



## Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam

*John L. Esposito*

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The September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon left us stunned, angry, and uncomprehending. As it became clear that these horrifying acts had been committed in the name of religion, the media, the government, and ordinary citizens alike sought answers to questions about Islam and its adherents.

In this level-headed and authoritative book, John L. Esposito, one of the world's most respected scholars of political Islam, provides answers. He clearly and carefully explains the teachings of Islam--the Quran, the example of the Prophet, Islamic law--about jihad or holy war, the use of violence, and terrorism. He chronicles the rise of extremist groups and examines their frightening worldview and tactics. Anti-Americanism (and anti-Europeanism), he shows, is a broad-based phenomenon that cuts across Arab and Muslim societies. It is not just driven by religious zealotry, but by frustration and anger at U.S. policy. It is vital to understand, however, that the vast majority of Muslims are appalled by the acts of violence committed in the name of their faith. It is essential that we distinguish between the religion of Islam and the actions of extremists like Osama bin Laden, who hijack Islamic discourse and belief to justify their acts of terrorism. This brief, clear-sighted book reflects twenty years of study, reflection, and experience on the part of a scholar who is equally respected in the West and in the Muslim world. It will prove to be the best single guide to the urgent questions that have recently forced themselves on the attention of the entire world.

## Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam Details

Date : Published November 13th 2003 by Oxford University Press, USA (first published March 22nd 2002)

ISBN : 9780195168860

Author : John L. Esposito

Format : Paperback 196 pages

Genre : Religion, Islam, War, Terrorism, Nonfiction, Politics, History

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## **From Reader Review Unholy War: Terror in the Name of Islam for online ebook**

### **Hassan Mahfooz says**

This is a brilliant and well researched book that puts the "Muslim terrorism" in its perspective and explains the underlying reasons of extremism. The author argues in a persuasive way that the Western Foreign Policy has played a big role in causing instability in the Muslim world and religious extremism is a fruit of the Western oppression.

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### **Fadwa Sakr says**

The book has a very insightful and original view of Islam as a faith, a way of life and an act of worship that can even be new to Muslims leave alone non Muslims. The author succeeded in giving a good argument and interpretation of the true meaning of Jihad in Islam and how, when and why it should be conducted. The background he gave about the Muslim world and the political and economical climate that had an impact on why the Muslim world is in the state it is in nowadays. The brief biography he provided on all the leaders who affected the globalization of Jihad and terror in the name of Islam was very rich and informative. I specially loved his argument on the status of women in Islam and the miss leading image introduced to the world that Islam is anti-feminism and suppresses women. He had a brilliant set of examples from the past till the present that show how any suppression of women is in fact the doing of patriarchy systems and those who are responsible for it.

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### **Erick says**

I had to read this book for the first day of my Law & the War on Terror class being taught by my law school. At 160 pages, it is not meant to be an in-depth historical, cultural and social analysis of one of the world's oldest and largest religions much less its interplay with one of the most complex wars the United States is fighting. What the book is designed to tell you, however, is the general overview of hundreds of years of history leading up to radical Islamic groups such as al-Qaeda including quick glances at Muslim scholars throughout the ages and brief histories of other terror groups, their focuses, their agenda, and their ideology.

In short, it is an introduction to Islam.

The purpose of the book is laid out in the preface by the author: "I have written this book for the vast majority of people in the West, non-Muslims as well as Muslims, whose lives and communities in the 21st century are inextricably intertwined. The Muslim world is no longer 'out there'; Muslims are our neighbors, colleagues, and fellow citizens, and their religion, like Judaism and Christianity, rejects terrorism. Never before have soft phrases like 'building bridges of understanding' been more critical in a war that ultimately cannot be won simply by military power... [We] are challenged to move beyond stereotypes, historic grievances, and religious differences...and to move collectively to build our common future."

Whether or not Professor Esposito's hope can be borne out with radical Islam's intense hatred of Israel and America has yet to be seen, however, it's always good to know where the grievances and catalysts began to

understand what it is we're currently faced with.

Esposito's book does just that and I hope more people pick this up and read it.

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### **Denise Junker says**

I liked this book. It is now a bit old but gives a nice history. I felt more could have been said at the end about how we are seen and why these reactions. Yet, overall, this conflict is about what has gone on throughout history and still continues today: power struggles and getting stabilized.

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### **CholoSoy says**

Esposito seems like an Islamist apologist, he criticizes extremist Islam but at times he almost "admire" Osama bin Laden and Palestine Hamas.

He not only compares crusades with the several years of Islamic attacks but also justify them. He states that Islamic extremist have "hijacked" Islam, but they are following the "true" teachings of the quran.

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### **Hannah says**

If George Bush knew how to read I would recommend this to him. It's relevant and I think it would set quite a few people straight.

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### **Jenny says**

A decent primer on the Islamic concept of jihad, although I wish more had been said about the greater jihad (the struggle to improve oneself) in addition to the lesser jihad (military struggle).

I liked Esposito's bios of three Muslim advocates of intercivilizational dialogue. I also appreciated that alongside his calls for reforms in Muslim-majority countries, he also called on the USA (and other Western countries) to take a good hard look in the mirror, particularly in regards to their foreign policies.

This book was written before the Arab spring and before ISIS/Daesh, so it was interesting to consider how then-current events laid the groundwork for later unrest.

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### **Bosnian23 says**

A good short historical overview of the radicalism within Islam from the time of the Kharijites to the present day.

Too bad the book was written before the American invasion of Iraq in 2003. There would be a lot more things to cover.

Works by some Islamic scholars which sadly today inspire the extremists are discussed and analyzed and the impact which various Islamic revivalists from Abdul Wahhab to Qutb had on radicals within the Islamic community.

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## **M.F. Moonzajer says**

Unholy War: Terror in the name of Islam, John L. Esposito (Book Review)

Read the review at [www.moonzajer.com](http://www.moonzajer.com)

Unholy war: Terror in the name of Islam, John L. Esposito, Oxford University Press: 2002, New York.

ISBN: 0-19-515435-5. Review:

### Introduction

John Louis Esposito is an American professor of International Affairs and Islamic studies at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. He is also the director of the Prince Alwaleed Center for Muslim- Christian Understanding at Georgetown.

Esposito founded the Center for Muslim- Christian understanding at Georgetown University to serve as a bridge between Christianity and Islam. The center received a \$ 20 million endowment from Saudi Arabian Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal to advance education in the fields of Islamic civilization and Muslim – Christian understanding (University web, 2014).

Unholy War: Terror in the name of Islam is an academic piece written by Esposito and published by the university of Oxford press in 2002. The book discusses the discourse of modern terrorism, Jihad and the struggle for Islam. Esposito has a background in Islamic Studies from well-known universities in the west. He is famous for his efforts towards dialogue between Islam and Christianity.

In his preface (book), Esposito discusses the impacts of 9/11 on the perception of the Americans about the Islam, Osama Bin Laden, religious violence and extremism. Later he talks about the exploitation of religion by terrorists and Al-Qaida as warfare forces against the west. Another important discourse in this book is the Call of Khomeini for the Islamic revolution in Iran and its global impacts. Esposito's arguments are represented by a bulk of western and Islamic literature. He talks about the war of the twentieth century and Shia – Sunni root conflicts and their infiltration in the vulnerable Muslim states like Afghanistan, Iraq, Pakistan and Palestine.

### The making of Modern Terrorist

The first chapter of this book starts with a journey of Osama Bin Laden. The author argues how Osama was raised and what were the impacts of the environment on his personality. Additionally, he explains all the incidents and events chronologically about Osama and his personal life; what made him the man behind 9/11?

According to author, Osama Bin Laden's worldview was very much influenced by the political climate of Saudi Arabia and the Wahhabi brand of Islam. This chapter is a detailed chronicle and the list of events and incidents that took place during the 70s until 9/1. The author also talks about the disastrous and the humiliating defeat of the Arabs in the 1967, the six-day Arab Israel war in which the combined forces of Egypt, Syria and Jordan were beaten by a tiny Israel. Esposito argues that the defeat and humiliation of the

Arabs by the Israel in the occupied territory of the Palestinian engendered deep soul search for what went wrong with the Islamic vision and this incident cause the inception of the Islamic armies and soldiers across and within the Muslims states.

#### Jihad in Afghanistan: the making of Holy Warrior

In the second chapter of the book, Esposito discusses the Soviet Union invasion in Afghanistan during 1979-1989. He argues how the USSR occupation of Afghanistan brought all the Muslim radicals together and put the foundation for extremely violent armies called the Army of God. The author further discusses the role of Osama Bin Laden in the Afghan Mujahedin war against the USSR and the role of Pakistan ISI in ideological creation of the Taliban and Madrassas in Pakistan. This incident raised plenty of funds for the jihad cause that not only for the Muslims around the world, but also from liberals in the USA and Europe. The financial incentive and the heroism notion made Osama and the jihadist an unstoppable army in the region.

In 1989, the USSR was defeated and the Russians left Afghanistan while the Army of God was in a stronger state rather than before. Osama as leader and conqueror of the war against the infidels as defined in the Muslim terminology return home as a hero. This event affected him intensely and he started advocating jihad in mosques and Madrassas. In 1990s, Afghanistan became a safe haven for the Army of the God and Osama became globally famous. The vacuum of power against the Army of God under the leadership of Osama put their attention towards the vengeance against the West.

It was the time when the Taliban took the control of Kabul. Islamic Deobandi the brand of Saudi influenced the Islamic movements across the countries. Saudi Arabia, Pakistan were the two main states who formally recognized and supported the regime of the Taliban in Afghanistan. Pakistan's military support and the Saudi Arabia financial aid founded the inception of a global network of Jihadist and this later became a very violent and extremist groups called Al-Qaida network.

#### Jihad and the struggle for Islam

In chapter three, Esposito talks about the Muslims consciousness and uprising against their own status quo. He argues that the incidents such as jihad and fall of the USSR gave them the belief that their conditions require jihad and holy war.

This chapter talks about the classical Muslim thoughts about jihad and the contemporary Islamic violence. The author further explains how Jihad was mistaken for defense or expansion. The modern literature of jihad is articulated with the extremism and violence not only against the non-Muslims but also against the moderate Muslims too. The army of God mostly incentivized by the Deobandi brand of Islam and the Wahabism of Saudi Arabia opened the sectarianism conflicts across the Sunni and Shii. Terror in the name of God became a global threat against the universal peace.

#### Armies of God: the vengeance of Militant jihad

Chapter four of this book, talks about the discourse of Jihad in the context of Arab – Israel. Esposito claims that the role of Islamic scholars, their interpretations of the jihad and the holy war provided the vision of violence and extremism for the army.

The jihad for conversion by sword became threatening phenomena in international affairs. The fears of Islamic movements and the use of any means to force others to become Muslim, violently questioned all the human rights declared in the United Nations human rights declarations. Islamic states were both member and signatory of the declaration and this incident resulted conflicts between Political Islam and West in the international affairs. Jihad and martyrdom became a vision for most of the Students of the Islamic Madrassas. They either wanted to die or kill to return to their holy home. This was the climax of the violence

of the political Islam in the 21 century.

### The Armies of God

Chapter 5 talks about the Armies of God. The 1979 USSR invasion in Afghanistan provided a chance for all the Islamic states to come together and fight against the Soviet Union. According to Esposito, it was the collection of the fighters with the same ideology. 9/11 of 2001 is not actually the first 9/11, while citing the history they refer the Battle of Vienna 1683 the day when an alliance of Christian armies led by Jan II Sobieski, the king of Poland came to the Gate of Vienna as first 9/11. In this chapter, the author also discusses the Kashmir- Pakistan and India conflicts and the role of Jihad in that context. Additionally, he talks about the role of monarch in Saudi Arabia and the two pioneered Islamic movements; the Egypt Muslim brotherhood and the Jamiat Islami Pakistan and their influence in Sudan, Bangladesh, India, and Kashmir. He also talks about the role of Hamas in Palestine and the fall of the army of God against the army in Algeria following the anti-government riot in 1988.

Where do we go from here?

The author in the previous chapters discussed the role of Saudi Arabia specially the Wahabism and their claim of supremacy over the Persians as one of the most important elements in inception of global jihad. Contemporary jihad is the outcome of Saudi Arabia funds and the Pakistan Madrassas. The issue of religion, modernization and development are the other topics discussed in the last chapter of this book. He also refers to the writings of Huntington mostly known as the Clash of Civilizations and the Mohammad Khatimi – Dialogue of Civilizations in this chapter. Can Islam be a cosmopolitan religion and could it have a global diversity? The author also refers to the work of Islamic scholars such as Abdul Rahman Wahid the leader of the Renaissance of religious scholars in the context of Political Islam.

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### **ABona says**

It reads like a Master's Thesis, but very interesting. Chocked full of interesting Islam facts.

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### **Kamil Yilmaz says**

My review:

Esposito, J. (2002). *Unholy War, Terror in the name of Islam*. Oxford University Press. 196pp. ISBN 0-19-516886-0. \$13.96

John Esposito (2002) reviews in his book the relationship between Islam and Global Terrorism. I read this book first at a time of its early release, about one year after the September 11 attacks. I witnessed the second plane crash on September 11. It was one of the most unforgettable and heartbreaking experiences in my life. I was totally shocked and flabbergasted. Already was it my conviction that there was a stereotyping for all Muslims by western powers before September 11, I realized that when it became clear that so-called Islamic extremists committed the attacks, many Americans, if not all, continued to equate the religion of Islam with global terrorism. As a Muslim I was quite disturbed about this equation, because I am sure that Islam condemns such acts. That's why I wanted to read relevant books on Islam and Terrorism written by especially non-Muslim authors to get their sight on this issue. That was the biggest reason for me to read *Unholy War*.

The September 11 attacks left the western world, as well as the Muslim world stunned, angry and uncomprehending. Since the actors were the Muslims, people struggled to learn more about the religion to justify these attacks. In this level-headed and authoritative book, John Esposito delivers an entertaining account and perspective and elucidates Islam—explaining Quran, the example of Prophet Muhammad, and Islamic Law regarding Jihad, the use of force, and terrorism. He skillfully chronicles the rise of extremist groups and examines their modus operandi.

John Esposito is University Professor of Religion and International Affairs and Founding director of Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding, Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University. His newest books include *What Everyone Needs to Know About Islam* and *The Oxford Dictionary of Islam*.

After reading it twice, I believe this book is an excellent resource to students, educators, and for those who are not knowledgeable enough about the religion of Islam. I was surprised with the author's knowledge on Islam. I can say that quite detailed information, which is not even known by the majority of the Muslims, was given clearly in an only 196 pages book. In reviewing this book, the principal criteria included content and organization.

There are six chapters in the book: Preface to the paperback edition, Preface, The Making of a Modern Terrorist, Jihad and the Struggle for Islam, The armies of God, and Where do we go from here?

In the preface to the paperback edition, the author discusses the changes that occurred after September 11—including the continued threat of terrorism, the American-led war on terror, and the exponential growth of anti-Americanism. He argues that the reason for anti-Americanism is the equation of the religion of Islam with global terrorism by Americans and the conviction that the American-led war on terrorism was in fact a war against Islam. (Esposito, 2002, p-1).

He states that although the White House and Pentagon apologized for the early use of such inflammatory terms as “Crusade” and “Infinite Justice”, the American policies in the war on terrorism reversed the international sympathy for America after 9/11 and fueled the widespread anger and anti-Americanism. Among the key factors were the broadening the American-led military campaign’s scope beyond Afghanistan, talk of the second frontiers and in particular the “axis of evil” countries (e.g. North Korea, Iraq and Iran), American continued support to Israel, and the President Bush’s unilateral approach to the war in Iraq. American rhetoric and policies not only in Israel/Palestine but also India/Pakistan, and Russia/Chechnya also fed anti-American sentiment among mainstream Muslims and hatred of America among militant extremists (p-2).

I think this is one of the most important and accurate messages given by the author in this book. Because, as a Muslim and knowing the Muslim mindset I believe that the majority of Muslims around the globe, including many admiring the fundamental principles of the West--political participation, human rights, freedom of speech, accountability--, think that America is acting regardless of the International Law and Treaties, and there is a double standard—these American principles and values are applied selectively or not at all when it comes to the Muslim world. He asserts that Americans have been challenged to move beyond the stereotypes, historic grievances, and religious differences, to recognize their shared values as well as interests, and to move collectively to build their common future with the Muslim world.

In the following chapter, the Preface to the book, he argues about the reasons why Muslims hate America; attempts to examine why Islam is perceived more militant than other religions; discusses what Quran says about the Jihad or Holy War; and whether there is a clash of civilizations between the West and the Muslim world. Moreover, He suggests that yet it is more important than ever that Americans and western world

educate themselves about Islam and the roots of Terrorism. I like to commend him here that even though Islamic Terrorism seems to be the biggest threat to the world in the last decade, there are still many different sources of terrorism around the world, therefore one should not generalize the terrorism in the name of Islam, because the vast majority of the Muslims are tranquil individuals and are in favor of peace in the world.

In the next chapter *The Making of a Modern Terrorist*, he gives an excellent overview of Osama Bin Laden and chronicles his life: how he became the world's most infamous terrorist living in caves when he had the chance to live in luxury since his family is one of the richest in Saudi Arabia; how he established the world's most havoc wrecking terrorist organization; his struggle in Afghanistan against Russia; his tenure in Sudan; and what were the main reasons for him to declare Jihad against America and the West.

The author accurately argues that among the reasons for his anger against America was the American existence-- for him infidel existence-- in the holy land and American Policy on Israel/ Palestine conflict. He thinks that indeed Muslims around the world are the subject of the killings and violence; therefore Jihad/ Holy War against the Western Powers is justified. Author's quote from Saul Bakhsh, *Washington Post* (Esposito, 2002, p-24), excellently summarizes Bin Ladin's mindset:

We are carrying out the mission of the Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him). The mission is to spread the word of god, not to indulge in massacring people. We ourselves are the target of killings, destruction, and atrocities. We are only defending ourselves. This is the defensive Jihad. We want to defend our people and our land. That is what we say, if we don't have security, the Americans, too, would not get security. This is simple formula that even an American child can understand. Live and let live.

In this chapter the author also chronicles the development of the meaning of Jihad, starting with the Prophet Mohammad and following with Ibni Taymiyye, Mawlana Mawdudi (Jamaat- i Islamiyye in Pakistan), Sayyid Qutub (Muslim Brothers in Egypt), Abdullah Azzam (Osama's teacher), and Hasan al Banna. I like to give a big credit to the author for this part of the book, because these names are the most well known people in the Islamic history and it requires a lot of research and in-debt analysis to provide readers with such detailed information.

The author gives the reader an overall message in this chapter related to jihad which I believe perfectly lays out a useful tool to better understand the Muslim world, and to take the necessary measures to deal with today's terrorist threat on America:

"Understanding the various ways in which jihad has been interpreted throughout Muslim history will enable us to distinguish between extremist groups on the one hand and the majority of the Muslims on the other" (p-28).

In the next chapter the author examines the creation of different Islamic extremist groups in the history of Islam. Among them the most important and influential ones are:

- The Juhaiman al- Utaiba's militant group (1979) established against his own government Saudi Arabia because of its alliance with the West and its disruptive modernization programs.
- Abdulah Azzam's Mujahideen Services Bureau.
- Mawlana Mawdudi's Jamaat-I Islamiye (Islamic community) in Pakistan.
- Assassins of Hasan ibn-al-Sabbah (died in 1124),
- Islamic Jihad in Egypt, headed by Ayman al Zawahiri, today Bin Ladin's right hand and brain of the Al-qaida.
- The Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas in Palestine against Israel.
- The Islamic Salvation Front in Algeria.
- Hezbollah in Lebanon, and Turkish Hezbollah.

I strongly agree with the author on the evolution of Armies of God. He argues that the Armies of God have passed several stages, becoming ever more global in outreach. They were primarily Algerian, Egyptian, or Tunisian movements. He suggests that the Afghan jihad against Russia has marked a turning point as Muslims in record numbers traveled to Afghanistan to join the jihad against the oppression of Muslims. The experience and success of that jihad created a new, more global jihad sentiment and the culture embodied in Arab-Afghans and other Muslims who had fought in Afghanistan- and in a sense of solidarity, which subsequently brought Muslims from various parts of the world to participate in jihads in Bosnia, Kosovo, Kashmir, Central Asia, and Chechnya. Jihad today has thus become the evocative symbol to the holy and unholy wars, in wars of resistance and liberation as well as global terrorism. Finally, Osama bin Ladin's declaration of jihad marked global expansion of Al-Qaeda's unholy war of terror to the West. Nonetheless, I think the author is missing one important point here regarding with the roots of jihad mentality. That is the Humiliation in Islamic society. This concept has to be mentioned here, because Islamic society is a shame society and after the series of defeats such as six-day wars, it deeply affected Muslim world and this in turn has led to the risings of the Islamic extremist groups. Most of these groups have common understanding, motivation, and tactics: "The Islamic states fail to restore our honor, so let's do it".

In the last chapter of the book, the author makes several suggestions on to-know what to do to tackle the today's terrorist threats of Islamic extremist groups. He successfully attempts to demonstrate the root causes of hatred against America; searches if there is any relationship between Islam and anti-Americanism; understand whether there is a clash of civilizations between Islam and the West; and find out whether or not Islam and modernity are incompatible.

In response to these questions Esposito argues that many people think that it is a necessity to learn more about the religion of Islam to deal with the problem. But he points out a very interesting motto of a Senate leader that is; "I know a lot about many things, but nothing about Islam and the Muslim world—and neither do most of my colleagues" (p-120). While many are sincere to know more, others epitomize the saying: "My mind's made up, don't confuse me with the facts!" At one point it is very easy to portray September 11 as the latest phase, a historic battle between Islam and the West, as militant Islam has now gone global. However, this dangerous oversimplification mimics the distorted, polarized worldview and message of Bin Ladens of the world. He argues that if Americans start out presuming that the other is completely different, they can find whatever they are looking for.

Esposito also realizes that as we move forward to the twenty-first century, a key reality to keep in mind is that Islam is the second largest and fastest growing religion not only out there, but also in America and Europe. And he suggests that "improving our understanding of the faith of our fellow citizens and neighbors will require that we look at Muslims with new eyes and judge Islam by the totality and the teachings of faith, not just the beliefs and actions of radical few".

Esposito quotes Paul Kennedy, in an attempt to show how we can rationalize the anger of Muslim world against America and the West:

[H]ow do we appear to them and what would be like were places in the world reversed...Suppose that there existed today a powerful, unified Arab-Muslim state that stretched from Algeria to Turkey and Arabia- as there was 400 years ago, the Ottoman Empire. Suppose this unified Arab-Muslim state had the biggest economy in the world, and the most effective military. Suppose by contrast this United States of ours had split into 12 or 15 countries, with different regimes, some conservative and corrupt. Suppose that the great Arab-Muslim power had its aircraft carriers cruising off our shores, its aircraft flying over our lands, its satellites watching us everyday. Suppose that its multinational corporations had reached into North America to extract oil, and paid by the corrupt, conservative government's big royalties for that. Suppose that it

dominated all international institutions like Security Council and the IMF. Suppose that there was a special state set up in North America for fifty years ago, of a different religion and language of ours, and the giant Arab-Muslim power always gave it support. Suppose the Colossus state was bombarding us with cultural messages, about the status of women, about sexuality, that we found offensive. Suppose it was always urging us to change, to modernize, to go global, and to follow its example. Hmm...in those conditions, would not many Americans steadily grow to loath that Colossus, wish it harm? And perhaps try to harm it? I think so.

As this citation clearly shows, the author's citations in most parts of the book are excellent and serving good for the purpose of the book. His ability of causal thinking and consistency to the topic is worth to be given credit.

Finally he argues that America will not defeat terrorism solely by military or economic means. He suggests that public diplomacy must be a critical component. He discusses that there can be no excuse for terrorism in the name of Islam. Suicide attacks, bombings, assassinations, and hostage takings in the name of any cause; whether justified in the name of God, justice, or state security, are still terrorism. He suggests that quick responses such as moves to Arab Street through overwhelming force may seem satisfying in the short term, but in the long run it will prove that it is ineffective and contribute to greater radicalization and extremism. The cancer of global terrorism will continue to afflict the international body until addressing its political and economic causes, causes that will otherwise continue to provide breeding ground for hatred and radicalism, the rise of extremist movements, and recruits for bin Ladens of the world.

One aspect of the book that one might criticize is the fact that Esposito tries to take on more than can be adequately handled in a single book. Clearly, the topic of religion of Islam involving terrorism is quite complex. He tries to provide a bit of everything; therefore, it may seem to many readers that he remains on the surface of the various topics without discussing them in depth. Nonetheless, reading numerous books on Islam and being familiar to the subject, I can assure readers that the author has a very good grasp on the issues of Islam and it is more than enough for those who has no idea (!) about Islam, Jihad, and terrorism.

It may seem like the author is defending the religion of Islam and that's why I could not find anything to criticize him. So am I being emotional as a Muslim when assessing this book? Not really...Because, I think we should not hesitate giving good credit to the people who really deserve it.

Clearly, in my opinion Esposito succeeds in providing a good and overall balanced analysis on the subject of Islam and Terrorism. The book is excellent in terms of its content and organization. The selection and sequence of topics and events is so perfect that gives the reader an enjoyable reading. Finally, I believe that the author should be an adviser to the President on the religion of Islam and contemporary terrorism.

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### **Buthaina says**

liked this book, recommend to read it!

very descriptive, it provides history of many several famous parties  
that are waging war and using the word Jihad to get things done or some other beliefs  
depending on the environment! how the concept of Jihad is used in many ways

and so later understood in bad different ways which creates a blurred pic about it , it brought the war against the source of this concept i.e Islam and Muslims !

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### **Jeremy Baker says**

This book, published in 2002, is a perfect example of why most Americans are so misinformed about Islam in general and Wahhabism in particular: Saudi Arabia pays people like Esposito to whitewash their history and present their totalitarian regime, as well as their violent religious colonialism, as a moderating force in the Arab world.

In case you haven't been paying attention since 9/11, the Saudi government is not and has never been our friend. Aramco's friend, sure, but even if you ignore the fact that fifteen out of the nineteen people responsible for the disasters were from there (Not counting that Bin Laden guy), or the fact that they hold telethons to raise money for families of the suicide bombers they train, you have to consider their continuing refusal to cooperate with any of the actions we demanded from other terror allies (such as providing passenger lists for flights from their country, or freezing the assets of known terror supporters).

Saudi Arabia has always been a textbook dystopia; the government controls all the media, all the schools, all the resources, and all the religious institutions, and have consistently used every conflict involving muslims or arabs around the world in order to spread its backwards brand of Islam. But what continues to surprise me is the lengths that Americans will go to gloss over their state-sponsored violence and terrorism. In Esposito's case the organization at the other end of his leash is the Middle Eastern Institute, a Saudi Lobbying group who's job is to make sure that any kind of criticism against the ruling family is drowned out.

But aside from the source (as if an intelligent reader could ever separate the two), Esposito isn't proffering anything new here, though he does at least declare in a roundabout way that Osama Bin Laden is evil and terrorism is kinda bad. He allots three full pages to the issue of how modern islamic states developed (everywhere) and why they face increasing political instability (colonialism, colonialism, colonialism). He devotes an entire paragraph to what we can do to fight Wahhabism, and his solution is basically less government support for authoritarian regimes, and for muslims everywhere to reform their religion: simplistic solutions that sound lovely in print while simultaneously disregarding the reality of steady oil profits here as well as the police state that exists in Saudi Arabia (and extends to their state-sponsored mosques operating worldwide).

In the end, all Esposito has to offer is fluff and nonsense, and very few real solutions.

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### **Damian Doyle says**

I dipped into sections of this book a couple of years ago for uni, and decided it was a good time to re-read it in full. Written in response to American soul-searching following the Al Qaeda terrorist attacks of 2001, this book is still relevant - perhaps moreso. Esposito writes with clarity, balance, and knowledge built over a long career studying Islam. It is a shame that Australia lacks an authoritative voice such as Esposito's, especially when public discussion of Islam and other matters of religion - like so many issues of public interest - is dominated by sloganeering and uninformed opinion.

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**Belinda doni says**

jihad is the holy spirit of moslem way to exist and to defend themselves. islam is not terror or terrorism, if you saw or heard something bad about islam it causes by the man,not Islam itself. islam is rahmatan lil'alamin

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