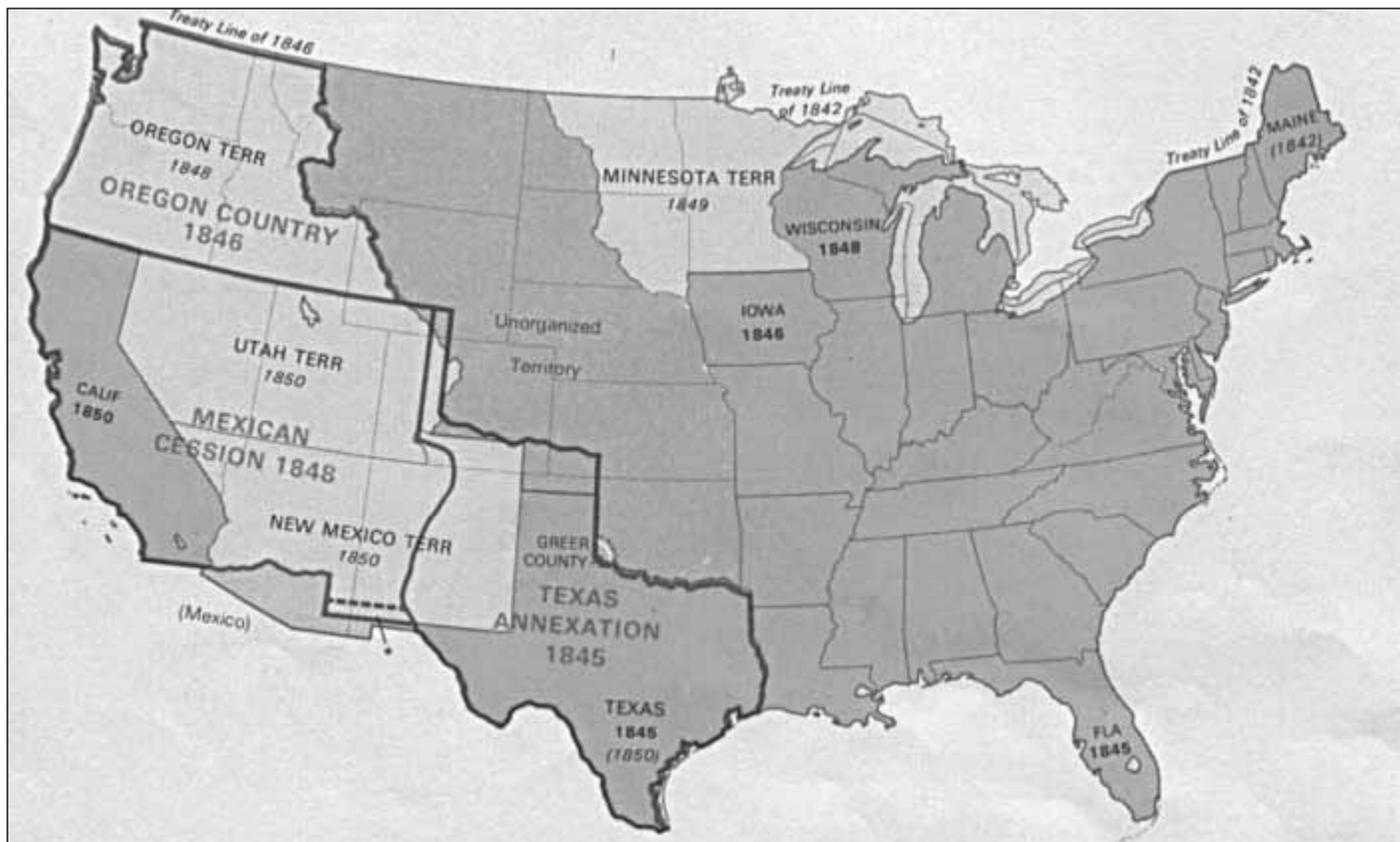
## Cultures in Conflict

This edition of *Bill of Rights in Action* examines various conflicts of cultures. The first article looks at the Mexican War and its aftermath, particularly the decisions on who owned land in California. The second article explores the clashes between Muslim civilizations and Europe from the Middle Ages to the 20th century. The last article looks at the rise of Islamist terrorist organizations, particularly Al Qaeda.

**U.S. History:** President Polk and the Taking of the West

**World History:** Muslim Conquests in Europe

**Current Issues:** The Rise of Islamist Terrorist Groups



Following the Mexican War, the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo set the borders of Texas at the Rio Grande River and gave the United States California and the New Mexico territories (which later became the states of New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, and parts of Colorado and Wyoming). (Perry-Castaneda Map Collection, University of Texas Library)

between the Nueces and Rio Grande rivers. This move would have resulted in a military clash with Mexican troops, which would have led to war with the United States when Texas was officially annexed. The objective was to quickly defeat the weaker nation and demand that it hand over its California and New Mexico territories. But the scheme failed when the president of the Republic of Texas objected and negotiated a peace treaty with Mexico. Historians disagree on whether President Polk was involved in this adventure.

In November 1845, President Polk sent John Slidell to Mexico City in an attempt to buy California and New Mexico. Mexico, in political and economic disarray, had failed to make payments on \$4.5 million it owed the United States. Polk authorized Slidell to offer to forgive the debt and pay another \$25 million in exchange for these Mexican lands. Mexican officials, however, refused to meet Slidell. Even so, military opponents of the Mexican president considered Slidell's mere presence in Mexico City an insult. They overthrew the president and installed a new regime that favored war with the United States.

When Slidell reported on his failed mission to President Polk early in 1846, Texas had become the 28th U.S. state. Polk declared that the border between the United States and Mexico extended to the Rio Grande. He then ordered American troops to cross into the contested land as a “defensive” act.

In March 1846, General Zachary Taylor led American troops across the Nueces River all the way to the Rio Grande. When Mexicans objected, Taylor positioned his troops across the river from the Mexican town of Matamoras. A few days later, some Mexican soldiers crossed the Rio Grande and attacked Taylor's men, killing 16.

When news came of the clash with Mexican soldiers, President Polk announced that Mexico had attacked the United States and “shed American blood on the American soil.” He asked Congress for a declaration of war against Mexico.

With Polk's party in the majority, Congress voted for war after two days of debate. Some members of Congress believed it was the “manifest destiny” of the United States to occupy all the land from the Atlantic

states to the Pacific Ocean. Southerners saw an opportunity to create more slave states.

American forces defeated the Mexicans in California and New Mexico within a few months. In March 1847, General Winfield Scott invaded Mexico at the port of Vera Cruz and began to march inland toward Mexico City. The Mexicans did not win one battle in this war, but they fought fiercely and stubbornly refused to surrender.

The war was popular in the South and with Americans who believed in manifest destiny. But the war aroused great opposition. Congressman Abraham Lincoln introduced a “Spot Resolution,” demanding that Polk show the spot where Mexicans “shed American blood on American soil.” Lincoln proclaimed, “That soil was not ours; and Congress did not annex or attempt to annex it.” Writer Henry David Thoreau went to jail for refusing to pay a poll tax in protest against the war. (He later wrote his essay “Civil Disobedience” explaining his action.)

In April 1847, amid increasing criticism of “Polk’s War,” the president sent a State Department official to Mexico to try to negotiate a peace treaty. Nicholas Trist was an unusual negotiator. He not only strived to end the war, but even sympathized with Mexico’s grievances against Polk. Nevertheless, he was a professional diplomat who was determined to achieve his president’s minimum goals of settling the border dispute and acquiring California and New Mexico.

After a cease fire had been arranged, Trist met with Mexican diplomats appointed by Mexican President Santa Anna. The negotiators could not reach agreement, and the war resumed. Soon, General Scott’s army occupied Mexico City, forcing the Mexican government to relocate.

President Polk decided to recall Trist to Washington. But Trist disobeyed his orders and remained to try one more round of negotiations. These succeeded, and a peace treaty was signed at the city of Guadalupe Hidalgo on February 2, 1848.

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo recognized the border between the state of Texas and Mexico at the Rio Grande River. The United States also got California and New Mexico. (The Territory of New Mexico, later enlarged by the Gadsden Purchase, was eventually divided up into the states of New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, Utah, and parts of Colorado and Wyoming.)

The United States agreed to pay the Mexicans \$15 million for giving up about half of their country.

### **Citizenship and Land Grants**

The peace treaty was vague about the citizenship of Mexicans remaining in California and New Mexico. The treaty stated that Mexicans had the right to become American citizens who would be “admitted at the proper time” by Congress. In the meantime, their rights to liberty, property, and religion were to be “maintained and protected . . . without restriction.”

The most troublesome problem resulting from the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo concerned the ownership of Mexican land grants in California. Before the war, the Mexican government had approved more than 500 grants of land to California Mexicans (called “Californios”) and even to a few Americans. In most cases, the grant holders used their land to graze cattle for hides and beef.

*When news came of the clash with Mexican soldiers, President Polk announced that Mexico had attacked the United States and “shed American blood on the American soil.”*

The original treaty negotiated by Nicholas Trist flatly declared all Mexican land grants “shall be respected as valid.” But President Polk and the U.S. Senate removed this provision before the treaty was ratified. Only a few general references to Mexican property rights remained in the treaty.

Almost as soon as the United States and Mexico ratified the peace treaty, gold was discovered in California. After a while, discouraged gold seekers began looking for land to settle. They soon learned that the best farm and grazing areas were already taken by the Mexican land grants, mostly held by a few hundred Californio families. The land-hungry immigrants began to challenge the property rights of the Californios, who had not yet been recognized as American citizens.

To settle the conflict over the California land grants, Congress passed the Land Act of 1851, which established a Board of Land Commissioners. This board was to verify or reject each California land grant claim.

The Land Act required all grant holders to appear before the Board of Land Commissioners and prove with documents and testimony the validity of their claims. In other words, the burden of proof was on the grant holders and not those who might challenge them. Moreover, once the commissioners made their decision, it usually was appealed to the federal courts, sometimes all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court.

The Board of Land Commissioners generally acted fairly and often understood that some documents, maps, or other evidence could not be presented because they had been lost over the years. The commissioners ended up confirming 75 percent of the grant claims, which included about 10 million acres of land. But the long, drawn-out verification process and court appeals cost a lot of money. Many of the land-rich and cash-poor Californios had to mortgage their land at high interest to pay their legal fees.

Other problems plagued the Californios while they tried to prove their claims. Lawyers swindled some of them. Land taxes, unknown in Mexican California, put the Californios further in debt. Squatters, hoping the Californios' claims would be rejected, moved onto their lands. The squatters fenced off homesteads, stole cattle, and sometimes violently forced the Californios out of their own homes.

By the 1860s, most of the Californios who had finally confirmed their grants still lost their land to the Americans due to overwhelming debts aggravated by plunging cattle prices and drought.

In 1870, the U.S. Supreme Court decided that Californios became full citizens when California was admitted as a state in 1850. Mexicans in the vast Territory of New Mexico were also eventually admitted as American citizens.

### For Discussion and Writing

1. Texas was annexed because Americans settled there and eventually revolted from Mexico. Had there not been a Mexican War, do you think this also would have happened in California? Explain.
2. Who do you think was responsible for starting the war with Mexico in 1846? Why?
3. Do you think the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was fair? Why or why not?
4. Many American squatters argued that it was not fair for a small number of Californio families to monopolize the best agricultural lands in the state. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

### For Further Reading

Del Castillo, Richard Griswold. *The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, A Legacy of Conflict*. Norman, Okla.: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990.

Pitt, Leonard. *The Decline of the Californios, A Social History of the Spanish-Speaking Californians, 1846–1890*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1966.

## A C T I V I T Y

### The Conflict Over California Land Grants

**What was the fairest way to settle the conflict over California land grants?**

- A. Form five groups. Four groups should each argue one of the following positions on the question above.
  1. Automatically recognize all Mexican land grants as valid.
  2. Establish a Board of Land Commissioners to require all land-grant holders to prove their claims.
  3. Require anyone challenging the validity of a land grant to prove their case in court.
  4. Declare all land grants conquered territory and open them to homesteading.
- B. The fifth group should act as members of Congress who will listen to the arguments of each group and question the presenters.
- C. After all four groups have presented their positions, the members of Congress will meet to discuss and decide the fairest way to settle the conflict over California land grants as the other four groups observe.

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## Standards Addressed

**National High School U.S. History Standard 9: Understands the United States territorial expansion between 1801 and 1861, and how it affected relations with external powers and Native Americans.** (5) Understands the initiating factors and outcomes of the Mexican-American War (e.g., the extent to which President Polk bore responsibility for initiating the war, whether the war was justified, arguments for and against the war, the impact of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo on the U.S. and Mexico).

**California History-Social Science Content Standard 8.8: Students analyze the divergent paths of the American people in the West from 1800 to the mid-1800s and the challenges they faced.** (2) Describe the purpose, challenges, and economic incentives associated with westward expansion, including the concept of Manifest Destiny . . . and the territorial acquisitions that spanned numerous decades. (6) Describe the Texas War for Independence and the Mexican-American War, including territorial settlements, the aftermath of the wars, and the effects the wars had on the lives of Americans, including Mexican Americans today.

**National High School World History Standard 13: Understands the causes and consequences of the development of Islamic civilization between the 7th and 10th centuries.** (2) Understands challenges to Muslim civilization (e.g., the transformation of the Arab Caliphate into a Southwest Asian and Mediterranean Empire under the Umayyad Dynasty, and why the Muslim community divided into Sunni and Shi'ite factions; the significance of the Battle of Tours of 733 as interpreted by Muslim and Christian sources and changing historiographical views of the event)

**California History-Social Science Content Standard 7.2: Students analyze the geographic, political, economic, religious, and social structures of civilizations of Islam in the Middle Ages.** (4) Discuss the expansion of Muslim rule through military conquests and treaties, emphasizing the cultural blending within Muslim civilization and the spread and acceptance of Islam and the Arabic language.

**National Civics Standard 23: Understands the impact of significant political and nonpolitical developments on the United States and other nations.**

**California History-Social Science Content Standard 10.10: Students analyze instances of nation-building in the contemporary world in at least two of the following regions or countries: the Middle East . . .** (1) Understand the challenges in the regions, including their geopolitical, cultural, military, and economic significance and the international relationships in which they are involved. (2) Describe the recent history of the regions, including political divisions and systems, key leaders, religious issues, natural features, resources, and population patterns. (3) Discuss the important trends in the regions today and whether they appear to serve the cause of individual freedom and democracy.

**California History-Social Science Content Standard 12.9: Students analyze the origins, characteristics, and development of different political systems across time, with emphasis on the quest for political democracy, its advances, and its obstacles.**

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## Muslim Conquests in Europe

In less than 100 years, Muslim warriors conquered lands for Islam from Persia to Spain. Muslims then pushed further into Europe. Their incursion into Western Europe was stopped in France. Their invasion from the east was finally halted at the gates of Vienna.

In the seventh century, the two major powers in Middle East were the Persian and Byzantine empires. Between them was the Arabian Peninsula, populated

by nomadic Bedouin tribes often at war with one another. In the towns that sprouted beside the desert oases, some inhabitants were Christians and Jews.

Most of them, however, were pagan and worshipped many gods. A caravan trader named Muhammad, who was from Mecca in Arabia, traveled through these towns. Around the year 610, he began preaching a new religion in Mecca. He said to his followers that the angel Gabriel had visited him and told him there was only one God and that Muhammad was to be his last prophet. (Previous prophets included Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and others.)

God's words, as related by the angel to Muhammad, were eventually written down in verses that became the *Koran*. This holy book and the sayings of Muhammad (called the *Sunna*) formed the basis of the new religion, called Islam. In Arabic, Islam means "to submit" to God. (The Arabic word for "God" is Allah.)

Muhammad did not attract much support in Mecca. In fact, his preaching against the corrupt practices of traders earned him many enemies in a city whose wealth depended on trade. Warned of an attempt on his life in 622,



In the eighth century, Muslims conquered much of Iberia and remained there for 700 years. They even crossed the Pyrenees Mountains, but were stopped at the Battle of Tours. From the east, Muslims conquered the city of Constantinople and went on into Greece, Serbia, Bosnia, Romania, and Hungary. Their advance was stopped at Vienna three times, the last in 1683.

he fled to the town of Medina. Torn apart by political struggles, Medina had invited him to rule it. Muhammad took control of the town and unified it under Islam. Local tribes flocked to convert to Islam. Within seven years, he led warriors back to Mecca and conquered it. By the time of his death, he had succeeded in unifying most of Arabia under Islam, personally leading about 20 military campaigns against pagan Arab tribes. Because Muhammad held both religious and political authority, the *Koran* and *Sunna* did not just contain religious teachings. They also set down civil and criminal laws (collectively known as the *Sharia*).

### From Arabia to Spain

After Muhammad died in 632, he was succeeded by a leader called a caliph (meaning "successor"). The caliph was the political and religious leader, but was not a prophet. The first caliph faced the daunting task of keeping all the Bedouin tribes under his control, but a war of "reconversion" succeeded. Then to keep the warrior Bedouins from fighting each other, subsequent caliphs launched military operations beyond Arabia. Over a period of about 30 years, Arab warriors, riding fast horses and camels, conquered the entire Persian empire and much of the Byzantine. The conquered lands included Egypt, Syria, Iran, Iraq, and much of Afghanistan and Baluchistan.

Arab warriors were filled with confidence that God destined them for victory. They believed that if they died in battle for God, they would become martyrs, rewarded for eternity in paradise. They did not fear death, which made them fierce fighters. Those Arab warriors who survived battle benefited from the loot, women, and slaves they captured. The caliph was always entitled to one-fifth of the spoils of war.

The people conquered by the Muslims usually faced a multiple choice. They could denounce their religion and convert to Islam, pay a tax to continue practicing their beliefs, become a slave, or be executed. Most chose to convert. But many people paid the tax.

In time, the tax proved such a lucrative source of revenue that many Muslim rulers actually discouraged conversions. Those who paid the religious tax were called *dhimmi*s. To Muslims, *dhimmi*s were considered inferior and were treated as inferiors.

In 661, a civil war broke out over the succession of the caliph. The Umayyad family gained control of the growing *Dar al-Islam*, land of Islam. But this civil war marked a division within Islam that exists to this day. The vast majority of Muslims, known as Sunnis, believe that the Umayyads were the rightful successors to the caliphate. Shi'ite Muslims deny the legitimacy of the Umayyads.

The Umayyads ruled for nearly 100 years, during which the empire spread from the Middle East into Europe. Damascus in Syria served as the capital of their empire. In 670, the forces of the Umayyad caliph attacked Constantinople, in Asia Minor. It was the capital of the Christian Byzantine Empire. But after seven years of siege, the Muslims gave up their first attempt to take the city.

Meanwhile, Arab warriors swept across North Africa from Egypt to Morocco. They defeated the Byzantines and converted the Berber tribes (also known as Moors).

The Muslim governor of North Africa then planned to invade Christian Europe. In 711, a Muslim fleet landed on the Iberian Peninsula (the site of modern-day Spain and Portugal). The invaders met forces sent by Rodrigo, the Visigoth Christian king. Outnumbered, the Muslims still defeated King Rodrigo. The Arab and Berber cavalry went on to capture most of Iberia for Islam by 715.

## Charles of the Franks

Following the collapse of the Roman Empire, Europe in the 700s was divided into numerous kingdoms and even smaller dukedoms that were almost always at war with each other. No unified nations existed. Most living in Europe were Christians, but some peoples still practiced pagan religions.

The Kingdom of the Franks, a loose confederation of dukedoms, occupied lands that would later become France and part of Germany. Power rested in the hands of the local dukes and their noblemen followers. They acknowledged a Frankish king, but he was little more than their puppet. The Franks had been converted to Christianity 200 years earlier.

Charles was the illegitimate son of the Franks' King Pippin II. When Pippin died in 714, his wife, Plectrude, imprisoned Charles to assure that her grandson, then a small child, would become king. But Charles soon escaped.

Plectrude came under attack by several dukedoms in the Frankish kingdom. Charles, however, raised a small fighting force to confront them. In his first battle, Charles was defeated. But this would be his last defeat. Plectrude bribed the invaders to cease their attack, but on their way home, Charles ambushed them and killed many.

Charles then went on the offensive and invaded his enemies' territory. After winning several battles, he returned home to confront Plectrude. In 717, he installed his own puppet king and made himself "Mayor of the Palace," the power behind the throne.

For the rest of his life, Charles was engaged in constant warfare throughout the Frankish kingdom. He assembled a formidable army of experienced fighters who received land from Charles in exchange for their loyalty. Charles went to war to take land, sometimes from churches and monasteries, which enabled him to increase his army.

## The Battle of Tours

While Charles and the other Franks were fighting one another, the Muslims in Iberia were preparing to fight the Franks. In 721, they mounted raids across the Pyrenees Mountains into Aquitaine, the southernmost dukedom of the Franks. Duke Eudo of Aquitaine defeated the Muslims in one battle, but they continued

*(Continued on next page)*

their raids. The Muslim cavalry looted and burned churches, monasteries, and entire cities.

Around 732, the Muslim governor in Iberia, Abd ar-Rahman, led thousands of horsemen and their families into Aquitaine once again. They killed, burned, and looted as they went. After crushing Duke Eudo in battle, Abd ar-Rahman sacked the city of Bordeaux and burned the cathedral at Poitiers.

Duke Eudo, a longtime enemy of Charles, had to call upon him for help to stop the Muslim invaders. Charles responded quickly, and an epic battle soon took place near Tours. It is known as the Battle of Tours (also as the Battle of Poitiers).

There are many uncertainties about this battle. We are not sure exactly where it took place, the length of it, the number of combatants, the tactics used, or even the year in which it occurred (732 or 733). But we do know that a major battle took place and the Franks led by Charles won.

The Battle of Tours was apparently a clash between Abd ar-Rahman's cavalry and Charles' infantry. The Muslim horsemen attacked numerous times with swords and spears against the Franks in square formations, fighting with battleaxes, spears, and massive broadswords.

Only a few accounts of the battle were written down at the time. A Frankish chronicle related that Charles "rushed in against them," perhaps indicating that he also used cavalry. "With Christ's help," the chronicle says, "he overturned their tents, and hastened to battle to grind them small in slaughter." The Muslims may have turned from battle to protect their families and loot-filled tents. In the confusion, Abd ar-Rahman was speared to death.

Charles did not pursue the Muslims as they burned and plundered their way back to Iberia. The Battle of Tours came to be known in the West as the great battle that stopped the Muslim advance. To Muslims, it was a minor battle.

Muslim forces continued to mount raids north of the Pyrenees. These raids only ended after 740, when the Berbers revolted in Iberia and North Africa.

Charles continued warring against his Frankish rivals, but with the added glory as the savior of Christendom. Charles was later given the name Martel, meaning "The Hammer." His grandson, Charles the Great (Charlemagne), finally unified most of Western Europe under his rule.

The Muslims, however, remained in Iberia for another 700 years. Their influence on the country remains today. The Spanish language contains many words derived from Arabic, e.g., *alcalde* (mayor), *azúcar* (sugar), *café* (coffee), *chisme* (gossip), *hasta* (until), *ricón* (corner), and *cero* (zero). Many Spanish buildings show the influence of Islamic architecture, which Spain brought to the New World and can be seen throughout Latin America and the Southwestern United States.

In 1492, the same year as Columbus' voyage to the New World, Christians finally reconquered all of Spain. They expelled the Jews and Muslims who refused to convert to Christianity.

### **The Gates of Vienna**

In 750, a new family, the Abbasids, took command of the Muslim Empire and established its capital in Baghdad. By 900, however, the empire had splintered into separate caliphates. But Muslim conquests continued. The Island of Sicily (off the Italian Peninsula) came under Muslim control for almost 300 years. Muslims also spread into India and further east.

In the 11th century, popes and kings in Europe launched a series of wars, known as the Crusades. Their goal was to retake Jerusalem and the surrounding Holy Land from Muslim control. The Crusaders finally did occupy the area and held it for almost 100 years. But the Muslims eventually expelled them.

The Mongols from Central Asia captured Baghdad in 1258 and massacred its population. The Baghdad caliphate was gone. But a new Muslim power, the Ottoman Turks, arose in Asia Minor (what is now modern Turkey). The Ottomans reignited the push into Europe.

In 1452, the Ottoman ruler, Sultan Mahomet II, ordered another attempt to capture Constantinople, the capital of the Byzantine Empire. This time, the Muslims were successful. Within about 100 years, the Ottomans added Greece, Bulgaria, Serbia, Bosnia, Albania, Romania, and Hungary to their empire.

In 1529 and again in 1566, the Ottoman Turks tried to capture Vienna, the capital of the Holy Roman Empire in the heart of Europe. Both assaults on the city failed. More than 100 years later, the Ottomans tried once more with 250,000 troops.

The Ottomans decided to lay siege to Vienna and settled in a luxurious tent camp outside the city walls. In September 1683, the Polish military leader John

Sobieski arrived with 60,000 Christian fighters. Just before going into battle, he spoke to his men:

It is not a city alone that we have to save, but the whole of Christianity, of which the city of Vienna is the bulwark. This war is a holy one.

Sobieski and his cavalry charged the Ottoman camp, and the Muslim soldiers fled. The Ottomans' dream of taking Europe collapsed in a rout before the gates of Vienna.

### **“The Sick Man of Europe”**

After the Muslim defeat at Vienna, the Ottoman Empire gradually receded. The Ottoman sultans in Istanbul (old Constantinople) repeatedly tried to reform the army to defend against the Europeans, but conservatives in the government and army resisted changes. One after another, the European countries occupied by the Ottomans won their independence.

In 1798, Napoleon Bonaparte conquered and for a short time ruled Egypt. This was the beginning of European imperialism in the Muslim world. The Russians moved southward into Central Asia, threatening Persia (later called Iran). The British took control of India and for a time occupied Afghanistan. The Dutch colonized Indonesia. The French imposed their colonial rule throughout North Africa. The British took over Egypt in 1882.

Well before World War I, the Ottoman Empire was widely viewed as “the sick man of Europe.” After the war, the Ottoman Empire (which had allied with Germany) was divided up among the victorious European powers. The British occupied Iraq and Palestine. France took control of Syria.

In 1924, a young Turkish military leader overthrew the last of the Ottomans and established the modern nation of Turkey. Mustafa Kemal Atatürk broke with 1,300 years of Islamic history when he set up a secular government, one with the state separated from religion. The caliphs and sultans were gone.

### **For Discussion and Writing**

1. What do you think accounted for the success of Muslim rulers in holding together their empires?
2. How and when were the Muslims advances from the west and the east into Europe stopped?
3. What happened to the Ottoman Empire after World War I?

### **For Further Reading**

Fouracre, Paul. *The Age of Charles Martel*. Harlow, England: Longman, 2000.

Fregosi, Paul. *Jihad in the West*. Amherst, N. Y.: Prometheus Books, 1998.

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## **A C T I V I T Y**

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### **The Golden Age of Islam**

Most scholars believe that Muslims developed the most advanced civilization in the world in the Middle Ages. Below are some the people responsible for the rise of Islamic civilization. Choose one person, research the person, and create a report explaining who the person is and why the person is important.

### **Significant People in the Muslim World in Medieval Times**

Abd ar-Rahman I (d. 788)	Ibn Khaldun (1332–1406)
Abd ar-Rahman III (891–961)	Jami (Nur ad-Din Abd ar-Rahman Jami) (1414–92)
Abu Bakr (c. 573–634)	Kabir (1440–1518)
Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (1058–1111)	Mahmud of Ghazna (c. 971–1030)
Abu Raihan Al-Biruni (973–1048)	Moussa Ben Maimon (Maimonides) (1135–1204)
Al-Hazen (965–1038)	Mu’awiyah I (602–680)
Ali ibn Abu Talib (c. 600–661)	Muhammad (c. 570–632)
Avicenna (Ibn Sina) (980–1037)	Omar Khayyam (1048–1131)
Farid ad-Din Attar (c. 1142–1220)	Omar (Umar) (c. 581–644)
Firdausi (Abul Kasim Mansur) (c. 940–1020)	Rhazes (Abu Bakr Mohammad Ibn Zakariya al-Razi) (c. 850–c. 930)
Hafiz (Shams al-Din Muhammad) (1319–c. 1389)	Rumi (Mowlana Jalaluddin Rumi) (1207–73)
Harun al-Rashid (c. 764–809)	Sadi (1184–1291)
Ibn Battuta (ibn Batuta) (c. 1304–c. 1377)	Saladin (Salah ad-Din) (c. 1137–1193)
	Uthman (d. 656)

# The Rise of Islamist Terrorist Groups

**Despite Islamic teachings against suicide and killing innocent people in battle, terrorist groups like Al Qaeda have used a fundamentalist form of Islam to justify an unholy war of terrorism.**

In recent years, the terrorist group Al Qaeda has committed terrorist acts killing many innocent men, women, and children. It was responsible for the September 11, 2001, suicide terrorist attacks on New York's World Trade Center and the Pentagon, which murdered close to 3,000 people. On August 7, 1998, Al Qaeda terrorists almost simultaneously set off bombs 150 miles apart at U.S. Embassies in the East African countries of Kenya and Tanzania. The blasts killed 12 Americans and about 250 Africans, most of them Muslims. On May 12, 2003, Al Qaeda suicide terrorists set off bombs in three housing compounds in the capital of Saudi Arabia. The bombs killed 35 people, including 12 Americans. Al Qaeda has been linked to many other attacks and continues to be a threat.

In a 1998 interview, Al Qaeda's leader, Osama bin Laden, called Americans "the worst thieves in the world today and the worst terrorists . . . ." He went on to say that, "We do not have to differentiate between military or civilian. As far as we are concerned, they are all targets." He justified targeting Americans in the name of Islam. He said: "The terrorism we practice is of the commendable kind for it is directed at the tyrants and the aggressors and the enemies of God . . . ."

Other groups also commit terrorism in the name of Islam. The U.S. Department of State lists, to name a few, Lebanon's Hizbollah, Algeria's Armed Islamic Group, Egypt's Islamic Jihad, Palestine's Islamic Jihad and Hamas, Uzbekistan's Islamic Movement, the Philippines' Abu Sayyaf, and Pakistan's Jaish-e-Muhammad (Army of Muhammad) as foreign terrorist groups. Unlike Al Qaeda, most of these groups do not commit terrorism internationally. Instead, they use terrorism to help overthrow the regimes in control of their countries.

Although their goals differ, they all want to set up Islamist states, based on Islamic fundamentalism. (The political form of Islamic fundamentalism is sometimes called Islamism.) The

vast majority of Islamic fundamentalists are not terrorists, but their teachings have been adopted by terrorist groups to justify their actions.

Islamic fundamentalism calls for a society ruled by Islamic law. It rejects most things Western (except technology). Islamists believe their culture has been infected by Western ideas and practices, which must be rooted out. They want a more equal society with less division between the rich and poor. They want women to return to their traditional role and dress. This can mean women taking care of the family, staying out of the political and business worlds, wearing a veil, and even dressing in garments that cover them completely. Fundamentalists call for a return to a strict, "pure" Islam as practiced in the seventh century by the Prophet Muhammad and his immediate successors, the first four caliphs.

But the *Encyclopaedia of the Orient* states that:

. . . there are no Muslim sources indicating that the Islam of the Golden Age was as strict and conservative as the Islamists believe. All indications show that it was the liberal Islam that paved the ground for cultural, social and military achievements of those days—values foreign to all major Islamist groups. Hence, there is reason to say that the Islamist idea of the Golden Age is a dramatic falsification of history.

Islamist terrorists, like Al Qaeda, view themselves as following Muhammad's example. Muhammad in A.D. 622 had to flee from Mecca with a small band of followers. Yet in 630, he returned with an army of followers to conquer Mecca and then spread Islam throughout the Arabian Peninsula. The terrorist groups see themselves as small bands that will lead Islam to victory.

But terrorist tactics run against the basic teachings of Islam. The *Koran*, the holy scripture of Islam, set strict rules against suicide and killing women, children, and old people in battle.

The overwhelming majority of Muslims deplore terrorist attacks and view them as violating the *Koran*. Even many fundamentalist Muslims believe terrorism violates Islamic law. Nonetheless, Al Qaeda and other Islamist terrorist groups draw their supporters from the ranks of Islamic fundamentalists.

## Secular States After World War II

Islam is the religion of more than 80 percent of the people in North Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia. Islamic empires controlled these areas for more than a

thousand years. The last great Islamic empire—the Ottoman Empire—finally collapsed after World War I. During the 200 years it was crumbling, European nations were busy adding most of the heavily Islamic areas of North Africa, the Middle East, and Central Asia to their empires. Following World War I, they carved up most of the remaining parts of the old Ottoman Empire.

European control ended state by state. Most countries in this heavily Islamic area gained their independence shortly after World War II. Almost all the new leaders who emerged in countries like Iraq, Syria, and Egypt chose to follow a secular model of government pioneered by Turkey after World War I. Many adopted European or American legal systems and other Western ways, forcing Islamic law and culture into the background.

The most significant leader of the era was Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser. In 1952, he led a group of Egyptian military officers in overthrowing Egypt's weak monarchy, which was supported by the British. Nasser set Egypt on a secular path and tried to unify his people by promoting loyalty to the nation. Islam would remain important, but no longer dominate government, the law, and education.

Egypt under Nasser adopted a socialist economic system and an authoritarian government with close links to the military. For a while, Nasser was an inspiration and hero to many Egyptians and others in the region. But poor management and corruption in the Egyptian government resulted in massive unemployment, increased poverty, and political repression. The same was true of most of the other newly independent states.

### **The Jewish State and the PLO**

In 1948, the United Nations, with the strong support of the United States, partitioned the land then called Palestine into Jewish and Arab states. The surrounding Arab countries, however, rejected this partition and attacked Israel. They viewed the partition as another case of European colonialism, with Jews displacing Arabs and taking land that they had occupied for more than a thousand years. But Israel defended its new borders and even gained territory.

In 1967, Nasser asked the U.N. to remove its troops along the Egypt-Israel border, and he blockaded the Straits of Tiran to prevent goods from reaching Israel. When Egypt and Syria mobilized their troops in preparation for war, Israel attacked. This war lasted a mere six days and resulted in Israel occupying Egyptian land

all the way to the Suez Canal as well as Jordan's West Bank, Syria's Golan Heights, and East Jerusalem. In 1973, Egypt and Syria attempted to defeat Israel in yet another war, but failed again.

The failures showed that the Arab states were too weak to overcome Israel, which was far more advanced economically and militarily. A new entity, the nationalistic Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), stepped in to take up the war against Israel. Founded in 1964 by Arab states, the PLO was set up as an umbrella organization to bring together the many Palestinian groups that had formed in Arab lands. The PLO set two goals: destroying Israel and establishing a secular, democratic state in its place. It never favored an Islamist state. Initially, the PLO launched guerilla attacks on Israeli military targets. But then factions of it started using terrorism—kidnappings, shootings, bombings, and hijackings. The two most notorious attacks were probably the hostage-taking and murder of 11 Israeli athletes during the 1972 Munich Olympics and the 1985 hijacking of the Italian cruise ship *Achille Lauro* and murder of a disabled American tourist on board. In 1988, the PLO renounced its goal of destroying Israel. (The PLO has consistently denied it was ever involved in terrorism.)

### **The Rise and Spread of Islamic Fundamentalism**

For many years, two main forces have worked to spread Islamic fundamentalism. One is a grassroots, non-governmental effort. The other is sponsored by the government of Saudi Arabia.

One of the primary grassroots efforts has been through the Muslim Brotherhood (the Society of Muslim Brothers). Today, this organization exists in more than 70 nations in the world. It was founded in 1928 in Egypt, during British colonial rule. An Egyptian named Hasan al-Banna wanted to create an ideal government, based on Islamic law and society of the seventh century. Before this ideal Islamist state could be achieved, he argued, the Muslim masses would have to be gradually brought back to a fundamentalist Islam that was unpoluted by Western ideas.

Al-Banna's Muslim Brotherhood preached self-help, generosity, family values, and restricting women to their traditional role in the home. The Brotherhood also worked to provide hospitals, schools, and other services for the poor that the secular government was failing to provide.

In the 1940s, Al-Banna created a secret organization within the Brotherhood that took part in attacks on police and British officials. In December 1948, a member of this group assassinated Egypt's prime minister. Al-Banna had not known about the plan and quickly denounced the killing. But the government retaliated by murdering Al-Banna two months later.

The Brotherhood splintered between those who advocated violence and those who wanted to work non-violently for an Islamist society. The same process has repeated itself in other countries, with the Brotherhood starting as a peaceful organization and sometimes splitting into more radical factions.

A second powerful force pushing fundamentalism has been the Saudi Arabian government. The home to about one-fourth of the world's known oil reserves, Saudi Arabia produces great wealth. The Saudi government supports a fundamentalist Islam called Wahhabism, named after a Muslim named Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab who lived in the 1700s. Wahhab led a religious movement to restore the purity of Islam in Arabia, the Muslim holy land where the Prophet Muhammad lived and died. Wahhab believed in the strict literal reading of the *Koran*. His movement became the model for many Islamic fundamentalists today.

*The home to about one-fourth of the world's known oil reserves, Saudi Arabia produces great wealth. The Saudi government supports a fundamentalist Islam called Wahhabism.*

Wahhab joined with the Saudi family of Arabia to violently suppress all Arab Muslims who resisted his fundamentalist version of Islam. After about two centuries of conflict, the Saudis and their Wahhabi allies established the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932.

Since the founding of the kingdom, the Saudi royal family has handed over control of religious, moral, educational, and legal matters to the Wahhabi clergy. Wahhabi Saudi Arabia has no elected government, and it allows no other religion and few human rights. The hands of thieves are still cut off as they were in Muhammad's time. Women have virtually no public life. They are even forbidden to drive automobiles.

Wahhabism is the basis for the Saudi education system. The curriculum and textbooks refer to infidels (unbelievers in Islam) as the enemy and promote the hatred of Jews, Christians, and Muslims who reject

Wahhabi beliefs. (In 2002, the Saudi government promised to remove these passages and promote tolerance in its schools.)

The Saudi government has used money from its oil revenues to fund Wahhabi missionaries, mosques, and schools and to promote Wahhabism in dozens of countries, including the United States.

### **The Revolution in Iran**

Two events beginning in 1979 promoted the spread of radical Islamism. The first took place in Iran. That year's Iranian Revolution, which overthrew the shah (king), electrified the Muslim world. Many Muslims viewed the shah as a despot who had been put in power by the United States and Great Britain. Fundamentalists saw him as a Westernizer and traitor to Islam. During the turmoil that took place during the revolution, radical Muslim students seized the U.S. embassy and held American diplomats hostage for more than a year.

The galvanizing leader of the Iranian Revolution was a Shi'ite Muslim, Ayatollah (a religious title) Ruhollah Khomeini. (Shi'ite Muslims are a small minority—about 15 percent of all Muslims—but they constitute the majority in Iran, Iraq, and Bahrain and are about 40 percent of the population in Lebanon.) A fundamentalist, Khomeini seized power over other factions and created an Islamist state headed by a "Supreme Religious Leader." Rejecting Western culture, he installed a political system with him as leader for life surrounded by other religious leaders. The new government did hold popular elections for other positions and even allowed women to vote and hold public office. But Shi'ite religious leaders control the military, law-making power, courts, education system, and all matters of public morality, which are enforced by a "morals police."

Iran has also become a central source for arming and financing radical Islamist groups like Lebanon's Hizbollah (Party of God). In the 1980s in Lebanon, Hizbollah kidnapped a number of Westerners and was also responsible for the bombing that killed 241 U.S. Marines, sailors, and soldiers. Hizbollah also led an 18-year guerilla campaign against Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon, which caused Israel to remove its troops in 2000.

But the Iranian Revolution has not improved the lives of many Iranians. Iranians are increasingly demanding democratic reforms. They have elected new members

of government who are attempting to modify the religious state. The final word, however, still rests with religious officials.

### **The Soviet War in Afghanistan**

The second event in 1979 that promoted Islamist radicalism was the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, a remote, mountainous, landlocked country with Muslim inhabitants. The Soviets invaded to help Afghan communists who had seized power. Muslims from around the world called for a jihad, or holy war in defense of Islam, to free the Muslim country from the invaders. Thousands from many countries volunteered to be *mujahedeen*, holy warriors. Saudi-funded religious schools (known as *madradas*) in neighboring Pakistan produced many volunteers for the jihad.

Money poured in. The Muslim Brotherhood contributed heavily. But the two biggest backers of the jihad were Saudi Arabia and the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. The Saudis sent many volunteer fighters and spent untold millions of dollars. The CIA contributed more than \$3 billion, supplied more than 1,000 small, portable Stinger missiles (for shooting down helicopters and low-flying airplanes), and trained the *mujahedeen*. Afghanistan had become a battleground in the Cold War between the Soviet Union and the United States.

One of the Saudi volunteers was 25-year-old Osama bin Laden, a member of a wealthy Saudi family. He had attended Wahhabi schools and completed college studying engineering and public administration. In college, he had grown increasingly religious and had come in contact with radical elements of the Muslim Brotherhood. For the Afghan jihad, he raised money through his family connections, set up training camps, and commanded *mujahedeen* in battle against the Soviets. He also created a computer database to organize his fighters. This became known as Al Qaeda (“the base”). After the Soviet Union withdrew its troops from Afghanistan in 1989, bin Laden returned home to Saudi Arabia as a Muslim hero.

But in 1990, Iraq (led by Saddam Hussein) invaded Kuwait. Fearing that Iraq would next invade Saudi Arabia, Bin Laden offered to bring *mujahedeen* from Afghanistan to Saudi Arabia to help defend it from attack. Instead, Saudi King Fahd decided to rely on American military forces to defeat Iraq, and he allowed them to set up bases in the Muslim holy land.

The stationing of non-Muslim troops on Saudi Arabia’s holy soil transformed bin Laden. He viewed King Fahd as a traitor against Islam. From this point, bin Laden became an outspoken enemy of the Saudi ruling family and its American defenders.

Saudi Arabia expelled him in 1991. Bin Laden went to Sudan, a country south of Egypt with a strict Islamist government. He took with him an estimated \$250 million, part of which he spent to fund terrorist training camps. Outraged with what he was doing, the Saudi government revoked his citizenship, froze his assets remaining in Saudi Arabia, and reportedly even tried to assassinate him in Sudan.

Back in Afghanistan, civil war raged among Muslim warlords, producing chaos and great loss of life. Then, in 1996, a group of former *madrassa* students, the Taliban, seized power and imposed a strict Wahhabi Islamist regime. (In Arabic, *talib* means “student.”)

Bin Laden had become an international outlaw, and Sudan, under pressure from the United States and Saudi Arabia, expelled him in 1996. The Taliban offered him sanctuary in Afghanistan where he provided the regime with financial aid and fighters. He also created training camps for his growing Al Qaeda terrorist network.

In 1998, bin Laden proclaimed his jihad against Americans and Jews. He declared that since the Gulf War against Iraq in 1991, “the United States is occupying the lands of Islam in the holiest of its territories, Arabia, plundering its riches, overwhelming its rulers, humiliating its people, threatening its neighbors.” He also charged that the United States was destroying the Iraqi people with crippling economic sanctions and supporting Israel’s occupation of Arab Palestine.

All of these acts, bin Laden argued, added up to a “clear declaration of war by the Americans against God, His Prophet, and the Muslims.” Therefore, he concluded, “Jihad becomes a personal duty of every Muslim.”

A short time later, bin Laden issued a “fatwa.” This a legal opinion issued by a religious authority. Since bin Laden is not a religious authority, only his followers would take his fatwa seriously. Nonetheless, bin Laden decreed that it was the duty of every Muslim “to kill Americans.” After bin Laden issued his fatwa, Islamist terrorists began to strike American targets. In 1998, two U.S. embassies were bombed in Africa. In 2000, suicide bombers attacked the *U.S.S. Cole* warship off

the coast of Yemen. In 2001, terrorist airplane hijackers killed almost 3,000 people in the United States.

The United States responded to the September 11, 2001, attacks by declaring a war on terrorism. U.S. troops invaded Afghanistan and overthrew the Taliban. In 2003, the United States and allies invaded Iraq and toppled the regime of Saddam Hussein, a brutal secular dictator. A large force of U.S. troops remains in Iraq and a smaller contingent is in Afghanistan. Bin Laden remains at large, probably in the mountains of Afghanistan or Pakistan.

The overwhelming majority of Muslims today reject terrorism, bin Laden, and his call for a war on America. They view his beliefs as a perversion of Islam.

Bin Laden appeals to those who believe the United States is the enemy. In the last 25 years, Islamic fundamentalism had gained more adherents. It has attracted the poor, the unemployed and underemployed, and frustrated young people. Most of the states in the Middle East, North Africa, and Central Asia have failed to improve the lives of their citizens. Some are brutally oppressive, and Islamist groups sometimes offer opposition to the rulers. Some Islamists have joined terrorist groups linked to Al Qaeda's international network and its jihad against the United States.

### For Discussion and Writing

1. What are "Islamic fundamentalism" and "Islamism"?
2. In 1929, British historian Arnold Toynbee wrote, "If you looked in the right places, you could doubtless find some old fashioned Islamic Fundamentalists still lingering on. You would also find that their influence was negligible." Why do you think that was true then and no longer true today?
3. What do you think accounts for the rise of Islamist terrorist groups?

### For Further Reading

Esposito, John L. *Unholy War, Terror in the Name of Islam*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002.

"Hunting Bin Laden." Frontline (PBS). 2001. URL: <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/binladen/>

Lewis, Bernard. *The Crisis of Islam, Holy War and Unholy Terror*. New York: The Modern Library, 2003.

### Islamic Fundamentalism: What Should We Do About It?

There is a connection between certain kinds of Islamic fundamentalism and Islamist terrorism. What should we do about this?

1. Below are listed some policies that the United States might adopt to try to counter Islamist terrorism. Form small groups to discuss these policies.
2. Each group should choose what it considers to be the most important policy for the United States to adopt now. Groups may develop their own policy choice if they wish.
3. Each group should then defend its policy choice before the rest of the class.

### Proposed Policies

1. Remove all American military forces from Saudi Arabia and/or Iraq.
2. Remain in Iraq to develop democracy as a model for other Muslim countries.
3. Pressure Muslim countries to close religious schools that preach hatred.
4. Provide foreign aid to Muslim countries in order to reduce unemployment and poverty.
5. Give foreign aid to countries that curb Islamists.
6. Work to achieve security and justice for Israel and Palestine.
7. Capture, try, and (if convicted) execute Osama bin Laden.
8. Lessen our dependence on Mideast oil.



# PostScript

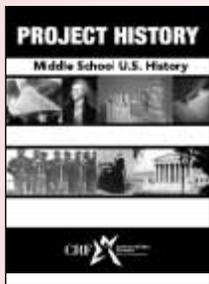
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- 6: Refugees: International Law and U.S. Policy
- 7: Issues of Asylum in the U.S.

8: Refugees From Vietnam and Cambodia

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## William P. Hogoboom (1918–2003)

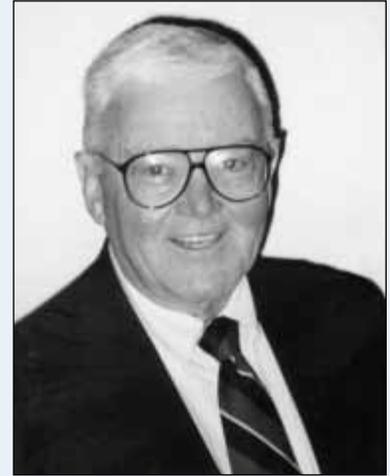
With great sadness, Constitutional Rights Foundation notes the passing of Judge William P. Hogoboom. Our sincere condolences go to his wife, Katherine, and the entire Hogoboom family.

Judge Hogoboom served as president of CRF from 1980 to 1983 and continued to be active in CRF helping expand the board and its programs and even judging Mock Trial competitions. In 2002, CRF presented him with its Lloyd M. Smith Award for his years of outstanding service.

Judge Hogoboom was born in Pasadena, California, and attended Hollywood High School. He graduated Phi Beta Kappa from Occidental College and went on to receive a Master's Degree from USC. After serving as a Navy lieutenant in the Pacific in World War II, he returned to law school at USC. He was on its Law Review, served as student body president, and graduated Order of the Coif.

He worked in a law firm until then-Governor Ronald Reagan in 1968 appointed him to the Los Angeles Superior Court. For the next 16 years, Judge Hogoboom served on the court, rising in succession to presiding judge of the Juvenile Court, of the Family Law Division, and of the whole L.A. Superior Court system. He retired from the court in 1983 and spent the next 10 years as vice president and counsel of USC.

Known for his wit, wisdom, and generosity, this extraordinary man will be deeply missed.



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