

## The War on Muslims

by [Fred Reed](#)

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Methinks we don't – think, I mean, about anything outside our immediate visual horizon. Thinking is a poor way of understanding the world, which is too complex to be thought about effectively. That leaves hormones and unfortunate limbic wiring.

Consider the presidential wars. I get combative email informing me that Moslems are savage, barbaric, crafty, and patient, biding their time through the centuries to spit in apple pie, put Mom in a seraglio, and sodomize Boy Scouts – that they have spread by the sword, live by the sword, and lust to convert us all to Islam and sell us prayer rugs. The Gates of Vienna, 1453, all that.

Perhaps. There follows a list of Christian countries I can think of that have been conquered by Moslems since the Industrial Revolution:

On the other hand, to the best of my admittedly weak historical understanding, the following Islamic countries have been conquered by Christians: Egypt, Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, Jordan, Chad, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Libya, Indonesia, Yemen, Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Kyrgyz, Kazakhstan, Somalia, Sudan, and Uzbekistan, to name a few. On various occasions Christians have tried to conquer Afghanistan, but with no better luck than they deserved.

Since 1500, Christians also conquered all of North, South, and Central America, most of Southeast Asia, India, Australia, Nepal, Africa, China for practical purposes, and so on. I am not sure the record is altogether on the side of Christians in terms of inherent pacifism.

My correspondents further inform me that Moslems hate America because of its advanced society, or because they hate freedom (which is silly even by the dilute standards of our sorry journals). I suspect that the reasons are otherwise.

Now, I am inexpert in Islam and may be wrong here. Correct me. (That is, if you are Moslem and know something about it, correct me.) They seem to have a cast of mind more primitive than ours, or more advanced than ours (depending on your attitude), but at least different from ours. They take their religion seriously. We do not. Yes, I know, polls show that some impressive proportion of Americans say they think God is more influential than Katie Couric (who I believe to be a bubblehead I saw once on a television network). In fact, though, religion plays little part in the national life, or lives, of what was once called Christendom. The word has died for want of a referent. We pride ourselves on eliminating religion from public life, and regard those who still practice it as snake-handlers.

Thus if Rastafarians took over Lithuania, Americans would not be greatly exercised. Perhaps one in fifty could find it on the map. That Lithuania is Christian would mean nothing. By contrast, Moslems seem to regard themselves as part of a family, despite rigorous and unpleasant disputes among themselves. They see Israel as just another example of colonization by armed force (see paragraph four above). And they know that every bomb destroying an apartment building in Beirut was given to Israel by America, along with the plane dropping it, for the express purpose of blowing up Moslems.

Further, the United States looks and talks as if it were making war on Islam. At the moment, Americans or Jewish allies are brutalizing Palestine and Lebanon, using Pakistan as a puppet, wrecking Iraq and Afghanistan, bombing Somalia, hunting Moslems in the Philippines, and threatening Syria and Iran. Maybe that's why Moslems don't like us.

I just offer it as a thought.

The truculent among my correspondents often express contempt for the Iraqi and Afghan insurgents, calling them dirtballs and rag heads and such. Perhaps, but they are not helpless rag heads. (If I hear another stupid joke about the seventy-two virgins, I'm going to kill something.)

If I may lapse into the vernacular, underestimating the enemy is a serviceable approach to getting your ass kicked. It's working. The US

“coalition” has something like 150,000 troops in Iraq, equipped with artillery, tanks, fighter-bombers, armored personnel carriers, helicopters, gun ships to include AC-130s, night-vision gear, and excellent medical care. The Pentagon seems to know little of the insurgents, but I’ve seen guesses that they might number from 12,000 to 30,000. Outnumbered five to one, and having only rifles, RPGs, and explosives, the insurgents have so far fought the US to a standstill, and have good prospects of handing it a defeat. That’s contemptible?

Further, US losses have been light. The US military has claimed to be killing 3,000 insurgents a month (and lots of other numbers too). Do the arithmetic. Even allowing for lying, guessing, and honest ignorance, the insurgents, and their families, are taking heavy casualties. They haven’t quit. If the US had suffered proportionately – say a couple of hundred thousand dead – the war would have been over years ago. Why did no one in power think of this beforehand?

A drawback of getting older is that one has a sense of seeing the same bad movie over and over. We always fight demons. Like the Moslems, the Russians also were patient and barbaric, as were, and will be again, the Chinese when they come online as the next enemy. The Japanese too were primordially evil, committing such atrocities as the Rape of Nanking until nuclear terror bombing returned them to civilization’s fold. The only good Indian was a dead Indian. Et cetera.



*The Japs, circa 1943*



*After a few decades of rapid evolution and, apparently, braces*

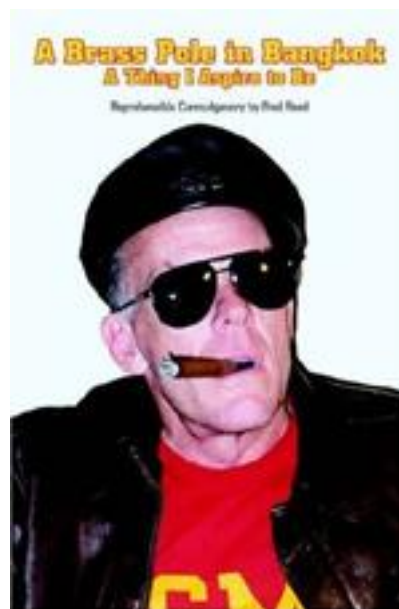
Still, if I were churlish, I would ask my correspondents how much they, we, actually know about the Islamic world. I might say to them:

Do you speak Arabic? Read it? How about Farsi? Do you have close Moslem friends? Do you know any Moslems at all? Have you lived for any appreciable time in a Moslem country, outside of a Western corporate enclave? Have you lived in a Moslem country? Have you visited a Moslem country? How many books on Islamic affairs, written by Moslems, have you read? Written by anybody? Can you name six Moslems other than Osama bin Laden and Mohammed? How much of the Koran have you read?

The US is fighting a war crucially dependant on religion, politics, and culture without knowing anything about the religion, politics, or culture.

Think about it. The GIs are late adolescents who have only the vaguest notion of where they are. The State Department has bright people who do know a lot about Islamic lands but, aside from being ignored, I doubt they much get out of the Green Zone. The upper ranks of American government? How much time have Congress, the Senate, Bush, Cheney, or Rice spent in Moslem countries?

Foreign policy – just about everybody’s – springs from spinal reflexes, I tell you. The human race has no business being in charge of its affairs. I’m trying to think of a better idea.



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*Fred Reed is author of [Nekkid in Austin: Drop Your Inner Child Down a Well](#) and the just-published [A Brass Pole in Bangkok: A Thing I Aspire to Be](#). Visit [his blog](#).*

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