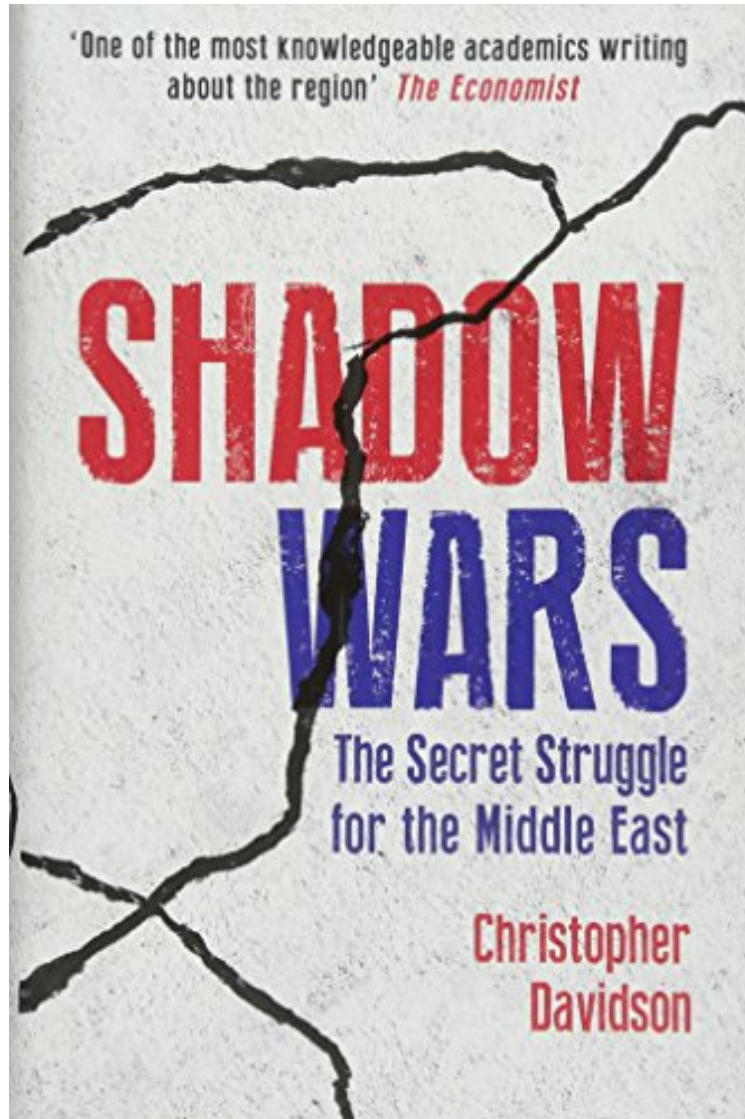


[Download free ebook] Shadow Wars: The Secret Struggle for the Middle East

## Shadow Wars: The Secret Struggle for the Middle East

*Christopher M. Davidson*

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#857170 in Books imusti 2016-10-18Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 10.00 x 2.25 x 7.00l, .0 #File Name: 1786070014688 pagesONEWorld Publications | File size: 50.Mb

**Christopher M. Davidson** : **Shadow Wars: The Secret Struggle for the Middle East** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Shadow Wars: The Secret Struggle for the Middle East:

10 of 10 people found the following review helpful. From Nicaraguan contras to ISIS jihadistsBy Great LakerDark, long, very readable volume. A rigorously made case that fundamentalist Islamic and eventually violently extremist salafi-jihadi forces have been repeatedly co-opted by the Anglo-American alliance for many decades as part of a wider 'counter revolutionary' campaign to keep control over resources and the foreign policies of valuable regions and

countries. Mostly kept at arms length and directed against their enemies, whether Arab nationalists or Iranian democrats trying to break up bad deals with Western business interests, and then the Soviets, Qaddafi, now Assad's regime, and so on, these dangerous forces have occasionally given the West 'blowback' back in their home yard. The blowback has mostly been managed by going after peripheral culprits such as Sudan, Iraqi Baathists and the Taleban, and then kickstarting various 'wars on terror' as the Anglo-American alliance has sought new ways to intervene in energy-rich parts of the Middle East and Central Asia. As the book takes pains to point out; in almost no cases have the root causes of these extremist organisations ever been properly dealt with, as the extremist organisations have remained 'strategic but volatile assets' right up until today and have been largely funded by wealthy networks in important US allies in the Middle East such as Kuwait, Saudi and most of all Qatar. Particularly liked the discussion of secret US relations with the Islamic Republic, with the modus established between Reagan, Tehran to help keep Iran in the game in the Iran-Iraq war, while also helping out the US in funding the Nicaraguan contras. Also liked the parts on 9-11, Bosnia, Nigeria, Mali, the UK government funded 'White Helmets' media war over Syria, the plot to carve up Libyan assets, and the future of US policy after the shale oil revolution and the Iran deal. Unlike previous attempts to take on this massive topic, this is not a journalistic account and contains no throwaway speculations, with almost every single point backed up by often several references at one time, many of which can be found online for corroboration. Very much a 'conspiracy in plain sight' delivered to us by a professor at an established British school. Some of the language can be a slightly dry in places, but this is not a casual topic. The book could have used a couple of maps, especially of the current war in Iraq and Syria as the jihadist forces have been used to fragment or partition these two important Arab states. As one of very few books to make significant use of Wikileaks and other such documents and one which challenges many assumptions about Anglo-American policy and history the book and the author are simply not going to be well received in some quarters.

2 of 3 people found the following review helpful.  
Five Stars  
By Richard Cray  
Crucial. 9 of 9 people found the following review helpful. A bitter but necessary pill to swallow  
By Waever  
A book that will turn your world upside down. Or at least your existing understanding of the US's historic and present role in the Middle East. It will be a bitter pill for many to swallow, especially if you believe that the US has largely been a benign force on the world stage, but the sheer weight of unrelenting evidence is of the sort that can't just be swept under the rug. The central argument is that the Western states, first Britain and then the US have repeatedly tried to prevent strong nation states forming in the Middle East on the basis that such states could potentially:- ally with other foreign powers (including the USSR during the Cold War)- nationalize their resources and dismantle lucrative monopolies held by Western companies over oil, gas, cheap labour, Suez canal, etc. To this end, Britain and the US engaged in a mix of covert operations or 'shadow wars' often using local proxies to stop rebellions (as in Oman and Yemen) and to undermine or replace governments that could have put the Middle East on a different path (including Nasser's Egypt and Mossadegh's Iran). As the Cold War persisted, these shadow wars became ever more dangerous as the US and Britain together with local allies such as Saudi Arabia started to export Islamic extremism as a counterforce to secular Arab nationalism and other secular allies of the USSR, most notably the government of Afghanistan. The best part of the book looks at how the secret operations and shadow wars have continued after 9/11 (9/11 was funded by renegade Saudi princes who needed to keep Al-Qaeda onboard following Bin Laden's criticism of their monarchy in the mid 1990s), and especially after the Arab Spring, as key US allies were lost in Tunisia and Egypt, requiring the return of US-backed Islamists and eventually military dictators. Then in Libya and Syria, in which full national revolutions never really took place, the US and its Arab allies made sure that uprisings were supported and all manner of groups were funded to make ensure that longstanding US foes such as Gaddafi and Assad were toppled. As this got out of hand, the US' Arab allies have increasingly turned back to the old Afghan strategy of funding some of the most extremist groups imaginable in order to get the job done, including new versions of Al-Qaeda. In terms of references, this is by far one of the best sourced books on the subject to have ever appeared on the market. The main text of the book is 530 pages long, while the references run to a further 130 pages and there are probably several thousand in total. These include a mixture of archival documents (mainly British and American declassifications), leaked documents (many from the big batch of US State Dept diplomatic leaks around 2009-2012), and probably best of all a number of court mandated documents including some of former Sec of State Clinton's emails (not the recent Wikileaks versions) and proceedings from a wide array of cases ranging from Saudi NGO funding to private sector contractor lawsuits and even the recent 9/11 victims' compensation lawsuit. There are also a number of interviews, some anonymous given the circumstances, but some are named in full too. The book makes extensive use of historical newspaper archives in different languages (French, Arabic, Serbian, etc) and includes references to many pieces that are now only available as hardcopy, if you can still find them. There are TV interviews too, most memorably from a former DIA chief who has claimed that between 2012 and 2014 the US 'wilfully' ignored the expansion of ISIS as it suited the interests of its regional Arab allies, most of which wanted to see an end to the Iran-allied governments in Damascus and Baghdad. Unsurprisingly and to be expected there are already many reviews of this book online. The two that stand out for me so far, as they are the best researched and most balanced, are probably Steve Donoghue's essay for Christian Science Monitor ('Shadow Wars exposes underlying patterns behind Middle Eastern strife') and Robert Morris' essay over on Goodreads, who makes that point that many

of the newspaper articles referenced in this book have long since disappeared down the memory hole, including even pieces in the LA Times, the Washington Post, and the crucial US News World report on Saudi and Iran terror financing produced by David Kaplan and his team in 2003. One area in which I thought the writer could have gone into a bit more detail would have been on Turkey's role, although he does cover the interesting court cases that point to Turkish intelligence's role in helping smuggle Qatari and other weapons across the Syrian border for ISIS and other groups. It would have been good to have covered the strange 'coup' that took place in summer 2016, but I suppose this took place after the book had already gone to press.

"This is the best and most informative book yet on the struggle for power among the US and Europe, Arab autocratic regimes, and these countries impoverished masses.... Highly recommended." CHOICE Magazine "Who are these people? Where did they come from? What do they want? SHADOW WARS makes the answers painfully, damningly clear... if some future solution is discovered, it'll be thanks to the path-clearing of books like this one." The Christian Science Monitor Davidson is especially dogged at following the money e.g., the rise of crony-capitalist networks in the Gulf monarchies and the financing of al-Qaida and Islamic State An exhaustively researched account. Kirkus Reviews The brief euphoria that followed the Arab Spring of 2011 quickly gave way to religious politics, sectarian war, and the most brutal incarnations of Islamic extremism ever seen. In the aftermath, people around the world once more lamented the Middle East's inability to build functioning modern states. However, the reality is that this turn of events fits firmly into a centuries-old pattern of uprisings and reactions involving not only the regions elites and their opponents but also the interests of foreign powers. Middle East expert Christopher M. Davidson makes the argument that the primary blame for the failure of the Arab Spring and the rise of Islamic extremists, including al-Qaeda and Islamic State, must rest with successive U.S. and U.K. governments. A systematic dissection of ongoing Western manipulations of the most powerful forces in the Middle East, Shadow Wars is a shocking book that demands to be read.

"Who are these people? Where did they come from? What do they want? SHADOW WARS makes the answers painfully, damningly clear... if some future solution is discovered, it'll be thanks to the path-clearing of books like this one." The Christian Science Monitor "This is an outstanding book, bracing in its understanding of the rapacious forces that set upon the Middle East and meticulous in weaving the historical threads that explain why." John Pilger "A thought provoking and original take on the present catastrophic realities in the Middle East. This is a timely research into the causes of the failure of the Arab Spring. It deems the defeat of the Arab Spring; as a counter revolution prompted by external interventions. The book is a tour de force that begins with the past European Revolutions and ends up with an intriguing and highly convincing analysis of the demise of the Arab Spring. No one is spared in this incisive analysis: Arab regimes, fundamentalist movements, the West and Israel are all castigated here for their responsibility for the suffering of the people of Middle East today." Ilan Pappé, Professor of History, University of Exeter "An avalanche of spies, lies, covert actions and overt aggression; Davidson shows how many of the West's troubles in the Middle East have emerged from its relentless search for resources." Leif Wenar, Professor and Chair in Philosophy and Law, King's College London "Plunges into America's move to center stage and how it has sustained its ravenous postwar economy by preserving access to crude oil imports at any cost... Davidson is especially dogged at following the money e.g., the rise of crony-capitalist networks in the Gulf monarchies and the financing of al-Qaeda and of the new Islamic State group... An exhaustively researched account." Kirkus