

The Religion of Peace Isn't Peaceful

By JOHN VINSON

George W. Bush once famously remarked that Islam was a “religion of peace.” It is astounding that a man with degrees from some of America’s leading educational institutions could express such profound and abysmal ignorance of history. An accurate record reveals that Islam waged aggressive warfare almost from its very beginnings in the deserts of Arabia. In less than a century after the death of Mohammed in 632, Islam’s conquering armies had surged westward, engulfing most of the Middle East and North Africa, Christian territories prior to their conquest.

In 711, armies of the peaceful faith prepared to assault Europe. They crossed the Strait of Gibraltar, engulfed most of Spain, and then pushed into France. There they met the forces of Charles Martel, who stopped their advance in 732 at the battle of Tours, a victory which may have saved all of Europe from Islamic subjugation.

But the struggle between Islam and Christian Europe was far from over. For the next 1,000 years Islamic forces besieged Europe. The Europeans gradually won back Spain while losing Greece and the Balkans. Throughout the struggle, Europeans suffered Islamic colonialism and slavery. Muslim Moors and Turks enslaved millions of white Christians, often subjecting them to death by overwork in galleys and quarries. The Islamic onslaught finally subsided at the beginning of the eighteenth century when Europe’s advancing technology gave the Europeans a military edge.

Today this history is either unknown or largely downplayed in Europe and the United States, a void of understanding which permits the “religion of peace” illusion. Anyone who would like to learn about this past would do well to begin with Paul Fregosi’s *Jihad*. Published in 1998, it chronicles in a very readable and lively fashion the beginnings of Islam and its Jihad, the Muslim name for holy war, against the West.

It begins with Fregosi’s less than reverent depic-

tion of the life and character of the Prophet Mohammed. Though the account derives from Muslim sources (the Hadith writings), it paints a picture far different from the saintly image revered by Muslims today. It is one of cruelty, cunning, and power seeking. These revelations may have caused one publisher—who feared Muslim retaliation—to cancel the scheduled publication of the book.

JIHAD IN THE WEST Muslim Conquests from the 7th to the 21st Centuries

by Paul Fregosi

Prometheus Books

Amherst, New York, 1998

442 pp., \$24.97



Such timidity stands in stark contrast to the story revealed in *Jihad* as its chapters unfold. In some ways it is a sad tale of war waged century after century against the West. But most heartening is its chronicle of Western men, standing for faith and homeland, who time and again defy overwhelming odds to stem the Islamic onslaught. This pantheon of heroes, along with Martel, includes the names of El Cid, Jean Parisot de Valette, Don John of Austria, and King Sobieski of Poland. It is hard to read of their dedication and valor without reflecting on the cynicism, disillusionment, and materialism of the contemporary West—and how effete Westerners imagine that they are somehow better than their forebears.

Contributing to this malaise is the Western guilt cult, which holds that the West can never atone for its unpardonable history of colonialism and slavery. Thus the only decent thing it can do, according to this view, is to surrender to Islamic colonization—euphemistically described as immigration. But, as Fregosi so well points out, the sins of Europe are pale in comparison with the historic sins of Islam against Europe—and, one might add, against much of Africa and Asia as well. It’s time for the guilt cultists to face this reality.

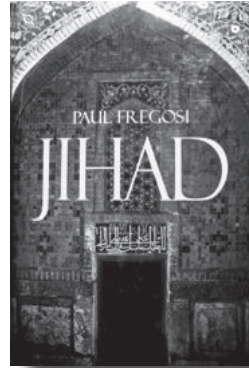
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Given the history of Islam, how can anyone possibly claim it is a “religion of peace?” One tactic used by defenders of the faith is to cite passages in the Koran extolling peace, harmony, and tolerance. They maintain that this is the real message of Islam. What they don’t reveal is that these teachings typically derive from the time when Mohammad was in Mecca. His position there was insecure, so he found it expedient to preach tolerance. Later he moved to Medina, where he secured full power. Then the message switched to warfare against the “infidels.” According to the Islamic doctrine of abrogation, the verses from Medina override the ones from Mecca.

Some Islamic apologists claim that “Islam” derives from the Arabic word al-Salaam, which means peace.

Actually it comes from the Arabic word al-Slim, which means submission or surrender. Also significant is how Muslims divide the world. The part they control is called Dar al-Islam, the zone of Islam. The part they don’t yet control is called Dar al-Harb, the zone of war.

Some, nevertheless, will keep on claiming that Islam is a religion of peace. Most relevant for evaluating this claim are the words of Jesus Christ: “By their fruits you will know them.” ■



A Thousand Year War against the West

From the Introduction to Jihad

To understand the Jihad we must be clear in our minds about what it is.... The purpose of the Jihad...is to expand and extend Islam until the whole world is under Muslim rule. The Jihad is essentially a permanent state of hostility that Islam maintains against the rest of the world, with or without fighting, for more sovereignty over more territory.... The Jihad is an institution in Islam which in Christian language we would call a sacrament. It is part of the normal functioning of the Muslim world, a religious duty which the devout Muslim has to perform if called upon.... The Jihad has affected and engulfed far more countries than the Palestine-bound Crusades.... The Crusaders wanted to establish themselves in the Holy Land, formerly Christian. Islam’s motives, through Jihad, were far grander. The Muslims wanted to take and occupy Europe and, hopefully, to Islamize it. A large part of Europe was taken, occupied for centuries, sometimes devastated, and some of it was Islamized.... Colonialism, a major cause of censure against the West..., was...a two-edged process in the Islamic-Christian connection. Simply put, the Muslim East conquered much of Europe from the seventh to the nineteenth centuries.... Western colonization of nearby Muslim lands lasted 130 years, from the 1830s to the 1960s.... Yet, strangely, it is the Muslims, Arabs and the Moors to be precise, who are the most bitter about colonialism and the humiliations to which they have been subjected; and it is the Europeans who harbor the shame and guilt. It should be the other way around. ■

