



TRADOC DCSINT HANDBOOK NO. 2

**ARAB CULTURAL AWARENESS:
58 FACTSHEETS**

**OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR INTELLIGENCE
US ARMY TRAINING AND DOCTRINE COMMAND
FT. LEAVENWORTH, KANSAS**

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PURPOSE

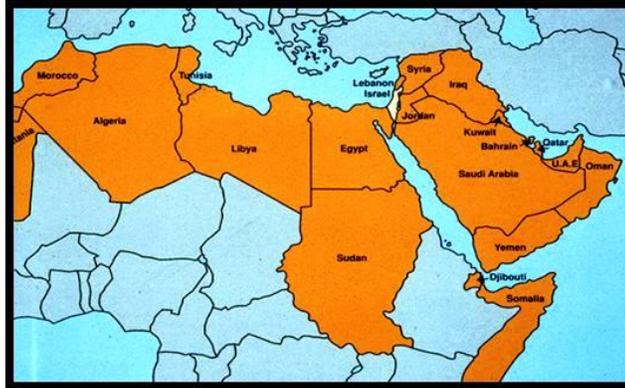
This handbook is designed to specifically provide the trainer a 'hip pocket training' resource. It is intended for informal squad or small group instruction. The goal is to provide soldiers with a basic overview of Arab culture.

It must be emphasized that there is no "one" Arab culture or society. The Arab world is full of rich and diverse communities, groups and cultures. Differences exist not only among countries, but within countries as well.

Caveat: It is impossible to talk about groups of people without generalizing. It then follows that it is hard to talk about the culture of a group without generalizing. This handbook attempts to be as accurate and specific as possible, but inevitably contains such generalizations. Treat these generalizations with caution and wariness. They do provide insight into a culture, but the accuracy and usefulness will depend on the context and specific circumstances.

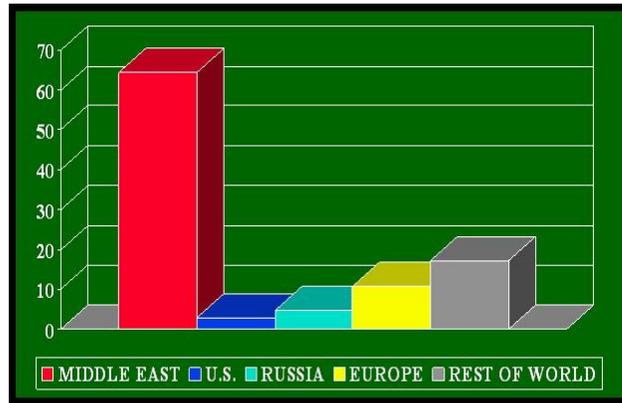
Comments or Suggestions: Please forward all comments, suggestions or questions to: ADCINT-Threats, 700 Scott Ave, Ft. Leavenworth, KS 66027 or email penny.mellies@leavenworth.army.mil or phone 913.684.7920/DSN 552-7920.

WHERE IS THE ARAB WORLD?



- The Arab world stretches from Morocco across Northern Africa to the Persian Gulf. The Arab world is more or less equal to the area known as the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Although this excludes Somalia, Djibouti, and the Comoros Islands which are part of the Arab world.
- It can also be defined as those countries where Arabic is the dominant language.
- **KEY:** Arab countries are religiously and ethnically diverse with Islam being the dominant religion in most countries.
- 22 Arab countries/areas: Algeria, Bahrain, the Comoros Islands, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Mauritania, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.
- Iran and Turkey are not Arab countries.

STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE OF ARAB WORLD



- 22 countries.
- Location of several world religions.
- Multitude of ethnic and linguistic groups.
- Close to 60% of earth's oil reserves are at or near the Arabian Peninsula.
- Saudi Arabia possesses the world's largest reserves of oil.

WHAT IS AN ARAB?

- Over 200 million Arabs worldwide.
- To be an Arab, is not to come from a particular race or lineage.
- To be an Arab, like an American, is a cultural trait rather than racial.
- The Arab world includes Muslims, Christians and Jews.
- Any person who adopts the Arabic language is typically called an Arab.
- Arabic is the official and the original language of the Qur'an, the Islamic holy book.

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT ARABS

- All Arabs are Muslims, and all Muslims are Arab.
 - *Arabs are religiously diverse group – significant numbers of Arab Christians in Egypt, Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Jordan, and Iraq. Arabs make up between 15-18% of the Muslim world.*
- The Arab world is backwards and uncivilized.
 - *Actually represents a highly developed culture and civilization where modern cities mingle with ancient ones.*
- The Arab world is one big desert.
 - *Truly geographically complex and diverse.*
- Stereotypes of Arab males:
 - *All are “oil-rich Sheiks”. As in the West, there are economically diverse segments of the population.*
 - *Mad dictators. Various types of political systems in Arab world.*
 - *Terrorists. Overwhelming majority are law abiding citizens with families and a wide variety of occupations.*
- Stereotypes of Arab women:
 - *All are oppressed by men. Not true.*
 - *All are veiled. According to Islam women are supposed to wear veils. In some countries, like Lebanon, Syria and Egypt, it is not imposed upon them and women are free to choose whether to wear veils. However, in other places, all women, even non-Muslims, wear veils out of fear of mistreatment by fanatics or those who pretend to be guardians of Islam.*

ARAB POLITICS

- Politically diverse forms of government in Arab world.
 - Parliamentary Republics in Algeria, Egypt, Lebanon, Tunisia, Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen.
 - Traditional monarchies in Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia.
 - Jordan and Morocco are constitutional monarchies.
- Religion does play a role in Arab politics in many different ways.
 - Lebanon – Parliamentary representation is divided according to religious affiliation (Muslim, Christian, and Druze).
 - Jordan/Morocco – King bases legitimacy on direct descent from the Prophet Mohammed, but he is not a religious leader.

ARAB DISUNITY

Not all Arabs agree on everything. Major differences exist between Arab countries. These differences have led to conflict and disunity across the Arab world. For example:

- **Country Boundaries not aligned with tribal / ethnic concerns.**
- **Relations with Israel.** Differences among Arab states in what the relationship to Israel should be but it should be noted that the majority of the people of these states have “hard feelings” against Israel.
- **Rivalry within the Arab World. Countries not always in agreement and are sometimes at odds with each other.** Iraq’s Saddam Hussein and the late Hafaz Assad of Syria each claimed leadership in the Ba’ath movement and were bitter enemies as each was unwilling to defer leadership to the other.
- **Sunni – Shi’a Schism.** Violence has widened the divide between the two major sects of Islam, and persecution of the Shi’a minority has the potential to spark into armed conflict and civil war in certain parts of the Middle East.
- **Politics of Oil.** Oil has made some Gulf States very rich while Jordan, Syria, and Egypt are relatively poor and this causes animosity and hard feelings.

ARAB DRESS, MEN

Arab dress for men ranges from the traditional flowing robes to blue jeans, T-shirts and western business suits. The robes allow for maximum circulation of air around the body to help keep it cool, and the head dress provides protection from the sun. At times, Arabs mix the traditional garb with Western clothes.

Headdress pattern might be an indicator of which tribe, clan, or family the wearer comes from. However this is not always the case. While in one village, a tribe or clan might have a unique headdress, in the next town over an unrelated tribe or clan might wear the same headdress.

Headdress

Checked headdresses relate to type and government and participation in the Hajj.

- Red and white checkered headdress – Generally of Jordanian origin. Wearer has made Hajj and comes from a country with a Monarch.



- Black and white checkered headdress – The pattern is historically of Palestinian origin. Black and grey represent Presidential rule and completion of the Hajj.
- Shi'a- black turbans associated with Shi'a clergy who are somehow connected to the Prophet Muhammed or Ali Ibn Abi Talib the cousin of the Prophet who was the 4th Khalif of Islam and leader of the Shi'a sect. Those who wear white turbans are associated with the lower echelons of the Shi'a hierarchy.



ARAB DRESS, WOMEN

- Adherence to traditional dress varies across societies. (More traditional—Saudi Arabia Less traditional – Egypt)
- Traditional Arab dress features the full length body cover (*abayah, jilbob, or chador*) and veil (*hijab or chador*).
- Concerns of modesty are the reason for the dress.
- The most devoted women cover their faces as well as the bodies in veils/robes.
- Rural women, who typically work in the fields, may wear less restrictive garments lighter in color and weight.



WOMEN IN ARAB SOCIETIES

Arab women are typically subordinate to men in their societies. The extent varies by country. The most restrictive conditions exist on the Arabian Peninsula, and the most relaxed conditions exist in the urban areas of Egypt, Syria and Lebanon

THINGS TO DO:

- **Respect the privacy and protected role of women in Arab societies.**
- **Men stand when women enter a room.**
- **Respect the different living “areas” for men and women. Do not expect women to eat or socialize in the same room as men.**



THINGS NOT TO DO:

- **Do not shake hands with an Arab woman unless she offers her hand first, or if you are a woman. Do not flirt, hit-on, touch, hug or talk in private with women. IT COULD ENDANGER THEIR SAFETY!**
- **Do not talk in public to professional Arab women unless it is business related.**
- **Do not try and engage a woman in conversation unless you have been formally introduced.**
- **Do not stare at women or maintain eye contact.**
- **Do not ask an Arab questions about his wife or other female members of his family.**

FAMILY

- The family is the key social unit to an Arab. This loyalty influences all aspects of an Arab's life.
- Arabs honor and respect their family. They highly value friendships. Family and kin's honor most important.
- Patriarchal and hierarchal: Fathers/elders dominate
- Larger the better: Large families provide for possible economic benefits, particularly for the possibility that a son will care for his parents in their elderly years. Large families provide the father with the prestige of virility.
- Clan and then tribe in terms of loyalty follow family as a social unit, although most contemporary Arabs express a national identity as well.
- Children: Male offspring are favored, since a son is expected to care for his parents in their advanced age, whereas a daughter becomes part of the son-in-law's family. Also, a son can bring a family honor, whereas a daughter can only bring shame.
- Women typically have a private area in the household separate from men, especially in rural areas.



YOUTH EXPLOSION IN THE ARAB WORLD

Statistics show a dramatic increase in the number of persons less than 15 years of age in the Arab world.

- Rates in the developed world are around 20%.
- Rates in the developing world are around 35%.
- Rates in the Arab world are 42%.

The impact of this increase could be positive and/or negative and will depend upon how each country addresses the issue.

- Positive: Increase labor pool, new talent and leadership potential.

Negative: If economy cannot support (jobs, education, etc.) growing youth bulge – discontent and social unrest are likely.



ARAB Perspective vs. WESTERN Perspective

ARAB

- Family – Center of everything. (Father has first and last word.)
- Friends – Periphery, but courteous to all.
- Honor – Very Important amongst Arabs. Honor will be protected and defended at all costs.
- Shame (especially against family) – avoided at all costs, insults and criticism taken very seriously.
- Time – less rigid. Approach to time is much more relaxed and slower than that in Western cultures.
- Religion – Central to all things.
- Society – Family / tribe is most important
- Government – Most governments are secular, but still emphasize religion.
- Age and Wisdom honored.
- Wealth honored in both cultures.

WESTERN

- Family – Important but not as central to individual.
- Friends – Core to some, important to most.
- Honor – Typically not as important.
- Shame – Typically not as important.
- Time- Very structured, deadlines must be met.
- Religion – Varies by individual, very personal, not discussed in polite conversation.
- Society – Individual rights.
- Government – Purpose is to protect rights and improve standard of living.
- Youth and Beauty praised.
- Wealth honored in both cultures.

ARAB WORLDVIEW

An Arab worldview is based upon six concepts: atomism, faith, wishes versus reality, justice and equality, paranoia and the importance of family over self.

ATOMISM. Arabs tend to see the world and events as isolated incidents, snapshots, and particular moments in time. Westerners tend to look for unifying concepts whereas Arabs focus on parts, rather than on the whole.

FAITH. Arabs usually believe that many, if not all, things in life are controlled by the will of God (fate) rather than by human beings.

WISH VERSUS REALITY. Arabs, much more than Westerners, express emotion in a forceful and animated fashion. Their desire for modernity is contradicted by a desire for tradition (especially Islamic tradition).

IMPORTANCE OF JUSTICE AND EQUALITY. Arabs value justice and equality among Muslims, and to a lesser degree to others. All actions taken by non-Arabs will be weighed in comparison to tradition and religious standards.

FAMILY VERSUS SELF. Arabic communities are tight-knit groups made up of even tighter family groups. Family pride and honor is more important than individual honor.

PARANIOA. Arabs may seem paranoid by Western standards. Many are suspicious of any Western interest or intent in their land.

ARAB CUSTOMS

SHAME and HONOR

- Admitting, "I don't know" is distasteful to an Arab.
- Constructive criticism can be taken as an insult. Be careful not to insult.
- Women wear headscarves as a show of respect, even if wearing Western clothing.

FAMILY

- Family is the center of honor, loyalty, and reputation for Arabs.
- Males are always the head of the Arab family.

PERSONAL SPACE

- Most Arabs **DO NOT** share the American concept of "personal space" in public situations, and in private meetings or conversations. It is considered **OFFENSIVE TO STEP OR LEAN AWAY!** Women are an exception to this rule. **DO NOT** stand close to, stare at, or touch a woman.

SOCIALIZATION and TRUST

- When conducting business, it is customary to first shake the hand of all males present, taking care not to grip too firmly.
- Allocate plenty of time for refreshment before attempting to engage in business. It is important to first establish respect and trust.

ARABIC CALENDAR/HOLIDAYS

2006	Festival	2007
29 Dec – 01 Jan	Hajj	18-21 Dec
10 Jan	Eid al-Adha	20 Dec
10 Feb	Islamic New Year	20 Jan
19 Feb	Ashura	29 Jan
21 April	Mohammad's Birthday	31 March
05 – 24 Oct	Ramadan	13 Sept-12 Oct
29 Oct	Layla tul-Quar	8 Oct
04 Nov	Eid al-Fitr	13 Oct

- Islamic practices are based on the lunar calendar or cycle, consisting of twelve months of 29 or 30 days each, totaling 353 or 354 days.
- Each new month begins at the sighting of a new moon. Actual dates may differ from dates provided.
- The holy day of the Muslims is FRIDAY. It is considered to be sacred and the Day of Judgment will take place on Friday. In the Friday sermon the Imam (prayer leader) gives the sermon (Khutba) and leads prayer.

EATING ETIQUETTE

- Arabs are restricted by Islamic conventions from eating pork, most carnivorous animals, and unscaled fish. Alcohol is forbidden.
- Meat must be butchered in line with Qur'anic ritual (known as Hallal = "permitted")
- The staple of the Arab diet is dark pita bread.
- Lamb is the most common meat.
- Always offer snack foods to visitors and accept what is offered to you as a guest, but only after modestly refusing the first offer.
- It is assumed that guests will accept at least a small quantity of drink (tea usually or sometimes Arabic coffee) offered as an expression of friendship or esteem. It is considered rude to decline the offer of drink.
- When served a beverage, accept with the **RIGHT HAND ONLY! When eating, drinking, offering, or passing use right hand only!**
- When eating with Arabs, especially when taking food from communal dishes, the left hand must never be used, it is considered unclean.
- Not eating everything on one's plate is considered a compliment. It is a sign of wealth when an Arab can afford to leave food behind. If invited to an Arab home, leave shortly after dinner. The dinner is the climax of conversation and entertainment. Avoid discussions on political issues (national and international), religion, alcohol, and male-female relations over dinner or tea.

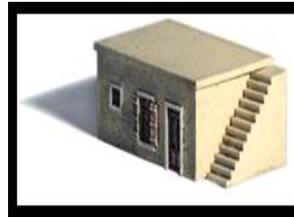


HYGIENE

- Personal hygiene is extremely important to Arabs for both spiritual and practical reasons.
- Because meals are frequently eaten by hand, it is typical to wash the hands before and after eating.
- Formal washing of face, hands, and forearm required before daily prayers or fasting.
- Some interpretations of the Qur'an suggest that all flowing water is clean, to include that coming from open air canals within the cities that are sometimes garbage or sewage clogged. The immunity systems of Arabs accustomed to this water prevents ill effects, but Westerners should only use water from a trusted source.

ARAB HOMES

- Homes vary from one room to multiple room dwellings.
- One room homes may be curtained into sections to make sleeping areas. The walls are made from mud mixed with the chaff from wheat and most often are left the tan mud color although they can be painted a white or light color. The walls tend to be thicker near the ground and tend to taper off as the walls approach the roof. Roofs tend to be flat topped, since the lack of rain does not warrant a sloped roof. The poor tend to build their dwellings slightly below ground and everyone sleeps on the floor to escape the summer heat.
- Only female soldiers should search the women's quarters in a Middle Eastern home.



BODY LANGUAGE AND GREETINGS

Body Language takes on extra significance in Arab culture. The body language is distinctly different and must be learned in order to effectively reinforce the intended message, and perhaps more importantly to not give unintended insults.

- Shake Hands with right hand only and at the beginning and end of any visit. Shake hands longer but less firmly than in the West. Left hand grasps elbow.



- Close friends or colleagues hug and kiss both cheeks upon greeting. During the Hajj (pilgrimage), people may kiss only on the shoulders as a gesture of friendship and greeting. Touching noses together three times when greeting is a Bedouin gesture of friendship and respect.



- Placing a hand on your heart along with a slight bow is a sign of respect. This is usually done during greeting.

US soldiers should limit physical contact to a handshake.



BODY LANGUAGE w/SPECIFIC MEANING

"It's my Obligation" - The gesture of placing the right hand or its forefinger on the tip of the nose, on the right lower eyelid, on top of the head, on the mustache or beard has the meaning of "it's in front of me, I see it or it's on my head to accomplish."

"Come Here" - Right hand out, palm down, with fingers brought toward oneself repeatedly in a clawing motion, is the sign for calling someone to come.

"I'm thinking" - Grasping the chin with the thumb side of the right fist is a sign of wisdom or maturity.

"Slow down" - By holding the fingers in a pear shaped configuration with the tips pointing up at about waist level and moving the hand slightly up and down signals "wait a little bit" or "be careful." This gesture can be observed extensively when driving in the crowded streets of the Arab cities. In such a locale, it may be accompanied by curses from an anxious taxi driver or a pedestrian trying to cross the street.

"Thank You" - Placing the palm of the right hand on the chest, bowing the head a little and closing one's eyes connotes "Thank You" (in the name of Allah).

"No" - A quick snap of the head upwards with an accompanying click of the tongue connotes: "No", "Unlikely", or "What you say is false."

BODY LANGUAGE – PART 2

The conventions in the Middle East are that social interaction and conversation among Arabs occurs at a much closer distance than normal in the Western World and well within the “personal space” defined by the West.

- Long handshakes, grasped elbows, even walking hand in hand by two males is common place in the Arab world.
- A considerable number of Arabs touch more between the same sex. They hold hands, hug each other.
- As Arab society condones the outward display of affection between male friends, one may see Arab men, even officials and military officers, holding hands as they walk together or otherwise converse with one another.
- If an individual Arab does not touch you, he does not like you--or he may be trying to restrain himself because you are not used to being touched.
- A full body embrace, accompanied with hugging, should not be initiated until you are sure that the Arab is a close friend. If the Arab initiates it, participate and consider yourself honored and/or accepted.
- Contact between the opposite sex in public is considered close to obscene. Eye contact during discussions--often long and direct--is important. Staring is not necessarily rude (except gazing at women).

BODY LANGUAGE – PART 3

- “I wish evil upon you”** - Biting the right forefinger, which has been placed sideways in the mouth, may be a threat or an expression of regret. In Western culture the "A-OK" sign is a positive gesture. However in the Arab world, if the gesture is shaken at another person it symbolizes the sign of the evil eye. An Arab may use the sign in conjunction with verbal curses.
- “I wish you harm”** -Hitting the right fist into the open palm of the left hand indicates obscenity or contempt.
- “You’re lying”** - Placing a half closed hand in front of the stomach, and then turning it slightly connotes that the person to whom the gesture is made is a liar.
- “I insult you”** - Placing the tips of the left fingers and thumb together so that the hand faces right, then placing the tip of the right forefinger directly on the left fingertips indicates an obscenity or insult directed at one’s birth or parentage.
- “You are unimportant”** - Showing soles while sitting is considered rude. and symbolic of “you being beneath my feet”. Sit instead with soles toward or on ground to be polite. Also maintain eye contact; lack of eye contact strongly conveys “you are unimportant” as well.

Warning! Gestures indicating obscenities or insults should not be used by non-Arabs. Arab gestures of this type have varying degrees of intensity. Depending upon the circumstances and country, incorrect usage could lead to serious offenses and cause diplomatic incidents.

COMMUNICATIONS

Verbal

- The love of talk stems from the rich nomadic oral tradition of greeting travelers and exchanging information.
- Low literacy rates increase the importance of verbal communication.
- Arabs love poetry and creative speech. They are fond of bestowing flowery blessings and colorful swearing.
- When speaking with Arabs keep in mind that they believe that words have power. Arabs shun speaking about unpleasantries out of fear that negative speech compels negative results. Also, they will use euphemisms when discussing the plight of others. For instance, say a mutual acquaintance is ill and near death. Should you inquire about recent news he will likely respond, "he is well, but a little tired." In an operational situation check the facts after being briefed by an Arab soldier because he may be sugar coating a bitter pill.

Written

- Muslims, particularly Arab Muslims, consider the Arabic Language holy as the Qur'an is written in Arabic. The written word has special meaning to them and is respected by the literate and the illiterate alike.
- Arabs consider advanced education a remarkable achievement and greatly respect scholars and learned men and women.
- Avoid using newspapers in "unclean" ways as many Arabic newspapers usually have some reference to Allah and some Arabs could be insulted in how the printed name of Allah is treated.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS

- **Location:** Choose a pleasant quiet, private location away from distractions.
- **Plan a light agenda:** Middle Easterners resist pressure to accomplish too much at an initial meeting. Initial meetings are usually only considered as 'meet and greet' opportunities to judge if negotiation might be possible in the future.
- **Expect tardiness:** The Middle East has a lax mentality on the necessity for punctuality and few wear watches. Tardiness is not a sign of disrespect and does not warrant an apology unless the tardiness is excessive (more than 90 minutes).
- **Greetings:** Spend double the time with greetings and salutations. Greet Arabs in rough order of seniority. Do not attempt to shake hands with an Arab female unless she initiates the handshake first.
- **Greeting Gifts:** Gifts are appropriate particularly if the discussions occur in a home. Gifts must be wrapped. Politely refuse gifts at least twice. Do not open a gift in front of the gift-giver.
- **Manners:** Courtesy is essential. Meetings begin with niceties and small talk.

SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS – PART 2

- **Translators:** Be aware of complexities involved with working with translators. Your translator might have an agenda, or his dialect or tribal affiliation might not be well received. (For meetings, check in advance if female translator is okay).
- **Eye to Eye Contact:** Maintain eye to eye contact with your counterpart even if talking through a translator. Do not wear sun glasses even if the meeting is occurring in bright sun light.
- **Refreshments:** Beverage refreshments of tea and coffee should be available. Offer or expect to be offered tea at least three times, say yes at least twice. Never offer alcohol. If the meeting is expected to be lengthy have snacks available or a meal prepared.
- Hierarchy is followed in social interaction. Look for the elder in the group when you need to gain allies.
- **Time:** Do not look at a watch or clock during the meeting. Doing so suggests to your host or guest that you consider them unworthy of your time.
- **Closing Gifts:** Gifts may be presented publicly to the group at the meeting's end.
- **Photography:** Always ask permission.

SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATION SUGGESTIONS

- **Use Policies of Inclusion:** Consult and involve in negotiations all the power brokers that have the ability to affect your project.
- **Xenophobia:** Be prepared for some distrust of foreigners. Historically, Middle Easterners perceive foreigners in the Middle East as invaders or exploiters.
- **Bartering:** Expect Bartering- Expect an Arab to ask for what he wants rather than merely what he needs. Work towards a satisfactory medium.
- **Personal Provisions:** Some Arabs may ask for provisions that appear self-serving. Personal rewards are a normal part of negotiation in the Arab world.
- **Commitment:** Do not put your guests / hosts in a position to commit to a firm 'yes' or 'no' in front of other Arabs. Social pressure could compel your guest/host to agree to a commitment he has no intention of keeping.
- **Long Range Planning:** Never accept a firm commitment farther than a week out at face value. Arab culture and the concept of fatalism are not conducive to long range planning and require at least a confirmation in the week prior to the planned event.
- **Compliance:** To compel an Arab to keep a commitment in which he appears not to be keeping, attempt an indirect approach first before direct confrontation. Having a peer gently remind him of his commitment, could prevent him from feeling an affront to his honor. Keep verbal commitments or risk reinforcing the perception that "America never keeps its promises".

ISLAM

- **Islam.** 'Islam' in Arabic means 'submission', or specifically, submission to the Allah's will and obedience to His law.
- **One God.** Islam is a strictly monotheistic religion.
- **God is 'Allah'.** Allah is immortal, omniscient, omnipresent, and genderless.
- **Islam is the final word of God.** Although Judaism and Christianity preceded Islam and worships the same God as Islam, Islam claims to be more refined than them in that it built upon both.
- **Muhammad is God's Prophet.** Muhammad is not to be worshiped but is to be respected and revered. Muhammad's life and teachings provide the examples of how one is to live his life.

MUSLIMS

- Followers of Islam are called Muslims.
- There are 1.3 billion Muslims worldwide.
- Muslims are not to be confused with Arabs. Muslims may be Arabs, Turks, Persians, Indians, Pakistanis, Malaysians, Indonesians, Europeans, Africans, Americans, Chinese, or other nationalities.
- 12% of the world's Muslims are Arabs.
- The US, with 5-6 million Muslims, has the 20th largest Muslim population.
- Turkey and Iran, not Arab countries, are the most populous Muslim nations in the Middle East.
- The most populous Muslim nation in the world is Indonesia.
- Egypt, not Saudi Arabia, is the most populous Arab Muslim nation.

ARAB CONCEPT OF REVENGE

- The Arab concept of revenge is a strong cultural force.
- The Old Testament's and Qur'an's passages that advocate "an eye for an eye" dominate Arab culture.
- The conflict continues even after the belligerents have killed each other off, because previously uninvolved family and/or tribal members expand the fight seeking revenge.
- The ancient tribal custom of 'fasil' compensation, mentioned within the Qur'an as 'diya', and advocated by Islam, presents a way to defuse the revenge perpetuated cycle of continued conflict.
- 'Diya' is an obligatory, non-negotiable payment of blood money used in cases of accidental killings.
- 'Fasil' is an Iraqi term for a negotiated settlement that is paid even after intentional killings.
- 'Fasil' does not have to be financial. The perpetrator can agree to be exiled from a neighborhood, village or region.

COMMON ISLAMIC TERMS

- **FATWAH:** A legal pronouncement in Islam usually issued at the request of a judge or individual to settle a question when Islamic law is unclear on the subject.
- **IMAM:** Community religious leader/clergy (bishop). In some contexts, 'Imam' merely refers to the prayer leader.
- **KHALIFA:** Political Sunni leader chosen by elders.
- **QUR'AN:** Islamic Holy Book, given by Allah to the Prophet Mohammad.
- **MADRASSAH:** A school. Normally secular with some integrated Islamic subjects, sometimes purely Islam oriented.
- **MOSQUE:** Muslim place of worship similar to a church or temple.
- **MUEZZIN:** Person who calls faithful to prayer.
- **MUFTI:** A Sunni Islamic law scholar who is an interpreter of Islamic Law (Sharia) and capable of issuing a fatwah/fataawa.
- **AYATOLLAH:** A Shia Islamic law scholar who is an interpreter of Islamic Law (Sharia) and capable of issuing a fatwah/fataawa.
- **MULLAH:** Local religious leader/clergy (minister).
- **QADI:** Judge of the Sharia Islamic law.
- **SHARIA:** Islamic Law.
- **SHEIK:** Leader of a family/village/tribe or mosque.
- **SUNNI and SHI'A:** Two main branches of Islam.
- **WAHABBI:** Puritanical Muslims from the Hanbali school of Sunni Islam. Never shave their beards.

ISLAM'S FIVE PILLERS OF FAITH

SHAHADAH - Declaration of Faith

This declaration of faith is called the Shahadah. The significance of this declaration is the belief that the only purpose of life is to serve and obey God, and this is achieved through the teachings and practices of the Last Prophet, Muhammad.

SALEH – Prayer

Saleh is the name for the obligatory prayers that are performed five times a day, and are a direct link between the worshipper and God.

ZAKAH – Alms

An important principle of Islam is that everything belongs to God, and that wealth is therefore held by human beings in trust. The word zakah means purification. Possessions are purified by setting aside a proportion for those in need and for the society in general.

SAWM – Fasting

Every year in the month of Ramadan, all Muslims fast from dawn until sundown--abstaining from food, drink, and sexual relations with their spouses.

HAJJ – Pilgrimage

The pilgrimage to Mecca is an obligation only for those who are physically and financially able to do so. Over two million people go to Mecca each year from every corner of the globe providing a unique opportunity for those of different nations to meet one another.

SHAHADAH- DECLARATION OF FAITH

- First pillar of Islam is Shahadah.
- Arabic for “Testimony”
- “There is no God but Allah and Muhammad is his prophet.”
- Converting to Islam
 - Professing Shahadah in front of two Muslim witnesses
- Whispered into right ear of newborns
- Preferred last words of dying Muslim



SALEH - PRAYER

CALL TO PRAYER TIMES

- At dawn before sunrise
- Just after the height of midday, when the sun begins to set
- During the afternoon when the shadows have lengthened (between noon and sunset)
- Just after sunset
- During the hours of darkness



There is a proper way to wash before prayer. These are ritualistic washings which symbolize purification.

- Wash hands up to the wrist 3 times
- Rinse mouth out 3 times
- Sniff water into the nostrils and blow it out 3 times
- Wash the entire face 3 times
- Wipe off the top of head one time
- Wash your ears
- Wash the back of your neck one time



FRIDAY PRAYER

- Friday is the Muslim Sabbath
- In some of the more devout Muslim countries, prayer time really shuts things down (like in Saudi Arabia), however, in Turkey and in Cairo, Egypt it is common to see large numbers people disregarding the call to prayer and continuing with their business as usual.
- During the Friday service, there are two Khutbahs (sermons) given by an Iman.
- As the Sabbath is observed on Friday in the Islamic world, instead of on Sunday as in the West, the weekend becomes Thursday and Friday with the 5 day work week starting on Saturday.

RESPECT FOR PRAYER

- In Saudi Arabia everything shuts down during Salat (Prayer)
- Be respectful.
- Stay indoors until complete.

Warning!! As a Westerner visiting a conservative Islamic country it is wise to stop what you are doing and be respectful of the Salat. If indoors, stay there until the Salat is complete. If you must be out and about, refrain from standing directly in front of any Muslim in a prayer position.



ZAKAT- ALMS

- Third pillar of Islam
- From the Arabic word meaning to “purify”
- Alms amounting to 2.5% percent gross income
- Hoarding of wealth not favorable
- Collection not enforced
- A specific collection, called Sadaquah, is used to respond to catastrophes



SAWN- FASTING

- The fourth pillar, Sawm, has a considerable effect on the everyday life of an observant Muslim during the Islamic month of Ramadan.
- This is a month of fasting from food, drink, smoking, and sexual intercourse during the daylight hours. It is a time for self-discipline, self-reflection, and empathy for the poor.
- Fasting Guidelines
 - during daylight hours **NO**
 - food
 - drink
 - sexual intercourse
 - smoking
 - activity shifts to night
 - ends with feast
- Bad manners to break fast in presence of Muslims
 - Arrest or deportation possible



IT IS CONSIDERED BAD MANNERS TO EAT, DRINK, OR SMOKE IN FRONT OF SOMEONE FASTING! In some Muslim nations Westerners can be arrested or deported for this.

HAJJ - PILGRIMAGE

- The Fifth and Final Pillar is the Hajj, the pilgrimage to Mecca required of every Muslim (if feasible) at least once in his or her life time. The Hajj takes place annually during the first 10 days of the Dhu al-Hijja, the twelfth month of the Islamic year.
- Mecca is located in Saudi Arabia.
- During the Hajj, pilgrims must be in a state of ihram (consecration or blessing). Men typically wear two pieces of white unstitched cloth – covering the waist and legs, the other around the shoulders covering the upper body.
- The Hajj culminates, on the 10th day of Dhu al-Hijja, and begins the 4-day festival know as 'Eid al-Adha' (Feast of the Sacrifice), which is celebrated by Muslims around the world with prayer, and exchange of gifts.



VISITING A MOSQUE

Visiting a mosque. Here are a few do's and don'ts to remember when visiting a mosque:

- **Take off your shoes at the entrance and leave them there before going in. Men should not go into a mosque wearing shorts, and women should not go there wearing short sleeves or sleeveless dresses.**
- **Do not talk loudly.**
- **Do not take pictures of people in a mosque, particularly women. Mosques are considered to be shelters for homeless people. Do not be surprised to find mosques without furniture, except for the carpet. The Islamic religion advocates a simple way of life for its followers.**



THE QUR'AN

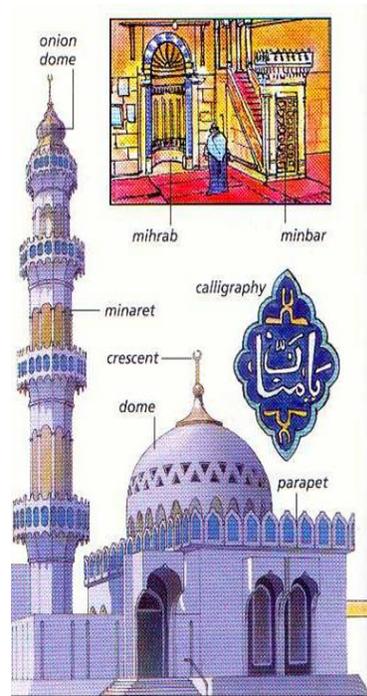
- Means "Recitation"
- Honorable to memorize
- Allah's Infallible word
- 114 chapters arranged by length
 - longest to shortest
 - the size of the Gospels

Handling the Qur'an

- Anyone who touches the Qur'an must have clean hands.
- Keep Qur'ans out of latrines.
- Keep the Qur'ans off the floor.
- Use a cloth or plastic dustcover for the Qur'an when not in use.
- Muslims will keep Qur'an texts on the highest bookcase shelf.
- Place nothing on top of the Qur'an.
- Prior to reading the Qur'an, Muslims will often recite the following, "I seek refuge in God from Satan, the rejected enemy [of mankind]."
- When reading while sitting on the floor Muslims, place the text on a book rest or holder. If no holder is available, hold the Qur'an above the lap or waist.

MOSQUE LAYOUT

- **Mihrab** - Niche in a mosque, indicating the direction to Mecca in which a Muslim shall perform his prayers. The mihrab is where the person leading the congregation in prayer stands. A mosque will normally have only one mihrab.
- **Minaret** - Tower near to, or built into, the structures of a mosque which is used by the muezzin to sing out the call to prayer.
- **Minbar** - Pulpit in a mosque. The minbar is used by the Iman giving the Friday sermon.



SUNNI

- Sunni are the vast, dominant majority of Islam.
- Strong supporters of Islamic Law (Sharia).
- Sunni Islam puts far more importance into the hajj (pilgrimage) to Mecca than does Shi'a Islam.
- Accepting of secular political leadership.
- Worship is more conservative or orthodox than Shi'a.
- Sunni clergy form Ulma which are deciding bodies of religious scholars who decide policy for Islam. It is these scholars who issue fatwahs (religious edicts) and declare Jihad (struggle).
- Sunni Islam reveres Ali although not to the extent that Shi'a does. The term "Shi'a" itself actually means Supporter, as in the supporters of Ali, The Prophet's Son in Law and cousin.

SHI'A

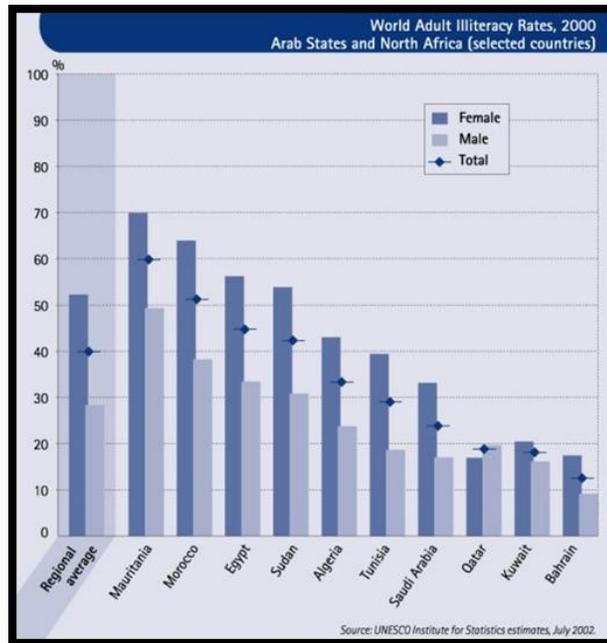
- About 10% of all Muslims are Shi'a. They are in the majority in Iran, Iraq and Bahrain.
- Shi'a have more formal hierarchy and authority for their religious leaders than in Sunni Islam. Grand Ayatollah is the top ranking.
- Shi'a Muslims believe that Ali was the first of the twelve imams appointed by God to succeed Muhammad as leader of the Muslim community.
- Ashura is the 10th day of Muharram, which is the first month of the Islamic year. Remembrance of the deaths of Ali and his son Hussayn on Ashura culminates in dramatic reenactments and bloody self flagellation. Hussayn and Ali are symbols of martyrdom for Shi'a Muslims. Their shrines at Najaf and Karbala are the destinations of many Shi'a pilgrims.
- Iran (a non-Arab nation) has the largest Shi'a population.

SHARIA - ISLAMIC LAW

- The law of Islam is known as “Sharia” which means “the way”.
- Sharia is the entire spectrum of the law of Islam which is based not only on the Qur’an, but also the teachings of Muhammad. These are known as Hadiths.
- Hadiths address subjects not covered in the Qur’an and were collected from second hand sources centuries after Muhammad’s death.
- Sharia has influenced the legal systems of modern Islamic nations to varying degrees.
- The family laws of Saudi Arabia, Yemen, Kuwait, Bahrain, UAE, Qatar, and Sudan are derived solely from Sharia.
- Jordan, Iraq and Syria have family law based largely on Sharia. All Muslim countries depend on Sharia but they differ in translation based on their sects (Shi’a or Sunni).
- The northern African Muslim states of Egypt and Libya are each to varying degrees under Sharia law mixed with European concepts/laws.

ARAB EDUCATION

- Produces a literacy rate that varies across the region.
- Typically stresses memorization.
- Much political control exists over schools.



COMMON SPELLING/TERMINOLOGY MISTAKES

- Muslim - not Moslem
- Allah is Arabic word for God, not the name of a god.
- Qur'an - not Koran.
- jihad means struggle not war. Specifically, in terms of a personal or inner struggle.
- "Arab" is a noun or adjective.
- "Arabic" is the name of a language.
- "Arabian" is an adjective which refers to Saudi Arabia, Arabian Peninsula, or an Arabian horse.

ARAB CONTRIBUTION TO CIVILIZATION

- Mathematics
 - Concept of zero
 - Decimal system
 - Invented and developed algebra
- Astronomy
 - Invented “astrolabe” – a device used to chart precise timing of sunrise and sunset.
- Architecture
 - Numerous grand mosques and mausoleums.
- Engineering
 - Invented water wheel
 - Irrigation system
 - Cisterns
- Music
 - Harp, lyre, zither, drum, tambourine were all developed in early Arab civilization.

ARAB AMERICANS

- Arab Americans have been settling in the United States since the 1880s.
- Arab Americans live in all 50 states, but two thirds reside in 10 states; one third of the total live in California, New York, and Michigan. About 94% live in metropolitan areas. Los Angeles, Detroit, New York/NJ, Chicago and Washington, D.C., are the top five metro areas of Arab American concentration.
- Arab Americans with at least a high school diploma number 85%. More than 40% Americans of Arab descent have a bachelor's degree or higher, compared to 24% of Americans at large. Seventeen percent of Arab Americans have a post-graduate degree, which is nearly twice the American average (9%).

ARAB CHILDREN

- Family is the foundation of Arab society. Fathers are the authority figure. Mothers have power over the house and the children.
- Young children are treasured, adored and indulged.
- Arabs tend to have a preference for male offspring.
- Older boys are allowed to attend the gatherings of men.
- Older girls are carefully protected.
- Children are taught to conform to norms and conventional Arab society.
- Children are not encouraged to seek individuality as much as they are in the West.
- Children seldom leave home until they marry. It is expected that everyone will marry.
- Honor and dignity are tied to the good repute of one's family.
- Children belong to their father's family, and in the case of divorce the father is automatically awarded custody of boys at least nine years old and girls at least 12 years old. Younger children remain with their mother.

MUSLIM AMERICANS

- 5-6 million Muslims live in North America.
- 2.5 million live in the US.
- States with the largest Muslim population include: California, New York, Illinois, New Jersey, Indiana, Michigan, Virginia, Texas, Ohio and Maryland.
- Virtually every race, ethnicity and culture is represented among American Muslims.
- Muslims currently outnumber Episcopalians, Lutherans, Presbyterians, and the United Church of Christ members in the US.
- More than 1,200 Mosques exist in the US.
- DoD reports that more than 9,000 Muslims are on active duty in the US armed services.

SIGNIFICANCE OF COLOR GREEN IN ISLAM

- Green is the symbolic color of Islam.
- Green is also the color of the banners used on the battlefield and the color of the first Islamic flag.
- Islam also considers green significant because it is the color of nature.
- Green is also a popular color used in art and architecture in Muslim nations.
- Green is one of the dominate colors of Arab flags and considered a Pan-Arab color.
- Black, red, and white are also very important and common colors. Traditionally these three colors, along with green, are preferred.

MARRIAGE IN ARAB SOCIETY

- Arranged marriages are normal but not mandated.
- Usually a man will have only one wife, but can have up to four. However, he must be able to financially provide for them.
- The marriage ceremony is often conducted by the Imam. The celebration can last several days. Marriage and other ceremonies can include the firing of weapons into the air.
- Typically a marriage contract is signed prior to the ceremony. The contract covers what both the bride and groom will contribute to the marriage and possible division of property in case of divorce.
- The husband is expected to provide the house they will live in. He is also expected to provide the food and clothes to support his wife and future family.

ARAB GEOGRAPHY

- The Arab “homeland” stretches some 5,000 miles – nearly twice the distance between New York and San Francisco – from the Atlantic coast of northern Africa in the west to the Arabian Sea in the east, and from the Mediterranean Sea in the north to Central Africa in the south.
- It covers an area of 5.25 million square miles. By comparison, the United States comprises 3.6 million square miles.
- With 72% of its territory in Africa and 28% in Asia, the Arab world straddles 2 continents, a position that makes it one of the world’s most strategic regions.
- Long coastlines give it access to vital waterways: the Atlantic Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea, the Arabian Gulf, the Arabian Sea, the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.

THE ARAB LEAGUE

- One of the oldest regional organizations in the world, the Arab League was founded on March 22, 1945.
- The objective of the Arab League is to facilitate maximum integration among the Arab countries through coordination of their activities in the political sphere as well as in the fields of economics, social services, education, communications, development, technology and industrialization.
- The headquarters of the Arab League is in Cairo, Egypt.
- Members of the league include: Algeria, Bahrain, Comoro Islands, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

THE ARABIC LANGUAGE

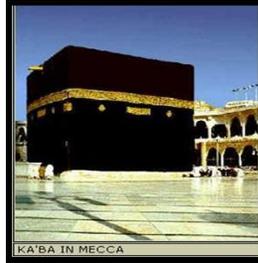
- Arabic is the written and spoken language of more than 150 million inhabitants of the Arab world.
- Arabic script is also used by 1/7th of the world's population. Millions of people in Africa and Asia write their languages in the Arabic alphabet.
- Arabic belongs to the Semitic family of languages of which Hebrew is also a member.
- Arabic script reads from right to left and its alphabet contains 28 characters.
- While it is universally written, read and understood in its classical form, spoken Arabic has undergone regional and dialectical variations.

ARAB CONCEPT OF AUTHORITY

- Throughout the Arab world, authority is generally related to age and sex.
- Arabs tend to associate age with experience and wisdom.
- Head of the family or clan is normally the oldest male. When he dies or becomes incapacitated, his place will likely be taken by his oldest son or one of his brothers.
- When a son succeeds his father as family head, he thereby gains authority over his mother.
- Arab society is dominated by males – at least in public.

HOLY SITES IN ISLAM

- Ka'ba – located in Mecca, it is the most sacred site in Islam. Muslims pray five times a day facing toward Ka'ba.



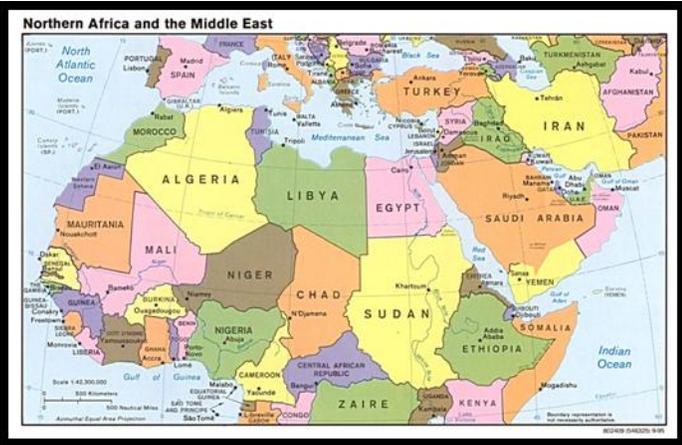
- Medina – second holiest site in Islam where the Prophet Muhammad is buried.
- Jerusalem – third holiest site from where Prophet Muhammad ascended to heaven to meet God.



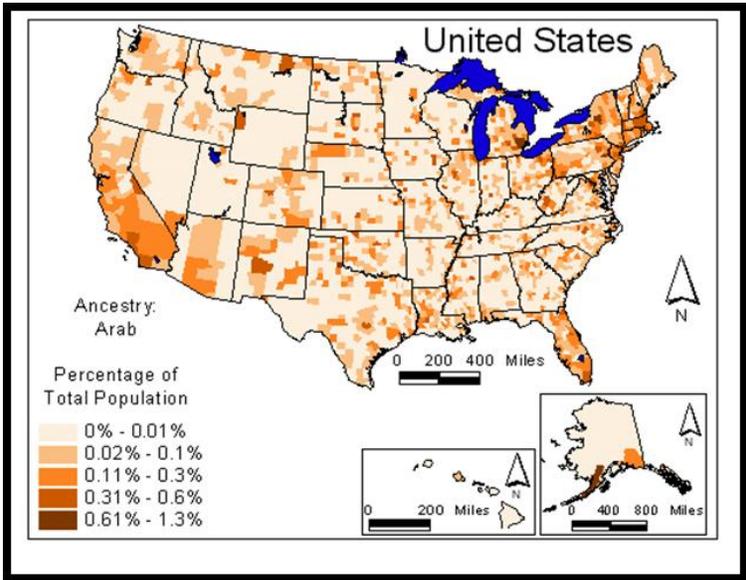
Is there a Judeo-Christian-Islamic Tradition?

- Key doctrinal differences exist between Judaism, Christianity and Islam.
- However, some similarities include:
 - All three faiths are monotheistic (worship one god).
 - All three religions share beliefs in successive prophets and revealed scriptures.
 - All three trace their religious history back to Abraham demonstrating a common history.

MAPS



MAPS - 2



**OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF FOR INTELLIGENCE
US ARMY TRAINING AND DOCTRINE COMMAND
FT. LEAVENWORTH, KANSAS**

JANUARY 2006