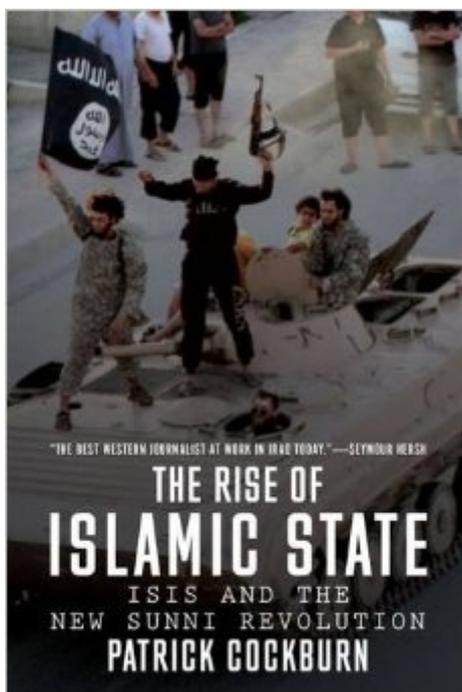


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The Rise Of Islamic State: ISIS And The New Sunni Revolution



Synopsis

The essential on the ground report on the fastest-growing new threat in the Middle East, from the winner of the 2014 Foreign Affairs Journalist of the Year Award. Born of the Iraqi and Syrian civil wars, the Islamic State astonished the world in 2014 by creating a powerful new force in the Middle East. By combining religious fanaticism and military prowess, the new self-declared caliphate poses a threat to the political status quo of the whole region. In *The Rise of Islamic State*, Patrick Cockburn describes the conflicts behind a dramatic unraveling of US foreign policy. He shows how the West created the conditions for ISIS's explosive success by stoking the war in Syria. The West—the US and NATO in particular—underestimated the militants' potential until it was too late and failed to act against jihadi sponsors in Saudi Arabia, Turkey and Pakistan.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The book's subtitle is "ISIS and the New Sunni Revolution". The further into this book you read, the more you realize how fitting a subtitle that is. For ISIS is Sunni Islam, and they hate adherents to Shia Islam. And vice versa. When you heard about sectarian violence in Iraq that followed President Obama's pullback of U.S. troops around 2009, Sunni-Shia relations went completely off the rails. Remember, too: back in 2014, al-Qaeda felt that ISIS was too extreme for even them and so severed ties with them. Besides this sectarian violence you have many other jihadist groups operating in the area. Groups Cockburn brings into the discussion here include the Kurds; the Free Syrian Army, consisting early on of defectors from the Syrian military; al-Qaeda; Jabhat al-Nusra (JAN), a splinter group of ISIS but now affiliated with al-Qaeda; Islamic Front; Chechen rebels;

Morrocon jihadists; the Salafist Ahrar ash-Sham, backed by Qatar and Turkey; Army of Islam, "created by Saudi Arabia as a jihadi counterbalance to JAN"; and Hezbollah, among others. Google "list of armed groups in Syrian Civil War" and you'll find a list of ~100 different groups. Eye-opening and spine-chilling information abounds. Cockburn, an Irish journalist, is a correspondent for the British newspaper The Independent (among others), so his writing is crisp and engaging: "Jihadi groups ideologically close to al-Qaeda have been relabeled as moderate if their actions are deemed supportive of U.S. policy aims" (p. 52). "Al-Qaeda is an idea rather than an organization, and this has long been the case" (p. 54).

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