

LECTURE / DISCUSSION / DEBATE  
RELIGION AND NATIONALISM

**Terms and concepts to know:**

Nationalism	Ideology
Secularization	Islam
Muhammad	Muslim
Caliph	Koran
<i>Ummah</i>	<i>Jihad</i>
Sunni	Shi'ite / Shia

**Study and discussion questions:**

1. Examine the statements about contemporary religion put forth by James Carroll. He appears to believe that, under the proper conditions, religion can be a positive force in international affairs. Would you agree or disagree with this notion?
2. Discuss the differences between *Jihad* and "McWorld." Which one of these forces does the United States represent? Also, examine the "four imperatives" of McWorld. Are they really incompatible with the forces of jihad?
3. What do you think a Muslim would say about the "unswerving embrace of objectivity and impartiality" of science and modernism (enlightenment) in general?
4. Do you agree with Barber that "capitalism and democracy have a relationship, but it is something less than a marriage"? Discuss Barber's image of *jihad* and its natural, innate conflict with "McWorld." What are some of the examples he points to?
5. Interestingly, Lewis suggests in his article that "Anglo-French rule and American influence, like the Mongol invasions, were a consequence, not a cause, of the inner weakness of Middle Eastern states and societies." What direction then does this point those nations of the Middle East to go in order to regain "strength and greatness"?
6. Discuss Mead's analysis of the relationship that the evangelical community in the U.S. has in influencing our foreign policy. Does Mead see it as a net positive or negative? Do you agree or disagree with him?
7. The documentary *Beyond Our Differences* makes the case that the world is too largely focused on the negative aspects of contemporary religion, particularly the Western tradition, and not enough on the positive. Did you agree or disagree with this essential message of the film?

**Readings:**

Walter Russell Mead. "God's Country?" *Foreign Affairs*. Sep/Oct 2006.  
James Carroll. "Why Religion Still Matters." *Dædalus*. Summer 2003.  
Benjamin Barber. "Jihad vs. McWorld." *The Atlantic Monthly*. March 1992.  
Bernard Lewis. "What Went Wrong?" *The Atlantic Monthly*. January 2002.

**Video:**

*Beyond Our Differences*, a documentary film from the Bill Moyers Journal.