

Prince El Hassan bin Talal discusses peacemaking efforts in a post-9/11 world, and the international implications of acts of terrorism.

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The Speaker

Prince El Hassan bin Talal is Prince of Jordan. Born in Amman, Jordan in 1947 to a branch of the Hashemite family directly descended from the Prophet Mohammad, Prince Hassan has been deeply involved in issues of social development, human rights, and inter-religious understanding.

Review Questions

CHAPTER 1: *Prince Hassan describes his reactions and reflections in the immediate aftermath of 9/11.*

1. Describe Prince Hassan's 9/11 experience and his reaction to the attacks.
2. What does Prince Hassan believe is one of the most potent effects of 9/11 on the Muslim community?

CHAPTER 2: *Prince Hassan talks about 9/11's effect on peacemaking efforts between the United States and Middle Eastern countries, and the erosion of constructive communication between them.*

1. How did Prince Hassan focus his peace-making efforts in the aftermath of 9/11, and why?
2. What does Prince Hassan mean when he speaks of a "security phobia", and how did this phenomenon affect relations between the Middle East and Western countries?

CHAPTER 3: *Prince Hassan discusses the reactions of Muslim nations to 9/11, as well as terrorism and extremism around the world.*

1. How does Prince Hassan describe the varying reactions of Muslim nations to 9/11?
2. What is a militant theology, as Prince Hassan describes it, and what strategies does it use?

CHAPTER 4: *Prince Hassan discusses the consequences of 9/11, and the role of religion in relation to state authority.*

1. Why does Prince Hassan describe 9/11 as a crossing point?
2. Describe Prince Hassan's stance on the separation of church and state.
3. Why does Prince Hassan call himself a radical?

CHAPTER 5: *Prince Hassan discusses the international dialogue that has been necessitated by 9/11, and Osama bin Laden's public image.*

1. Describe Prince Hassan's proposed "culture of participation".
2. What "folklore" does Osama bin Laden promote about himself, and how does this "folklore" differ from reality?

Key Figures and Vocabulary

Al Qaeda

A group that encourages violent *jihād* (armed struggle on behalf of Islam) intended to expel foreign influence from the Islamic world and to establish a puritanical Islamic society. Founded in 1988 by Osama Bin Laden and others *jihadists*, al Qaeda was responsible for the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, as well as several other terrorist attacks, before and after 9/11, on U.S. targets abroad as well as in other countries.

Fertile Crescent

Widely considered to be the cradle of civilization, the Fertile Crescent is a region in Western Asia that encompasses territory belonging to Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Israel, the Palestinian territories, and Lebanon, among other countries.

Nihilism

A philosophical doctrine that promotes the belief that life is without objective meaning or purpose. "Nihilism" can also refer to the total rejection of established laws and institutions in favor of anarchy, terrorism, or other revolutionary activity.

CHAPTER 6: *Prince Hassan discusses ways by which the international community can reach a higher level of understanding and cooperation.*

1. What does Prince Hassan mean when he talks about “teaching by analogy?”
2. What is necessary for civilized disagreement, according to Prince Hassan, and why?

Questions for Further Discussion

1. Why would the United States’ image abroad be important to Jordan and other Middle Eastern countries?
2. Prince Hassan notes that Jordan “pays a price to be a friend of the United States.” What are some of the factors a governing body in the Middle East must consider in creating alliances? Are these factors unique to this region?
3. Describe what Prince Hassan calls the “golden rule of reciprocity.” Can a country be governed by this principle? How could adherence to this principle affect international relations?
4. Prince Hassan says that many people today are at the service of religion and not vice versa. What does he mean by this, and what are some examples of this point that Prince Hassan mentions in this webcast?
5. Prince Hassan points out that Arabs are a minority in the Muslim world. Why is this relevant to the issues discussed in this webcast?

Recommended Resources

The Georgetown University Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs: <http://berkleycenter.georgetown.edu/>

Key Figures and Vocabulary (con’t)

Oklahoma City Bombing (April 19, 1995)

The bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City by Timothy McVeigh, a United States Army veteran and security guard. The attack, which was the most significant act of terrorism on American soil before 9/11, killed 168 people and injured more than 600.

Osama bin Laden

Co-founder and leader of al Qaeda, bin Laden was raised in Saudi Arabia. As leader of al Qaeda, bin Laden oversaw the September 11, 2001 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, as well as several other terrorist attacks, before and after 9/11, on U.S. targets abroad as well as in other countries.

Salafi

An adherent of the “literalist” theology of Islam that seeks to reform Muslim society through a return to the so-called purer beliefs and practices of the earliest generations of Muslims in the 7th and 8th centuries CE.