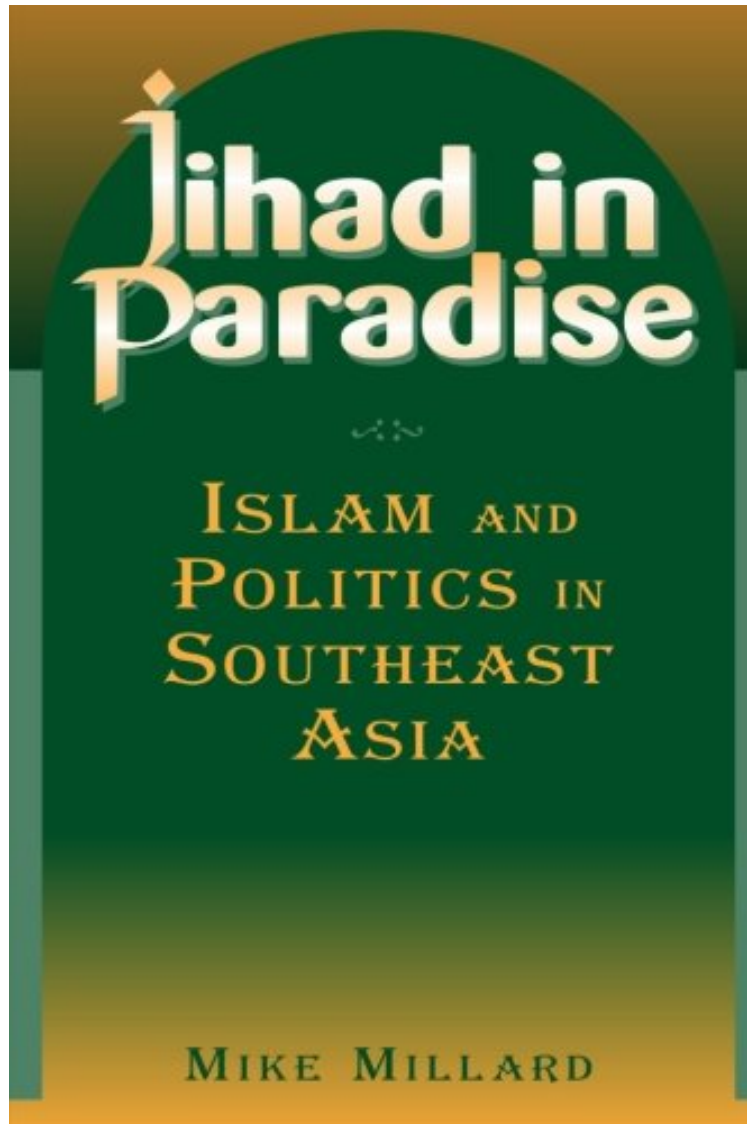


(Mobile pdf) Jihad in Paradise: Islam and Politics in Southeast Asia (East Gate Books)

## Jihad in Paradise: Islam and Politics in Southeast Asia (East Gate Books)

*Mike Millard*

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**Mike Millard : Jihad in Paradise: Islam and Politics in Southeast Asia (East Gate Books)** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Jihad in Paradise: Islam and Politics in Southeast Asia (East Gate Books):

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Confronting Realities -Danger and UtopiaBy A CustomerIn recent years there has been much discussion about the harsh realities, particularly in terms of socio-political contexts, facing

the ASEAN countries. With the impending threat of Islamic fundamentalism rearing its head, especially in Indonesia and Malaysia, observers are keen on noting any event, personality and occurrence which might indicate movements either towards or away from this broad-based fear. It is interesting that several academics have put forward all manner of argument to underline the crucial role of religious freedom in the context of the multi-cultural scenarios found in South East Asia. Mike Millard's excellent book, *JIHAD IN PARADISE*, takes you on an exploratory journey starting from Singapore (or Japan, really, from which this fascinating writer seems to have come!) to Malaysia. But this is only geographical ground: much of the book is centred on a larger journey - the author's personal journey as he chooses to make Singapore his home and as he confronts some hard truths in making this choice/decision. Being American, Millard is very aware of the implications, consequences and meanings of 9/11, and being in a region where the majority religion is Islam makes him think seriously of the associated realisations. So some tough issues are brought up, especially about Singapore where religious freedom is delicately balanced with inter-religious tolerance/harmony. Millard does well to interview some of the key people involved in determining, in varying degrees, the current Singaporean ethos as well as the future trends which will, invariably, help bring about basic changes in this tiny Island-Republic. *JIHAD IN PARADISE* is an easy read, though what it covers requires sustained engagement, for the themes brought up and scrutinised are exacting. Millard does not mince his words, nor do the many intellectuals he meets and talks with - and this, for this reader, is the great strength of the book: straightforward narrative without unnecessary apology or diplomacy. They say tough times require tough leaders; well, we can also say, pressing times require direct writers. Millard's style is broadly conversational, his narration and anecdotes sprinkled with wit and his insights encompassing wide reading and shrewd observation. This is a \*must read\* - not only for those who worry about Islam in SE Asia but for anyone wanting to know more about the very complex nature of the geopolitics of SE Asia, particularly the complex driving forces of tiny Singapore. - A Reader from Singapore

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Southeast Asia After Sept. 11 By A Customer One of the first things that struck me while reading *Jihad in Paradise* was how I felt I was on the same journey as the author as he travelled through Southeast Asia - from the neighbourhoods of metropolitan Singapore, to the east coast and villages of peninsular Malaysia and the tranquil beaches of Bali - in search of answers after Sept. 11. While *Jihad in Paradise* is not a travelogue per se, it does bring you on a journey of sorts - exploring the intricacies of the politics of Islam in this corner of the world. Millard delves into the challenges facing governments in the region as terrorism and religious extremism threatened decades of peace that have been established in these multi-racial and multi-cultural Shangri-Las. A good part of this book is the author's analysis of Singapore. The reasons behind the decision to make this island his home for a time, of the extremists who lurked in the shadows and the omen of unrest, the possibility of a select few unravelling what the government had taken decades to establish - peace among all the racial groups. Millard also attempted a glimpse into the country's future, of the need for the island to ensure its survival in a new and ever-changing world by taking more risks instead of depending on that well-trodden path. The last three years were a turbulent time in Southeast Asia and Millard in his book speaks to several of the prominent newsmakers of the time. This is THE book to read if you want to know the politics of a region that has not escaped unscathed from the scourge of terrorism since Sept. 11.

6 of 6 people found the following review helpful. Good snapshot of jihadi developments in Asia By Gary Shaw As an Australian who lived in Southeast Asia previously and who had followed the developments of the nefarious Jemaah Islamiya, I found this book an excellent read on the rise of a small group of deviant Muslims in Southeast Asia who believe in the use of violence to overthrow their secular governments. Millard's book is easy to read and understand, but yet it credibly gives a snapshot of the complexities involved in deciphering how jihadi sentiments can grow in affluent Southeast Asian states like Malaysia and Singapore. Chapters 2 (Sources of Jihad), 3 (Terror in Singapore) and 4 (To Bali and Back) are particularly insightful in highlighting how the Jemaah Islamiya is not necessarily a fictitious bogeyman like some cynics have depicted.

Written in an accessible, journalistic style, *Jihad in Paradise* focuses on Southeast Asia's struggle to deal with Islamic extremists and terrorism at the hands of Jemaah Islamiyah, al Qaeda's Southeast Asian arm. Although the book gives particular attention to Singapore's attempts to deal with these issues, the story extends into Malaysia, Indonesia, and the Philippines. All of these countries have significant Muslim populations, and recent violent events have affected the business environment, tourism, and the region's tradition of religious tolerance. The author draws on personal interviews with experts in the field as well as key political and religious figures in Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia, including Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, Minister for Muslim Affairs Jaacoub Ibrahim, and expelled Muslim dissident Zulfikar Mohamad Sharif. Millard examines the Bali bombing, Malaysia's conservative Islamic party PAS, the Malaysian province of Kelantan which is a Muslim political hotbed, Abu Saayaf of the Philippines, and Fateha.com and the use of the Internet. He also provides a glimpse of how Singapore, the region's most developed nation, has engineered its society in order to impose a degree of racial and religious tolerance.

"*Jihad in Paradise* is Millard's paean to the multi-ethnic pluralism and tolerance he has come to savor in his new home in Southeast Asia, a book brimming with his love for the region and its peoples with their diversity as warm and lush

as the lands in which they live. It is above all, however, the author's alarm bell as to how all this is placed in jeopardy by the rise of radical Islamism with its instrument of terror and its goal of a region-wide theocratic state."