



# The New Crusades: Constructing the Muslim Enemy

From Columbia University Press

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**The New Crusades: Constructing the Muslim Enemy** From Columbia University Press

Not since the Crusades of the Middle Ages has Islam evoked the degree of fear, hostility, and ethnic and religious stereotyping that is evident throughout Western culture today. As conflicts continue to proliferate around the globe, the perception of a colossal, unyielding, and unavoidable struggle between Islam and the West has intensified. These numerous conflicts, both actual and ideological, have revived fears of an ongoing "clash of civilizations"—an intractable and irreconcilable conflict of values between Western cultures and an Islam that is portrayed as hostile and alien.

*The New Crusades* takes head-on the idea of an emergent "Cold War" between Islam and the West. It explores the historical, political, and institutional forces that have raised the specter of a threatening and monolithic Muslim enemy and provides a nuanced critique of much received wisdom on the topic, particularly the "clash of civilizations" theory. Bringing together twelve of the most influential thinkers in Middle Eastern and religious studies—including Edward Said, Roy Mottahedeh, and Fatema Mernissi—this timely collection confronts such depictions of the Arab-Islamic world, showing their inner workings and how they both empower and shield from scrutiny Islamic radicals who operate from similar paradigms of inevitable and absolute conflict.

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## **Editorial Review**

Review

A book of major importance.... Essential.

*(Choice)*

Sophisticated, subtle, richly documented, and wide-ranging.

*(L. Carl Brown Foreign Affairs)*

This is an important book... for those engaged in challenging the assumptions that lie behind this current 'war on terror'.

*(The Muslim World Book Review)*

*The New Crusades* assembles expert knowledges of some tangled historical roots... this work deserves as wide a readership as possible.

*(Max Weiss Canadian Review of Studies in Nationalism)*

An insightful work.

*(Roxanne D. Marcotte Studies in Religion)*

An important book at an important time in American social thought.

*(Daniel L. Smith-Christopher Studies in Contemporary Islam)*

Review

There is no Muslim enemy. In the 11th century the First Crusaders constructed him to cover spurious conquests and wanton killings. In the 21st century the New Crusaders reconstruct him to cover global asymmetries and moral blunders. Both sets of Crusaders are zealots with feet of clay. Their opposite is Eqbal Ahmad. Ahmad was an educator with a heart of gold. He was also a tireless, fearless agonist for justice. It is in his vision that these essays are cast and to his memory that they are collectively dedicated. This volume holds out true hope. Its message will resonate for all who look beyond Crusades to imagine, then construct a new world order without Muslim enemies.

*(Bruce B. Lawrence, Nancy and Jeffrey Marcus Humanities Professor, Duke University)*

A scholarly work of exceptional clarity, forthrightness and position taking. This brilliant work pulls no punches as it provides answers to and refutes the clichés (conventional wisdom) of today – that there is a clash of civilizations and that militant Islam is on the march threatening Western civilization. The most comprehensive group of essays you will find which rebuts assertions made by establishment and neo-conservative scholars. This book provides answers and arguments many people have been waiting for and many have needed.

(Ahmed Rashid, author of *Taliban and Jihad: The Rise of Militant Islam in Central Asia*)

A collection of first-rate essays that offer much-needed critiques of parochial, xenophobic, or merely simplistic Western approaches to Islam, Muslims, and the Muslim-majority world. These writings offer acute analyses of, and responses to, those writers who ought to know better (e.g., Bernard Lewis), those who don't want to know better (e.g., V.S. Naipaul), and those who need to know better (e.g., Robert Kaplan). Collectively, they expose the faults of the "clash of civilizations" approach to the contemporary world and remind us how much it has become a self-fulfilling prophecy recently. This volume needs to be on the reading list of every thoughtful American before it is too late.

(William A. Graham, Murray A. Albertson Professor of Middle Eastern Studies, Harvard University)

A book of major importance, revealing the extraordinary strength of Islamophobic prejudice in modern society worldwide. The authors demonstrate the depth of this dehumanizing problem with painful clarity, and they challenge us to move beyond the sinister opposition of 'us' and 'them.'

(Carl Ernst, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill)

The learned, subtle, and often brilliant essays in this volume offer a far richer and more nuanced view of Islam and the West than the strident simple-mindedness of too many politicians and pundits these days. The range of subject matter is in itself mind-broadening, the intellectual level high, and the selection of contributors impressive. The late Eqbal Ahmad, to whom this volume is dedicated, would have felt honored, and his many friends and admirers can feel that his work is here carried on.

(Adam Hochschild, author of *King Leopold's Ghost*)

#### About the Author

Emran Qureshi is an independent scholar and freelance journalist. His articles and reviews have appeared in the *Los Angeles Times*, the *Toronto Globe & Mail*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Guardian Weekly*. He resides in Ottawa, where he is working on his next book, a study of Islam and human rights. Michael A. Sells is Emily Judson Baugh and John Marshall Guest Professor of Comparative Religion at Haverford College. He is the author of more than sixty articles and seven books, including *Approaching the Qur'an: The Early Revelations* and *The Bridge Betrayed: Religion and Genocide in Bosnia*.

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