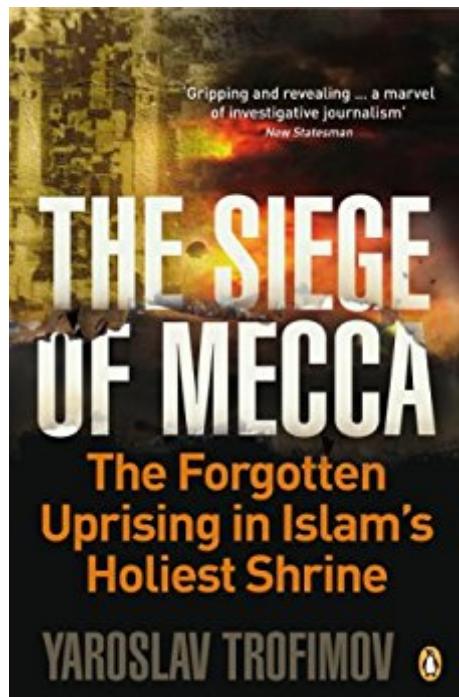


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# The Siege Of Mecca: The Forgotten Uprising In Islam's Holiest Shrine



## **Synopsis**

20 November 1979: as morning prayers began, hundreds of hardline Islamist gunmen, armed with rifles smuggled in coffins, stormed the Grand Mosque in Mecca. With thousands of terrified worshippers trapped inside, the result was a bloody siege that lasted two weeks, caused hundreds of deaths, prompted an international diplomatic crisis and unleashed forces that would eventually lead to the rise of al Qaeda. Journalist Yaroslav Trofimov takes us day-by-day through one of the most momentous – and heavily censored – events in recent history, interviewing many direct participants in the siege and drawing on secret documents to reveal the truth about the first operation of modern global jihad.

## **Book Information**

File Size: 1454 KB

Print Length: 308 pages

Publisher: Penguin (August 7, 2008)

Publication Date: August 7, 2008

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B002RI9DVK

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Not Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #853,838 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #56 in Books > Religion & Spirituality > Islam > Mecca #178 in Books > History > Middle East > Saudi Arabia #304 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > History > Religion > Islam

## **Customer Reviews**

I remember in 1979 as a wee lad reading (and perhaps seeing on TV news, but cannot recall the details) about the attack on Mecca. I had always wondered what really happened. In ca. 2008, I saw this book at (then still in business) Border's on the shelf--picked it up, thought, "Hey, I should read this!" Then I (stupidly) put it back. Fortunately, our local library had it. This is an amazing account, and some may question whether or not Trofimov's book can be compared favorably (if at all) to the Looming Tower (Lawrence Wright, The Looming Tower: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11). Well, of

course it can! Masterfully written, very well researched, and with a fascinating, fast-paced but exceptionally well-detailed narrative, this critical work provides key historical connections between modern radical Islam, and recent threats not only to the Muslim world but especially to the West (and that includes Israel, of course). The fanatic, macabre death-wish frenzy of our enemies can be traced back further, of course, but this book (Siege of Mecca) is one of the best modern accounts of its contorted genesis. And given the sensitivity and seclusion of the main subject, i.e., Mecca, The Siege of Mecca will likely be the only definitive account--unless the Kingdom ever decides to make public its archives on the tragic and very violent battle at Islam's holiest of holies.

For anyone struggling to understand the various sects within Islam, this book helps explain the animosities and tensions that exist. I don't remember ever hearing about this event until I read the book.

I had a difficult time putting down this book. I never heard of it until I was in a seminar and it was recommended to me to better understand Islamic extremism. It was VERY informative and actually a bit exciting if a book can be that way. I learned a LOT.

This is a fantastic book about the siege of Mecca (the Muslim holy place in Saudi Arabia) that happened on the morning of November 20, 1979. On that early morning, the first day of a new Muslim Century, hundreds of Muslim killers stormed God's Mosque (also known as the House of God) in Mecca, taking hostages and declaring Jihad against the House of Saud (Saudi Arabia's ruling family). The aim of Juhayman al Uteybi, the jihadist leader, was to overthrow the house of Saud and restore Muslim democracy. The bloody siege lasted two weeks. Many mistakes were made by these jihadist. First, these men were defiling Islam's holiest shrine. God forbid violence and bloodshed in the Grand Mosque. Their action was contrary to Muslim doctrines. Second, an attack on the House of Saud should have been an attack on Al Saud's family, not against God. Storming the Grand Mosque was an attack on Islam, and in the process, many innocent Muslim pilgrims died. Third, the jihadist believed that the Mahdi (in Muslim belief, a spiritual man who is believed to welcome the coming of Jesus Christ on Earth) was among them. The Saudi royal family, with their little army of untrained men, was unable to fight off the jihadist, suffering many casualties. In desperation they enlisted the help of French commandos led by Captain Paul Barril. He used poison gas to finally knock out the insurgents. I really enjoyed reading this book, and honestly, couldn't put it down. It reads like a spy novel. The reader will gain much insight into the politics of Saudi Arabia,

and what is more important, about the rise of the present jihadist terrorist attacks around the world. This is a necessary book for anyone wanting to understand why the September 11 attacks on US soil occurred. I highly recommend this book!

Trofimov reveals the surprising truth about the origin of "radical Islamic fundamentalism". A well researched, well written and very informative book. Trofimov is a great writer.

For all those who want to know and understand the middle crisis, here's the book that would give an insight to the problem. Very well investigated and written.

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