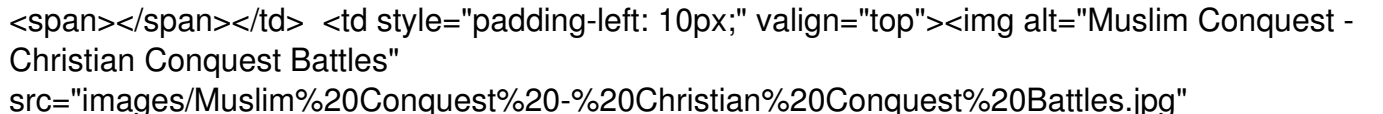


This article can also be viewed as a [PowerPoint presentation](http://www.slideshare.net/frontfel/the-crusades-vs-jihad?qid=6a820383-ca45-470a-b7d8-cad934b0784e&v=qf1&b=&from_search=4).

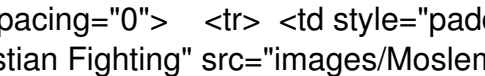
US President Barack Hussein Obama has raised the issue of the Crusades as evil done in the Name of Jesus Christ as some kind of justification, or distraction, from Islamic Jihad today. It is impossible to understand the Crusades without first understanding the five centuries of Islamic Jihad that preceded it.

<h2>A Reaction to Jihad</h2> <p>The crusades were a reaction to centuries of Islamic Jihad. Muslim armies had conquered most of the Byzantine Empire. The enemy was literally at the gates of the greatest Christian city in the world at the time, Constantinople. Muslims had conquered Spain, Sicily, Southern Italy and many of the islands in the Mediterranean Sea.</p> <h2>Persecution and Piracy</h2> <p>Vast territories which had once belonged to Christians were now under the rule of Islamic rulers who abused the Christians, looted churches, kidnapped, tortured and ransomed Christian pilgrims. Millions of Christians were being enslaved by the Muslim world. Muslim Pirates were threatening Christian shipping. Christian lands were threatened by Islamic raids and full scale invasion.</p> 	
<h2>Exploiting Exhaustion</h2> <p>Even before the death of Muhammad in 632, Muslim forces were already raiding the Byzantine Empire and Persia. Both Byzantium and Persia were weakened by incessant wars against one another. The Arabs were able to exploit the exhaustion of the Persians and the Byzantines, not only by hit and run raids for plunder and loot, but also by sustained military campaigns to wrest substantial territory away from these vast empires.</p>	<h2>The Invasion of Syria</h2> <p>Syria was the first Arab conquest. At that time Syria was a province of the Byzantine Empire. The capital of Syria, Damascus, was the oldest continually inhabited city in the world. The land of Syria was far more fertile than the land of Arabia. After centuries of Byzantine rule Syria had fallen to the Persians in 611 and were retaken by Byzantine in 630. As the Persians had destroyed the institutions of Byzantine rule, a leadership vacuum had developed.</p> <h2>Betrayed from Within</h2> <p>As the Byzantine Empire employed many Arab mercenaries to guard against their raiding kinsmen from the south, the defection of most of the Arab defenders left huge gaping holes in the defences of Syria. During key battles, the defection of Arab mercenaries, who were meant to be fighting for Byzantine, was decisive in turning the tide of battle against the Christians. Soon the Muslim Caliph established Damascus as the capital of the growing Islamic Empire.</p> <h2>Targeting Persia</h2>

The next target was Persia, which at that time included Mesopotamia, what is today known as Iraq. Here as well, whole units of the Persian cavalry consisted exclusively of Arab mercenaries. The Muslims managed to exploit the conflict of loyalties by persuading whole units of Arab mercenaries to turn traitor and join the Muslim side. Soon even the heartland of Persia, what is today known as Iran, was conquered by the Muslims. Yet, the Persians continued to rebel against Muslim rule for at least another century.

Invading India

Caliph Al-Mansur moved the capital of the Muslim Empire from Damascus to Baghdad. From this base, Muslim armies moved out to conquer the Indus valley of India (what today is known as Pakistan).

	<h2>The Betrayal of Jerusalem</h2>
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As Palestine was part of the Byzantine province of Syria, the decisive defeat of the Greek forces at the Battle of Yarmuk left Jerusalem vulnerable to attack. Many Jews, hostile to the Greek Christians of the Byzantine Empire, welcomed the invading Muslim forces and opened the gates of Jerusalem to the Caliph in 638. Despite this, the Caliph prohibited all Jews from living in Jerusalem.

Massacres in Egypt

Egypt was a province of the Byzantine Empire. The abandonment of Syria and Palestine by the Greek forces left Egypt particularly vulnerable and isolated. The first invasion of Egypt in 639 by the forces of Caliph Umar was unsuccessful. In 640 a force of 12,000 Muslims attacked and succeeded in luring the Byzantine army out from their secured walled cities, whereupon they were ambushed and slaughtered in great numbers. The Muslim invaders then massacred the inhabitants of the undefended city of Nikiou and a number of other towns.

The Betrayal of Alexandria

Alexandria was the second largest city in the Christian world at that time. When the Arabs attacked the city of Alexandria they were repulsed with great losses. The Arabs thereupon withdrew out of range of the catapult shots and arrows of the walls and began what should have been a hopeless siege.

<p>As Alexandria was a port and the Byzantine navy had supremacy of the Mediterranean they could have easily resupplied and reinforced Alexandria for as long as necessary. However, inexplicably, the new governor of Egypt, Cyrus, betrayed Alexandria, and all of Egypt, by handing it over, without a fight, to the Muslim invaders.</p>
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<h2>Massacre in Alexandria</h2> <p>Four years later a Byzantine fleet of</p>
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300 vessels arrived at Alexandria and re-conquered the city of Alexandria with ease. So the Greeks once again had an impregnable position behind the formidable walls of the city. However, a foolish and arrogant commander led his soldiers out, in a very ill advised move, and was ambushed. Even so, the Arabs had no chance of conquering Alexandria. It was at this time that a traitor opened the gates of the city to the Arabs and the Muslims poured into the city massacring, plundering and burning until more than half of the great city was destroyed.

Arming their Enemies

Recognising their great naval weakness, the Muslims turned to the Egyptian shipyards and commissioned Christian workmen to build them a fleet. They hired Christian mercenaries to do their navigation and sailing. In 649 this entirely mercenary fleet enabled the Muslims to invade Cyprus, Sicily and the island of Rhodes.

Civil War

At this point an opportunity arose that would have enabled the Christian Byzantine Empire to regain all their losses as the Muslim world erupted in a vicious civil war. Muhammad's cousin and son-in-law, Ali, waged war against Muawiyah, the cousin of the murdered Caliph Uthman. Ali was murdered and Muawiyah became Caliph. From this point Islam was divided into the Sunnis and the Shiites. However, the Christian world failed to take advantage of this opportunity to regain their lost territories.

Conquering North Africa

At this time, with the exception of conquered Egypt, the entire north coast of Africa was still under rule of the Byzantine Empire. The Arabs targeted the desert dwelling Berber tribe, many of whom had converted to Judaism. After much bloodshed and bitter resistance, the Berbers were subjugated and enlisted as allies of the Arab and Berber Muslim army of 40,000 swept over the coastal cities taking the ancient capital of Carthage, which in 705 was razed to the ground and most of its inhabitants massacred.



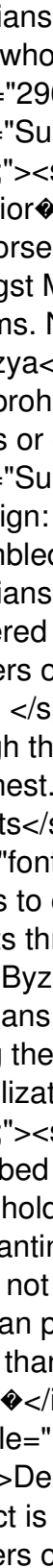
Invading Spain

In 711 an army of 10,000 Muslims from Morocco crossed the Mediterranean at its narrowest western point to land at Gibraltar on the southern coast of Spain. King Rodrigo marched a hastily assembled army south from his capital in Toledo and was defeated in a battle at the river Guadalete. The king was drowned and the Berber Tariq Ibn-ziyad sent the king's head to the Caliph in Damascus. Within 7 years the Moors (as the Spanish called the Muslim invaders from Morocco) had brought most of Spain, which they called *Al-Andalus*, under their control. The Muslims called Spain the Emirate of Cordoba. On the site of a Christian cathedral in the city of Cordoba the moors built a large mosque.

Subjugating Sicily

text-align: justify;">There were numerous Muslim invasions of Sicily, in 652, 667 and 720 - each of which were defeated. In 827 the Muslims invaded again with 10,000 troops. The local Christians fought back furiously and it took more than 70 years for the Muslims to conquer Sicily, after ♦much fighting and many massacres.♦ After a prolonged siege, Palermo fell in 831. Syracuse held out until 878. Taormina held out until 902. </p> <p style="margin-right: -1.15pt; text-align: justify;"> <table border="0"> <tr> <td></td> <td> <h2 class="Sub-title">Invading Italy</h2> <p style="margin-right: -1.15pt; text-align: justify;">From Sicily the Muslims invaded southern Italy, conquering Taranto and Bari in 840. The historic city of Rome was looted in 843 and all the famous churches were looted in 846. The Muslim occupation of Sicily and southern Italy lasted for over 200 years. </p> </td> </tr> </table> </p> <h2 class="Sub-title">Islands Invaded</h2> <p style="margin-right: -1.15pt; text-align: justify;">Cyprus was invaded and conquered by the Muslims in 653. Rhodes in 672. Sardinia in 809. Majorca was conquered in 818. The island of Crete was invaded by the Muslims in 824. Malta fell in 835. Plainly, the popular propaganda line that Islam only advanced peacefully, and that Jihad was only a defensive concept is fiction. What were Saudi Arabians defending in Spain and Cyprus?</p> <h2 class="Sub-title">Overstretched and Undertrained</h2> <p style="margin-right: -1.15pt; text-align: justify;">It should be noted that, at that time, most of the armies of Persia and the Byzantine Empire were poorly trained. Most were used for static defence of strong points such as garrisons and walled cities. Very few were trained in manoeuvres for battle. The Byzantine Empire was particularly overstretched with insufficient soldiers to maintain their vast empire. Most of the soldiers employed by both Byzantine and Persia were foreigners who served mainly for pay, and many of these were Arabs, most of whom ended up deserting to the Muslim side. </p> <h2 class="Sub-title">Mobility</h2> <p style="margin-right: -1.15pt; text-align: justify;">The use of camels provided the Arab invaders with superior mobility, particularly across the deserts. Even the Arab cavalry rode between battles on camels, leading their horses. The camels enabled the Muslims to outflank imperial forces by using desert routes. When confronted by superior forces the Arabs withdrew into the desert to avoid battle. This much greater mobility allowed the Arabs to select and attack smaller forces and destroy them before reinforcements could be sent. The imperial forces of Byzantine made themselves vulnerable by spreading out and trying to defend everywhere at once, or wore themselves out marching in fruitless pursuit of a battle. These battles the Arabs normally avoided until they greatly outnumbered their enemies.</p> <p style="margin-right: -1.15pt; text-align: justify;">The immensity of the Byzantine Empire stretched the Byzantine forces far too thin. However, the Arabs concentrated their forces to attack specific areas at a time.</p> <p style="margin-right: -1.15pt; text-align: justify;"> <table border="0"> <tr> <td> <h2 class="Sub-titleCxSpLast">The Myth of Islamic Tolerance</h2> <p style="margin-right: -1.15pt; text-align: justify;">Muslim propaganda makes great claims as to the tremendous tolerance which was meant to have been shown by Muslim rulers to Christian subjects. Actually, these claims began with Voltaire and other 18th century humanists who continually tried to cast Christians in the worst

possible light and in this case invented the fiction of Islamic tolerance. From the very beginning Muslim authorities went to great lengths to humiliate and punish *Dhimmi*, Jews and Christians who refused to convert to Islam.

 **Behead those who insult islam**

Dhimmitude

Official Islamic policy was that *Dhimmi* must feel inferior and subjugated. Laws were passed that Christians and Jews were not allowed to ride horses. Jews and Christians were compelled to wear marks of their religion when they were amongst Muslims. Non-Muslims were prohibited from wearing clothing similar to that of Muslims. Non-Muslims were forbidden to be armed. Non-Muslims were severely taxed (*Jizya*). No new churches or synagogues were allowed to be built. Jews and Christians were prohibited from praying aloud, or even reading the Scriptures aloud, not even in their homes or churches lest a Muslim accidentally hear them.

Massacres of Christians

In 705 the Muslim invaders of Armenia assembled all Christian nobles in a church and burned them to death. Massacres of Jews and Christians were common. In Morocco over 6,000 Jews were killed in 1033. Even more were murdered in Grenada. Tens of thousands of Christian civilians were massacred by the Muslim invaders of Cyprus in 1570. Any Muslim who converted to any other faith was condemned to death.

Those today who attempt to portray Muslims through the ages as enlightened supporters of multi-cultural tolerance are either ignorant or dishonest.

Islamic Defeats

Despite Muhammad's assurance that it was impossible for Islamic armies to ever be defeated by *infidels*, Muslim armies have suffered numerous defeats throughout the centuries. In 672, the Caliph Muawiyah attempted to conquer the capital of the Byzantine Empire, Constantinople. With the massive fleet he had built up by the Egyptians, he transported 50,000 fighting men through the Dardanelles, (the narrow straight linking the Mediterranean with the Black Sea).

Clash of Civilizations at Constantinople

The Islamic assault on Constantinople in 672 was described as *the fiercest, which had ever been launched by the infidels against a Christian stronghold*. Numerous historians hailed the Christian victory over the Muslims assailing Constantinople as *A Turning point in the history of mankind*. *The fact that it held saved not only the Byzantine Empire, but the whole of European civilisation*. *As another historian put it: Had the Muslims captured Constantinople in the 7th century, rather than the 15th, all Europe and America, might be Muslim today.*

Supreme Technologies

Despite modern myths about the supposed superiority of Islamic culture and technology, the fact is that the Christians possessed superior technology and used it to defeat the Muslim invaders on numerous occasions. The walls of Constantinople were an engineering marvel, a massive outer wall with towers and superb battlements, and behind it an even stronger inner wall, 40 feet high and 15 feet thick.

<table border="0"> <tr> <td valign="top"> <h2 class="Sub-title">Greek Fire</h2> <p style="margin-right: -1.15pt; text-align: justify;">The Christians also had what was called <i>♦Greek fire♦</i>. The Greek engineer Kallinikos of Heliopolis had developed an incendiary weapon which literally destroyed the Muslim fleet. <i>Greek fire</i> was effectively a primitive flame thrower which included a pump that discharged a stream of flaming liquid through a tube projected from the bow of a galley. They could also use their catapults to hurtle pottery containing <i>Greek fire</i> over 400 to 500 meters away.
</p> </td> <td style="padding-left: 10px;" valign="top"></td> </tr> <tr> <td rowspan="1" colspan="2" valign="top">When it struck, it shattered, burst into flame, splashing its blazing liquid over large areas of the enemy. On several occasions the Byzantines rode out and incinerated the Muslim navy.</td> </tr> </table> </p> <h2 class="Sub-title"> </h2> <h2 class="Sub-title">Defeats at Constantinople</h2> <p style="margin-right: -1.15pt; text-align: justify;">With their fleet burned to a cinder the Arab invaders were soon stranded and starving. Discouraged and demoralised Muawiyah surrendered and agreed to pay an annual tribute of 300 pounds of gold to Byzantine. In 717, the Muslims once again tried to conquer Constantinople. A massive fleet of 1,800 galleys attacked Constantinople. The Greek Christians rode out and with their <i>Greek fire</i>, pumps destroyed virtually the entire fleet. Most of the Muslim attackers were either burned up or downed. The next year, 718, the Muslims tried again with a new fleet and this was again defeated by <i>Greek fire</i>. Most of those galleys that managed to flee were destroyed in a devastating storm. Only five Muslim galleys survived the attack of 718. </p> <h2 class="Sub-title">Defeat at Toulouse</h2> <p style="margin-right: -1.15pt; text-align: justify;">While the Muslim ambitions of conquering South Eastern Europe were frustrated by the apparently impregnable Constantinople, Muslim armies had attained far greater success on the Western edge of the Mediterranean, subjugating Spain. In 721, <i>A</i>|<i>-</i>Samah Ibn<i>-</i>Malik al<i>-</i>Khawlani the Caliph of Aldover (Spain), led his forces north of the Pyrenees Mountains to sack the city of Toulouse. For three months the city resisted his siege. Then Duke Odo of Aquitaine mobilised an army of Franks to lift the siege of Toulouse. The Muslims were taken by surprise and most were slaughtered as they fled before the Christian cavalry.</p> <p style="margin-right: -1.15pt; text-align: justify;"><i> <table border="0"> <tr> <td valign="top"> <h2 class="Sub-title">Islamic Invasion of France</h2> <p style="margin-right: -1.15pt; text-align: justify;">In 732, Abd-al-Rahman mobilised a massive army of 80,000 fighting men to invade Gaul (present day France). As they moved north from Spain the Muslims plundered cities and laid waste to the countryside. Muslim historians recorded that Al-Rahman <i>♦burned churches and imagined he could pillage the Basilica of St. Martin of Tours.♦</i> An Arab historian noted: <i><span style="font-size:

12pt;">◆The hearts of Abd-al-Rahman, his captains and his men were filled with wrath and pride.◆.

Charles Martel

He was to meet his match in Charles Martel, the Hammer. Martel, the son of King Pippin of the Franks, was an unusually tall and powerfully built man. Charles Martel was already famous for his great military exploits. He was perhaps the only man in Chrisendorm at that time who could have provided a serious challenge to the advancing Muslim forces.

The Battle of Tours

The Muslims were completely taken by surprise when they found their path to St. Martin of Tours blocked by dense lines of well-armoured infantry on the crest of a hill. With forests on both flanks, Martel had chosen his battleground well, forcing the Muslims to charge uphill. For seven days skirmishes were fought, before Al-Rahman ordered his cavalry to charge the Christian Franks.

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Charles Martel had his men closely packed forming a solid shield wall, and their long spears thrust into the ground to deter cavalry. A contemporary wrote of the Franks: ◆firmly they stood, one close to another, forming as it were a bulwark of ice.◆ Six times the Muslim cavalry charged the Frankish line and each time they were repulsed with severe casualties. Soon the battleground was filled with vast numbers of dead and dying, and the repeated furious charges of Muslims seemed to have absolutely no effect on the steadfast Christians who stood resolute in their ranks.

Decisive Victory

When the Muslims heard that some Franks had broken into their camp, they fled from the battlefield to protect their loot. At this the Franks unleashed their cavalry and inflicted even more severe casualties on the fleeing Muslims. At least 10,000 more died that afternoon, fleeing from the field. Among the dead lay the Caliph Abd-al-Rahman. Even at this point, Charles Martel maintained the discipline of his infantry, leaving the pursuit to the cavalry. Prepared to face a renewed onslaught the next day, the Franks slept in their ranks. The next morning scouts reported that the Muslims had fled leaving their empty tents and siege engines behind. The invaders fled back beyond the Pyrenees to Spain.

Liberating France

That was not the end of the Islamic threat to France. When the Muslims tried to invade Gaul again in 735, Charles Martel and the Franks gave them another severe beating. Many historians recognise the decisive victory at the Battle of Tours, or Poitiers, as one of the most important battles in world history, a turning point, absolutely essential to the survival of Western civilisation. In 759, the last foothold of Islam in South Eastern France was retaken. The Muslim armies never crossed the Pyrenees after that. In fact they began to be defeated even in Spain.

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Liberating Spain

The Muslims never conquered all of Spain. Many Spanish stalwarts stood firm on the Northern coast of Spain, by the Bay of Biscay, in an area known as Asturias. From the Christian Kingdom of Asturias, beginning in 741, the Reconquista, or the re-conquest, of Spain began. The first area to be liberated from the Muslim invaders was Galicia. In 778, the grandson of Charles Martel, Charlemagne, marched two armies into Spain to begin the liberation of South Western Europe from Islam. Within a few years, Charlemagne's army had forced the Muslims south of Barcelona. The fall of Toledo on 25 May 1085, was a strategic and psychological disaster for the Muslims.

El Cid

In 1092, King Alfonso VI of Castile, recalled Spain's most famous knight from exile. Rodrigo D z de Vivar, known as El Cid, liberated Valencia in 1094, and defeated the Muslims time and again. Frequently he seized the initiative and charged besieging forces, turning the tide and inflicting decisive defeats on the Muslim occupiers.

<p>El Cid's resounding victories, often against overwhelming odds, inspired Christians throughout Europe that the Muslim invaders could be defeated.</p> <h3>Liberating Italy and Sicily</h3> <p>In 873, the Byzantine Emperor, Basil I, defeated the Muslims throughout Dalmatia and liberated much of Southern Italy from the Muslim invaders. In 1038, the Byzantines determined to put an end to Muslim piracy by liberating the island of Sicily. Their invasion was well timed, as the Muslim Emirs in Sicily had turned on one another and were involved in one of the many internal conflicts and betrayals that frequently erupt in the Muslim world. George Maniakes employed Lombardian mercenaries and Norman knights to help liberate Sicily. Within two years over a dozen major fortresses had been taken, major battles had been won and Messina and Syracuse were in Christian hands.</p> <h3>Viking Victories</h3> <p>However, when the Byzantines alienated the Vikings, William of Hauteville</p>	<p>El Cid's resounding victories, often against overwhelming odds, inspired Christians throughout Europe that the Muslim invaders could be defeated.</p>

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Viking Victories

However, when the Byzantines alienated the Vikings, William of Hauteville

Arm) led the Norsemen to seize the southernmost province of Italy. Although vastly outnumbered, the Normans routed the Byzantines time and again. Iron Arm and his Vikings prevailed and the Byzantines never attempted to fight an open battle with them in Italy. Southern Italy was transformed into a Norman Kingdom. In 1061, Robert Guiscard, Duke of Southern Italy determined to seize Sicily, first conquering Messina and then Palermo. In 1098, Robert Guiscard's eldest son, Bohemond, let the Crusader forces that took the city of Antioch. Bohemond became the ruler of the Kingdom of Antioch. From the time of the Norman conquest of Sicily, the Muslims never again regained control of that island.

Muslim Navy Annihilated

In 747, a huge Arab armada, of a thousand galleys, was annihilated by a vastly smaller Byzantine fleet off the island of Cyprus. Only three Arab ships survived the engagement.

Christian Victories over Islam

These are but a few examples of Christian victories and Muslim defeats before the Crusades even began. The myth of Islamic invincibility was plainly propaganda. Before the Knights of Europe marched, or sailed, to the Holy Land, they already knew a lot about their Muslim enemies. Most importantly, they knew how to beat

them.

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