



Vahid Salemi/The Associated Press

After the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, Americans found themselves struggling to make sense of a new kind of war in an unfamiliar part of the world. These pages contain an in-depth look at the history, politics and people relevant to America's war on terror.

## TERRORISM



Who is Osama bin Laden? How do terrorist networks operate? How many other major attacks on the U.S.

have there been? What is anthrax? How can we protect ourselves? >>>

## U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

U.S. actions — from backing Israel to stationing troops in Saudi Arabia to supporting sanctions in Iraq — have long fostered resentment in other parts of the world. Here's a look at the primary tensions. >>>

## THE MILITARY

The Puget Sound area, ringed with Army, Navy and Air Force bases, is a critical component of the nation's defense. Tour these military installments and learn more about the nation's special forces. >>>



## THE REGION



If you didn't know where Afghanistan was before, you do now.

But to understand Afghanistan, study the politics and history of the region — from Northwest Africa to Southeast Asia. >>>

## ISLAM

How can some Muslims preach peace and others holy war? Learn about the tenets of the world's fastest-growing religion. >>>

## SEPTEMBER 11

The scarring images. The minute-by-minute accounts. The stories of heroism and death. The America that is forever changed. >>>

## CROSSING AMERICA

On Sept. 12, the day after our sense of security was shattered, reporter Alex Tizon and photographer Alan Berner ventured out to chronicle what connects us, and what keeps us apart in their "Crossing America" series.

[Photo gallery](#)



Now, we continue our journey in a collection of reported "postcards." >>>

## LEARN MORE

We recommend a number of books and Web sites to dig deeper into Islam, U.S. foreign policy and more. Also get details on UW's lecture series. >>>

**Discussion guide:** A series of questions and activities designed to help teachers and parents discuss the growing conflict. >>>

## GRAPHICS & VIDEO

It's a story told through images. Here you'll find the maps, charts and illustrations used in The Seattle Times to explain the events of Sept. 11 and beyond, as well as Associated Press video clips of the attacks and their aftermath. >>>

## Bioterrorism

The U.S. health system is ill-equipped to manage the fallout from a large-scale bioterrorist attack. But the threats are clear. Learn about our level of preparedness, plus the facts about anthrax, smallpox, botulism, plague, tularemia, nerve agents and mustard agents.

### CHARTS & GRAPHICS

- [An invisible arsenal: Biological and chemical terrorism](#) [60K PDF]
- [What you can do to prepare](#) [650K PDF]

### STORIES

- [Q & A on anthrax](#)
- [Ask the doctor: UW's Dr. Henry Rosen answers readers' questions](#)
- [Bioterrorism a real threat; are we ready?](#)
- [Local companies sniffing out threats from unseen enemy](#)
- July 26, 2001: [U.S. rejects plan to curb germ warfare](#)

### RELATED LINKS

- [The CDC's site on anthrax](#)



## Who is Osama Bin Laden?

He is an engineer who was born into a wealthy Saudi family. He once received money from the CIA. Now he calls his followers to a holy war against the United States. Find out more.

- [From U.S. friend to foe](#)
- [Inside the Taliban: How bin Laden, Afghanistan and the Taliban intersect](#)
- [Bin Laden's message to America](#)

## Al-Qaida

The U.S. government charges that Osama bin Laden heads an international terrorist network called "al-Qaida," an Arabic word meaning "the base." It is thought to be composed of cells operating in 35 countries but is an amorphous entity.

- [Bin Laden's lieutenants](#)
- [Funding, strength and structure](#)
- [Countries where al-Qaida is believed to operate](#)

## Terrorist groups

The vision of a holy war, or jihad, excludes any possibility of compromise. In contrast with Palestinian extremists in the 1970s and '80s, the goal now is not to negotiate with the West, but to destroy it. [Why?](#)

Learn more about known groups and their tactics.

- [Profiles of terrorist groups](#)
- [The new terrorism: Global in scope, it's based not on politics but fervor](#)
- [Terror's changing tactics: Assimilation, technology pose security challenges](#)
- [President Bush's sanctions list](#)
- [President Bush's most-wanted list](#)

## Terrorist acts

The U.S. has been relatively sheltered from acts of terrorism. These maps and charts detail where and how many.

- [Terrorist attacks against the U.S. since 1985](#)
- [World and U.S. hijackings since 1970](#)

## Related links

- [Report: "Countering the Changing Threat of Terrorism"](#)
- [Terrorism Research Center](#)
- [The U.S. embassy in Kabul](#)

## Resentment has fostered a violent clash of cultures

Long before the terrorist assault on the icons of U.S. military and economic might, the hostilities against America and its foreign policies were simmering in the Middle East.

The escalating tensions have a long and complex history. They involve centuries of clashes over ideology, shifting political alliances, economic disparities and conflicting religious viewpoints.

It is dangerous, and inaccurate, to define this as a clash between Western values and Islam; nor is it possible to fully explain the immense complexities that feed today's crisis. But these are some of the primary issues that frame the debate:

**Siding with Israel:** Israel was established as a haven for persecuted Jews on their biblical land. Israeli statehood in 1947 made hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, most of them Muslim, homeless. Since its founding, the United States has been Israel's biggest backer, fending off its enemies by blocking critical resolutions in the United Nations and sending economic and military aid. The U.S.-built F-16 jets and helicopters used against Palestinians are a visible reminder to their supporters of why they oppose American policy.

**On holy ground:** When U.S. troops were stationed during the Gulf War in Saudi Arabia, terrorist Osama bin Laden and others saw it as an insult to have an "infidel" army based in the home of Islam's holiest shrines, Mecca and Medina. He was driven out of the country for publicly criticizing the Saudi royal family over the issue.

**Sanctions on Iraq:** President Saddam Hussein has blamed the U.S. support of U.N. sanctions imposed after the Gulf War for hardships facing his country, particularly its children. The United States says sanctions are needed to stop Iraq from developing weapons of mass destruction and claims Saddam has withheld critical medical supplies from his own people to try to gain sympathy and support from other Arab nations.

**Out of the West:** The global economy driven by the capitalist West has created new desires and social pressures. There is an uneasiness over liberal ideas spread through television, movies and popular music — an emphasis on individual choice that weakens traditional male authority, the mixing of men and women at school and at work, and liberal sexual attitudes. Individualism is the essence of America. In the communal emphasis of Islam, such individualism borders on amoral and unethical behavior.

**The colonial legacy:** As with much of the developing world, many countries with fundamentalist movements were creations of the European colonizers, who divided their lands according to their own desires, not those of the inhabitants. Even before that, the rapid rise of the West and the colonization of one Islamic country after another had been considered a sign of something gravely wrong in Islamic history, according to Karen Armstrong, a religious scholar who wrote "Islam: A Short History" and "The Battle for God."

**"All you want is our oil":** The West is often accused of looking the other way at repression and economic disparity in many countries for fear of jeopardizing its heavy dependence on the region's oil. In few of the world's 50 or so Muslim countries have governments offered their citizens either prosperity or democracy. Western-backed governments such as Saudi Arabia have cracked down on dissidents with arrests and executions.

**God and government:** Also fomenting tensions is a sense that in the United States and Europe secularism is promoted, especially in civil and legal systems, and God's will ignored. While the West, especially America, has methodically separated church and state, there often is no such separation in the Muslim world. "The West sees separation of church and state as the separation of religion and politics," said Charles Amjad-Ali, a Pakistani-born professor at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn. "In Islam, those are impossible to be brought into division."

**The Crusades:** Islam, born six centuries after Christianity, remembers when medieval Europe launched the Crusades to seize control of the Holy Land from Muslims. Christians in 1099 conquered Jerusalem, "turning the thriving Islamic holy city into a stinking charnel house," historian Armstrong wrote. Christianity, Judaism and Islam had coexisted there under Islamic rule for nearly 500 years.

**Western bias:** The 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran, led by Ayatollah Khomeini, not only sparked the emergence of fundamentalist governments in the Middle East, but also contaminated all Muslims in the view of Americans, says Amjad-Ali, a Pakistani-born professor at Luther Seminary in St. Paul, Minn. After Khomeini called the United States "The Great Satan," Americans henceforth considered Islam in general as a threat, in this view. The perception of this bias, in turn, has radicalized Islamic fundamentalists. Fundamentalists — including Christian, Buddhist or Muslim — are also usually radical in their interpretation of religion, notes Armstrong, the religious scholar, and typically overstress certain elements of their religion to counter whatever it is they oppose. They "feel that they are fighting for survival, and because their backs are to the wall, they can believe that they have to fight their way out of the impasse. In this frame of mind . . . some resort to terrorism."

*Adapted from St. Paul Pioneer Press and wire reports.*

### Other stories from The Seattle Times archives:

[The roots of hatred: Some regard American culture as menace](#)

[Inside the Taliban: U.S. helped cultivate the repressive regime sheltering bin Laden](#)

[Understanding why 'they' hate us](#)

[Tackling the tough questions](#)



# UNDERSTANDING THE CONFLICT THE REGION

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## Northwest Africa to Southeast Asia

Some of the nations surrounding Afghanistan have declared their support to the U.S. Others are reluctant, fearing political upheaval and safety risks. Click on [the map](#) to see bases where U.S. troops are stationed, military air bases, refugee camps, suspected bin Laden training bases, and the area controlled by the Northern Alliance.



Click the underlined countries to learn more about them and their role in the region.

- [Russia, China and Central Asia](#)
- [Afghanistan](#)
- [Pakistan](#)
- [India](#)
- [Iran](#)
- [Iraq](#)
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- [Northeast Africa](#)
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- [Arabian Peninsula](#)
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## Afghanistan

### Features



What is it like in Afghanistan? What languages are spoken there? What's the currency? A rundown of the country's statistics.

[Afghanistan at a glance](#)

### History



Afghanistan has endured countless invasions by the likes of Alexander the Great and Genghis Khan. It is a crossroads for historic trade routes through Central Asia. It has been a pawn in superpower struggles several times over.

[From the Persian conquest to the Mujahedeen](#)

## Israelis & Palestinians

While it is an over-simplification to blame Israeli-Palestinian tensions directly for the current conflict, U.S. support for Israel is cited as a major source of Islamic ire against the West. Those historic tensions now play into a volatile new world order.

[A long history](#) | [Stories of war and loss](#) | [Mideast timeline](#) [PDF]

## Turbans



Many have equated turbans with terrorism. But the turban is no more evil than your hat. It is an ancient piece of headgear with a history that stretches back

thousands of years, multiplied through dozens of cultures.

[Types of turbans: an illustrated primer](#)

Story: [Don't link turbans to terrorism](#)

## Veils

To many Western eyes, the Muslim veil is not an innocent piece of cloth. It is a symbol of women's oppression, a metaphor for Islam's inscrutability, a way of identifying those who don't share "our" values. But its meanings have changed over time.



[Types of veils: an illustrated primer](#)

Story: [Meanings have changed with politics, history](#)

## The Taliban

To foil Soviet expansionism in Afghanistan, the U.S. funded a motley band of Islamic fundamentalists in the '80s. From this movement grew the Taliban, who imposed order on much of the country — at the expense of human rights and, ultimately, the security of the West. Learn more about who they are and what they've done.

[The Taliban at a glance](#)

[Inside the Taliban: How bin Laden, Afghanistan and the Taliban intersect](#)

## UNDERSTANDING THE CONFLICT

# ISLAM

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The Associated Press

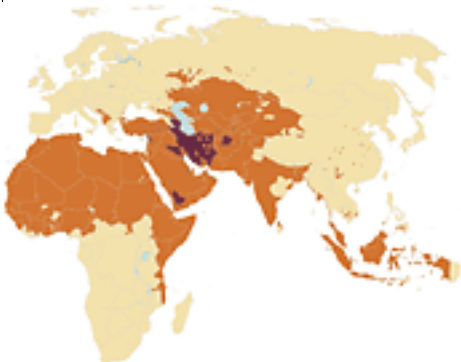
Pilgrims gather at the Grand Mosque of Mecca. The Ka'bah is the stone structure at the center of the Grand Mosque.

### About the religion

The Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, which authorities have blamed on Islamic extremists, have highlighted the tensions and contradictions in the practices of the world's 1 billion Muslims. Learn more about Islam's history and sacred texts.

- [The influence of Islam](#)
- [The five pillars of Islam](#)
- [The articles of faith](#)
- [Mohammed](#)
- [Glossary](#)

### Muslims throughout the world



[This map](#) shows the prominence and location of Sunni and Shiite Muslims. [501K PDF]

### Books

- "Islam: A Short History" by Karen Armstrong (Modern Library)
- "The Oxford History of Islam" by John L. Esposito (Oxford University Press)
- "The Meaning of the Holy Qur'an" by Abdullah Yusuf Ali, (Amana Publications)
- "The Holy Qur'an/English/Arabic" by Maulana Muhammad Ali (Ahamadiyya Anjuman Ishaat Islam Lahore)

### Web sites

- [IslamiCity.com](#)
- [Afghanistan Online](#)
- [Islam Q & A](#)



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## The attacks



- [What happened on Sept. 11](#)
- [Victims and heroes](#)
- [The emotional impact](#)
- [The rescue effort](#)
- [The suspects](#)
- [U.S. retaliation](#)
- [Cracks in the system](#)
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## September 11

### [A day of infamy: World Trade Center collapses in terrorist attack](#)

In the most devastating terrorist onslaught ever waged against the United States, knife-wielding hijackers crashed two airliners into the World Trade Center on Tuesday, toppling its twin 110-story towers. The deadly calamity was witnessed on televisions across the world as another plane slammed into the Pentagon, and a fourth crashed outside Pittsburgh.

### [Pandemonium at ground zero of attack](#)








It was the scene of a nightmare: people on fire jumping in terror from the World Trade Center towers just before the buildings collapsed.

### ['Ugly sound' heralded devastation at Pentagon](#)

As she limped blindly through smoke and debris, smelling her burned hair, feeling the pain from her peeling skin and a blow that had momentarily knocked her to the floor, Ann Parham thought about her mother. Parham was among the lucky ones on the west side of the Pentagon. She got out.

### [Editorial: America under attack](#)

All that is known for sure this morning is the enormity of the terrorist attacks on New York City and Washington, D.C. Leaping to conclusions about the identities and motives of the terrorists is a mistake.

-  [The World Trade Center attack: by flight path and by minute](#)
-  [The World Trade Center attack](#) [AP Interactive]
-  [The Pentagon attack](#) [AP]
-  [How the buildings most likely collapsed](#) | [Related story](#)
-  [Lower Manhattan after the attack](#)
-  [Skies empty after attack](#)
-  [Bush's path](#)

-  [Plane crashes into North Tower](#)
-  [Plane crashes into South Tower](#)
-  [Second World Trade Center tower collapses](#)

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[Why we printed an extra edition](#)

### [Bush promises full force of U.S. government will track down terrorists](#)

As chaos unhinged New York and Washington, President Bush deplored the acts of "a faceless coward" and commanded the United States military to high-alert status worldwide. "The resolve of our great nation is being tested. But make no mistake, we will show the world that we will pass this test," Bush declared today.

### [Locals react to attacks with tears, fear, disbelief](#)

Motorists on their way to work sobbed as they heard the news on their car radio. Others stood at home before their televisions in utter disbelief, reflecting on the Pearl Harbor attack nearly 60 years ago. And at least a few decided the best course of action was to leave the country immediately.

- [What they said: Quotes from officials in the region](#)

### [Seattle's 'big symbols' closed; skyscrapers, Space Needle evacuated](#)

The Space Needle was closed, downtown skyscrapers were emptied, service at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport was suspended and a host of other emergency precautions were taken around Seattle this morning in reaction to the terrorist attacks at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

- [State-by-state, security measures taken in wake of attacks](#)

### [Attacks draw condolences, cheers in Middle East](#)

In the Middle East, crucible of much of the world's terrorism, the horror gripping the United States yesterday reverberated loudly among Israelis and Palestinians. In the West Bank towns of Nablus and Ramallah, some Palestinians cheered and distributed candy to passers-by, and Iraqi television played a patriotic song that began "Down with America!" as it showed the World Trade Center towers collapsing.



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