

The Untold Story of America's War for the Greater Middle East

The Middle East has been a hotbed of conflict and turmoil for centuries. With its strategic location, vast oil reserves, and religious significance, it has always drawn the attention of powerful nations throughout history. However, it was in the late 20th century that the United States embarked on a new chapter in its involvement in the region, sparking what has come to be known as America's War for the Greater Middle East.

For the past few decades, the United States has been militarily engaged in the Middle East, with its primary focus on Iraq, Afghanistan, and other neighboring countries. This article aims to shed light on the underlying reasons behind America's continuous involvement, the geopolitical interests at play, and the impact of these wars on the region and beyond.

The Genesis of America's War for the Greater Middle East

The roots of America's prolonged engagement in the Middle East can be traced back to a series of pivotal events that took place in the 1970s and 1980s. The Iran hostage crisis, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, and the rise of violent extremist groups like Al-Qaeda all contributed to shaping the United States' perception of the region as a direct threat to its national security.

America's War for the Greater Middle East: A Military History by Andrew J. Bacevich (Kindle Edition)

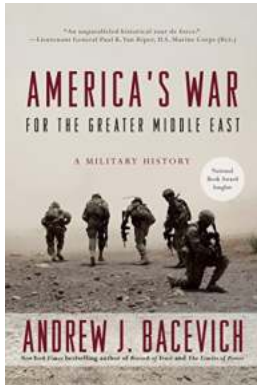
★★★★☆ 4.6 out of 5

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Driven by a desire to maintain control over the vast oil reserves in the Persian Gulf region, protect its regional allies, and prevent the spread of radical ideologies, the United States became increasingly militarily involved. First, it provided support to anti-Soviet forces in Afghanistan during the Cold War, and later launched a full-scale invasion of Iraq in 2003, based on unfounded claims of weapons of mass destruction.

Geopolitical Interests and Resource Control

The Middle East holds immense strategic and economic significance for the United States. Its oil reserves are vital for maintaining global economic stability and ensuring energy security. Additionally, the region's geostrategic location allows for the projection of power and influence over neighboring countries, including potential adversaries like Iran and Syria.

Controlling these vital resources and dominating the strategic landscapes facilitates the United States' ability to shape global politics and protect its national interests. Moreover, maintaining a military presence in the region ensures that no other power can challenge America's hegemony, effectively securing its position as a global superpower.

The Unintended Consequences of War

America's War for the Greater Middle East has had far-reaching consequences, both intended and unintended. The initial objectives of countering terrorism and promoting democracy were overshadowed by the emergence of new threats and the exacerbation of existing conflicts.

The toppling of Saddam Hussein in Iraq, for example, created a power vacuum that allowed sectarian violence and extremist groups to flourish. Similarly, the invasion of Afghanistan did not result in the eradication of terrorism but rather increased insurgency and instability in the region.

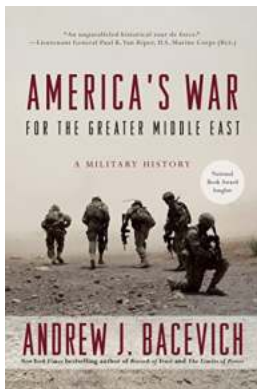
Furthermore, the prolonged presence of American troops and the use of controversial tactics like drone strikes have fueled anti-American sentiments and strengthened extremist narratives. This has further undermined the United States' ability to win the hearts and minds of the local populations, ultimately hindering its long-term objectives and leaving a trail of resentment and hostility.

Impact on the Greater Middle East and Beyond

The consequences of America's War for the Greater Middle East extend far beyond the region itself. The conflicts have caused immense human suffering, with millions of lives lost and countless others displaced or forced to live in dire conditions. The destabilization of the region has also fueled the rise of extremist ideologies, leading to the spread of terrorism globally.

Furthermore, the astronomical costs involved in maintaining a military presence in the Middle East have had a significant impact on the United States' economy. Trillions of dollars have been spent on wars and nation-building efforts, diverting funds from domestic priorities and contributing to the national debt.

America's War for the Greater Middle East is a complex and multifaceted issue. While it has been driven by geopolitical interests and a desire to maintain control over vital resources, the unintended consequences have been profound and far-reaching. The region continues to grapple with violence and instability, while the United States faces the challenge of reevaluating its approach and finding a path towards a more sustainable future.



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LONGLISTED FOR THE NATIONAL BOOK AWARD • A searing reassessment of U.S. military policy in the Middle East over the past four decades from retired army colonel and New York Times bestselling author Andrew J. Bacevich

From the end of World War II until 1980, virtually no American soldiers were killed in action while serving in the Greater Middle East. Since 1990, virtually no American soldiers have been killed in action anywhere else. What caused this shift? Andrew J. Bacevich, one of the country's most respected voices on foreign affairs, offers an incisive critical history of this ongoing military enterprise—now more than thirty years old and with no end in sight.

During the 1980s, Bacevich argues, a great transition occurred. As the Cold War wound down, the United States initiated a new conflict—a War for the Greater Middle East—that continues to the present day. The long twilight struggle with the Soviet Union had involved only occasional and sporadic fighting. But as this new war unfolded, hostilities became persistent. From the Balkans and East Africa to the Persian Gulf and Central Asia, U.S. forces embarked upon a seemingly endless series of campaigns across the Islamic world. Few achieved anything remotely like conclusive success. Instead, actions undertaken with expectations of promoting peace and stability produced just the opposite. As a consequence, phrases like “permanent war” and “open-ended war” have become part of everyday discourse.

Connecting the dots in a way no other historian has done before, Bacevich weaves a compelling narrative out of episodes as varied as the Beirut bombing of 1983, the Mogadishu firefight of 1993, the invasion of Iraq in 2003, and the rise of ISIS in the present decade. Understanding what America’s costly military exertions have wrought requires seeing these seemingly discrete events as parts of a single war. It also requires identifying the errors of judgment made by political leaders in both parties and by senior military officers who share responsibility for what has become a monumental march to folly. This Bacevich unflinchingly does.

A twenty-year army veteran who served in Vietnam, Andrew J. Bacevich brings the full weight of his expertise to this vitally important subject. America’s War for the Greater Middle East is a bracing after-action report from the front lines of history. It will fundamentally change the way we view America’s engagement in the world’s most volatile region.

Praise for America’s War for the Greater Middle East

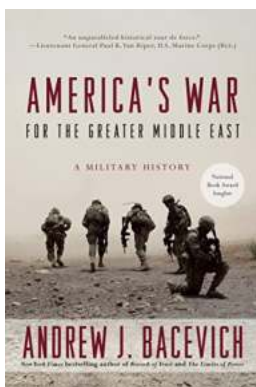
“Bacevich is thought-provoking, profane and fearless. . . . [His] call for Americans to rethink their nation’s militarized approach to the Middle East is incisive, urgent and essential.”—The New York Times Book Review

“Bacevich’s magnum opus . . . a deft and rhythmic polemic aimed at America’s failures in the Middle East from the end of Jimmy Carter’s presidency to the present.”—Robert D. Kaplan, The Wall Street Journal

“A critical review of American policy and military involvement . . . Those familiar with Bacevich’s work will recognize the clarity of expression, the devastating directness and the coruscating wit that characterize the writing of one of the most articulate and incisive living critics of American foreign policy.”—The Washington Post

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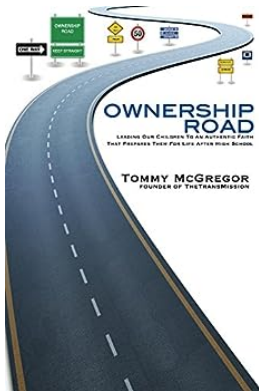
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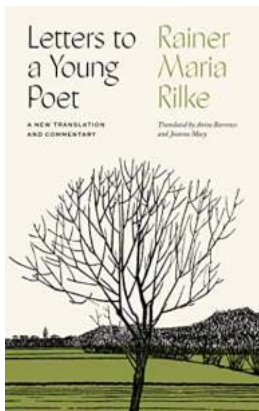
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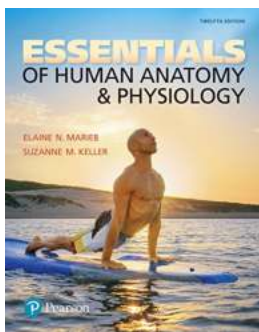
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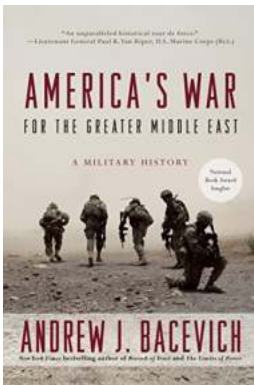
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