



Would our world be a safer place without Islam?

Would our world be a safer place had Islam not existed? This is certainly a contentious and heated issue. Nevertheless, author [Graham E. Fuller](#) is valiant enough to tackle this issue head on in his book [“A World Without Islam.”](#)



Typical scenes of unhappy Muslims around the world
(photo by dailymail.co.uk)

Scientists such as [Sam Harris](#) and [Richard Dawkins](#) are well known not only for their atheism but also for their bold attacks on religion in particular Christianity and Islam. Dawkins, for example, once compared Christian churches like Nazi pep rallies, where one comes to feel rather than to think.

“Faith is the great cop-out,” says Dawkins, “the great excuse to evade the need to think and evaluate evidence. Faith is belief in spite of, even perhaps because of,

the lack of evidence.”

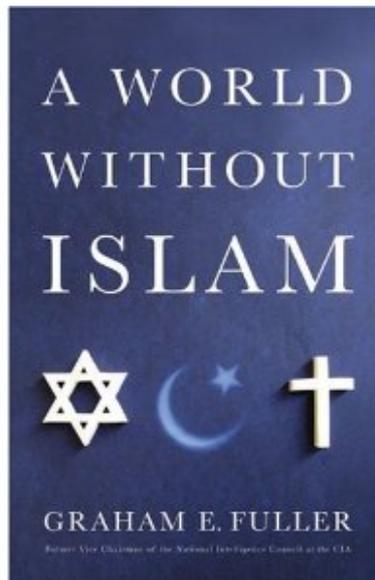


Sam Harris



Richard Dawkins

I picked up Fuller’s book, wondering if his book is in any way as explosive and caustic as what are typically expounded in Harris’s and Dawkins’s books.



"A world without Islam" by Graham E. Fuller



Graham E. Fuller

Au contraire, Fuller argues that a world without Islam would still see unrests. History, *sans* Islam, would not follow the same path, of course, but the violence around the world would prevail. Religions like Islam are powerful icons or symbols by which people of different backgrounds, races, and cultures are united. Islam, as with Christianity, is a double-edged sword: a powerful icon to unite — as well as to divide people.

If we analyze every violent conflict in the past, says Fuller, the fundamental or core basis of these conflicts relate more to ethnicity, nationalism, ambition, greed, fight over resources and land, financial gain, invaders, imperialists, interventions, and power. People seek banners to propagate and glorify the cause of their

struggle. And religion makes a very strong banner by which to champion one's struggle. In other words, religion like Islam is a vehicle, rather than the cause of conflicts. The banner of the moment may go away, argues Fuller, but the grievances remain.

The Middle East is a cauldron of ethnic groups such as Arabs, Persians, Turks, Kurds, Jews, and Pashtuns, to name a few. Even before the introduction of Islam in the seventh century, violent conflicts had already occurred in the Middle East.

Numerous conflicts occurred between the great Persian empires and the Greeks in what is now known as the [Greco-Persian](#) wars. And the Persians were met with violence by the Semitic peoples across the Fertile Crescent and in Iraq. In turn, these Semitic people had to contend with the expanding Arab tribes and traders into Semitic areas of the Middle East. These struggles were over power, territory, influence, and trade - and these struggles occurred before Islam arrived.

Today's Middle East comprise over 90% Muslims (excluding Israel). But if Islam did not exist, what religion would the Middle East people embrace? Fuller speculates that most people in the Middle East would instead embrace [Eastern Orthodox Christianity](#).

However, we would be mistaken if we think this would create a peaceful world united in Christianity. Middle East Christians, embracing Eastern Orthodox Christianity, would remain anti-West, much like today.

One of the world's most enduring, virulent, and bitter religious conflicts was between the Catholic Church in Rome and the Eastern Orthodox Christianity in Constantinople. In 1204, Western Crusaders, instead of taking back the Muslim-controlled Jerusalem, altered their goals and conquered the Eastern Orthodox city of Constantinople, the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire - an act which would have repercussions even until today.

In Greece today, the Eastern Orthodox remains a powerful political and sociological influence behind nationalism and anti-Western feelings there.

Fuller points out evidence that the Crusades, that occurred from the eleventh to thirteenth century, were not religiously motivated, but were driven rather by political, social, and economic needs of the West. Christianity was merely a potent symbol to start a series of violent military campaigns against Islam (and even

against Eastern Orthodox Christians) to further Western power and influence.

Numerous more examples exist where Islam is not the cause of violence. Secular regimes such as [Leopold II of Belgium](#) in the Congo, Hitler, Mussolini, Lenin and Stalin, Mao Zedong, and Pol Pot are responsible of violent conflicts in the 20th century. Do not forget that the last two world wars had little, if at all, any relationship with Islam.

Despite the news of suicide bombings and terrorist attacks by Muslims around the world, it isn't the Muslims who invented suicide bombings and terrorism. That dubious honor belong to the Sri Lankan Tamil Tigers (who invented bomb vests for suicide attacks) and to the Jewish guerrillas (who used terrorism against the British in Palestine).



Muslim suicide bombers. Yes, even kids are enlisted (photo from [detailedabstractions.com](#)).

The book “A World Without Islam” is a fascinating and thought-provoking book. However, it is impossible to prove or disprove Fuller’s arguments. The speculations in this book remain as such - as speculations, a voyeurish peek into an alternate universe in which Islam did not exist and in which we find frighteningly similar with our current universe.

Further readings

Graham Fuller’s articles on his book at:

1. [foreignpolicy.com](#)
2. [NPR](#)