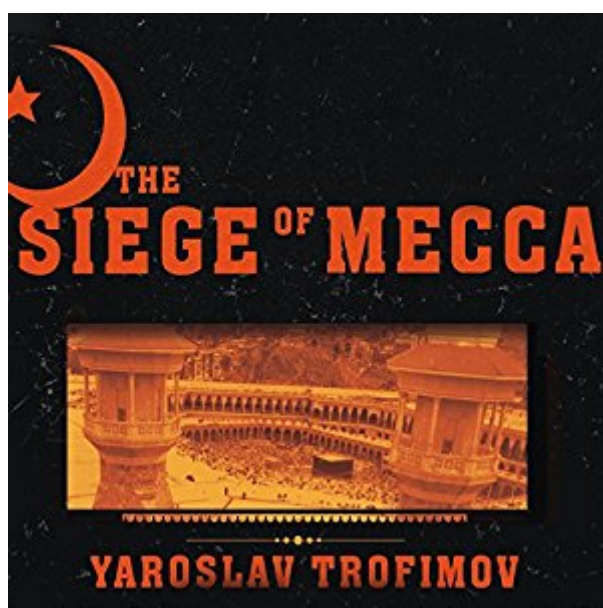


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# The Siege Of Mecca: The Forgotten Uprising In Islam's Holiest Shrine & The Birth Of Al-Qaeda



## Synopsis

On November 20, 1979, worldwide attention was focused on Tehran, where the Iranian hostage crisis was entering its third week. The same morning—the first of a new Muslim century—hundreds of gunmen stunned the world by seizing Islam's holiest shrine, the Grand Mosque in Mecca. Armed with rifles that they had smuggled inside coffins, these men came from more than a dozen countries, launching the first operation of global jihad in modern times. Led by a Saudi preacher named Juhayman al Uteybi, they believed that the Saudi royal family had become a craven servant of American infidels and sought a return to the glory of uncompromising Islam. With nearly 100,000 worshippers trapped inside the holy compound, Mecca's bloody siege lasted two weeks, inflaming Muslim rage against the United States and causing hundreds of deaths. Despite U.S. assistance, the Saudi royal family proved haplessly incapable of dislodging the occupier, whose ranks included American converts to Islam. In Iran, Ayatollah Khomeini blamed the Great Satan—the United States—for defiling the shrine, prompting mobs to storm and torch American embassies in Pakistan and Libya. The desperate Saudis finally enlisted the help of French commandos led by Captain Paul Barril, who prepared the final assault and supplied the poison gas that knocked out the insurgents. Though most captured gunmen were quickly beheaded, the Saudi royal family responded to this unprecedented challenge by compromising with the rebels' supporters among the kingdom's most senior clerics, helping them nurture and export Juhayman's violent brand of Islam around the world. This dramatic and immensely consequential story was barely covered in the press in the pre-CNN, pre-Al Jazeera days, as Saudi Arabia imposed an information blackout and kept foreign correspondents away. Yaroslav Trofimov now penetrates this veil of silence, interviewing for the first time scores of direct participants in the siege, including former terrorists, and drawing on hundreds of documents that were declassified upon his request. Written with the pacing, detail, and suspense of a real-life thriller, *The Siege of Mecca* reveals how Saudi reaction to the uprising in Mecca set free the forces that produced the attacks of 9/11 and the harrowing circumstances that surround us today. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

## Book Information

Audible Audio Edition

Listening Length: 8 hours and 11 minutes

Program Type: Audiobook

Version: Unabridged

Publisher: Tantor Audio

Audible.com Release Date: October 19, 2007

Whispersync for Voice: Ready

Language: English

ASIN: B000XPWRBM

Best Sellers Rank: #24 in [Books > Religion & Spirituality > Islam > Mecca](#) #101 in [Books > Audible Audiobooks > Religion & Spirituality > Islam](#) #221 in [Books > Audible Audiobooks > History > Middle East](#)

## Customer Reviews

This should be required reading for everyone who is trying to understand the catastrophic situation in the Middle East. The author tells the story of Wahhabi Moslem extremists, from many countries, attacking, and seizing, Mecca in 1979. This attack and the Saudi Arabian response was purely a fight among Moslems but it led to Moslem attacks on US embassies across the middle east due to Iranian propaganda blaming the US for the attack. In telling this story the author describes the history of the hundreds of years of radical Moslem religious turmoil leading up to this pivotal event. He then explores its aftermath and illustrates the continuing violence and terrorism associated with the Wahhabi extremism in many countries across the Middle East including the assassination of the Egyptian President Anwar Sadat. Today's events from ISIS to Iraq to Yemen to Syria to Iran to Pakistan to Afghanistan are much easier to understand given this perspective.

This was a fascinating book about a subject that I had never heard about before. I happened to hear about it on a podcast and I was intrigued enough to give it try. If you are a fan of world history, then you will love how this book brings all of the political struggles of the 70's and 80's together. Excellent book!

The author has done an exceptional job of researching and sourcing material for this amazing look at a pivotal event in modern Islam and Middle Eastern history. While I was vaguely familiar with the attempted siege of the Grand Mosque in Mecca in 1979, the details behind the takeover by Sunni's intent on overthrowing the Saudi Royal family and the ultimately "successful" subduing of the followers of Juhayman makes for a fascinating read and raises questions about the lasting impact of this event. Occurring shortly after the Iranian Revolution, Trofimov provides a revealing look into never before covered facts about how close the Saudi regime came to being overthrown, the

ineptitude of the Saudi government departments in putting down the situation (National Guard, Dept. of Interior) and the role of the French special forces in assisting the royal family. Especially captivating were Trofimov's chapters on the harrowing situations for American diplomats and their staffs in Pakistan and Libya as Islamic students attempted to destroy the US Embassy's and quite possibly replicate the situation that existed in Tehran. For anyone interested in the Islam and the Middle East, this book is an absolute must.

I was compelled to write a review for this book as I'm amazed at how well it was researched and written! I first heard of it from Shane Smith of Vice when he discussed it briefly while appearing as a guest on the Joe Rogan Experience podcast. That led to me downloading the sample chapter and I was quickly hooked! I bought the rest of the book and spent the next day or so glued to my Kindle! This book is so well written and is an easy page turner despite the scope and subject. I learned so much even though it felt like I was just reading a good action story! Now that's a great way to learn without feeling like you're doing homework!!! The amount of research and investigation for this project had to be astounding yet the author clearly did a thorough job and then was able to concisely convey the results with an absolutely gripping and compelling narrative. That's obvious talent, and it was a real eye opener for me too! Many of the other reviewers here explain the book in detail so I won't rehash it myself. I will however highly, highly recommend The Siege of Mecca! Go ahead, entertain AND educate yourself with this one!!!

This book documents the fact that Saudi Arabia is the source of modern Islam-based hatred of all non-Muslims and the call to murder them. Financed by petro dollars Saudi royalty, in exchange for stability of monarchy, has permitted untold thousands to "educated" (actually brainwashed) to the Islamofascist line. The face of that exchange is IS and AQ. IS is embedded in large civilian populations and is financed by a vast criminal network, not to mention oil money from confiscated wells in Iraq. Trofimov convincingly shows that the explosive vanishing point for the creation of the army of terrorists that Saudi based Islamofascism has engendered today was its adherents' cowardly overtaking of the holy mosques of Mecca in 1979. That siege was amazingly suppressed from public attention then in pre-internet days. The book provides a well researched explanation for the root much of the current terrorist culture and the disastrous consequences of the West's historically tepid responses to it. However, some credit for the present day mess belongs to the Bush-Cheney Iraq war which empowered Iran and left Iraq in the cauldron of civil war. Terrorist attacks on innocent civilians throughout the West are surely going to escalate. Eventually, leaders in

the West will be forced to solve the equation of how many civilian deaths here will justify the Dresden like firebombing of Raqqa and Mosul and the part of Libya that IS has taken.

This book gives the historical account of the takeover of the holy site in Mecca, an account which apart from this book is mostly suppressed, certainly by Saudi's, who see these events as a huge embarrassment. All that to say, this book fills the gap to a unique but very important piece of history. A second layer of the book, is how the events described actually led to the formation of many of the Islamic terrorist groups as we know them today. A third layer of the book, of course, is how this shaped the cultural and political/religious climate in Saudi today. A fourth layer, is the insights into the disagreements, hatred, and hostility among various Muslim factions. A fifth layer of the book provides a historical view of the Jimmy Carter era of Presidency. Don't get me wrong, Jimmy Carter is one of the nicest people ever to have been President, but overall, one of the worst President's ever. I lived through the Carter era and thought it was bad at the time, but reading this book made me realize I only knew the half of it.

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