

CHAPTER

8

THE INTOLERANCE IN THE ISLAMIC STATES



Israel lives in a tough neighborhood that makes its viability more difficult.

Perhaps 25% of the population of the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the twentieth century were non-Muslim Greek Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Armenian Catholic, Armenian Gregorian, Jewish, Protestant, Maronite, Samaritan, Nestorian Christian (Assyrians), Syrian United Orthodox, Monophysite, and others.¹

In the early 1900s, Jews were commercially preponderant in Baghdad. Along with Jerusalem, it was one of the two great Jewish cities of Asia. Jews had lived there since Babylonian captivity, about 600 BCE, more than a thousand years before the Arabs came to the region.² What occurs when Jews are subject to a ruling Arab majority? Baghdad is essentially free of Jews now.

What happened? The world sat by. The states that

were created from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire were free to rid themselves of non-believers.³

There is still a great deal of intolerance emanating from the Islamic world today. The Arab/Muslim-Israeli conflict, which has erroneously passed into our lexicon as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, is only one of many fights between the Islamic and non-Islamic world. The list includes fights in Nigeria, Sudan, Bosnia, Kosovo, Macedonia, Chechnya, Sinkiang, Kashmir, and Mindanao. The pursuit of violent Islamic redress is widespread.

Many Muslim clerics systematically spread hate without rebuke, and indeed with tacit encouragement from political leaders. It took many months to whip up the hate to a level of riots and death as retribution for the appearance of a few unflattering cartoons of Mohammed in a Danish newspaper.

Islamic leaders claim the cartoons were disrespectful of Mohammed and Islam. So what if they were? Does this justify Muslim clerics to incite people to violence? On the Dome of the Rock Mosque in Jerusalem, which sits on the ruins of both a Christian Church and the Jewish Temple, inscriptions read, "Praise be to God, who begets no son, and has no partner," and "He is God, one eternal. He does not beget, nor is he begotten, and he has no peer."⁴ That anti-Christian rhetoric seems a little stronger than cartoons published by a newspaper. Where is the outrage in the Arab and radical-Islam dominated states about this insult to another religion? There is none. Apparently Arab Muslims are free to be blasphemous about the Christian religion at their holy sites, but blasphemy and insults can only be flung in one direction, not two. Never mind the constant hateful blood-dripping anti-American, anti-Israeli and anti-Semitic cartoons that are a fixture in the state sponsored Arab media throughout the Middle East. For the full flavor, Google