

*“Islam is not a religion of peace;
or war.*

Islam is a religion, just like any other.

Peace and war depend on one’s interpretation and ends.”

Dr. Abbas Kadhim

Islamic Scholar

Director Iraq Initiative: The Atlantic Council

Fix US

Jason Criss Howk

Education and Tolerance

In every direction

Islam

A Religion

Political
Ideology

Islamism

“ISIS”

Violent Radical
Islamism /
Khawarij Ideology

Pop Quiz

Terrorist or American Patriot?

-Najibullah

-Osama

-Said

-Omar

-Junaid

-Abdul

-Abbas

-Gulbideen

-Daud

-Akhtar

Religious population of the world

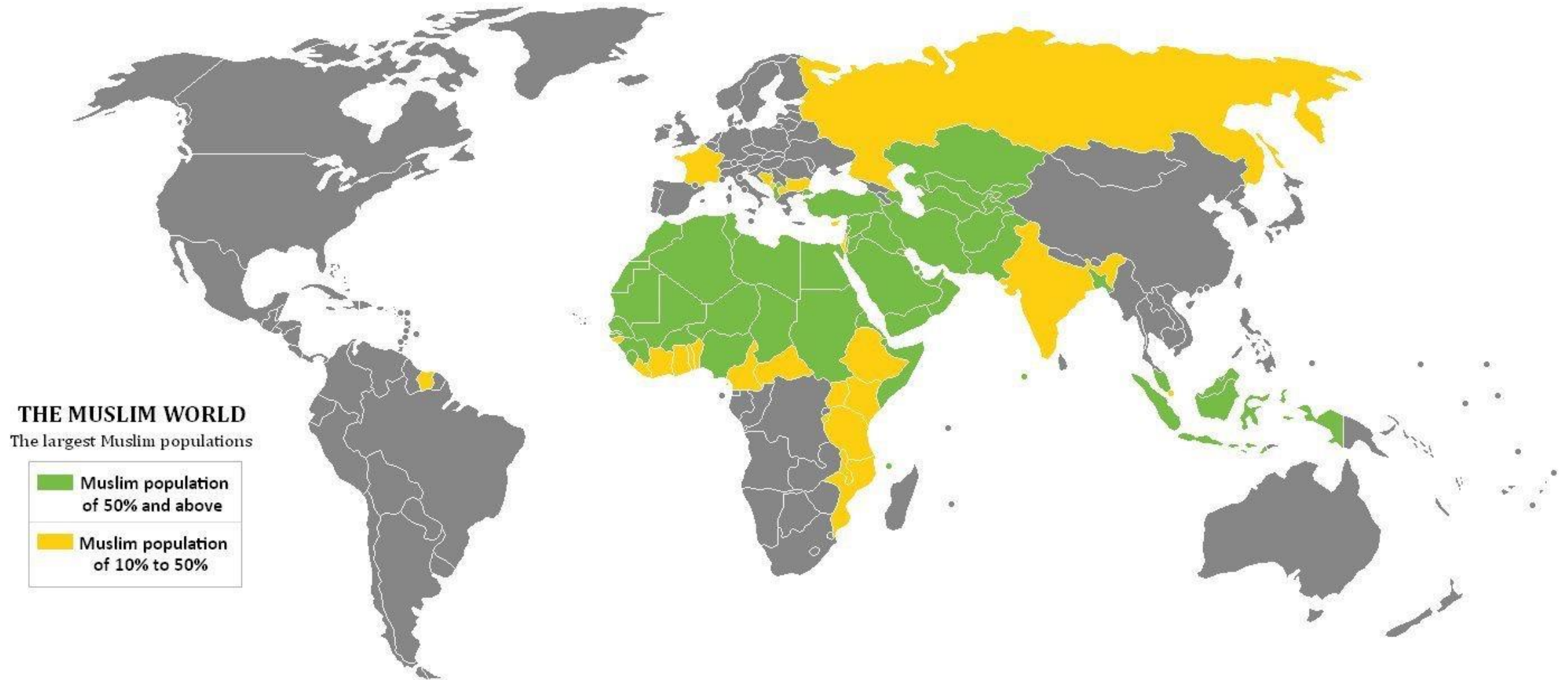
Christian	2.2 Billion	31%
<u>Muslim</u>	1.6 Billion	22%
Non-Religious	1.1 Billion	15%
Hinduism	1 Billion	14%
Buddhism	376 Million	5%
Judaism	14 Million	0.2%

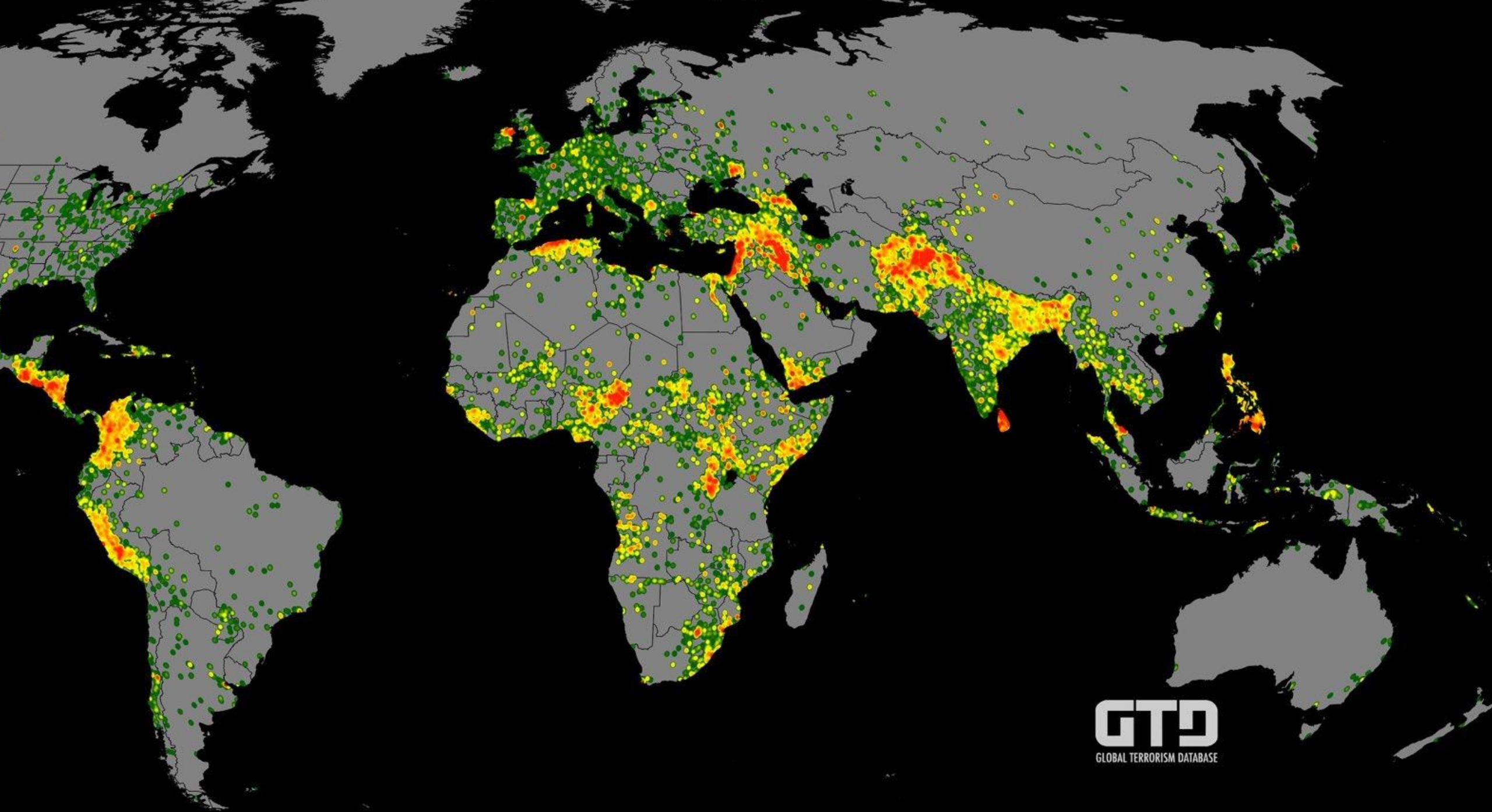
*Pew Research 2012

“The Muslim World”



Likely Muslim Growth Areas



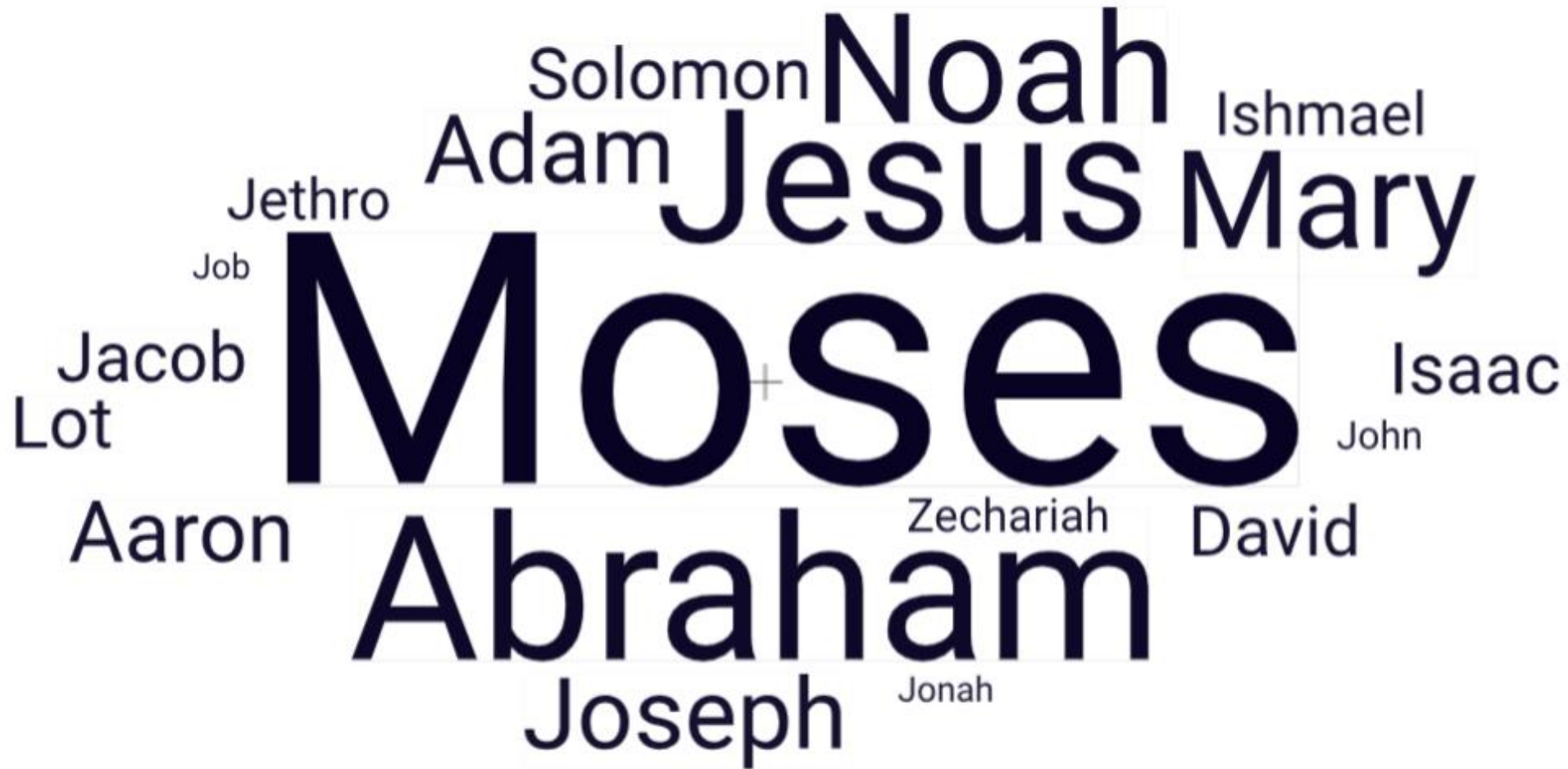


GTD
GLOBAL TERRORISM DATABASE

ISIS Strategy

“Accept the fact that this caliphate will survive and prosper until it takes over the entire world and beheads every last person that rebels against Allah.”

Who's in the Quran



Messages in the Quran

- Forgiveness
- Oneness of God and the power of God
- Faith in one God
- One faithful community
- Code of conduct
- Rewards of heaven
- Punishment of hell
- Prayer
- Judgement day / Resurrection
- Creation
- Conduct of warfare/diplomacy

Controversial Verses

- When you meet **unbelievers** (on the battlefield) strike their necks. (47:4-6)
- God will remember and take care of those who died in God's way and admit them **to paradise**. (47:4-6)
- You can **question another's faith** if you don't think they have struggled in God's way with all their wealth and person. (49:14-16)
 - *You aren't Muslim enough!*

Favorite Verses

- God rewards best those who **choose to forgive** when they are angry. (42:36-37)
- Bad deeds will be rewarded by equally bad deed, but **God will reward those who forgive and reconcile** (when attacked)...unless its in defense. (42:39-41)
- The **most courageous** way to act is to show **patience and to forgive**. (42:43)

*Traditional chapter numbers

Summary: Trump Riyadh Speech, 21 May 2017

- US seeks peace in the region
- US takes this seriously and we have studied the issues
- US is not here to lecture you, but we offer to assist you if you want to improve yourselves
- We must all work together and Muslims must take the lead on radicalization and countering extreme interpretations of Islam
- The problem is ideological and wont be solved by the military alone
- Not one more kid should grow up in fear and be radicalized or terrorized—its your job as leaders to stop this
- We must act now and act together---a fresh start and shared vision
- You must drive the extremists and terrorists out of your nations and institutions, America cannot
- No sanctuary, no financing, no more barbaric ideology!

Lessons From 5 Years of Discussions (A)

Stereotyping happens in every direction and leads to intolerance

- **Americans do not hate Muslims or Islam;** although you probably can't tell from the daily barrage of news. **Don't make assumptions about your audience.**
- **It is easy to stereotype and everyone does it** consciously and unconsciously
- **Calling someone a bigot will not change their views.** If you want to help someone understand a complex topic like religion, it is **best to not start** your discussion by stereotyping the audience **as “a bunch of white Christian bigots.”**
- **So-called liberal groups were often more close-minded than conservative audiences** or at least very unreceptive to having conversations with a new voice. **(bias against new approaches—even when they get results)**

Lessons From 5 Years of Discussions (B)

NO Partisan POLITICS!

- **Leave politics out of the discussion.** I teach political science and worked in DC, I am no stranger to politics. However, I make clear in my discussions that **I will not be inserting politics in my remarks and will not take questions that get politically partisan.**
- **Keep the focus on the topic,** not who was running for office, who had been elected, or what either group said for political party reasons
- When someone in the audience or a speaker starts to get political, **they destroy the ability to build bridges.**
- **Politics instantly alienates part (up to 50%) of the audience and derails the conversation.**

Lessons From 5 Years of Discussions (C)

- **Unbiased educators are the key.** The goal must be to educate people with facts and keep your bias out of the talk. Audiences will thank you for even-handed talks
- To **build bridges** just speak about facts and **don't get upset** about how we feel.
- **Tolerance is built through education.**
- If your audience is trying to figure out your personal views on the topic...**you are doing it right.**
- **The messenger matters.** You may think that the best person to explain Islam to American audiences is a Muslim. I have come to realize that is not often true. The curse of interfaith work is that most speakers are **talking in an echo chamber** that already has tolerance towards religions. We spend a lot of money to keep speakers on the road talking to **the wrong audiences. The problem then becomes that most speakers aren't changing anyone's mind or heart.**

Lessons From 5 Years of Discussions (D)

- **We need tolerance in every direction.** The best way to get there is to talk more not less about religion and other challenging topics---**IN A CIVIL and CONSTRUCTIVE WAY**
- I get it; this is **not a comfortable conversation**. You are **going to encounter many intolerant people** on this path. I have been called an anti-Muslim racist, a closet Muslim, a terrorist, a Muslim-lover, a traitor to the Army and America, and a longer list of unprintable words.
- There are **extremists** in our nation on the **left and right**, both Muslim and non-Muslim that do not want fair-minded people to discuss religion. They **want division between humans**. They want hatred between religions. They **don't want you and I to have a discussion** that might teach us that we can tolerate each other, and even become friends.
- **Be realistic**, you will not change the mind of many extremists, and you should not focus your efforts on the 10 percent on either side of the topic you are discussing. **Focus your civility dialogue on the 80% of the audience that is curious and willing to change their mind** when presented with logic and facts.

Q&A Guidance

- **USE 7-10 seconds to ask a question or 20-30 seconds to make a comment**
- Try to focus on:
 - What stereotype mistakes do we make that harm bipartisan solutions?
 - What type of negative stereotypes (words/phrases) should we stop saying?
 - What are some intolerant actions that don't unite people?
 - How can we get politics out of the discussion? Does partisanship help?
 - What messengers are missing from the conversation?
 - HOW DO YOU GET the right audience to listen to your ideas?
 - How will you change your approaches to equality and inclusion discussions?
 - How do we make equality and police reforms bipartisan issues?
 - How do we bring black communities and police departments closer?