

The Sunni Shia Conflict Understanding Sectarian Violence In The Middle East

A narrative history of the origins of the Shia and Sunni conflict describes how a seventh-century struggle between the supporters of the late Muhammad's surviving family members erupted in a massacre at Karbala that would become a central component of Shia Islam.

For four decades Saudi Arabia and Iran have vied for influence in the Muslim world. At the heart of this ongoing Cold War between Riyadh and Tehran lie the Sunni-Shia divide, and the two countries' intertwined histories. Saudis see this as a conflict between Sunni and Shia; Iran's ruling clerics view it as one between their own Islamic Republic and an illegitimate monarchy. This foundational schism has played out in a geopolitical competition for dominance in the region: Iran has expanded its influence in Syria, Iraq and Lebanon, while Saudi Arabia's hyperactive crown prince, Muhammad bin Salman, has intervened in Yemen, isolated Qatar and destabilized Lebanon. Dilip Hiro examines the toxic rivalry between the two countries, tracing its roots and asking whether this Islamic Cold War is likely to end any time soon.

Clarifies the true nature of Iraq's sectarian civil war

This book argues that ever since Iran's Islamic Revolution in 1979, which established a Shia Islamic government in Iran, that country's religious and political leaders, have used Shia Islam as a crucial way of expanding Iran's objectives in the Middle East and beyond. Since 1979, Iran's religious and political leaders have been concerned about Iran's security in the face of the hostility and expansionism of the United States and other western countries, and the threats from powerful neighboring Sunni leaders and countries. While Iran's government has attempted to align itself with Shia Muslims in various countries, such as Iraq and Lebanon, against American and Sunni expansionism, the Iranian government has attempted to religiously nourish and politically mobilize those Shias as a matter of principle, not only because of the Iranian government's desires to protect Iran from external threats. The book analyzes Shia Islam and politics in Iraq, Iraq, and Lebanon which have among the largest proportional Shia populations in the Middle East and are vibrant centers of Shia intellectual life. The book's clear and jargon-free approach make it especially accessible for students and general readers who would like an introduction to the book's topics.

A New York Times Bestseller "Historically incisive, geographically broad-reaching, and brimming with illuminating anecdotes."—Max Rodenbeck, New York Review of Books Iranian-born scholar Vali Nasr has become one of America's leading commentators on current events in the Middle East, admired and welcomed by both media and government for his "concise and coherent" analysis (Wall Street Journal, front-page profile). In this "remarkable work" (Anderson Cooper), Nasr brilliantly dissects the political and theological antagonisms within Islam, providing a unique and objective understanding of the 1,400-year bitter struggle between Shias and Sunnis and shedding crucial light on its modern-day consequences.

This volume brings together academics, experts, and practitioners to explore pathways to ending the current civil wars in the Middle East. It starts by examining the history of civil wars in the region in the 20th century, moves on to what we know about

ending civil wars and the geopolitics of the current conflicts, and then delves into the causes, drivers, and dynamics of the ongoing civil wars in Syria, Yemen, Libya, and Afghanistan, as well as the recent civil war in Iraq. While readers will find little easy optimism within these pages, they will gain a better understanding of the obstacles and opportunities for advancing toward peace and stability in each of these countries, as well as escaping the conflict trap in which the region is mired. The unique combination of academic, analytic, and practitioner perspectives will help policymakers step back from the immediacy of today to consider the various elements of a broader sustained strategy for resolving these conflicts that involves actors at the national, regional, and global levels. Policymakers, academics, students, and concerned citizens will come away with a richer and more nuanced understanding of the drivers of civil conflict in the region, the particular challenges of the individual civil wars, and the factors that need to be brought to bear to bring these conflicts to an end, and create a stable and sustainable peace.

This book is the first comprehensive account of how Pakistan became involved in sectarian terrorism starting in the 1980s. How was the state of Pakistan dragged into this terrorism? All Pakistanis want to know about the roots of today's terrorism. This book lays bare the infrastructure of terror as it targeted the sects in its first phase. The demand for this book is going to be across the spectrum, from the scholar to the lay reader. It will make available the answers no one has tried to supply in the past.

The History of the Sunni and Shia Split Understanding the Divisions Within Islam Createspace Independent Publishing Platform "Sectarianism" is one of the most over-discussed yet under-analyzed concepts in debates about the Middle East. Despite the deluge of commentary, there is no agreement on what "sectarianism" is. Is it a social issue, one of dogmatic incompatibility, a historic one or one purely related to modern power politics? Is it something innately felt or politically imposed? Is it a product of modernity or its antithesis? Is it a function of the nation-state or its negation? This book seeks to move the study of modern sectarian dynamics beyond these analytically paralyzing dichotomies by shifting the focus away from the meaningless '-ism' towards the root: sectarian identity. How are Sunni and Shi'a identities imagined, experienced and negotiated and how do they relate to and interact with other identities? Looking at the modern history of the Arab world, Haddad seeks to understand sectarian identity not as a monochrome frame of identification but as a multi-layered concept that operates on several dimensions: religious, subnational, national and transnational. Far from a uniquely Middle Eastern, Arab, or Islamic phenomenon, a better understanding of sectarian identity reveals that the many facets of sectarian relations that are misleadingly labelled "sectarianism" are echoed in intergroup relations worldwide.

The Shi'is of Iraq provides a comprehensive history of Iraq's majority group and its turbulent relations with the ruling Sunni minority. Yitzhak Nakash challenges the widely held belief that Shi'i society and politics in Iraq are a reflection of Iranian Shi'ism, pointing to the strong Arab attributes of Iraqi Shi'ism. He contends that behind the power struggle in Iraq between Arab Sunnis and Shi'is there exist two sectarian groups that are quite similar. The tension fueling the sectarian problem between Sunnis and Shi'is is political rather than ethnic or cultural, and it reflects the competition of the two groups over the right to rule and to define the meaning of nationalism in Iraq. A new introduction brings this book into the new century and illuminates the role that Shi'is could

play in postwar Iraq.

A former CIA analyst, National Security Council official, and author of *The Threatening Storm* looks back at the turbulent relationship between Iran and the United States on the twenty-fifth anniversary of the Iran hostage crisis, examining the hostage crisis, the Iran-Contra scandal, the 1996 Khobar Towers terrorist attack, and U.S.-Iran clashes over Afghanistan and Iraq. Reprint. From the award-winning author of *The Rise of Islamic State*, the essential story of the Middle East's disintegration *The Age of Jihad* charts the turmoil of today's Middle East and the devastating role the West has played in the region from 2001 to the present. Beginning with the US-led invasion of Afghanistan, Cockburn explores the vast geopolitical struggle that is the Sunni–Shia conflict, a clash that shapes the war on terror, western military interventions, the evolution of the insurgency, the civil wars in Yemen, Libya and Syria, the Arab Spring, the fall of regional dictators, and the rise of Islamic State. As Cockburn shows in arresting detail, Islamic State did not explode into existence in Syria in the wake of the Arab Spring, as conventional wisdom would have it. The organization gestated over several years in occupied Iraq, before growing to the point where it can threaten the stability of the whole region. Cockburn was the first Western journalist to warn of the dangers posed by Islamic State. His originality and breadth of vision make *The Age of Jihad* the most in-depth analysis of the regional crisis in the Middle East to date. "This book is a historical and sociological reading of the relation between Sunnis and Shias from the inception of the dispute for Mohammed's succession until today. It is divided in two parts. The first part offers a comprehensive history of the divide. It shows how Shiism was, during much of the Middle Ages, the main contestation ideology of the caliphate, but also how Sunnism and Shiism converged as Shiism progressively ceased to be an esoteric and politically radical doctrine to espouse a number of tenets of mainstream Islam. It shows the political dynamics that runs beneath theological debates and, in particular, how the Sunni/Shia conflict was revived when the Safavids made Shiism an official state religion on the model of Sunnism. On the contrary, when faced with the colonial challenge, Sunni and Shia reformists closed ranks and collaborated. The second part of the book offers a socio-historical account of some national contexts in which the Sunni/Shia divide shapes the society and the politics: Iraq, Bahrain, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Yemen and Lebanon. It shows that in each of these countries the sectarian divide is shaped by very specific historical and social circumstances. Sunni and Shia identities are associated with ethnic, regional, statutory and economic identities. In most cases the relations between Sunnis and Shias are shaped by typical majority/minority dynamics. They can lead to conflict but dynamics of emulation often emerges from conflicts, which are particularly obvious when Sunni and Shia Islamic movements compete"--

Rogerson's timely book begins with the contemporary Middle East and the proxy wars between Saudi Arabia and its Sunni allies and Shiite Iran. To understand these, he suggests, we must understand the origins of the Sunni-Shia divide, which go back to the death of the Prophet Muhammad in 632, the accidental coup that set aside the claims of Ali, and the slaughter of Ali's son Husayn at Kerbala. These events, known to every Muslim, have created a slender fault line in the Middle East. This is a vivid and pulsating tale full of doomed heroes and secret conspiracies as Rogerson shows how the rivalry between Arab, Turk and Persian has

shaped the modern chessboard of nation states, oil wells, mountains and minorities, and at the seismic shift from the Iranian Revolution of 1979. It is vital, Rogerson contends, to empathise with the Islamic world and understand their story-lines, or this disastrous schism may pull us all apart.

Islam is largely blanketed by mystery and distorted by bias. This book introduces the truth of Islamic beliefs and culture. Islam is an incredibly popular religion, and the second largest in the world. What comes with such a common but elusive belief system? A curiously large amount of customs, and very intriguing, ancient beliefs. There is A LOT of intricacies about Islam. This book will give you an introductory, holistic understanding of the religion. From defining the truth of what Allah means to muslims, explaining the four stages of life, to everyday customs, this book covers it all. Both for muslims and non-muslims, you're guaranteed to learn A LOT of valuable information. Here are some of your questions that will be answered! What are the five pillars of Islam? What's the story of Muhammad? Who is he? What does Islam say about Jesus? Muslims believe in Satan? What about Angels? What does Islam say about free will? What is the Ka'ba? What's the Quran and what's written in it? And much, much more... If you're looking to learn more about Islam, look no further. Whether you know nothing about the religion, or you're a muslim yourself and want more, this book will be accessible and useful to everyone. I'm so sure that you'll find it informative, that I'll happily give you a refund if you're not totally satisfied.

Islam is one of the most popular religions in the world with over 1 billion followers worldwide. As with any other widespread religions, many different schisms and sects have emerged over the course of history so that Islam has come to be interpreted in many different ways. Of those schisms, the split between the Sunnis and Shiites has been by far the oldest and most enduring split. Because it occurred approximately 1,400 years ago, the causes and consequences have become blurred. Today, myths and confusion abound and few people—even within the Muslim community itself—actually know what really happened and what that really means for today's world. This book has been written with the intention of clearing up that confusion. It is primarily intended for readers who are not very familiar with Islam in general—let alone the actual significance of the split between Sunni and Shiite—who are interested in learning more. Knowing the history of the religion and the current tensions in the Middle East will go a long way toward helping you understand the complexity and nuance of the situation. You will gain a deeper understanding of the Sunnis and the Shiites as well as Islam more broadly. Some of the features of this book include: An overview of the belief system and structure of the Islamic religion The geography, politics, and daily life of believers in Islam A history of the rise of Islam in the Arabic world A detailed discussion of the Sunni Shia schism A closer look at the Sunni belief system, geography, politics, and daily life A closer look at the Shiite belief system, geography, politics, and daily life Deeper analysis of the present day conflicts, including differing perspectives on its origins and roots. While reading just one book cannot make you an expert on the situation, this book will allow you to view the news coming out of the Middle East from a much more informed perspective and give you the foundation you need to do further research and learn more.

From Algeria and Libya to Egypt and Syria, the Arab world commands Western headlines, even as its complex politics and cultures elude the

grasp of most Western readers and commentators. Perhaps no other region is so closely linked to contemporary U.S. foreign policy, and nowhere else does the unfolding of events have such significant consequences for America. A Concise History of the Arabs argues that the key to understanding the Arab world today—and in the years ahead—is unlocking its past. John McHugo takes the reader on a journey through the political, social, and intellectual history of the Arabs from the Roman Empire right up to the present day. His sweeping and fluent account describes in vivid detail the mission of the Prophet Muhammad, the expansion of Islam, the origins of Shiism, medieval and modern conflicts, the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the interaction with Western ideas, the struggle to escape foreign domination, the rise of Islamism, and the end of the era of dictators. McHugo reveals how the Arab world came to have its present form, why change was inevitable, and what choices lie ahead following the Arab Spring. This deeply informed and accessible account is the perfect entry point for anyone seeking to comprehend this vital part of the world.

This collection seeks to advance our understanding of intra-Islamic identity conflict during a period of upheaval in the Middle East. Instead of treating distinctions between and within Sunni and Shia Islam as primordial and immutable, it examines how political economy, geopolitics, domestic governance, social media, non- and sub-state groups, and clerical elites have affected the transformation and diffusion of sectarian identities. Particular attention is paid to how conflicts over distribution of political and economic power have taken on a sectarian quality, and how a variety of actors have instrumentalized sectarianism. The volume, covering Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf, Iran, and Egypt, includes contributors from a broad array of disciplines including political science, history, sociology, and Islamic studies. Beyond Sunni and Shia draws on extensive fieldwork and primary sources to offer insights that are empirically rich and theoretically grounded, but also accessible for policy audiences and the informed public.

Reinventing Khomeini offers a new interpretation of the political battles that paved the way for reform in Iran. Brumberg argues that these conflicts did not result from a sudden ideological shift; nor did the election of President Mohammad Khatami in 1997 really defy the core principles of the Islamic Revolution. To the contrary, the struggle for a more democratic Iran can be traced to the revolution itself, and to the contradictory agendas of the revolution's founding father, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. A complex figure, Khomeini was a fervent champion of Islam, but while he sought a Shi'ite vision of clerical rule under one Supreme Leader, he also strove to mesh that vision with an implicitly Western view of mass participatory politics. The intense magnetism and charisma of the ayatollah obscured this paradox. But reformers in Iran today, while rejecting his autocratic vision, are reviving the constitutional notions of government that he considered, and even casting themselves as the bearers of his legacy. In Reinventing Khomeini, Brumberg proves that the ayatollah is as much the author of modern Iran as he is the symbol of its fundamentalist past.

From 1980 to 1988 Iran and Iraq fought the longest conventional war of the century. It included tragic slaughter of child soldiers, use of chemical weapons, striking of civilian shipping, and destruction of cities. Pierre Razoux offers an unflinching look at a conflict seared into the region's collective memory but little understood in the West.

Before the immense changes of the 2011 'Arab Spring', it was Sunni-Shia sectarian rivalry that preoccupied most political analyses of the Middle East. This book presents wide-ranging and up-to-date research that sheds light on the political, sociological and ideological processes that are affecting the dynamics within the Shia and Sunni worlds.

A New York Times Notable Book of 2020 "[A] sweeping and authoritative history" (The New York Times Book Review), Black Wave is an unprecedented and ambitious examination of how the modern Middle East unraveled and why it started with the pivotal year of 1979. Kim

Ghattas seamlessly weaves together history, geopolitics, and culture to deliver a gripping read of the largely unexplored story of the rivalry between Saudi Arabia and Iran, born from the sparks of the 1979 Iranian revolution and fueled by American policy. With vivid storytelling, extensive historical research and on-the-ground reporting, Ghattas dispels accepted truths about a region she calls home. She explores how Sunni Saudi Arabia and Shia Iran, once allies and twin pillars of US strategy in the region, became mortal enemies after 1979. She shows how they used and distorted religion in a competition that went well beyond geopolitics. Feeding intolerance, suppressing cultural expression, and encouraging sectarian violence from Egypt to Pakistan, the war for cultural supremacy led to Iran's fatwa against author Salman Rushdie, the assassination of countless intellectuals, the birth of groups like Hezbollah in Lebanon, the September 11th terrorist attacks, and the rise of ISIS. Ghattas introduces us to a riveting cast of characters whose lives were upended by the geopolitical drama over four decades: from the Pakistani television anchor who defied her country's dictator, to the Egyptian novelist thrown in jail for indecent writings all the way to the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in 2018. *Black Wave* is both an intimate and sweeping history of the region and will significantly alter perceptions of the Middle East.

An unprecedented analysis of the crucial but underexplored roles the United States and other nations have played in shaping Syria's ongoing civil war "One of the best informed and non-partisan accounts of the Syrian tragedy yet published."—Patrick Cockburn, *Independent* Syria's brutal, long-lasting civil war is widely viewed as a domestic contest that began in 2011 and only later drew foreign nations into the fray. But in this book Christopher Phillips shows the crucial roles that were played by the United States, Russia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Qatar in Syria's war right from the start. Phillips untangles the international influences on the tragic conflict and illuminates the West's strategy against ISIS, the decline of U.S. power in the region, and much more. Originally published in 2016, the book has been updated with two new chapters.

*Includes pictures *Discusses the political and religious history of both main branches of Islam *Includes footnotes and a bibliography for further reading "Our followers are of three kinds, one who follows us but depends on others, one who is like a glass involved in his own reflections, but the best are those who are like gold, the more they suffer the more they shine." - Muhammad al-Baqir Different branches of the same religion are the exception more than the rule, and they have had a profound impact upon history. The schism between the Orthodox and Catholic Churches influenced relationships between nations across Europe, and religious intolerance based on different Christian faiths led to persecution and outright violence across the continent for centuries. The Protestant Reformation split Christianity further, and the results culminated in the incredibly destructive Thirty Years' War in the 17th century. Today, the most important religious split is between the Sunnis and the Shias (Shiites) within Islam. Unlike divisions in other faiths - between Conservative and Orthodox Jews or Catholic and Protestant Christians - the split between the Sunnis and Shia has existed almost as long as the faith itself, and it quickly emerged out of tensions created by the political crisis after the death of the Prophet Muhammad. In a sense, what are now two different forms of Islam essentially started as political factions within the unified body of Muslim believers. Over the past few centuries, Christians have mostly been able to live alongside their co-religionists, but the split between the Sunnis and Shias is still so pronounced that many adherents of each branch view each other with disdain if not as outright apostates or non-believers. The religious divide is perhaps the most important fault line in the turbulent Middle East today, with Sunni nations like Egypt and Saudi Arabia at odds with Shiite nations like Iran. At lower levels, non-state groups like the Islamic State and Hezbollah are fighting each other in ways that cross state lines in places like Lebanon, Iraq, and Syria. Although it is technically a split in religion, the divide has had substantial global ramifications for decades, and there seems to be no end in

sight. The History of the Sunni and Shia Split traces the origins of the split and the historic effects of the main divide within Islam. Along with pictures of important people, places, and events, you will learn about the history of the Sunnis and Shias like never before, in no time at all. The Shias of Pakistan are the world's second largest Shia community after that of Iran, but comprise only 10-15 per cent of Pakistan's population. In recent decades Sunni extremists have increasingly targeted them with hate propoganda and terrorism, yet paradoxically Shias have always been fully integrated into all sections of political, professional and social life without suffering any discrimination. In mainstream politics, the Shia- Sunni divide has never been an issue in Pakistan. Shia politicians in Pakistan have usually downplayed their religious beliefs, but there have always been individuals and groups who emphasised their Shia identity, and who zealously campaigned for equal rights for the Shias wherever and whenever they perceived these to be threatened. Shia 'ulama' have been at the forefront of communal activism in Pakistan since 1949, but Shia laymen also participated in such organisations, as they had in pre-partition India. Based mainly on Urdu sources, Rieck's book examines, first, the history of Pakistan's Shias, including their communal organisations, the growth of the Shia 'ulama' class, of religious schools and rivalry between "orthodox" "ulama" and popular preachers; second, the outcome of lobbying of successive Pakistan governments by Shia organisations; and third, the Shia-Sunni conflict, which is increasingly virulent due to the state's failure to combat Sunni extremism.

As the Middle East descends ever deeper into violence and chaos, 'sectarianism' has become a catch-all explanation for the region's troubles. The turmoil is attributed to 'ancient sectarian differences', putatively primordial forces that make violent conflict intractable. In media and policy discussions, sectarianism has come to possess trans-historical causal power. This book trenchantly challenges the lazy use of 'sectarianism' as a magic-bullet explanation for the region's ills, focusing on how various conflicts in the Middle East have morphed from non-sectarian (or cross-sectarian) and nonviolent movements into sectarian wars. Through multiple case studies -- including Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Yemen and Kuwait -- this book maps the dynamics of sectarianisation, exploring not only how but also why it has taken hold. The contributors examine the constellation of forces -- from those within societies to external factors such as the Saudi-Iran rivalry -- that drive the sectarianisation process and explore how the region's politics can be de-sectarianised. Featuring leading scholars -- and including historians, anthropologists, political scientists and international relations theorists -- this book will redefine the terms of debate on one of the most critical issues in international affairs today.

As the world focuses on the conflict in Iraq, the most important political players in that country today are not the Sunni insurgents. Instead, they are Iraq's Shi'i majority--part of the Middle East's ninety million Shi'i Muslims who hold the key to the future of the region and the relations between Muslim and Western societies. So contends Yitzhak Nakash, one of the world's foremost experts on Shi'ism. With his characteristic verve and style, Nakash traces the role of the Shi'is in the struggle that is raging today among Muslims for the soul of Islam. He shows that in contrast to the growing militancy among Sunni groups since the 1990s, Shi'is have shifted their focus from confrontation to accommodation with the West. Constituting sixty percent of the population of Iraq, they stand squarely at the center of the U.S government's attempt to remake the Middle East and bring democracy to the region. This groundbreaking book addresses the crucial importance of Shi'is to the U.S. endeavor. Yet it also alerts readers to the strong nationalist sentiments of Shi'is, underscoring the difficult challenge that the United States faces in attempting to impose a new order in the Middle East. The book provides a comprehensive historical perspective on Shi'ism, beginning with the emergence of the movement during the seventh century, continuing through its rise as a political force since the Iranian Islamic Revolution of 1978-79, and leading up to the Iraqi elections of January 2005. Drawing extensively on Arabic sources, this

comparative study highlights the reciprocal influences shaping the political development of Shi'is in Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Lebanon, as well as the impact of the revival of Shi'ism on the larger Arab world. The narrative concludes with an assessment of the risks and possibilities arising from the assertion of Shi'i power in Iraq and from America's attempt to play an increasingly forceful role in the Middle East. A landmark book and a work of remarkable scholarship, *Reaching for Power* illuminates the Shi'a resurgence amid the shifting geopolitics of the Middle East.

Gun-for-hire James 'Ash' Ashcroft thought he'd left Iraq behind. Last time he only got out alive thanks to the bravery of his interpreter and friend Sammy. But now a call for help means Ash must once again face the chaos of war-torn Baghdad - and this time there's no pay cheque. Abandoned by the occupying Coalition Forces, Sammy and his family face certain death at the hands of the Shia-dominated Iraqi Police and the death squads that roam the streets unless Ash and his team can get in and get them to safety over the border. This is the action-packed story of their audacious escape from Baghdad. It is a gripping account of the chaos of war, where the only thing that can be relied upon is the bond between former brothers-in-arms.

"The New Sectarianism considers the causes for growing Sunni-Shi'a animosity in countries such as Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. It illustrates how the two groups perceive one another after the Arab uprisings, how these perceptions have affected Arab life, and how these contestations pose a serious threat to the stability of regional states and to stakeholders in the wider world"--

The conflict in Iraq is characterized by three faces of war: interstate conflict, civil war, and insurgency. The Coalition's invasion of Iraq in March 2003 began as an interstate war. No sooner had Saddam Hussein been successfully deposed, however, than U.S.-led forces faced a lethal insurgency. After Sunni al Qaeda in Iraq bombed the Shia al-Askari Shrine in 2006, the burgeoning conflict took on the additional element of civil war with sectarian violence between the Sunni and the Shia. The most effective strategies in a war as complicated as the three-level conflict in Iraq are intertwined and complementary, according to the editors of this volume. For example, the "surge" in U.S. troops in 2007 went beyond an increase in manpower; the mission had changed, giving priority to public security. This new direction also simultaneously addressed the insurgency as well as the civil war by forging new, trusting relationships between Americans and Iraqis and between Sunni and Shia. This book has broad implications for future decisions about war and peace in the twenty-first century.

"Tribes and politics in Yemen' tells the story of the Houthi conflict in Sa'dah Province, Yemen, as seen through the eyes of the local tribes. In the West the Houthi conflict, which erupted in 2004, is often defined through the lenses of either the Iranian-Saudi proxy war or the Sunni-Shia divide. Yet, as experienced by locals, the Houthi conflict is much more deeply rooted in the recent history of Sa'dah Province. Its origins must be sought in the political, economic, social and sectarian transformations since the 1960s civil war and their repercussions on the local society, which is dominated by tribal norms. From the civil war to the Houthi conflict these transformations involve the same individuals, families and groups, and are driven by the same struggles over resources, prerogatives, and power. This book is based on years of anthropological fieldwork expertise both on the ground and through digital anthropological approaches. It offers a detailed account of the local complexities of the Houthi conflict and its historical background and underscores the absolute imperative of understanding the highly local, personal, and non-ideological nature of internal conflict in Yemen."--Publisher's description.

One of the New York Times' 100 Notable Books of 2015 One of Financial Times' Books of the Year, 2015 A New York Times Editors' Choice A New Statesman [UK] Essential Book of the Year 2015 A Times [UK] Book of the Year 2015 Shortlisted for the 2015 Samuel Johnson Prize for Nonfiction Shortlisted for the 2016 Orwell Prize When Emma Sky volunteered to help rebuild Iraq after the overthrow of Saddam Hussein

in 2003, she had little idea what she was getting in to. Her assignment was only supposed to last three months. She went on to serve there longer than any other senior military or diplomatic figure, giving her an unrivaled perspective of the entire conflict. As the representative of the Coalition Provisional Authority in Kirkuk in 2003 and then the political advisor to US General Odierno from 2007-2010, Sky was valued for her knowledge of the region and her outspoken voice. She became a tireless witness to American efforts to transform a country traumatized by decades of war, sanctions, and brutal dictatorship; to insurgencies and civil war; to the planning and implementation of the surge and the subsequent drawdown of US troops; to the corrupt political elites who used sectarianism to mobilize support; and to the takeover of a third of the country by the Islamic State. With sharp detail and tremendous empathy, Sky provides unique insights into the US military as well as the complexities, diversity, and evolution of Iraqi society. *The Unraveling* is an intimate insider's portrait of how and why the Iraq adventure failed and contains a unique analysis of the course of the war. Highlighting how nothing that happened in Iraq after 2003 was inevitable, Sky exposes the failures of the policies of both Republicans and Democrats, and the lessons that must be learned about the limitations of power. In the last decade, the USA and its allies have invaded Afghanistan; Russia has sent troops into Ukraine; Britain and France helped topple a regime in Libya; the militant group ISIS has emerged in the Middle East; and across West Africa, the quest for precious minerals has both financed and caused conflicts. Other conflicts are less bloody, but still dangerous -- the nervous stand-off between India and Pakistan in Kashmir, for instance, or the continuing stalemate between nuclear-armed, totalitarian North Korea and capitalist, democratic South Korea. Can we be truly confident that these arguments will not lead to armed conflict -- whether by design or by human error? In *The World in Conflict*, John Andrews tackles head-on the reasons why global conflict is an ever-present in our lives. He analyses today's conflicts continent by continent, considering the causes, participants, impact and likely outcomes. He looks at recently-ended wars that remain prone to intermittent fighting. And, crucially, he considers where, why and how new conflicts might erupt. This is a book for our times, an essential guide for anyone and everyone who wants to know more about the world's main danger spots and how and why war and terrorism persist -- in short, how we might better understand our world in conflict.

The battles within Islam are not rooted in theology, but in timeless geopolitical struggles

The 1,400-year-old schism between Sunnis and Shi'is is currently reflected in the destructive struggle for hegemony between Saudi Arabia and Iran—with no apparent end in sight. But how did this conflict begin, and why is it now the focus of so much attention? Charting the history of Islam from the death of the Prophet Muhammad to the present day, John McHugo describes the conflicts that raged over the succession to the Prophet, how Sunnism and Shi'ism evolved as different sects during the Abbasid caliphate, and how the rivalry between the Sunni Ottomans and Shi'i Safavids ensured that the split would continue into the modern age. In recent decades, this centuries-old divide has acquired a new toxicity that has resulted in violence across the Arab world and other Muslim countries. Definitive, insightful, and accessible, *A Concise History of Sunnis and Shi'is* is an essential guide to understanding the genesis, development, and manipulation of the schism that for far too many people has come to define Islam and the Muslim world.

The story of Iran's Revolutionary Guards and 200,000 Shia militias fighting to establish an arc of influence across the Middle East.

This collection of essays brings together two sets of articles and book chapters by Mariam Abou Zahab, the extraordinary late scholar of Islam in South Asia. The first part of the volume examines Shia-Sunni relations in Pakistan, while the second concerns violent Islamism in the country, covering both the Talibanisation of the Pashtun belt and the jihadi dimension of South Asian Salafism. Throughout these texts, Abou Zahab explores the many reasons why Pakistan has been the crucible of political Islam. She offers a historical view of this development, factoring in the impact of colonialism and conflict, including the Soviet-Afghan War and the post-9/11 Western military operations in Afghanistan. While making clear the major importance of these external influences, from Saudi Arabia and Iran to the US, she also places Pakistan's political Islam in the context of local cultures, mobilising her anthropological erudition without ever indulging in culturalism. Finally, she emphasises the sociological determinants of sectarianism, Talibanism and jihadism, as well as the political economy of these ideologies. Abou Zahab's knowledge is exhaustive, but in these papers she offers an elegant synthesis in which each word matters. This volume is indispensable for understanding the present dynamics of Pakistan.

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