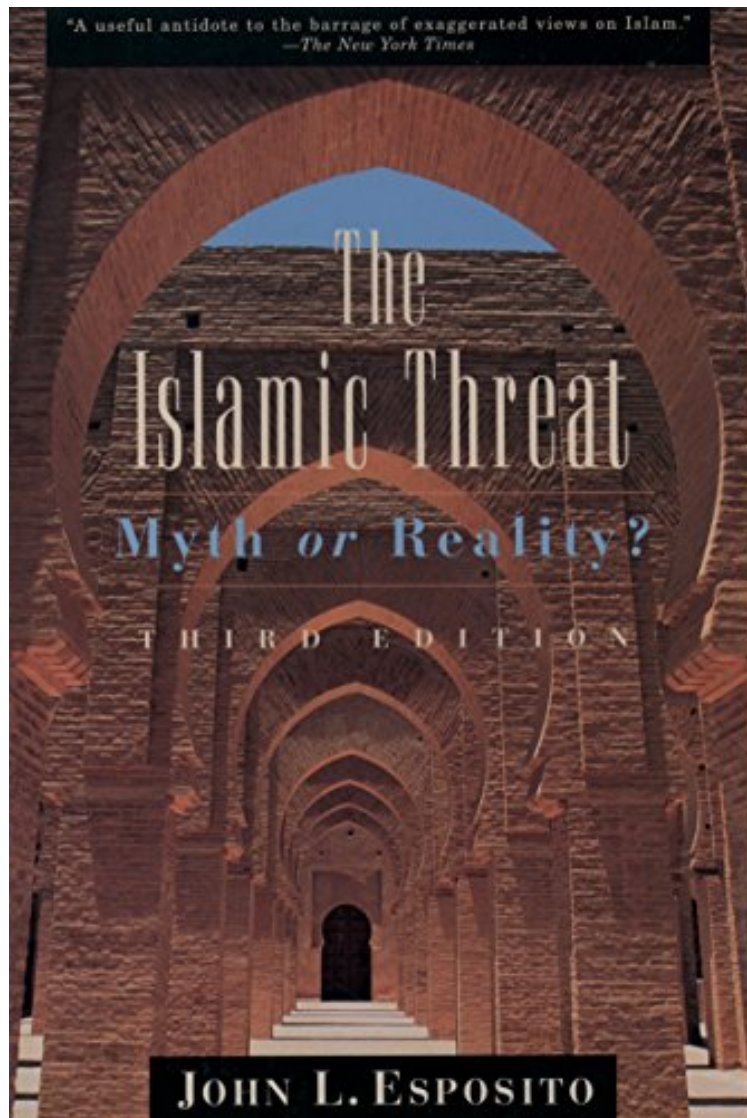


[Library ebook] The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?

The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?

Von John L. Esposito

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Esposito: A Bridge between Two CommunitiesVon C. King KhidrEsposito is writing as a secular liberal with a sympathetic desire to eradicate the dominant Western fear that Islam stands as a tyrannical military threat to Europe and North America. Such a stance doesn't mean that he turns a blind eye to the militant and radically hostile anti-Western war-cries emanating from various corners of the Muslim world. On the contrary, he attempts to relegate such

voices into their proper place -- which is that of a very small minority -- unlike the many Western political theorists who take such voices to be indicative of Islam itself. In doing so he argues that the vast majority of Muslims don't represent a black plague and that Islam isn't inherently hostile, despite the sophistry of the unemployed cold-warriors who feel forced to, as he puts it, "fill the threat-vacuum created from the demise of communism." After all, why has Islam suddenly become the new enemy? Were Muslims non-existent during the communist era? Esposito effectively highlights the various motives underlying attempts to vilify Islam, fixating such attempts against the contextual backdrop of the recent collapse of communism. This is not to belittle the fact that Muslims, generally do stand opposed to most secular Western principles and values. But to stand in opposition to someone's values is one thing, to desire a Nazi-style elimination of him is another. This is the problem with the McCarthyistic demonization of Islam, a paranoid fear fueled by the false presumption that Islam's inherent anti-modernistic tendencies imply that the religion and its adherents are obsessed with a holocaustic elimination of all Westerners. The protagonists of such a view take their cue from contemporary Islamic militants, failing to see that such terrorists, (albeit the anti-Islamic nature of their deeds), are generally REACTING to Western POLITICAL interventions upon Muslim self-determination -- interventions that are often themselves instigated by misguided political theorists (who perhaps desire continued funding for their think-tanks). This creates a vicious cycle of negative-feedback, like an amplifier that picks up and magnifies its own sound: intervention creates resentment which leads some to militant reaction which instigates more intervention; and so the pattern continues culminating in the likes of Laden. What Esposito seeks to do is pull the plug out of the amplifier. A sympathetic course safeguards him from fanning the flames, which is why he is endeared by a large Muslim audience and even gets invited to speak at Muslim conferences. Few other non-Muslims have contributed to such an irenic enterprise as he has. For this he stands as a bridge between two communities. THE ISLAMIC THREAT is a must read for anyone interested in the complex and multi-faceted dynamic that govern contemporary Western-Islamic relations.

Kurzbeschreibung Are Islam and the West on a collision course? From the Ayatollah Khomeini to Saddam Hussein, the image of Islam as a militant, expansionist, and rabidly anti-American religion has gripped the minds of Western governments and media. But these perceptions, John L. Esposito writes, stem from a long history of mutual distrust, criticism, and condemnation, and are far too simplistic to help us understand one of the most important political issues of our time. In this new edition of *The Islamic Threat: Myth or Reality?*, Esposito places the challenge of Islam in critical perspective. Exploring the vitality of this religion as a global force and the history of its relations with the West, Esposito demonstrates the diversity of the Islamic resurgence--and the mistakes our analysts make in assuming a hostile, monolithic Islam. This third edition has been expanded to include new material on current affairs in Turkey, Afghanistan, Palestine, and Southeast Asia, as well as a discussion of international terrorism. *Pressestimmen**Praise for previous editions: "Esposito has written that rarest, and most useful, of books: a consideration of 'Islamic Fundamentalism' by someone who knows what he's talking about."--The Village Voice Literary Supplement "Offers a valuable history of the leading figures and movements in the 20th century Islamic revival, underlining the trend in recent years away from violence and toward parliamentary practices."--The New York Times "One of America's foremost authorities and interpreters of Islam...offers an informed and reasoned discussion of Islam in politics."--The Wall Street Journal "There is no superior voice explaining Muslims to us."--Times Higher Education Supplement

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