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Robert Fisk On Algeria



Synopsis

A new front has opened in the global “war on terror”, in the deserts of north Africa. Islamic extremists, loosely affiliated to al-Qaeda, are attacking Western interests in an “arc of insecurity” stretching from Senegal to Somalia, with the fiercest recent action in Algeria and Mali. Such outbreaks can be traced in part to the Arab Spring, and the side-effects of, for example, the fall of Colonel Gaddafi in Libya. But there is also another, darker source: the legacy of years of horrifying sectarian bloodletting in Algeria. Rarely has a nation’s suffering been so under-reported. More than 150,000 people have been killed by their fellow Algerians, mostly with sickening cruelty, since a general election won by the Islamic FIS party was annulled in 1992. The violence has slackened since 1999, when an amnesty induced many rebels to lay down their arms, but it has never stopped, and the scars on the national psyche will take decades to heal.

Meanwhile, the power and influence of the fighters who call themselves Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb has been growing inexorably. Finally, with the insurgency in Mali and the hostage-taking and massacre at the In Amenas gas field in January 2013, Western leaders and the Western public have been forced to confront a problem that has hitherto passed under their radar. For those seeking to understand why Algeria’s tragedy matters, and what it means, there is no better place to start than here: a collection of contemporary reportage by the world’s pre-eminent Middle-East correspondent, Robert Fisk, who raised the alarm about what was happening in Algeria while the rest of the world looked away. The edited collection of articles that follows spans two decades, chronicling first-hand what happened when a nation’s failure to reconcile its ideological differences led both sides to descend into barbarity. Much of it is harrowing to read: a catalogue of man’s inhumanity to man, punctuated with shining instances of courage, kindness and humour but no less tragic for that. But it is the truth. And for anyone who wishes to understand the problems confronting us today, it is essential reading.

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Customer Reviews

These articles by Fisk about the turmoil in Algeria starting in 1992 are insightful. and will increase one's despair about anything good coming out of North Africa in the near future. The lesson learned from this book is that "The West" knows little about the affairs it continues to muddle in, and none of its efforts produce any good results. Whether in North Africa, Syria, Afghanistan, or Iraq today, Muslims are less a threat to the West, and more a threat to other Muslims. Brutality beyond belief, though in Fisk's writings, not beyond description. A worthwhile read, though it will leave you depressed.

Robert Fisk is the best Journalist reporting from the Middle East. He speaks Arabic and is a historian of the area. He respects the peoples he writes about, and their culture, customs language and is deeply committed to writing the truth. His sober rational reporting is intelligent and always so informative and a delight to read even when the subject matter is painful.

This collection of Robert Fisk writings date from 1992--the Algerian generals denying election results to a fundamentalist Muslim politician--through observations made in early 2013. It's particularly relevant considering the generals' coup in Egypt. Are we looking at flames lapping from western Africa to Syria and even far beyond? Stay tuned, and realize that what Fisk observed in Algeria is likely to be a precursor to events throughout the world.

He doesn't pull any punches but he's even handed in his constant effort to take no sides while he

gives us as clear a picture as possible of the deliberately chaotic.

Robert Fisk has a knack for detailing essential historical points of continuity that put together important factual information for the uninformed western reader

Although I really like Robert Fisk's books this one didn't catch me, neither journalism nor history old columns were not good enough for a book.

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