Document Based Question: Islam, the Crusades, and ISIS/ISIL
Humanities - Marshall
20 Points - Document and Discussion

For our study of the Middle Ages, we will be zeroing in on the expansion of Islam and the resulting Crusades, and looking to understand today’s conflict in the Middle East through our knowledge of the past. You are to complete this series of document based questions on your own, which ask you to read a document and answer related questions.

Post this to your DP when you’re done, under History.

You will then discuss your responses to these questions in groups of 4, and come up with a claim (as a group) regarding the recent events in Syria and the Middle East within the context of the Crusades. We will have an all-class discussion following completion of this worksheet in which you will be asked to discuss your claims and inferences, based on your responses to these document-based questions and the concluding questions at the end.

To get you started, we will watch John Green’s Crash Course on The Crusades, and you will also be expected to research the events unfolding in Syria. Ideas for research on current events on Google: ISIS in Syria, Islamic State, Sunni Islamic State

This worksheet is worth 10 points, and your performance in the discussion is also worth 10 points.

Pre-reading Questions (answer before proceeding to DBQs):

Is extremism ever justified to spread religious belief and/or exercise retribution for the past?
Personally, I do not think so, because I feel people should join a religion willingly. From other perspectives, I see their reasoning behind their extremism.

How might the wars of today, post-9/11, be Holy Wars that mirror the struggles of the middle ages?
Because people still fight over what they believe in and what they want to prove. They also will surrender an idea or belief that they hold on to so dearly.
~From 632 onward through the middle ages, Islam continued to spread as a religion around the Mediterranean, taking instruction from their prophet Muhammed under newly established “caliphates” (ruling groups). The Islamic Seljuk Turks, in the 11th century, began to move into the holiest sites for Jews and Christians (like Jerusalem, the birthplace of Christ) and claim them for their own. This prompted Pope Urban II, in 1095, to call for the first crusade to repel the Turks from the Christian Holy Lands.~

Document 1- They Bore the Sign of the Cross
Ekkehard of Aura, a German monk and historian, wrote about the reaction of Christians across Western Europe to the speech given by Pope Urban II:
“After Urban had aroused the spirits of all by the promise of forgiveness to those who undertook the expedition with single-hearted devotion, toward one hundred thousand men were appointed to the immediate service of God from Aquitaine and Normandy, England, Scotland, Ireland, Brittany, Galicia, Gascony, France, Flanders, Lorraine, and from other Christian peoples, whose names I no longer retain. It was truly an army of “crusaders,” for they bore the sign of the cross on their garments as a reminder that they should mortify (severely discipline) the flesh, and in the hope that they would in this way triumph over the enemies of the cross of Christ, as it had once come to pass in the case of the great Constantine. Thus, through the marvelous and unexampled working of divine
According to Ekkehard, what was the response all over Europe to the speech by Pope Urban II? The population really felt the same way as Pope Urban II and wanted to fight for something they were all connected by and an idea that they all shared.

What was surprising or amazing about this event?
That was one of the greatest times that a bunch of countries came together just for one reason and one goal.

~After the first Crusade, Jerusalem was restored to Christian and Jewish control; however, Saladin and his faithful Islamist followers vowed to retake control of the city for Muhammed. All three religions saw Jerusalem as the city given them by God.~

Document 2 - The Muslim Response
"If God blesses us by enabling us to drive His enemies out of Jerusalem, how fortunate and happy we would be! For Jerusalem has been controlled by the enemy for ninety-one years, during which time God has received nothing from us here in the way of adoration. At the same time, the zeal {devotion} of the Muslim rulers to deliver it languished {weakened}. Time passed, and so did many indifferent generations, while the Franks succeeded in rooting themselves strongly there. Now God has reserved the merit of its recovery for one house, the house of the sons of Ayyub [Saladin’s family], in order to unite all hearts in appreciation of its members."

SOURCE: The Islamic leader Saladin’s speech urging his people to retake Jerusalem, 1187.

What reasons did Saladin give for retaking Jerusalem?
God giving them the opportunity to take it back. Saying that this generation is the one to take back the holy land.

What arguments does he use to inspire his listeners (the Muslim people)?
God saying that it is sort of their destiny to take back the holy land and reclaim it in his name.
As you can see from the map above, there were three more crusades emanating from Europe and attempting to drive out the Turks and Muslims from the Middle East. Many regard the Crusades as largely a failure, as the Muslim and Turkish rule was not vanquished in the region. Some scholars point to the Crusades as being part of what thrust Europe out of Medieval Times and into the Renaissance. But, now, moving forward to today, we will see that this religious struggle has been reexamined and perhaps rekindled...

September 16th, 2001: following the attacks on New York and Washington, George W. Bush mentions launching a "crusade" on the Muslim attackers...

Document 3 - Fast-forward to Today
In recent months, the radical fringes within Christianity and Islam seem to have launched a modern-day crusade, a slander-to-vanquish battle where the mass media appears to have taken over from the sword as a weapon of choice. In an interview with CBS' 60 Minutes last year, the Rev. Jerry Falwell called the prophet Mohammed a "terrorist" and "a man of war." Falwell's comments capped a TV season that saw televangelist Pat Robertson call the prophet a "robber and a brigand" and the Rev. Franklin Graham (son of the Rev. Billy Graham) denounce Islam as a "very evil and wicked religion."

On the other side, underground cassette tapes of vitriolic Friday sermons delivered by mullahs across the Muslim world are available from Cairo to Quetta. And from post-9/11 hideouts, al Qaeda continues to release taped messages promising a fight against the "infidels." "They have taken their rabbis and their monks for gods beside Allah, and also the Messiah son of Mary," said bin Laden in a audiotape released last November. He was expanding on an earlier warning issued before the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks that the West had "divided the world into two regions — one of faith and another of infidelity, from which we hope God will protect us."

Certainly the choruses of commentaries emerging from several Christian evangelists over the past few months have been vitriolic and personally targeted at Mohammed, while Muslim extremists have steered clear of attacking Jesus, since he is also considered a prophet in the Koran.
By all accounts, jihad, or struggle, has been a particularly contentious term, with many Muslims interpreting it to mean a struggle to defend one's faith and ideals. Some experts say the fundamentalist interpretation of jihad as the duty of Muslims to fight to rid the Islamic world of a corrupting Western influence or of autocratic Muslim leaders received a modern shot in the arm when the Egyptian founder of the Muslim Brotherhood, Hassan al-Banna, used the concept of jihad as a holy war to try ending the foreign occupation of Muslim lands. The Muslim Brotherhood is widely believed to have spawned the al Qaeda network. But while the Koran is open to interpretation, el Fadl admits that the intellectual climate in the Islamic world tends to be inhospitable to dissent. "I do agree that in the contemporary age, dissent in Islam has become difficult, to say the least," says the UCLA professor, who says he has received threats over his writings and seen the cancellation of planned publications of Arabic translations of several of his books.
What are some accusations that Christians and Muslims make toward each other?

They both disagree with each other’s religion.

What are the differences in interpretation of jihad that the author points out?

Some saying that jihad is the struggle of making islam the dominant religion. Other times saying it is a reason to rid all other religions by any means necessary to help change the world.

Document 4 - ISIS/ISIL reading of the Koran and Jihad
The leader [of ISIS] specifically called for lone-wolf attacks in the United States and France -- two countries that have been conducting airstrikes against ISIS in Iraq.
The U.S. State Department had no comment to CNN when asked about the message Sunday night.
"Hinder those who want to harm your brothers," the ISIS spokesman said. "The best thing you can do is to strive to your best and kill any disbeliever, whether he be French, American or from any of their allies."
Civilians should not be exempt from brutality, he said. "Do not ask for anyone's advice and do not seek anyone's verdict. Kill the disbeliever whether he is civilian or military, for they have the same ruling. Both of them are disbelievers. Both of them are considered to be waging war."
"Oh Americans, and oh Europeans, the Islamic State did not initiate a war against you, as your governments and media try to make you believe," the ISIS spokesman added. "It is you who started the transgression against us, and thus you deserve blame and you will pay a great price."
He gave specifics on how to attack Westerners: "Rig the roads with explosives for them. Attack their bases. Raid their homes. Cut off their heads. Do not let them feel secure. Hunt them wherever they may be. Turn their worldly life into fear and fire. Remove their families from their homes and thereafter blow up their homes."
Al Qaeda has called for similar attacks in the past. But given ISIS' radical support base, which believes ISIS leaders are the rightful sovereign leaders of all Muslims worldwide, the ISIS pronouncement carries more weight.
SOURCE: Josh Levs and Holly Yan, CNN

What is ISIS’s directive to its believers regarding their fight?

Isis saying that all people who do not believe in their religion should die.
How does the ISIS spokesman relate the current war to past struggles between the west and Islam?
Still giving the jihad a strong reason of why they should fight, and most of the ideas are very similar to ones in the past.

Document 5 - President Obama’s view of Muslims as peacable

“I have made it clear that America will not base our entire foreign policy on reacting to terrorism. Instead, we’ve waged a focused campaign against al Qaeda and its associated forces – taking out their leaders, denying them the safe havens they rely on. At the same time, we have reaffirmed again and again that the United States is not and never will be at war with Islam. Islam teaches peace. Muslims the world over aspire to live with dignity and a sense of justice. And when it comes to America and Islam, there is no us and them, there is only us -- because millions of Muslim Americans are part of the fabric of our country. So we reject any suggestion of a clash of civilizations. Belief in permanent religious war is the misguided refuge of extremists who cannot build or create anything, and therefore peddle only fanaticism and hate. And it is no exaggeration to say that humanity’s future depends on us uniting against those who would divide us along the fault lines of tribe or sect, race or religion.
But this is not simply a matter of words. Collectively, we must take concrete steps to address the danger posed by religiously motivated fanatics, and the trends that fuel their recruitment. Moreover, this campaign against extremism goes beyond a narrow security challenge. For while we’ve degraded methodically core al Qaeda and supported a transition to a sovereign Afghan government, extremist ideology has shifted to other places -- particularly in the Middle East and North Africa, where a quarter of young people have no job, where food and water could grow scarce, where corruption is rampant and sectarian conflicts have become increasingly hard to contain.
No God condones this terror. No grievance justifies these actions. There can be no reasoning -- no negotiation -- with this brand of evil. The only language understood by killers like this is the language of force. So the United States of America will work with a broad coalition to dismantle this network of death.”

SOURCE: www.whitehouse.gov

What is Obama’s sense of Islam as a religion, in the United States and worldwide?
He accepts it and would not want to fight anybody because of religion. He only responds to attacks against the united states that are from terrorists.
What is Obama’s view of these modern day extremists, and how does he say the west must respond?
He thinks that extremists know what they are doing but are out of control, saying that the only way to respond to them is in the “language” they speak in, which is violence. He wants to put an end to them.

So, what are your views on the conflict today? What is your CLAIM?
Is the battle that Muslim extremists like ISIL/ISIS wage today a direct result of the teachings of Muhammed and the early Muslims? Is it justified?
They have their own beliefs and reasons why they do things, but in my opinion, I think that there is definitely some connection to what they are trying to do. They are probably trying to recreate what Muhammad did. I do not think that it is justified now, because you will never have a controlled population that believe in the same thing. We all have a free will to choose.

Are the wars of today (Afghanistan, Iraq, and now ISIS in Syria and Iraq) another “crusade” against Islam? Do you think it will work?
It may be a sort of crusade but I think that the motives are different for the current wars, because religion now is not as popular as it was back then.

What should the response be to the Islamic State’s extremist attacks?
I think that it makes sense that we must defend ourselves physically, spiritually, and mentally when being messed with. In other cases, if they do not do anything to us, we do not have to do anything to them..