

**GLOBAL  STUDIES**

# **THE MIDDLE EAST**

**TENTH EDITION**





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# **MIDDLE EAST**

**TENTH EDITION**

**Dr. William Spencer**

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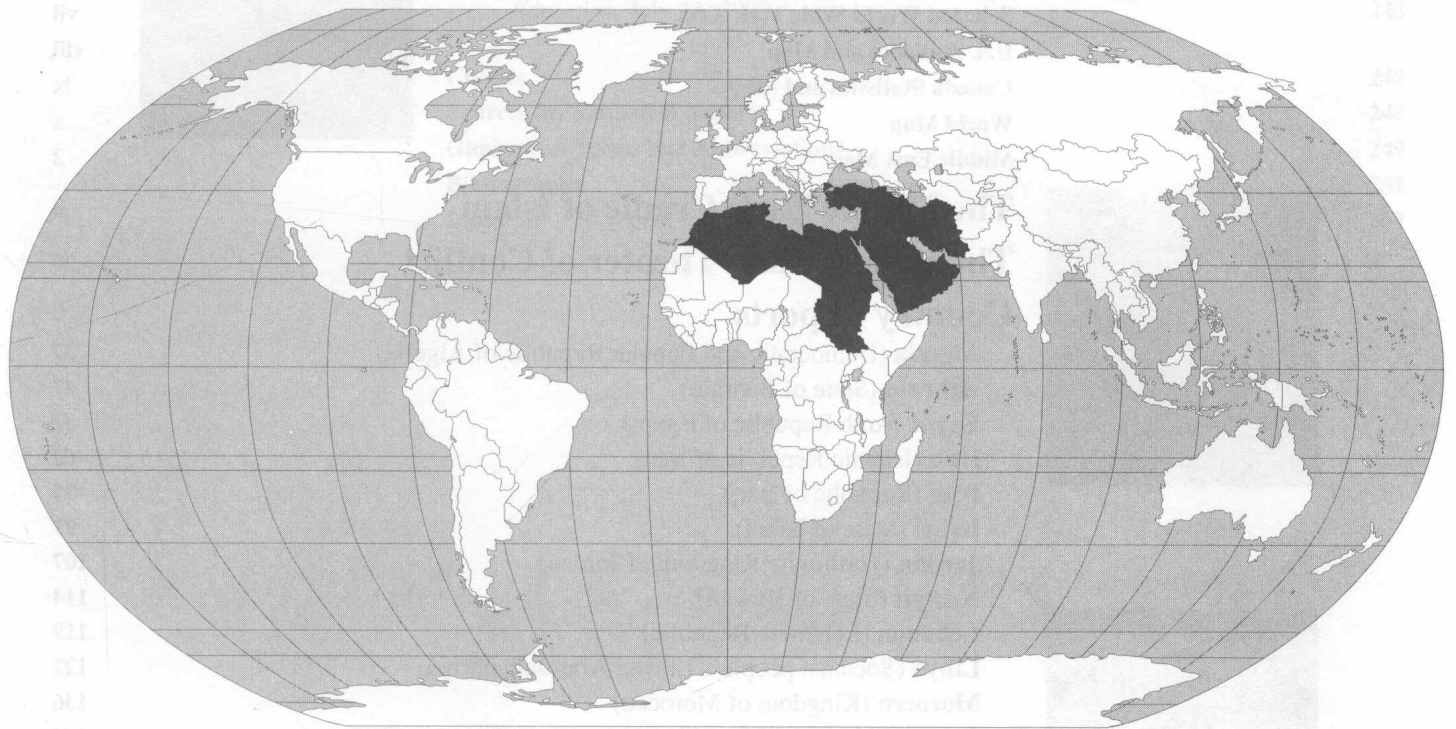
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# THE MIDDLE EAST



## **AUTHOR/EDITORS**

**Dr. William Spencer**

The author/editor for *Global Studies: The Middle East* was formerly professor of history at Florida State University and has specialized in Middle East/North African affairs for more than 40 years. He is the author of many books on the region and, in addition to his university teaching, has traveled extensively on research, U.S. government, and United Nations assignments. Since retiring from Florida State, Dr. Spencer has continued to be active in his field, serving as visiting professor at various colleges and universities. In his teaching and service as a curriculum consultant, particularly to school systems and community colleges, Dr. Spencer has made his life's work helping U.S. educators develop a better understanding of this volatile region of the world.

## **CONSULTANT**

**Elizabeth Bouvier Spencer**

Elizabeth Spencer is an artist and teacher who has traveled with her husband, Dr. William Spencer, to the Middle East on many research trips. She is responsible for much of the material in this book on home and family life, architecture, and housing, aside from her contributions as grammarian and amunensis extraordinary.

## **SERIES CONSULTANT**

**H. Thomas Collins**

Washington, D.C.



# Using *Global Studies: The Middle East*

## THE GLOBAL STUDIES SERIES

The Global Studies series was created to help readers acquire a basic knowledge and understanding of the regions and countries in the world. Each volume provides a foundation of information—geographic, cultural, economic, political, historical, artistic, and religious—that will allow readers to better assess the current and future problems within these countries and regions and to comprehend how events there might affect their own well-being. In short, these volumes present the background information necessary to respond to the realities of our global age.

Each of the volumes in the Global Studies series is crafted under the careful direction of an author/editor—an expert in the area under study. The author/editors teach and conduct research and have traveled extensively through the regions about which they are writing.

In *Global Studies: The Middle East*, the author/editor has written several regional essays and country reports for each of the countries included.

## MAJOR FEATURES OF THE GLOBAL STUDIES SERIES

The Global Studies volumes are organized to provide concise information on the regions and countries within those areas under study. The major sections and features of the books are described here.

### Regional Essays

For *Global Studies: The Middle East*, the author/editor has written several essays focusing on the religious, cultural, sociopolitical, and economic differences and similarities of the countries and peoples in the various regions of the Middle East. Regional maps accompany the essays.

### Country Reports

Concise reports are written for each of the countries within the region under study. These reports are the heart of each Global Studies volume. *Global Studies: The Middle East, Tenth Edition*, contains 20 country reports.

The country reports are composed of five standard elements. Each report contains a detailed map visually positioning the country among its neighboring states; a summary of statistical information; a current essay providing important historical, geographical, political, cultural, and economic information; a historical timeline, offering a convenient visual survey of a few key historical events; and four “graphic indicators,” with summary statements about the country in terms of development, freedom, health/welfare, and achievements.

#### *A Note on the Statistical Reports*

The statistical information provided for each country has been drawn from a wide range of sources. (The most frequently referenced are listed on page 000.) Every effort has been made to provide the most current and accurate information available. However, sometimes the information cited by these sources differs to some extent; and, all too often, the most current information available for some countries is somewhat dated. Aside

from these occasional difficulties, the statistical summary of each country is generally quite complete and up to date. Care should be taken, however, in using these statistics (or, for that matter, any published statistics) in making hard comparisons among countries. We have also provided comparable statistics for the United States and Canada, which can be found on pages 000 and 000.

### World Press Articles

Within each Global Studies volume is reprinted a number of articles carefully selected by our editorial staff and the author/editor from a broad range of international periodicals and newspapers. The articles have been chosen for currency, interest, and their differing perspectives on the subject countries. There are 12 articles in *Global Studies: The Middle East, Tenth Edition*.

The articles section is preceded by an annotated table of contents. This resource offers a brief summary of each article.

### WWW Sites

An extensive annotated list of selected World Wide Web sites can be found on the facing page (000) in this edition of *Global Studies: The Middle East*. In addition, the URL addresses for country-specific Web sites are provided on the statistics page of most countries. All of the Web site addresses were correct and operational at press time. Instructors and students alike are urged to refer to those sites often to enhance their understanding of the region and to keep up with current events.

### Glossary, Bibliography, Index

At the back of each Global Studies volume, readers will find a glossary of terms and abbreviations, which provides a quick reference to the specialized vocabulary of the area under study and to the standard abbreviations used throughout the volume.

Following the glossary is a bibliography that lists general works, national histories, and current-events publications and periodicals that provide regular coverage on China.

The index at the end of the volume is an accurate reference to the contents of the volume. Readers seeking specific information and citations should consult this standard index.

### Currency and Usefulness

*Global Studies: The Middle East*, like the other Global Studies volumes, is intended to provide the most current and useful information available necessary to understand the events that are shaping the cultures of the region today.

This volume is revised on a regular basis. The statistics are updated, regional essays and country reports revised, and world press articles replaced. In order to accomplish this task, we turn to our author/editor, our advisory boards, and—hopefully—to you, the users of this volume. Your comments are more than welcome. If you have an idea that you think will make the next edition more useful, an article or bit of information that will make it more current, or a general comment on its organization, content, or features that you would like to share with us, please send it in for serious consideration.

# Selected World Wide Web Sites for *Global Studies: The Middle East*

All of these Web sites are hot-linked through the *Global Studies* home page: <http://www.dushkin.com/globalstudies> (just click on a book).

Some Web sites are continually changing their structure and content, so the information listed may not always be available.

## GENERAL SITES

### BBC News

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/middle\\_east/default.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/hi/english/world/middle_east/default.stm)

Access current Middle East news from this BBC site.

### CNN Interactive—World Regions: Middle East

<http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/#mideast>

This 24-hour news channel often focuses on the Middle East and is updated every few hours.

### C-SPAN Online

<http://www.c-span.org>

See especially C-SPAN International on the Web for International Programming Highlights and archived C-SPAN programs.

### Library of Congress

<http://www.loc.gov>

An invaluable resource for facts and analysis of 100 countries' political, economic, social, and national-security systems and installations.

### ReliefWeb

<http://www.reliefweb.int/w/rwb.nsf>

UN's Department of Humanitarian Affairs clearinghouse for international humanitarian emergencies. It has daily updates, including Reuters and Voice of America.

### United Nations

<http://www.unsystem.org>

The official Web site for the United Nations system of organizations. Everything is listed alphabetically, and data on UNICC and Food and Agriculture Organization are available.

### UN Development Programme (UNDP)

<http://www.undp.org>

Publications and current information on world poverty, Mission Statement, UN Development Fund for Women, and much more. Be sure to see the Poverty Clock.

### UN Environmental Programme (UNEP)

<http://www.unep.org>

Official site of UNEP with information on UN environmental programs, products, services, events, and a search engine.

### U.S. Central Intelligence Agency Home Page

<http://www.cia.gov/index.htm>

This site includes publications of the CIA, such as the World Factbook, Factbook on Intelligence, Handbook of International Economic Statistics, CIA Maps and Publications, and much more.

### U.S. Department of State Home Page

<http://www.state.gov/www/ind.html>

Organized alphabetically (i.e., Country Reports, Human Rights, International Organizations, and more).

### World Health Organization (WHO)

<http://www.who.ch>

Maintained by WHO's headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, the site uses Excite search engine to conduct keyword searches.

## MIDDLE EAST SITES

### Access to Arabia

<http://www.accessme.com>

Extensive information about traveling and working in the Arab world is presented on this Web site.

### ArabNet

<http://www.arab.net>

This site is an extensive online resource for the Arab world in the Middle East and North Africa. There are links to every country in the region, covering current news, history, geography, culture, government, and business topics.

### Arabia.On.Line

<http://www.arabia.com>

Discussions of Arab news, business, and culture are available at this site.

### Camera Media Report

<http://world.std.com/~camera/>

This site is run by the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America, and it is devoted to fair and accurate coverage of Israel and the Middle East.

### Center for Middle Eastern Studies

<http://w3.arizona.edu/~cmesua/>

This Web site is maintained by the University of Arizona Center for Middle Eastern Studies. The Center's mission is to further understanding and knowledge of the Middle East through education.

### Center for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies

<http://www.dur.ac.uk/~dme0www/>

The University of Durham in England maintains this site. It offers links to the University's extensive library of Middle East information; the Sudan Archive is the largest collection of documentation outside of Sudan itself.

### The Middle East Institute

<http://www.mideasti.org>

The Middle East Institute is dedicated to educating Americans about the Middle East. The site offers links to publications, media resources, and other links of interest.

### Middle East Internet Pages

<http://www.middle-east-pages.com>

A large amount of information on specific countries in the Middle East can be obtained on this site. Their engine allows you to browse through virtually every aspect of Middle East culture, politics, and current information.

### Middle East Policy Council

<http://www.mepc.org>

The purpose of the Middle East Policy Council's Web site is to expand public discussion and understanding of issues affecting U.S. policy in the Middle East.

### Middle East Times

<http://metimes.com>

The *Middle East Times* is a source for independent analysis of politics, business, religion, and culture in the Middle East.

### Middle Eastern and Arab Resources

<http://www.ionet.net/~usarch/WTB-Site.shtml>

This omnibus site offers extensive information on each of the Middle Eastern countries. Scroll to their flags.

## ISRAEL SITES

### The Abraham Fund

<http://www.coexistence.org>

The goal of peaceful coexistence between Jews and Arabs is the theme of this site. Information to various projects and links to related sites are offered.

### Zionist Archives

<http://www.wzo.org.il/cza>

This site is the official historical archives of the World Zionist Organization, the Jewish Agency, the Jewish National Fund, Karen Hayesod, and the World Jewish Congress.

We highly recommend that you review our Web site for expanded information and our other product lines. We are continually updating and adding links to our Web site in order to offer you the most usable and useful information that will support and expand the value of your book. You can reach us at: <http://www.dushkin.com>.



# The United States (United States of America)

## GEOGRAPHY

*Area in Square Miles (Kilometers):*

3,717,792 (9,629,091) (about 1/2 the size of Russia)

*Capital (Population):* Washington, DC (3,997,000)

*Environmental Concerns:* air and water pollution; limited freshwater resources, desertification; loss of habitat; waste disposal; acid rain

*Geographical Features:* vast central plain, mountains in the west, hills and low mountains in the east; rugged mountains and broad river valleys in Alaska; volcanic topography in Hawaii

*Climate:* mostly temperate, but ranging from tropical to arctic

## PEOPLE

### Population

*Total:* 280,563,000

*Annual Growth Rate:* 0.89%

*Rural/Urban Population Ratio:* 24/76

*Major Languages:* predominantly English; a sizable Spanish-speaking minority; many others

*Ethnic Makeup:* 77% white; 13% black; 4% Asian; 6% Amerindian and others

*Religions:* 56% Protestant; 28% Roman Catholic; 2% Jewish; 4% others; 10% none or unaffiliated

## Health

*Life Expectancy at Birth:* 74 years (male); 80 years (female)

*Infant Mortality:* 6.69/1,000 live births

*Physicians Available:* 1/365 people

*HIV/AIDS Rate in Adults:* 0.61%

## Education

*Adult Literacy Rate:* 97% (official)

*Compulsory (Ages):* 7–16; free

## COMMUNICATION

*Telephones:* 194,000,000 main lines

*Daily Newspaper Circulation:* 238/1,000 people

*Televisions:* 776/1,000 people

*Internet Users:* 165,750,000 (2002)

## TRANSPORTATION

*Highways in Miles (Kilometers):* 3,906,960 (6,261,154)

*Railroads in Miles (Kilometers):* 149,161 (240,000)

*Usable Airfields:* 14,695

*Motor Vehicles in Use:* 206,000,000

## GOVERNMENT

*Type:* federal republic

*Independence Date:* July 4, 1776

*Head of State/Government:* President

George W. Bush is both head of state and head of government

*Political Parties:* Democratic Party;

Republican Party; others of relatively minor political significance

*Suffrage:* universal at 18

## MILITARY

*Military Expenditures (% of GDP):* 3.2%

*Current Disputes:* various boundary and territorial disputes; "war on terrorism"

## ECONOMY

*Per Capita Income/GDP:* \$36,300/\$10.082 trillion

*GDP Growth Rate:* 0%

*Inflation Rate:* 3%

*Unemployment Rate:* 5.8%

*Population Below Poverty Line:* 13%

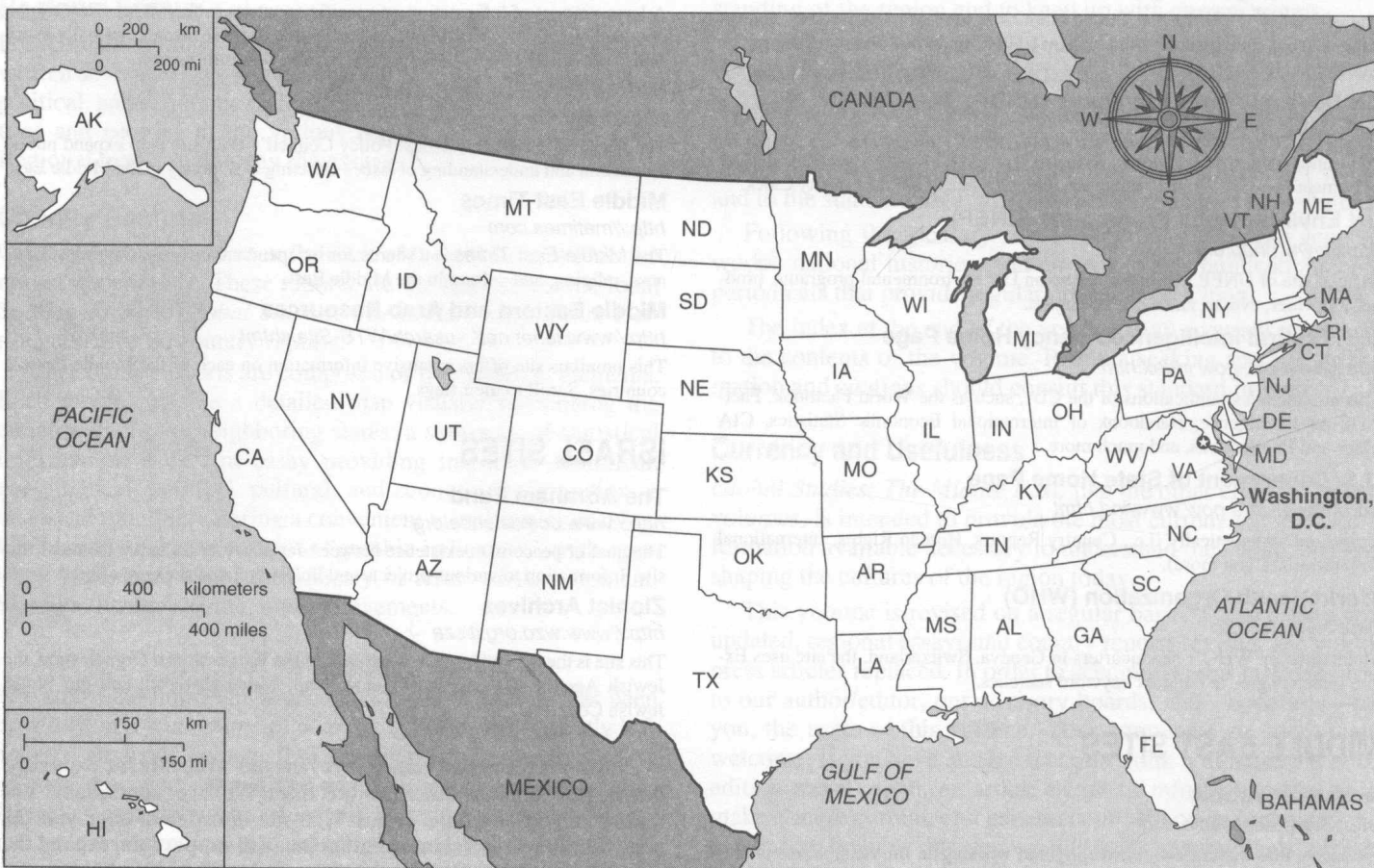
*Natural Resources:* many minerals and metals; petroleum; natural gas; timber; arable land

*Agriculture:* food grains; feed crops; fruits and vegetables; oil-bearing crops; livestock; dairy products

*Industry:* diversified in both capital and consumer-goods industries

*Exports:* \$723 billion (primary partners Canada, Mexico, Japan)

*Imports:* \$1.148 trillion (primary partners Canada, Mexico, Japan)



# Canada

## GEOGRAPHY

*Area in Square Miles (Kilometers):*  
3,850,790 (9,976,140) (slightly larger than the United States)  
*Capital (Population):* Ottawa (1,094,000)  
*Environmental Concerns:* air and water pollution; acid rain; industrial damage to agriculture and forest productivity  
*Geographical Features:* permafrost in the north; mountains in the west; central plains; lowlands in the southeast  
*Climate:* varies from temperate to arctic

## PEOPLE

**Population**  
*Total:* 31,903,000  
*Annual Growth Rate:* 0.96%  
*Rural/Urban Population Ratio:* 23/77  
*Major Languages:* both English and French are official  
*Ethnic Makeup:* 28% British Isles origin; 23% French origin; 15% other European; 6% others; 2% indigenous; 26% mixed  
*Religions:* 46% Roman Catholic; 36% Protestant; 18% others

## Health

*Life Expectancy at Birth:* 76 years (male); 83 years (female)  
*Infant Mortality:* 4.95/1,000 live births  
*Physicians Available:* 1/534 people

*HIV/AIDS Rate in Adults:* 0.3%

## Education

*Adult Literacy Rate:* 97%  
*Compulsory (Ages):* primary school

## COMMUNICATION

*Telephones:* 20,803,000 main lines  
*Daily Newspaper Circulation:* 215/1,000 people  
*Televisions:* 647/1,000 people  
*Internet Users:* 16,840,000 (2002)

## TRANSPORTATION

*Highways in Miles (Kilometers):* 559,240 (902,000)  
*Railroads in Miles (Kilometers):* 22,320 (36,000)  
*Usable Airfields:* 1,419  
*Motor Vehicles in Use:* 16,800,000

## GOVERNMENT

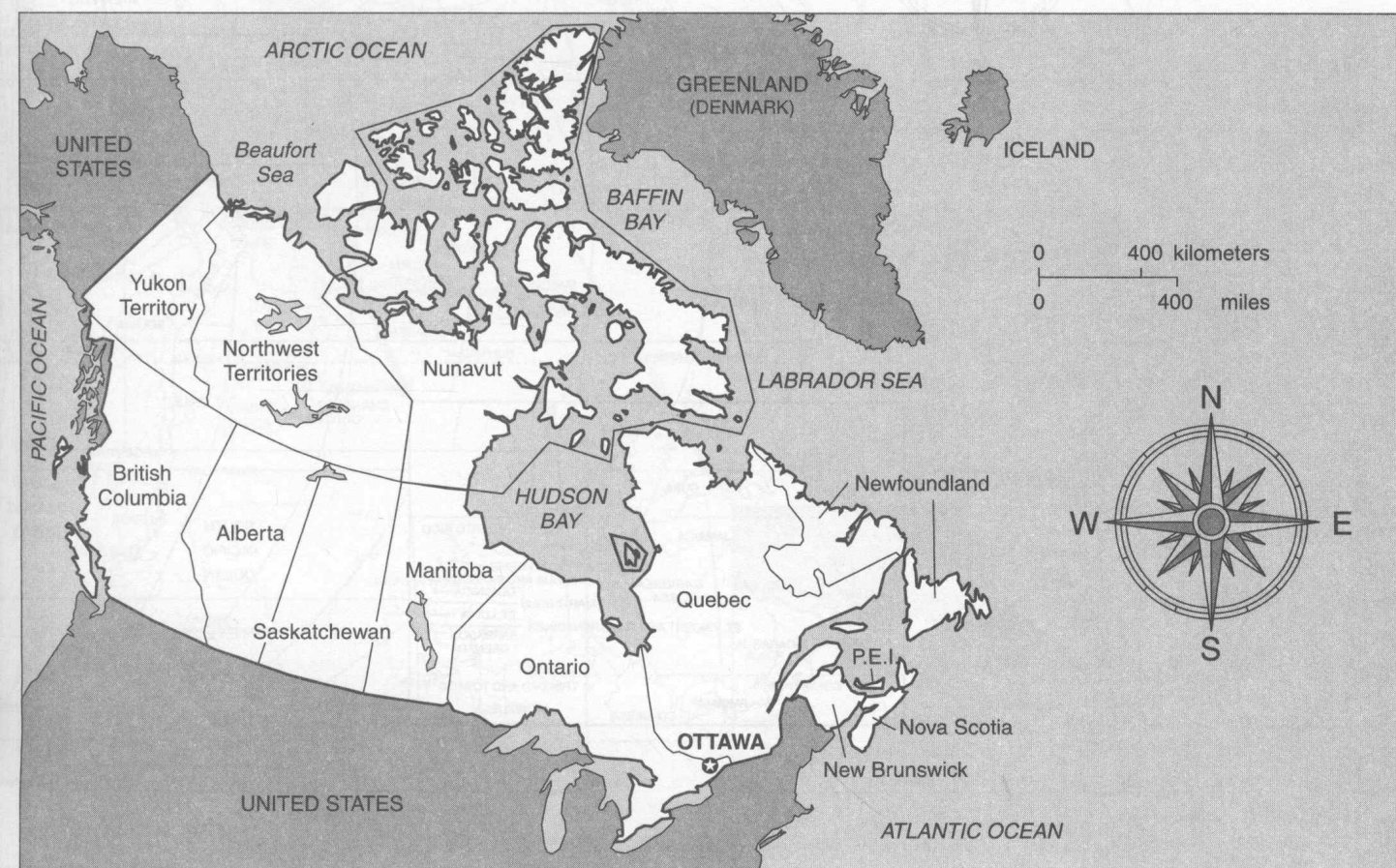
*Type:* confederation with parliamentary democracy  
*Independence Date:* July 1, 1867  
*Head of State/Government:* Queen Elizabeth II; Prime Minister Jean Chrétien  
*Political Parties:* Progressive Conservative Party; Liberal Party; New Democratic Party; Bloc Québécois; Canadian Alliance  
*Suffrage:* universal at 18

## MILITARY

*Military Expenditures (% of GDP):* 1.1%  
*Current Disputes:* maritime boundary disputes with the United States

## ECONOMY

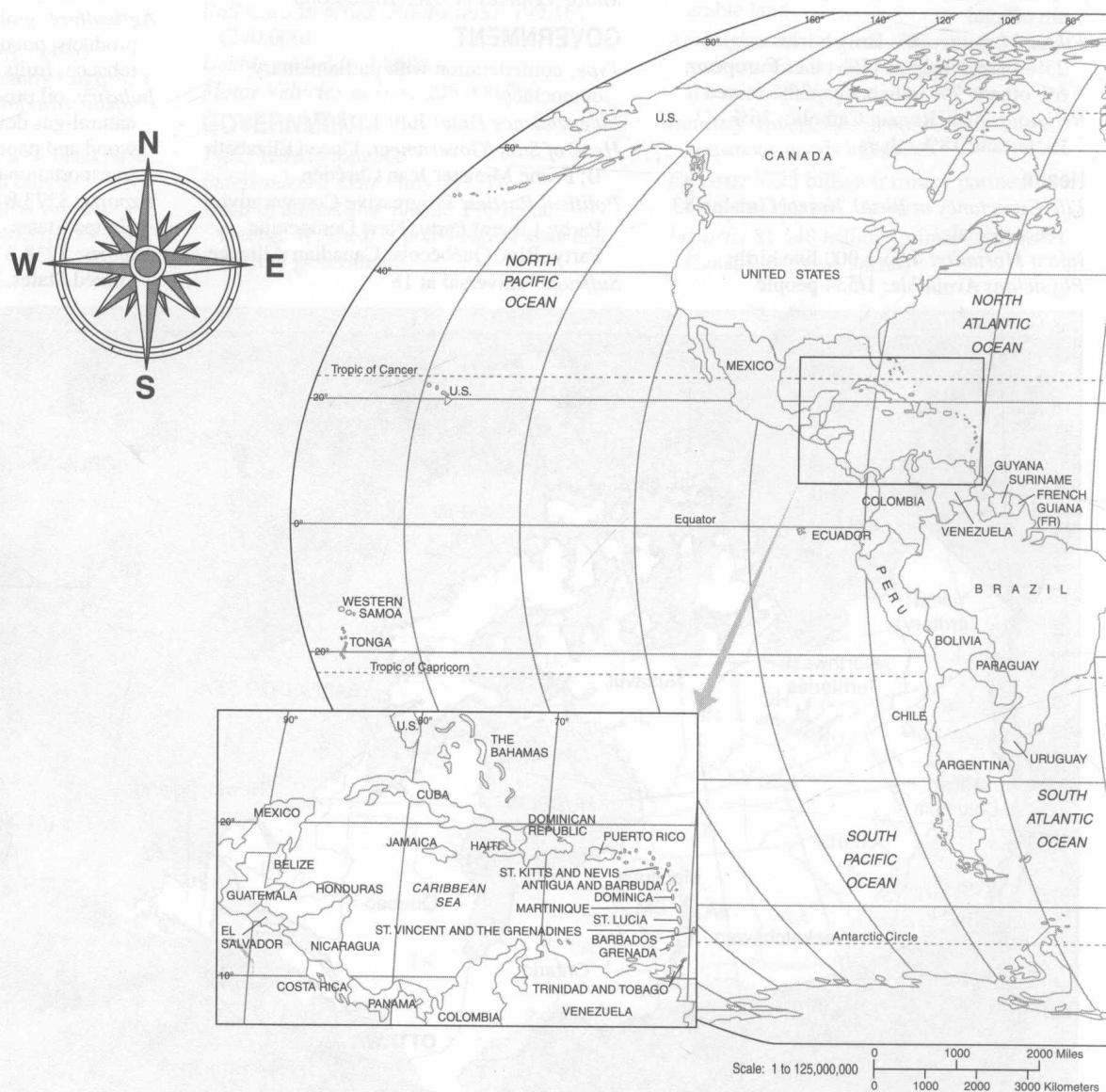
*Currency (\$U.S. equivalent):* 1.46 Canadian dollars = \$1  
*Per Capita Income/GDP:* \$27,700/\$875 billion  
*GDP Growth Rate:* 2%  
*Inflation Rate:* 3%  
*Unemployment Rate:* 7%  
*Labor Force by Occupation:* 74% services; 15% manufacturing; 6% agriculture and others  
*Natural Resources:* petroleum; natural gas; fish; minerals; cement; forestry products; wildlife; hydropower  
*Agriculture:* grains; livestock; dairy products; potatoes; hogs; poultry and eggs; tobacco; fruits and vegetables  
*Industry:* oil production and refining; natural-gas development; fish products; wood and paper products; chemicals; transportation equipment  
*Exports:* \$273.8 billion (primary partners United States, Japan, United Kingdom)  
*Imports:* \$238.3 billion (primary partners United States, European Union, Japan)





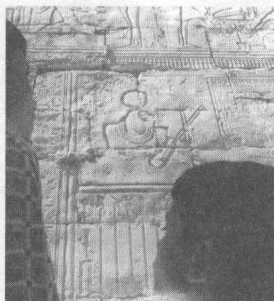
# GLOBAL STUDIES

This map is provided to give you a graphic picture of where the countries of the world are located, the relationship they have with their region and neighbors, and their positions relative to major powers and power blocs. We have focused on certain areas to illustrate these crowded regions more clearly.



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Nichole Alhassan  
Lori Church  
Maggie Telle  
Tara McLean  
Karl  
Jana  
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### MAJOR FEATURES OF THE GLOBAL STUDIES SERIES

The Global Studies series is organized to provide comprehensive information on the politics and economics of the world under study. The major sections and features of the books are described here.

#### Regional Essays

For Global Studies, the authors have the opportunity to write regional essays focusing on the politics, culture, and political and economic differences and similarities in the region and people in the various regions of the world. Each regional essay summarizes the series.

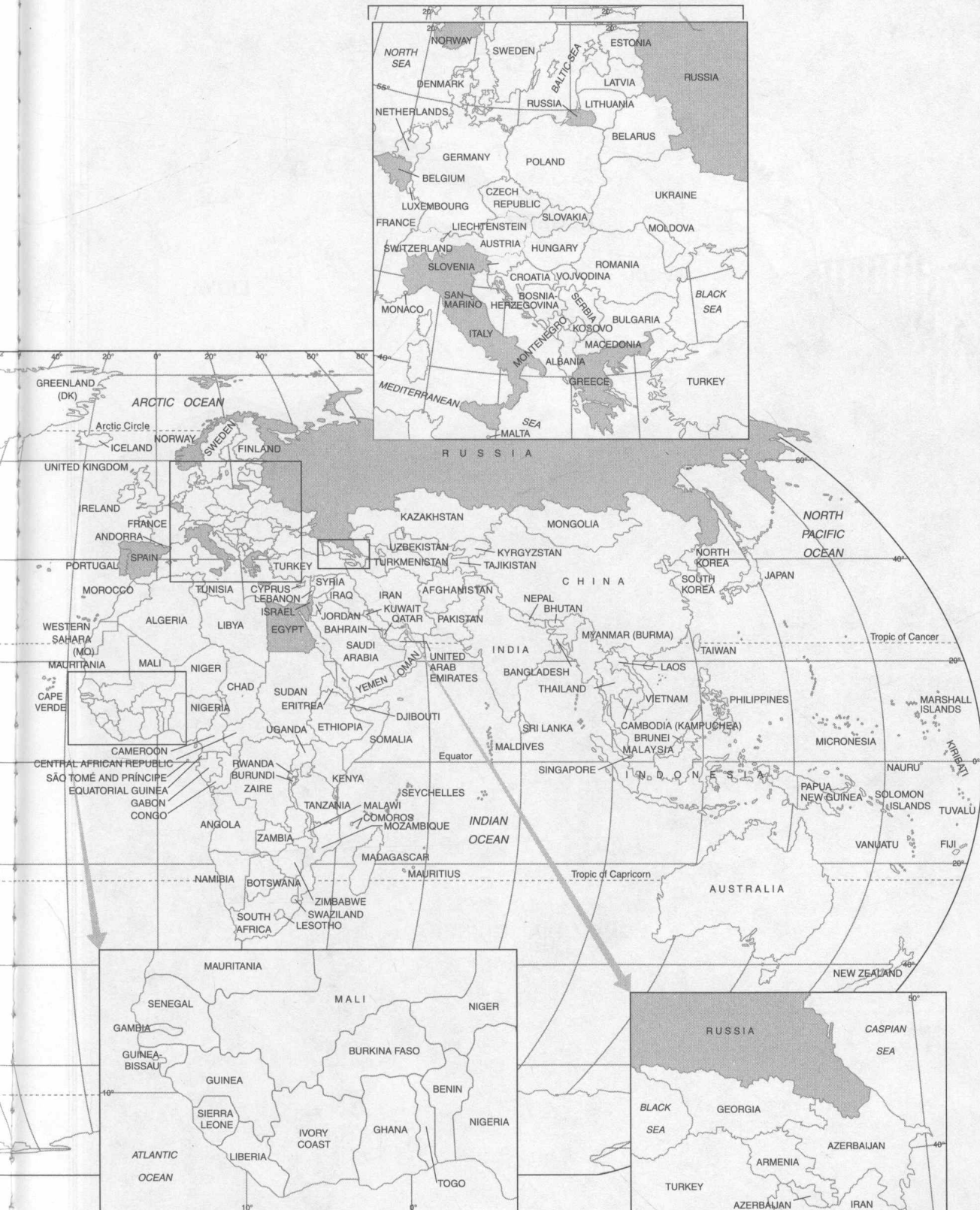
#### Country Reports

Country reports are written for each of the countries within the region under study. These reports are the heart of each Global Studies volume. Global Studies contains 20 country reports. The country reports are composed of five standard sections. Each report contains a detailed map visually portraying the country among its neighboring states; a summary of political, geographical, political, cultural, and economic information; a current essay providing important historical, political, and economic information; and a concluding section on the country in terms of development, freedom, human rights, and other issues.

#### A Note on the Statistical Reports

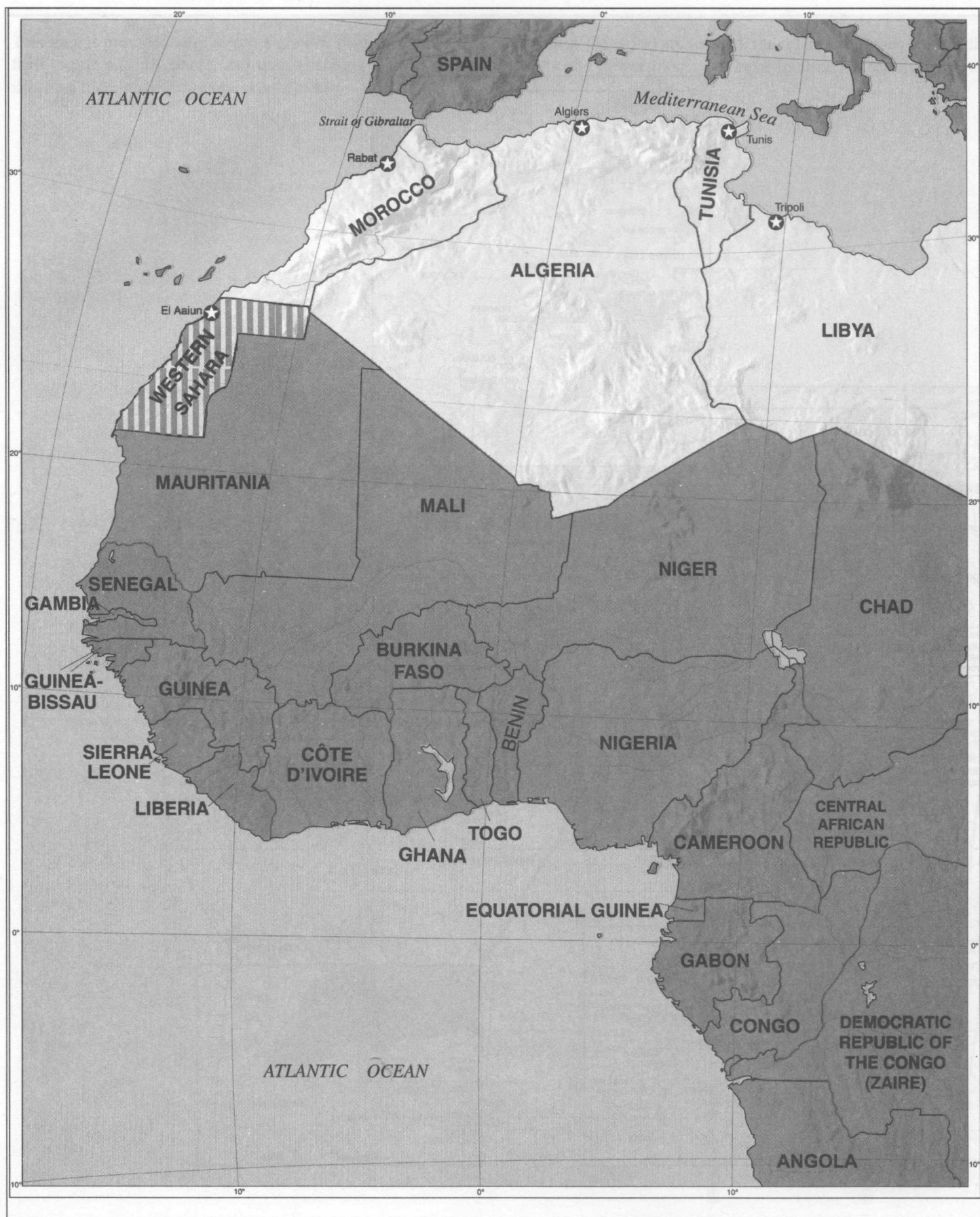
The statistical information provided for each country has been drawn from a wide range of sources. (The most frequently used source is the CIA World Factbook.) Every effort has been made to ensure that the most current and accurate information available is provided. However, the information is not always consistent across the various countries, and some information may be outdated. It is the responsibility of the user to verify the information for specific countries.

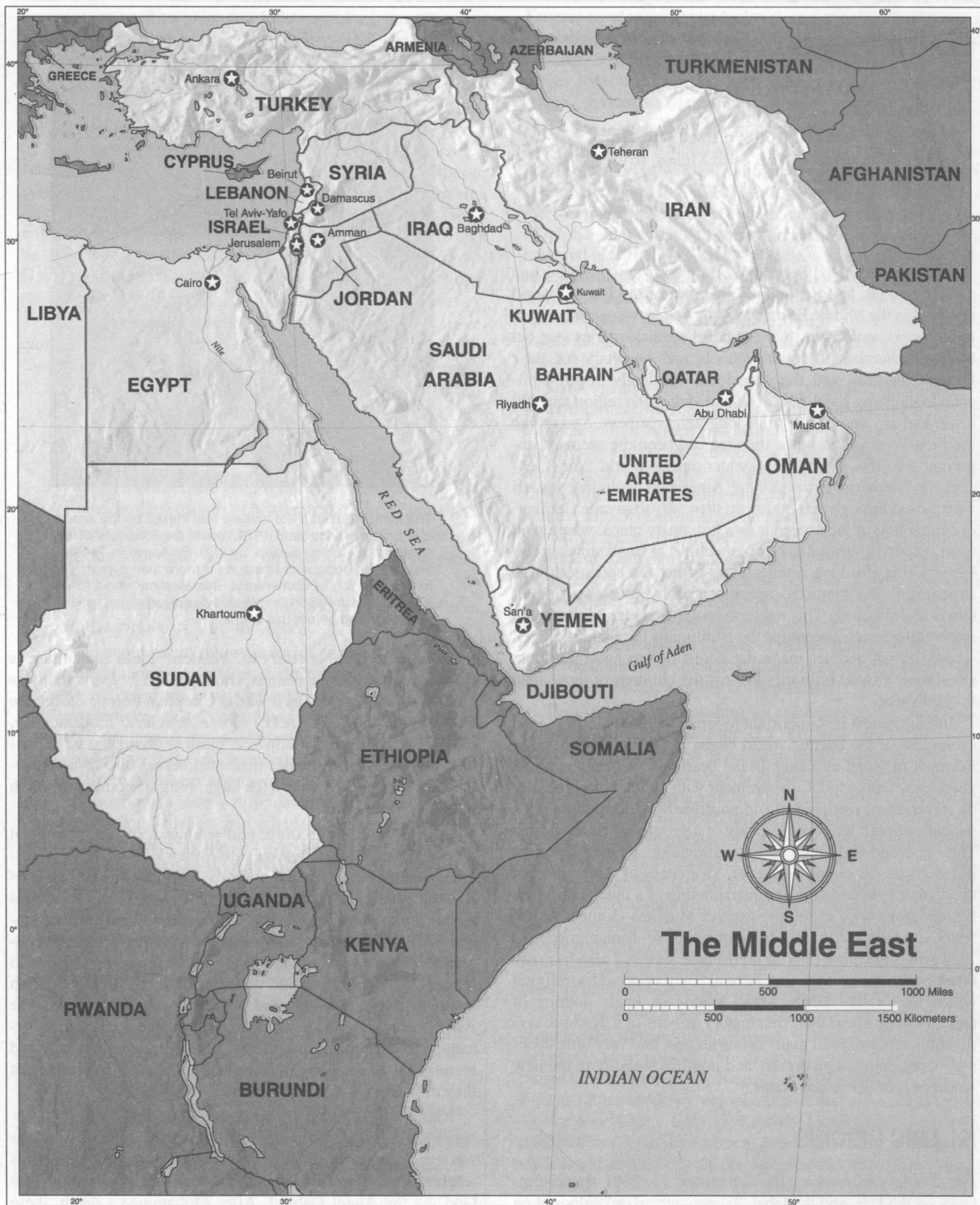
# The Middle East





# The Middle East







# The Middle East: Cradle of Islam

## ISLAM IN FERMENT

"The world is no barrier to God,  
He is visible in all that exists,  
Remove yourself from yourself and Him,  
Let Him speak to you as to Moses, from  
the burning bush"

Mehmed Esad Dede<sup>1</sup>

Until well after the Second World War, the world of Islam and its peoples, and particularly that part of the Islamic world centered in the Middle East and North Africa, were unknown to most Americans. Other than a handful of missionaries sent out by their churches to found schools and hospitals for their fellow-Christians and the occasional Biblically-inspired pilgrim to the Holy Land, few of us had visited the region and still fewer had any knowledge of its long-ago greatness. And unlike the First World War, when the area had been the scene of important conflicts, it was a backwater during World War II, except for Northern Africa. Young Americans including myself who passed through that region on their way to invade German-occupied Italy remembered it as a hot, dusty place, where men wearing what appeared to be bedsheets sat at small tables in fly-blown cafes, drinking small glasses of hot tea and speaking a strange guttural language accompanied by much waving of hands and shouting. This naive stereotype changed little in the intervening years, except for the addition of the State of Israel, whose Jewish peoples made the desert bloom and more than stood their ground militarily against the children of those men in "bed sheets."

In this context it is important to remember that our deepened awareness of the Islamic world began roughly with the establishment of Israel as a state in the heartland of Islam some 55 years ago. Through our involvement with Israel, both officially by government recognition and unofficially with moral and financial support, we became aware of a people called the Arabs. They had opposed Israel and fought against its establishment but were unsuccessful. However, awareness of Arabs did not translate into knowledge or understanding of a much larger, religious group who called themselves Muslims (sometimes referred to incorrectly as Muhammadans or Mohammedans.) This group lived not only in the Middle East but also in many other countries in Asia and Africa. They observed a religion which they called Islam. Most Americans knew nothing of them, nothing about their rich history as heirs to a dynamic civilization which existed many centuries ago, and very little about their struggle to attain dignity and political stability in the new world of postwar nation-states.

## ISLAMIC ORIGINS

For a variety of reasons, the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the U.S. and the label "Islamic terrorism" imposed on



(UN photo)

The Middle East did not make a real impact on the American consciousness until 1979, when the followers of the Ayatollah Khomeini seized the U.S. Embassy in Teheran and held its occupants hostage for more than a year. The extent to which fundamentalist Shia Muslims would follow Khomeini, pictured on the placard displayed above, was little recognized before this event.

them, and increased hostility to "Western" ideas and culture as destructive of Islamic values, among others, Islam today is viewed as "the enemy" as it was to Christian Europe during the Crusades (1100–1400 A.D.) Some scholars, unfortunately, have posited the relationship as a "clash of civilizations," Christian against Islamic, rather than an internal one of disagreements, even conflict, within the larger religious family to which both belong.

Islam in fact is the third, and youngest, of the three great monotheistic faiths. Some negative views of Islam by Westerners are the result of the Crusades, highly colored by generations of Sunday-school textbooks. However, Islam developed among a particular people, the Arabs; was built on earlier foundations of Christianity and Judaism; and was primarily concerned with the transmission of the spiritual message of God to humankind as a corrective measure. It is an article of faith among Arab nationalists and Muslim Arab scholars that the Arabs were chosen as a people to receive God's revelations because they were cousins of the Jews through Abraham and therefore were included in the Judeo-Christian tradition. But they did not have scriptures of their own.

Islam was founded in the seventh century A.D. by Muhammad, a merchant in the small town of Mecca in southwestern Arabia. Muslims believe that Muhammad's religious teachings came from revelations that he received orally from God via the Angel Gabriel. After Muhammad's death, these



revelations were put into book form in the *Koran* (Qur'an), "recitation," the Holy Book of Islam.

During Muhammad's lifetime, the various revelations he received were used to guide his followers along the "Way" of conduct (*Shari'a*, in Arabic) acceptable to God. The Arabs followed traditional religions in Muhammad's time, worshipping many gods. Muhammad taught belief in one God—Allah—and in the Word of God sent down to him as messenger. For this reason, Muhammad is considered the Prophet of Islam.

Muhammad's received revelations plus his own teachings issued to instruct his followers make up the formal religious system known as Islam. The word *Islam* is Arabic and has been translated variously as "submission," "surrender" (i.e., to God's will), and the fatalistic "acceptance." A better translation might be "receptiveness." Those who receive and accept the Word of God as transmitted to Muhammad and set down in the *Koran* are called Muslims.

Islam is essentially a simple faith. Five basic duties are required of the believer; they are often called the Five Pillars because they are the foundations of the House of Islam. They are:

1. The confession of faith: "I testify that there is no God but God, and Muhammad is the Messenger of God."
2. Prayer, required five times daily, facing in the direction of Mecca, the holy city.
3. Fasting during the daylight hours in the month of Ramadan, the month of Muhammad's first revelations.
4. Alms giving, a tax or gift of not less than 2½ percent of one's income, to the community for the help of the poor.
5. Pilgrimage, required at least once in one's lifetime, to the House of God in Mecca.

It is apparent from the above description that Islam has many points in common with Judaism and Christianity. All three are monotheistic religions, having a fundamental belief in one God. Muslims believe that Muhammad was the "seal of the Prophets," the last messenger and recipient of revelations. But they also believe that God revealed Himself to other inspired prophets, from Abraham, Moses, and other Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) figures down through history, including Jesus Christ. However, Muslims part company with Christians over the divinity of Jesus as the Son of God; the Resurrection of Jesus; and the tripartite division into Father, Son, and Holy Ghost or Spirit.

## THE ISLAMIC CALENDAR

The Islamic calendar is a lunar calendar. It has 354 days in all, divided into 7 months of 30 days, 4 months of 29 days, and 1 month of 28 days. The first year of the calendar, A.H. 1 (Anno Hegira, the year of Muhammad's "emigration" to Medina to escape persecution in Mecca), corresponds to A.D. 622.

In the Islamic calendar, the months rotate with the Moon, coming at different times from year to year. It takes an Islamic month 33 years to make the complete circuit of the seasons. The fasting month of Ramadan moves with the seasons and is most difficult for Muslims when it takes place in high summer.

Although Muhammad is in no way regarded as divine by Muslims, his life is considered a model for their own lives. His *hadith* ("teachings" or "sayings") that were used to supplement Koranic revelations (or to deal with specific situations when no revelation was forthcoming) have served as guides to Muslim conduct since the early days of Islam. The *Koran* and *hadith* together form the *Sunna* (translated literally as "Beaten Path"), which provides an Islamic code of conduct for the believers.

The importance of Muhammad's role in Islam cannot be overemphasized. Among Muslims, his name is used frequently in conversation or written communication, always followed by "Peace Be Unto Him" (PBUH). A death sentence imposed on the writer Salman Rushdie by Iran's revolutionary leader Ayatollah Khomeini resulted from an unflattering portrait of Muhammad in Rushdie's novel *The Satanic Verses* (1988). And an Israeli woman's depiction of Muhammad as a pig writing in the *Koran*, on a poster displayed in Hebron, roused a storm of protest throughout the Muslim world. She was arrested by Israeli police and given a 21-year jail sentence for "harming religious sensibilities."<sup>2</sup>

Seen against the strong image of Israel, that country's Middle Eastern neighbors seemed unimportant. Most Americans knew little of their rich histories or of their struggles to attain dignity and stability in the new world of independent states. Many people had only a vague awareness of a religious group called Muslims (mistakenly called Mohammedans), who inhabited the Middle East in large numbers and practiced a religion known as Islam. But in political terms, the Muslims seemed powerless, disorganized, always on the brink of conflict. With the exception of Israel—often perceived as an extension of the United States—the predictability that Americans had come to expect of governments like their own was not to be found among the quarrelsome leaders of these Middle Eastern states. Thus the thunderous impact of Islam on the United States came with little advance warning or preparation.

The American public abruptly came face to face with militant Islam in 1979, when the U.S. Embassy in Teheran, Iran, was seized by supporters of religious leader Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and its occupants held hostage. Their detention for more than a year made yellow ribbons a symbol of America's captivity to Islam and led to the political downfall of President Jimmy Carter, but produced relatively little development in Americans' understanding of Islamic peoples. Later, misreading of their motivations by the Reagan administration led to the disastrous assignment of American marines to Lebanon as part of a multinational peacekeeping force after the 1982 Israeli invasion of that country. In 1983, a truck carrying what was later described as the largest non-nuclear bomb ever exploded blew up the U.S. Marine barracks in Beirut, killing 241 marines.

In the mid-1980s, the Islamic Jihad, a secret Lebanese Shia organization linked to Iran through Hizbullah (Party of God), Lebanon's most powerful Shia Muslim group, initiated a campaign of kidnappings of Americans and other foreigners in Beirut. Other shadowy organizations, such as Revolutionary Justice and Islamic Holy War for the Liberation of Palestine, followed suit. U.S. involvement in Lebanon after the Israeli invasion and revelations of the Reagan administration's secret arms deals with Iran shifted the kidnappers' focus to one of revenge for U.S. and Israeli actions against the "sacred Islamic

soil" of Lebanon, whereas the original reason for the hostage taking had been to obtain the release of "Islamic brothers" held in Israeli and European jails for terrorist activities.

Altogether, more than a dozen Americans, plus Briton Terry Waite (the personal representative of the archbishop of Canterbury) and a number of British, French, German, and Italian citizens, were held hostage for periods of up to seven years. The longest-held was Associated Press Middle East bureau chief Terry Anderson. Between 1986 and 1990, there were no hostage releases; but in 1990–1991, protracted negotiations by United Nations (UN) secretary-general Javier Perez de Cuellar and his mediators, through intermediaries in Iran (the protective umbrella for Lebanese Shia organizations and essentially the only outside force capable of influencing the kidnappers), led finally to the resolution of the "hostage problem." One contributing factor in the complex negotiations was the release by Israel of Shia Lebanese prisoners held in south Lebanon. Another was the resolution of the Lebanese Civil War and establishment of de facto Syrian control over most of that country. However, Islamic Jihad's release of Anderson in December 1991 was accompanied by a statement emphasizing both the political and the Islamic aspects of the long-running hostage issue. It stated, in part: "The confrontation created by the kidnappings made the world listen to the voice of oppressed people and unmasked the ugly American and Israeli faces... but after finishing several stages we decided to free our last captive, thus folding this page in the hostage file before glorious Christmas."<sup>3</sup>

These and other shocks since 1979, particularly the terrorist attacks in the United States on September 11, 2001, have brought the United States face to face with what appears to be a recent phenomenon of confrontation in the Middle East between Muslims and Westerners. To give the phenomenon a name, we call it "Islam in ferment."

What has caused this ferment? What does it consist of, and why is it directed so violently against the United States in particular? Is it a new phenomenon, or is it a natural progression for Islam, arising out of the circumstances in which Muslims find themselves in the world today? What are the elements that play a role in the Islamic ferment? We address these questions in this report.

## ISLAMIC DIVISIONS: SUNNIS AND SHIAS

The great majority (90 percent) of Muslims are called Sunnis, because they follow the Sunna, observe the Five Pillars, and practice the rituals of the faith. They also interpret as correct the history of Islam as it developed after Muhammad's death, under a line of successors termed *caliphs* ("agents" or "deputies") who held spiritual and political authority over the Islamic community. However, a minority, while accepting the precepts and rituals of the faith, reject this historical process as contrary to what Muhammad intended for the community of believers. These Muslims are called Shias (commonly, but incorrectly, Shiites). The split between Sunnis and Shias dates back to Muhammad's death in A.D. 632.

Muhammad left no instructions as to a successor. Since he had said that there would be no more revelations after him, a majority of his followers favored the election of a caliph who would hold the community together and carry on his work. But

a minority felt that Muhammad had intended to name his closest male blood relative, Ali, as his successor. Supporters of Ali declared that the succession to Muhammad was a divine right inherited by his direct descendants. Hence they are known as Shias ("Partisans") of Ali.

The first three caliphs—Abu Bakr, Umar, and Uthman—were chosen by majority vote by the Mecca community. Under their leadership, Arab armies expanded Islam's territory far outside Arabia, changing what had been essentially a religious community into a political power through the conversion of non-Arab peoples to Islam and the imposition of rule by Islamic caliphs. These conquests compounded Sunni–Shia differences.

Ali was eventually elected as the fourth caliph; but by that time, the divisions were so deep that his election was disputed. The Kharijites, an extremist group, who felt that Muhammad's original purpose in founding the Islamic community had been distorted, decided to assassinate Ali and his major rival, on the grounds that Ali had accepted arbitration in his dispute with this rival over the election. The Kharijites argued that the office of caliph could not be bartered away; it was a sacred trust transmitted from God to Muhammad. One of them murdered Ali outside a mosque in A.D. 661.

Ali's younger son and designated successor, Husayn, was ambushed and killed in A.D. 680 by the army of Yazid, the son of the fourth caliph's major rival, near the town of Karbala (in modern Iraq). This event led to the founding of a hereditary dynasty, the Umayyads. The Umayyad caliphs moved the Islamic capital from Mecca to Damascus. But the intrigues and rivalries of Muslim leaders continued to hamper political stability. A century and a half later, a rival group overthrew the Umayyads and established a third caliphate, the Abbasids. The caliphal capital was moved eastward, to Baghdad, where it endured for 500 years and developed the distinctive features of *Islamic* civilization, the successor in many respects of Greek and Roman civilizations and precursor of European civilization.

The Abbasid caliphs were Sunnis, and Shia resistance to them as presumed usurpers of the rightful heritage of Ali and his descendants resulted in much persecution. Shia rebellions were put down with bloody massacres by the ruling Sunnis. Forced to go underground, the Shia Muslims began to practice *taqiya* ("dissimulation" or "concealment"). Outwardly, they bowed to the authority of Sunni rulers; secretly, however, they continued to believe in the divine right of Ali's descendants to rule the Islamic world.

Most Shia Muslims recognize a line of 12 direct descendants of Muhammad, through Ali and Husayn, as their Imams, or spiritual leaders. When the 12th Imam died, a number of Shia religious leaders declared that he was not dead but hidden (alive, present in this world, but invisible) and would return at the end of time to pronounce the Day of Judgment. Until the Hidden Imam returned, the religious leaders would provide leadership and interpretation of God's will and make decisions on behalf of the Shia community. This doctrine gave the Shia religious leaders more authority over Shia Muslims than Sunni religious leaders have over Sunni Muslims. This helps to explain the tremendous power and prestige that Ayatollah Khomeini, leader of the revolution that established an Islamic republic in Iran, held among his people.