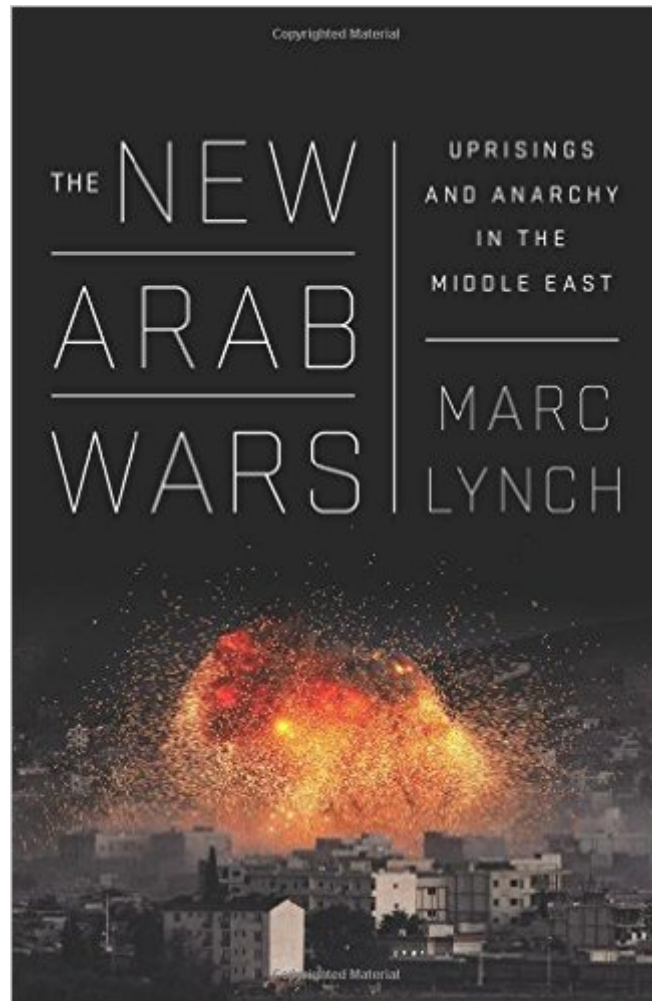


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The New Arab Wars: Uprisings And Anarchy In The Middle East



Synopsis

Less than twenty-four months after the hope-filled Arab uprising, the popular movement had morphed into a dystopia of resurgent dictators, failed states, and civil wars. Egypt's epochal transition to democracy ended in a violent military coup. Yemen and Libya collapsed into civil war, while Bahrain erupted in smothering sectarian repression. Syria proved the greatest victim of all, ripped apart by internationally fueled insurgencies and an externally supported, bloody-minded regime. Amidst the chaos, a virulently militant group declared an Islamic State, seizing vast territories and inspiring terrorism across the globe. What happened? *The New Arab Wars* is a profound illumination of the causes of this nightmare. It details the costs of the poor choices made by regional actors, delivers a scathing analysis of Western misreadings of the conflict, and condemns international interference that has stoked the violence. Informed by commentators and analysts from the Arab world, Marc Lynch's narrative of a vital region's collapse is both wildly dramatic and likely to prove definitive. Most important, he shows that the region's upheavals have only just begun—and that the hopes of Arab regimes and Western policy makers to retreat to old habits of authoritarian stability are doomed to fail.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Professor Lynch is a professional political scientist with a chair at Georgetown University and the author of several books on the Middle East. He is the kind of writer whose expertise is unquestioned, and it is only in his interpretation of events that one might find controversy. I didn't

find any, myself. I would only say that Lynch failed to fault Islam, the religion itself, for the horrors taking place in the Middle East today. This is understandable since there is little to be gained by blaming an entire religion and much to lose through distraction and ineffectual focus. True, it is in part Islam's inability to separate mosque from state that underlies the failure of democracy to take hold in the Middle East. Lynch seems to intimate as much when he writes, "The Arab uprisings of 2011 were only one episode in a generational challenge to a failed political order." (p. 254) What Lynch focuses on is the autocratic regimes themselves and their inability to awaken to the new reality brought about by rapid and nearly universal communication among the populace. (They can see clearly how much better things are in other places in the world.) No longer can the regimes manage public opinion and knowledge through nearly absolute control of media. Instead with Facebook, Twitter and other venues anyone with a smart phone and/or an Internet connection can learn via YouTube videos, outside news sources and messages from friends, comrades, family and even enemies the truth about what is happening almost anywhere in the Middle East. Lynch of course points with muted voice to the colonialism of the past since this book is about today and now, and the past is well known and nothing can be done about it. (The word "colonialism" does not even appear in the excellent Index.

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