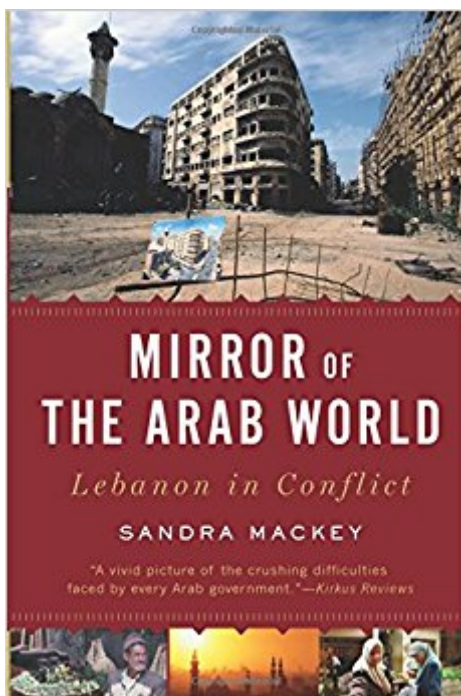


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Mirror Of The Arab World: Lebanon In Conflict



Synopsis

"A vivid picture of the crushing difficulties faced by every Arab government."--Kirkus Reviews The security of the West is threatened by escalating turmoil rising out of the Arab states is Lebanon, a small, tortured country poised uneasily between East and West. Improbably, this most unique of Arab states has much to teach about the Arab world. Like many Arab little sense of common identity and no strong central government. The tumultuous history of Lebanon illuminates not only the challenges that Arabs pose to themselves but also the fear and hostility that arise in response to perceived threats from the West. Awareness and understanding circumstances and pressures are the first steps toward resolution, cooperation, and solidity on all sides. 2 maps

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Reporter Mackey focuses on Lebanon, "the most transparent of all Arab states" to offer insight into the complexities of and challenges posed by the Middle East. She examines the cultural, religious, economic, and historical factors that contribute to the current politics within the Middle East—specifically Lebanon—and with Western nations, understanding that the Middle East has been complicated by artificial boundaries set by Westerners after World War I and interest in protecting the state of Israel. Those boundaries have not altered the strong influence of loyalty to ethnicity, tribe, religion, or family. Mackey maintains that Lebanon offers a microcosm of every major issue that has plagued the broader Middle East, including Palestinian statehood, Sunni-Shia sectarianism, and militant Islam. Despite its large Christian population and comparative cosmopolitanism, Lebanon took center stage in Western concerns about the Middle East until the U.S. invasion of Iraq. But Mackey maintains that Lebanon still holds the greatest promise to

understanding the Middle East. She offers a clearly written, well-researched analysis of Lebanon and broader Middle Eastern issues. --Vanessa Bush --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

“Incisive, timely, and eminently readable. A wonderful guide to the complexity of the brewing conflict in Lebanon and what it will mean for the Middle East.” - Vali Nasr

As someone who lived in Beirut in the early sixties and has lost touch with the country, I found Mackey extremely helpful in putting all subsequent events into perspective without taking sides except against the selfish elites who have ruined the country over and over again.

I found this book very good at pointing to the complexities in dealing with the "identity" question that is very active in both East and West. I am a Lebanese-American from south Lebanon and serve in the US Armed Forces. In reading this book I couldn't help but laugh (in a good way) at the similarities between what the author describes in it and the personalities I am forced to accept. Her ability to dissect the shades of chemistry in culture, politics, and economics is Eye-POPING!!! Any one interested in culture and conflict management in; or the recent history of, the Middle East must read this book.

To read this book is to come to believe that everything that has taken place in Lebanon has something to do with Israel. While this may be the propaganda of Hizbullah it hardly meets with reality. The author begins by claiming the American invasion of Iraq was designed to 'protect Israel without forcing Tel Aviv to address Palestinian rights.' Unfortunately there is no evidence for this in scholarly form or from media or government broadcasts in 2003. It is a claim out of the mouth of a conspiracy theorist. The obsession with Israel takes away from any context in the book. In describing the rise of the Phalange the book seeks to see it entirely from the viewpoint of Israel, whereas the Phalange and its heritage in Peirre Gemayel go back to the 1930s, long before Israel. The author attributes the Israeli invasion in 1982 entirely to an alliance between Bashir Gemayel and Israel which was only slightly true. Begin indeed wanted to save the only non-Muslim neighbor Israel had and he enjoyed the idea of helping beleaguered Christians but the author seems to ignore that Palestinian rocket attacks on Israel preceded the invasion, as did the killing of an Israeli diplomat. The author seems to have forgotten the mini-state Arafat created in Lebanon. These blatant omissions make the rest of the material in the book suspect. How can one know what to

trust. The history of Lebanon is interesting and there are nuggets of interest in this book, but the strange political interpretations and selective memory of the author and the failure to focus on Lebanese culture, for instance the Druze and Greek-Orthodox and Armenians, and instead to make this book about Israel's role in Lebanon weakens it. Lebanon is not really a mirror of the Arab world either. It is entirely unique. Seth J. Frantzman

"Mirror of the Arab World: Lebanon in Conflict" by Sandra Mackey is a journalistic rehash of repetitive accounts of what goes on in Lebanon. The book scandalously borrows from other standard works without substantiation or referencing even when statistics and important details are stated in the book. Entire passages seem to have been taken liberally from other books without footnoting that. It is full of factual and historical errors (pre-war Lebanese election was in 1972 not 1974, Hafez Assad died in 2000 not 2002, Syria's president is Bashar not Bashir, etc.). The attempt to collapse complex issues about religion and community and the narratives of Iraq and other Middle East countries is anything but professional. The choice of the photo on the cover is ill-advised. It is about the destruction of Beirut's downtown in 1975 but this risks giving the reader the feeling that this is happening now. On the bright side, those trying to learn something about Lebanon and the Middle East for the first time will get an easy-going read. Also I grant the author her good intentions towards the people of the Middle East.

Sandra shows in this book a command in Lebanese affairs, so this is a great read for people trying to understand the actual Lebanon.

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