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Demystifying ISIS:

Reality in the Context of
Global Power Politics

Demystifying ISIS:

Reality in the Context of Global Power Politics

لا إله إلا الله



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The Islamic State in Iraq and Levant

الدولة الإسلامية في العراق
والشام

al-Dawla al-Islāmiyya fī 'l-'Irāq wa'l-Shām

ISIS: Islamic State in Iraq and Syria

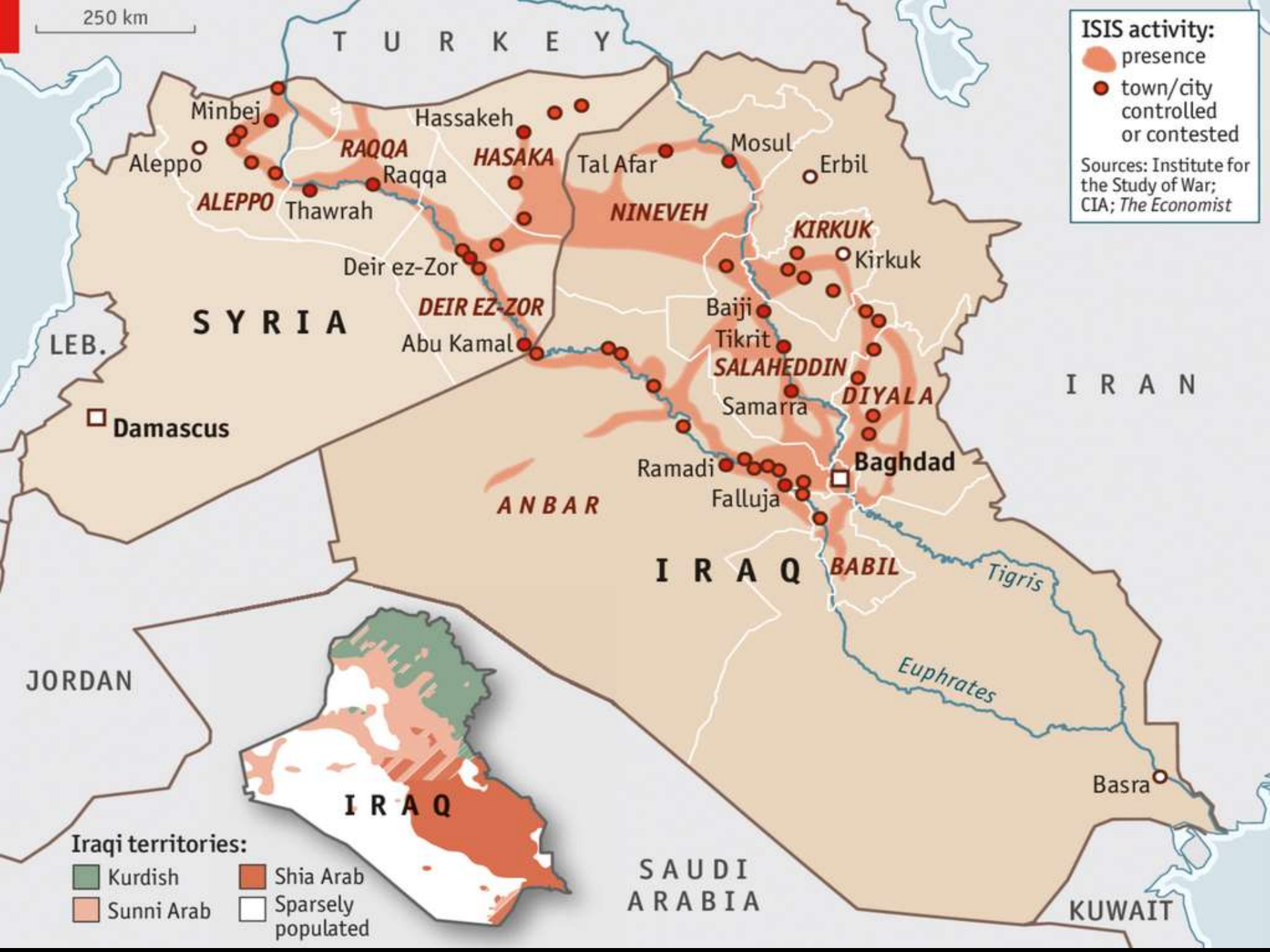
ISIL: Islamic State in Iraq and Levant

DĀʿESH (داعش): *Dawla Islāmiyya (fī) qārʿ (wa) Shām*

العراق

al-ʿIrāq





الشام *al-Shām*

The Levant:
Eastern
Mediterranean
region,
comprising
Syria, Lebanon,
Palestine, Israel,
Jordan, and part
of Iraq, Saudi
Arabia, Egypt
and Turkey.



Expansion of IS in Syria, 2014-2015



Regional Factions

Syrian Opposition

Syrian Government

Iraqi Government

Lebanese Government

Hezbollah

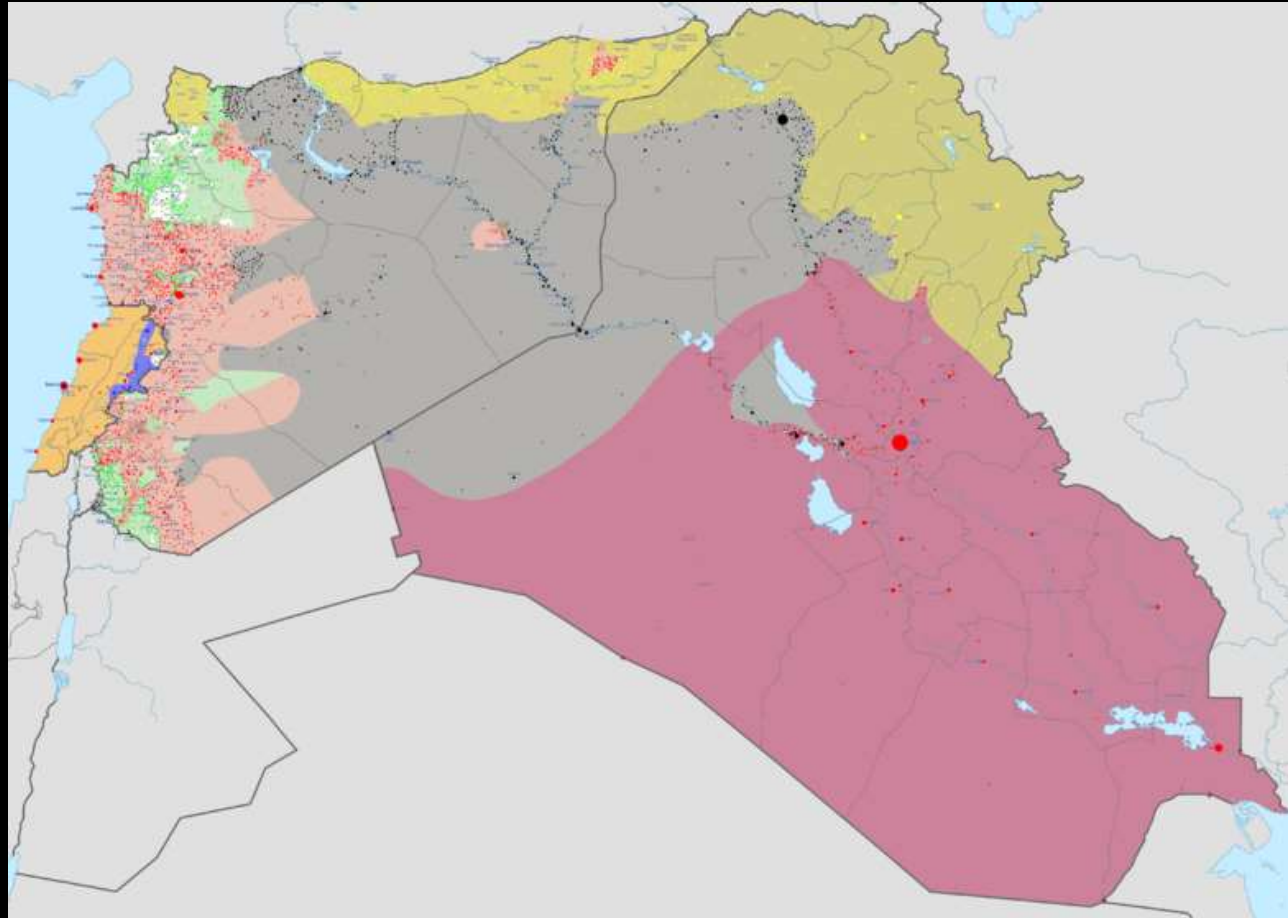
Islamic State

al-Nusra

Syrian Kurds

Iraqi Kurds

Disputed



The Caliphate

الخلافة

- From the Arabic word for "successor", those who succeeded the Prophet Muḥammad as the leader of the Muslim community in the temporal, political sense.

Muḥammad (570-632 CE)

According to
Islam, the final
Prophet, to
whom the
Qur'ān was
revealed.
Regarded as the
founder of Islām.

مُحَمَّدٌ
صَلَّى اللَّهُ
وَسَلَّمَ

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is reported to
have said:

...فإنه من يعيش منكم بعدي فسيرى اختلافا كثيرا فعليكم بسنتي وسنة
الخلفاء المهديين
الراشدين تمسكوا بها

“...those of you who live after me will see great
disagreement. You must then follow my Sunna and
that of the Rightly-Guided Caliphs. Hold to it and
stick fast to it.”

(Narrated by al-Tirmidhī, Abū Dawūd, Ibn Mājah)

The Rightly-Guided Caliphs الخلفاء المهديين الراشدين

Al-Kulafā' al-Mahdī'ūn al-Rāshidūn

- Generally refers to the first four Caliphs after Muḥammad:
 - Abū Bakr (r. 632-634)
 - 'Umar (r. 634-644)
 - 'Uthmān (r. 644-656)
 - 'Alī (r. 656-661)



Umayyad Caliphate

- 661-750
- Damascus

الخلافة الأموية

ʿAbbāsid Caliphate

- 750-1258
- Baghdad

الخلافة

العباسية

Early Expansion of Islam



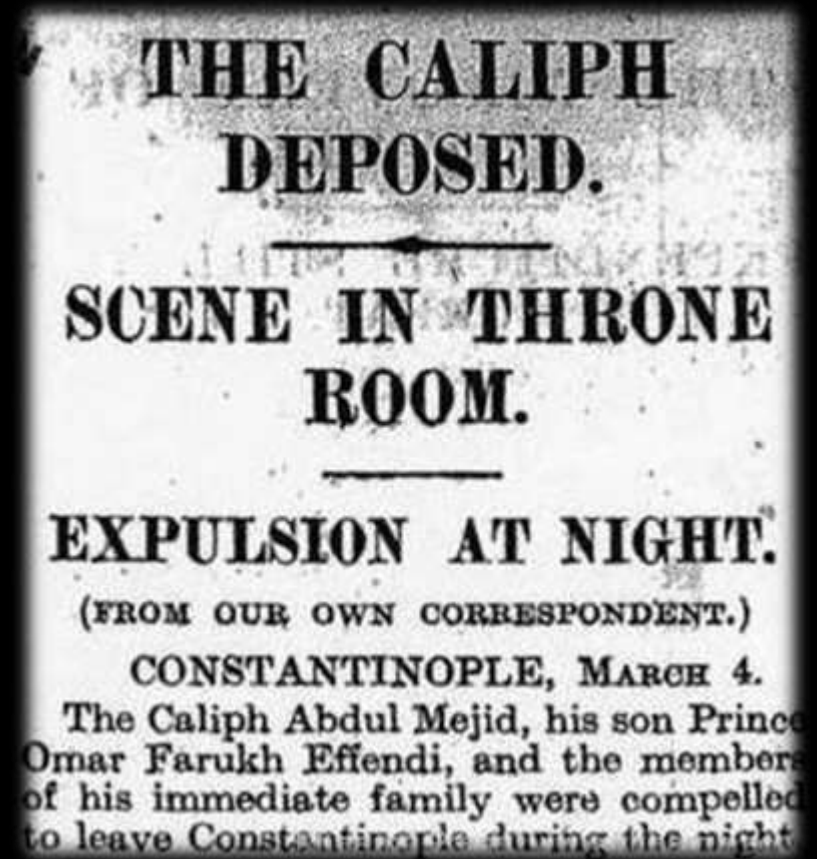
Ottoman Empire, 1299-1922



1924: Ottoman Caliphate Abolished



Caliph Abdülmecid II (1868-1944)

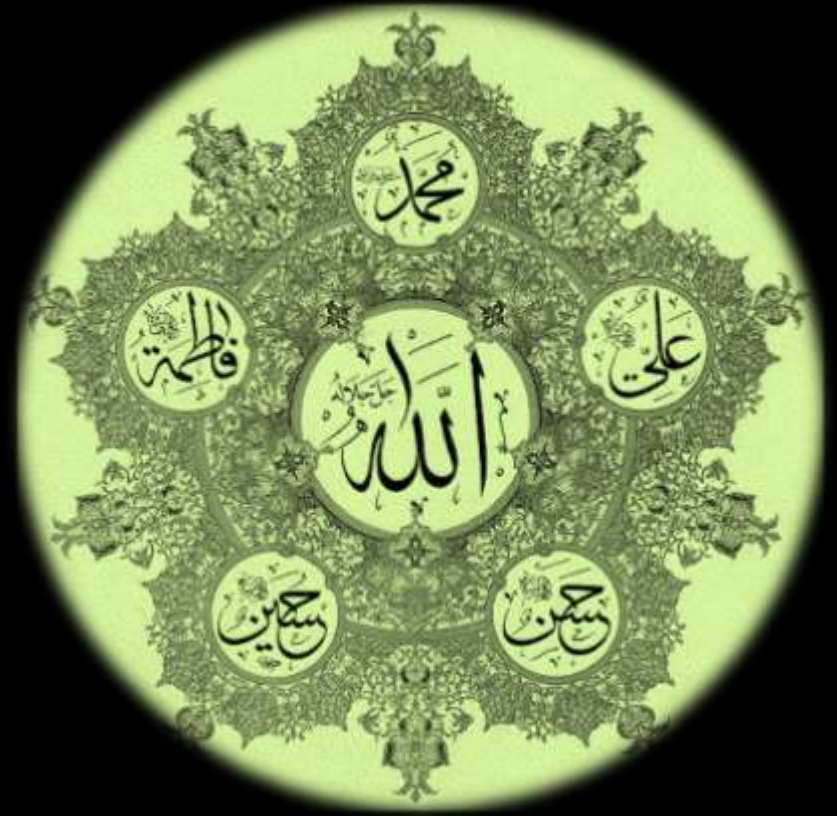


Sunnī

- The predominant body of orthodox Muslims, who accept the legitimacy of the first four caliphs
- Derived from *Sunna*, the “way” or “tradition” of the Prophet.

Shi'a (Shi'ites)

A branch of Islam that believes religious authority emanates from the family of Muḥammad through his cousin and son-in-law 'Alī. The name derives from *Shi'at 'Ali*, the "Partisans of 'Alī."



Estimated distribution of Sunni Muslims in the Middle East

5-20% 21-40% 41-60% 61-80% 81-100%



Salafī

Religious movement advocating strict adherence to the Sunna of the Prophet, and imitation of the practice of his Companions and the first two generations of Muslims after them:

“The Righteous Ancestors”, *al-Salaf al-Ṣālih*. السلف الصالح.



Ibn Taymiyya (1268-1328)



Ibn 'Abdul Wahhāb (1703-1792), Saudi Ideologue



Muslim Brotherhood (est. 1928), Egypt



Sayyid Qutub (1906-1966), Egypt



Hassan al-Banna (1906-1949), Egypt



Abdullah Azam (1941-1989), Palestine/Jordan



Usāma bin Lādin (1957-2011), Saudi Arabia



Ayman Ṣawāhirī (b. 1951), Egypt

al-Qā'eda



al-Qā'eda

Global (Afghanistan, Sudan, Somalia, etc.)



A.Q.A.P.

al-Qā'eda in
Arabian Pennisula



A.Q.I..

al-Qā'eda in Iraq



Abū Muṣ'ab al-Zarqāwī
(1966-2006)



Abū Ayyūb al Maṣrī
(1968-2010)



Mujāhidīn Shūra Council, Iraq



Abū 'Umar **al-Qurashī** al-
Baghdādī (d. 2010)



Islamic State



Abū Bakr al-Baghdadi al-
Hussaynī **al-Hāshimī al-
Qurashī** (b. 1971), Iraq

DABIQ

1435
RAMADAN

1
ISSUE

THE RETURN OF KHILAFAH

REPORTING
ON IRAQ
AND SHAM

FROM
HIJRAH
TO KHILAFAH

IMAMAH
IS THE MILLAH OF
IBRAHIM



Ibrāhīm Awwād
Ibrāhīm 'Alī
Muḥammad al-Badrī
al-Samarrā'ī

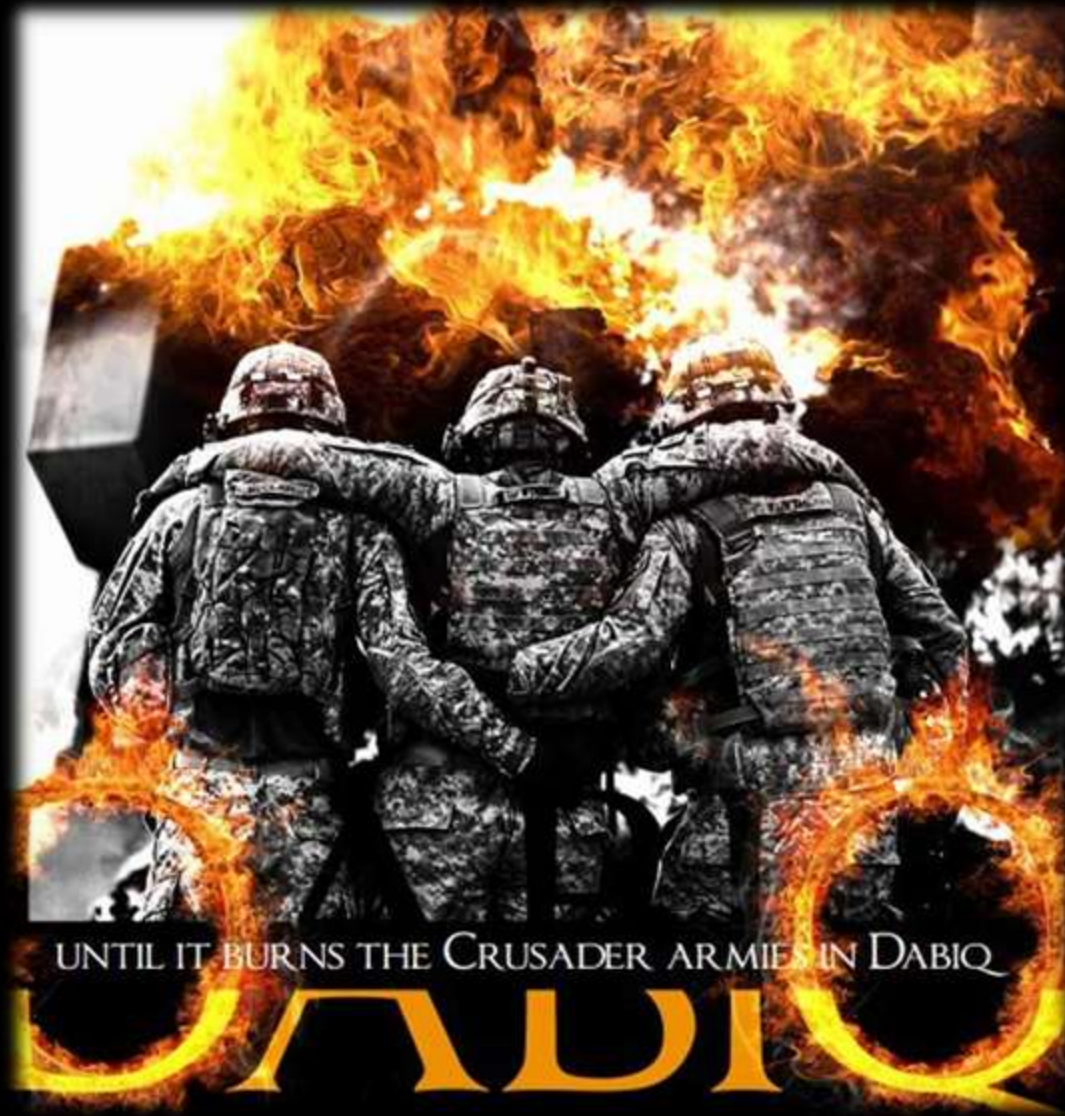


Abū Bakr al-Baghdādī

How ISIS Differs from its Predecessors

- Territoriality.
- State governed by Sharī'a (including restoration of penal laws, slavery, etc.)
- Establishes Caliphate immediately, not preparing for some distant future.
- Caliph bears prophetic heritage – Quraysh Tribe.
- Uses scriptural prophecy for legitimation.
- Demands allegiance of all Muslims worldwide.

Dabīq: From Prophecy to Propaganda



The Crusades (1095-1289)



The Prophet Muḥammad ﷺ is reported to have said:

“The Last Hour would not come until the **Romans** would land at al-A‘māq or in **Dabīq**. An army consisting of the best of the people on earth at that time will come from **Medina**. When they will arrange themselves in ranks, the Romans will say: ‘Do not stand between us and those who took prisoners from amongst us. Let us fight with them’; and the Muslims will say: ‘Nay, by Allah, we would never get aside from you and from our brethren that you may fight them.’ They will then fight and a third of the army will run away, whom Allah will never forgive. A third, constituted of excellent martyrs in Allah's eye, will be killed and the third who will never be put to trial will win and they will be **conquerors of Constantinople**. And as they are busy distributing the spoils of war, after hanging their swords by the olive trees, **Satan** will cry: ‘The **Dajjāl** has taken your place among your family.’ They would then come out, but it will be of no avail. And when they would come to **Syria**, he would come out while they are still preparing themselves for battle, drawing up the ranks. Certainly, the time of prayer shall come and then **Jesus**, son of Mary, (peace be upon him) shall descend and lead them in prayer. When the enemy of Allah sees him, it will disappear just as salt dissolves in water, and if he (Jesus) were not to confront them at all, even then they would dissolve completely, but Allah will kill them by his hand and will show them their blood on his spear.”

(*Saḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 6924)

دابق Dabīq

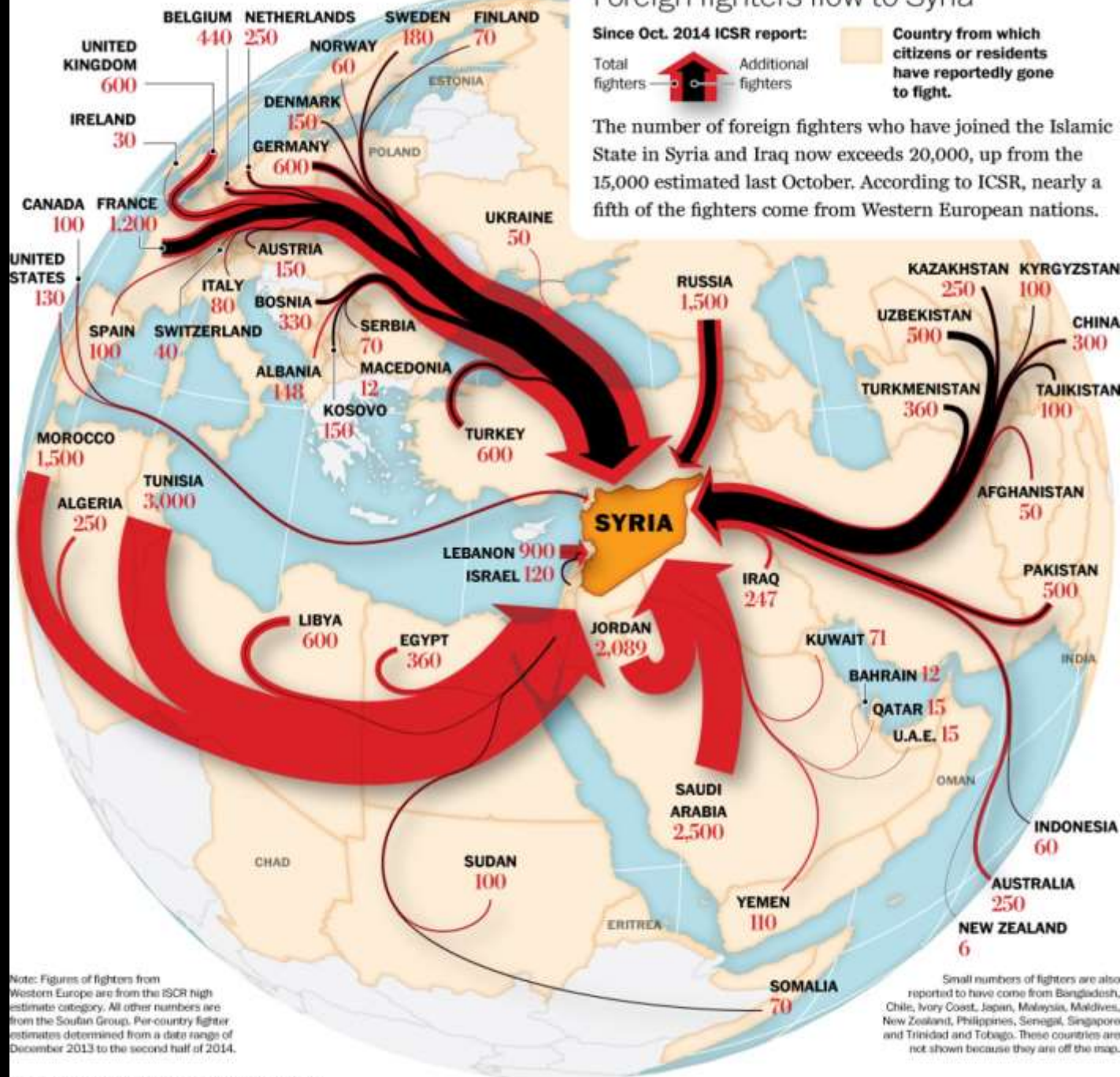


Jihād جهاد

Literally meaning “struggle”, the term refers first to the internal struggle to submit to God's will in all aspects of one's life, and second to external struggles with enemies of Islam. The term is commonly mistranslated as "holy war."



Foreign fighters flow to Syria



ISIS Tactics and Atrocities



“(‘Alī) burned some heretics alive and news of this reached Ibn Abbās, who said: ‘I would not have burnt them alive, for Allah’s Messenger ﷺ prohibited it.’”

بزنادقة فأحرقهم فبلغ ذلك ابن عباس فقال لو كنت أنا لم أحرقهم
لنهى رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم

The Fundamental Flaw of Fundamentalism

- Imagined “Golden Age”.
- Apocalypse will usher in a new, “Messianic Age” (return to the “Golden Age”)
- There is only one (literal) way to read scripture: Group Think.
- All other interpretations are heretical. Truth is exclusive.
- Zero tolerance for diversity.
- But fundamentalist ideas and methods are always products of centuries of evolution and appear in a modern context.
- Therefore, fundamentalisms are generally self-contradictory.

ANDALUS-



ALKINANA

Defeating ISIS?

- Battlefield: Strategic containment. Halt expansion and force withdrawal, retreat and retraction.
- Hearts and minds: Discredit ideology by pointing out its inconsistency. Allow attrition to disprove claims of prophetic destiny. Support will wane.