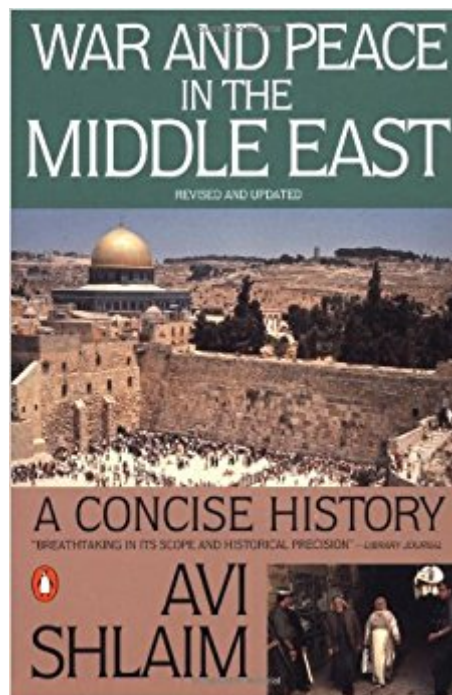




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War And Peace In The Middle East: A Concise History, Revised And Updated



Synopsis

"Remarkable...breathtaking in its scope and historical precision, this is highly recommended volume for both public and academic libraries."—Library Journal.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Examining Western relations with the Middle East since WWI, Oxford international relations professor Shlaim criticizes American policy in the region, charging that the U.S. continues to ignore the economic and social needs of that community. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.

To crown his political career and in the aftermath of the Gulf War, President Bush championed a New World Order to turn his military victory into a political cause. Alas, no such order emerged because Washington failed to recognize the underlying problems of the region-denial of democracy and human rights by authoritarian regimes and the gap between rich and poor. In this remarkable essay, Shlaim, the Iraqi-born, Israeli-raised, and British-educated Professor of International Relations at the University of Oxford, provides an unusually lucid historical analysis of the Middle East to underline seminal developments that shaped the region. He assesses the critical role of the Ottoman Empire and admonishes successive American administrations, which distinguished themselves by adopting a series of inconsistent policies during the past 50 or so years. Shlaim offers cogent insights on key issues and, without being coy, recommends a course of action that calls for more U.S. involvement in the peace process. Breathtaking in its scope and historical

precision, this is a highly recommended volume for both public and academic libraries. Joseph A. Kechichian, Rand Corp., Santa Monica, Cal. Copyright 1994 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Great book!!! It is a short read, very detailed. A great historically accurate account. Fair and balanced. Highly recommend.

Mr. Shlaim does an excellent job of clearly defining the reasons for recent troubles in the Middle East. He focuses on the period since World War I, and on three conflicts: The Arab-Israeli conflict, the Iran-Iraq war, and the Persian Gulf War. He is fair and objective, though that often means being critical of U.S and British involvement in the region. However, no party escapes deserved criticism. This book is short and concise, but is only meant to be a primer for understanding the politics of the Middle East. It is not meant for those who already have knowledge beyond the basics. I strongly recommend it to those readers who would like the background information necessary to begin understanding current situations in the Middle East.

good

I read this book in about 4 hours and took passed the Dantes DSST exam (An Introduction to the Modern Middle East) for 3 credit hours. An outstanding resource. I highly recommend this book for military personnel who are pressed for time and need 3 quick credits.

good

This book is a nice introduction to the great powers' influence on international relations of Middle Eastern countries. Surely, it offers a partial picture which is mostly about the role of great powers in shaping international relations in the Middle East. But it does a good job in doing what it does. Some of the stories and arguments are so important for understanding contemporary conflicts in the Middle East. Here are some excerpts from the book: "The Ottoman Empire had provided a far from perfect political system, but it worked. During WWI Britain and its allies destroyed the old order in the Arabic-speaking Middle East without considering the long-term consequences." "Nixon and Kissinger also aided the shah in his campaign to destabilize the Ba'ath regime in Baghdad. In 1972 they agreed to covert American-Israeli-Iranian action in support of the Kurdish rebels in northern

Iraq." "[regarding Iran-Iraq war] Kissinger summed up the general preference when he indicated that the best outcome would be for both sides to lose." "[The Iran-Iraq war] started as a result of rivalries inside rather than outside, but Reagan's intervention prolonged it unnecessarily." "On July 31 [1990], three days before Iraqi troops charged into Kuwait John Kelly [the US assistant secretary of state for Near East and South Asian Affairs] testified on Capitol Hill that America had no treaty and no commitment obliging it to send forces should Kuwait be overrun." "[The Gulf War] also demonstrated that Americans are better at short, sharp burst of military intervention designed to restore the status quo than at sustained political engagement to resolve the underlying origins of instability in the Middle East." "Most of the American mistakes in the last half century can be traced to the combination of globalism and the Israel-first approach."

When this first came out I nearly missed it because it appeared too short to be anything but a simplistic popularised summary. Thank goodness I did start browsing, because not only did the style have me hooked, the argument's balance and lucidity, and (whatever Likudnik propagandists may say) the thoroughly scholarly grounding of the account, made me realise that here at last I had the perfect introductory text for the intelligent student entering upon a study of modern Middle Eastern history and politics. It has been a top recommendation in my final-year university course on Middle East politics ever since. The only frustration has been that, since it went out of print in the UK, my students have had to rely on the few library copies and my own. I shall now be directing them to get their own copy - and order some more for the library. The book somehow manages to synthesise a mass of historical detail and controversy into a straightforward but finely judged account, bringing out all the key themes and dynamics: this is not only a list of facts and events, but a compelling analysis. He brings to life especially well the interplay of external actors (especially Britain, France and the US) and regional factors (the calculations of regional elites, balancing between dynastic/regime ambitions and the constraints of the international environment; and in places the outbursts of popular anger against both regimes and outsiders - including against the influx of Jewish settlers and eventually the establishment of Israel). The book wears its scholarship and erudition lightly - but it is perhaps only someone as thoroughly grounded in the disciplines of International Relations and History as is professor Shlaim, that could perform this feat with such apparent ease and elegance. Serious scholars of the region, while perhaps willing to quibble with small details, will (and indeed do) agree about the author's mastery of the material and the soundness of his judgement. That he ties a number of observations to the historical analysis that have a political flavour about current events (e.g. about US foreign policy), does not make the

historical analysis itself any less rewarding. Nor indeed can the conclusions regarding the current shape of the Palestine problem be dismissed (as happens in one or two of the other reviews on this site) except by those with the sorts of preconceived convictions (and political agendas?) that brook no challenge. This is a little gem of a book, and one of those few that serve the wider public as well as the novice student of Middle Eastern affairs. Buy it and help persuade the publishers (and the author!) to bring out an updated edition for the mid-2000s!

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