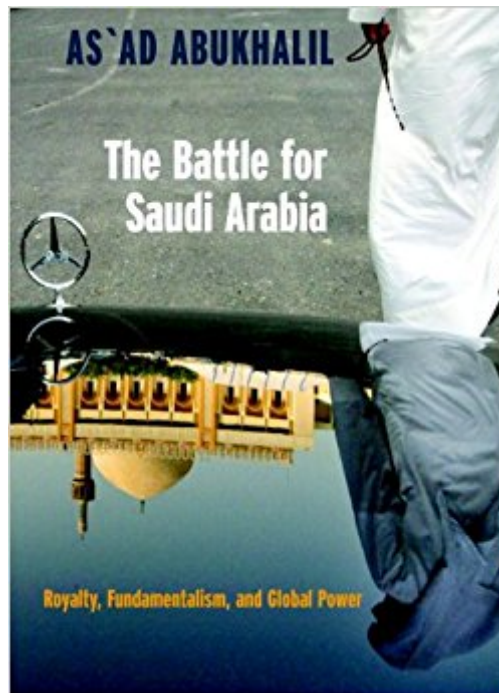




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The Battle For Saudi Arabia: Royalty, Fundamentalism, And Global Power



Synopsis

In *The Battle for Saudi Arabia: Royalty, Fundamentalism, and Global Power*, Professor As'ad AbuKhalil confronts the contradictory nature of Saudi Arabia—questions that both the Saudi government, long shrouded in mystery, and the United States government, ever protective of its own interests, seem unwilling to answer. In this unsparing probe into the history and power structure of the kingdom, Professor AbuKhalil, author of *Bin Laden, Islam, and America's New "War on Terrorism"*, affords the reader unique insight into the intense friction that underlies the increasingly precarious balance between the Saudi royal family and the fundamentalist clerical establishment.

Book Information

Series: Open Media Series

Paperback: 248 pages

Publisher: Seven Stories Press; First Printing edition (November 4, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1583226109

ISBN-13: 978-1583226100

Product Dimensions: 5 x 0.5 x 7 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.7 out of 5 stars 10 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #817,591 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #92 in [Books > History > Middle East > Saudi Arabia](#) #830 in [Books > Law > Legal Theory & Systems > Non-US Legal Systems](#) #874 in [Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > International & World Politics > Diplomacy](#)

Customer Reviews

"Asad Abu Khalil takes aim at friends and foes of the Kingdom alike in Saudi Arabia and the United States. Read and argue with his sharp, often provocative judgments, and, as you do so, appreciate Asad's attempt to go beyond the easy outrage that colors much of the post-9/11 writing on Saudi society and American foreign policy." --Robert Vitalis, Director of the University of Pennsylvania's Middle East Center "Based on often ignored Saudi sources, this important book reveals much about one of the most important countries in the Middle East, Saudi Arabia, and its long and involved relationship with the United States. For anyone who wishes to understand the background of perhaps the most extreme ideology in the Middle East, this book is a must." --Rashid Khalidi,

Edward Said Professor of Arab Studies, Middle East Institute, Columbia University

AS'AD ABUKHALIL was born in Tyre, Lebanon. He received his B.A. and M.A. in Political Science from the American University of Beirut, and his Ph.D. in Comparative Politics from Georgetown University. AbuKhalil has taught at Georgetown, George Washington University, Tufts University, Colorado College, and Randolph-Macon Woman's College. His articles on Middle East politics and society have appeared in English, German, Spanish, and Arabic. He is professor of political science at California State University, Stanislaus, and a visiting professor at UC, Berkeley.

Knowing that my very liberal Middle Eastern politics professor assigned this book for class several years ago now, I would kind of expected this book to swing towards a liberal point of view, but I think that this author has the situation in Saudi Arabia ultimately correct. You have a highly corrupt royal family who yet tries to shield themselves in extreme religious doctrine, but only so far because moving too extreme might upset the Americans, whose support they need to stay in power. Even though this book is now somewhat dated stopping just before the 2004 US Presidential Election, many of the trends he identified woman's rights, dissent against the royal family among others identified in this book remain valid. A good background work, but for more current information on the kingdom seek out another book.

Very good overview and history of Saudi Arabia. Everything you want to know about the Saud family and then some. Excellent clarification that the Saudi population is NOT like the monarchy. Excellent description of the role of the US and how US / Saudi interests intertwine. Suggestions for next edition: 1) Put the chapter name at top of page instead of author's name 2) Add information on the role of Saudi Arabia in alliance with US regime change operations in Central America and beyond. This book deserves to be read by wide audience. An updated edition describing events of the past decade, including Saudi role in Egypt and Syria, would be welcome.

This author has a great understanding of history and a decent writer. A must-read for those who are looking for a more complete and objective review of the nation-state of Saudi Arabia.

As'Ad Abukhalil presents critical, but well presented arguments that are well-cited! A must-read for anybody looking to get an insight into Saudi politics.

This very small book is a quick, quite superficial overview of the Saudi royals -- material better covered in Murawiec's 'Princes of Darkness' and in Schwartz's 'Two faces of Islam' among other options. It is, for example, surprisingly generic and non-specific when alleging human rights violations, corruption, etc. In addition, it is not particularly well written, or perhaps not well-edited -- occasionally one can get away with starting a sentence 'And...' but not constantly. Reads like a college term paper more than a professional work, at times. I also have to say - having read more than a dozen books on aspects of the Middle East, I am still waiting for one author of Arab heritage to be anything other than virulently, belligerently anti-Israel. Jewish and Israeli authors seem to bend over backwards to give at least some small nod to the Arab, Muslim, or Palestinian point of view, even if they then try to discredit it. The shrill polemics of even educated, 'Westernized' Arabs inevitably casts doubt on their other observations. Although it is a very small note in this book, it was there in the usual strident neon.

AbuKhalil is a political science professor who writes the Angry Arab News Service. This book chronicles the history of Saudi Arabia and its ruling ideology, Wahabbi Islam, then continues as a stinging critique of the present day regime and the complete lack of human rights in the kingdom. He shows the complete moral bankruptcy of the kingdom, and its close relationship with the United States, who has consistently supported the House of Saud in its treatment of their own population, and as a proxy to further American interests in the Islamic world, often to the long term detriment to American interests. The stranglehold the royal family, especially the sons of the states founder, has on the country is essential to understanding the political dynamics within the country, and this is a focal point of AbuKhalil's critique. It is fascinating how inter-family politics plays such a powerful role in the country's political life. His only mistake seems to be that he believes the new King Abdullah (who was Crown Prince when the book was written), would not become king, since he is not a son of the first wife, unlike the so-called Sudayri Seven, the now deceased King Fahd and his six full brothers. However, these brothers still are the main power elites in the country, and they are getting really old. What happens when they're gone will truly be momentous for both Saudi Arabia and the world. A must read for those wanting a greater understanding of this very important country and close ally of the US, right now fighting what is close to be coming a civil war.

This book is a brilliant and concise analysis of the Kingdom. As one who has consulted to the Royal Family (King Fahd was investor in a major wheat and dairy project for which my firm served as Strategists--based in the World Trade Center, how ironic now--not only did the Min of Ag and Water

have to lie about the CEO being a woman but for years the joint venture itself (Irish and Saudi) often denied and minimized our Pan-Gulf Strategy success, our financial structuring (one of largest IPOs in 20 yrs), my very existence. This book reveals--and I have read 30 texts including historical analyses that get lost in the minutia of tribal rivalry--how flawed the very thinking of the powerful Saud family is: except for Khalid the SAud Family is not religious, not very Islamic (gambling, London cruising/procuring of prostitutes, etc), and certainly never subscribers to Wahhabi fundamentalism themselves--has co-opted the religious powers for money such that the mullas export the fundatmentalists furry rather than focus on the family itself. AbuKhalil's book is among the very best I had read on Saudi.

Other than the small form factor of the book this book has a multitude of information about the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. I personally agree strongly with the conclusions of the book and I'm convinced they are based in the strong reality that the Saudi economy is based solely on oil revenues. I have lived in the kingdom for more than a year and fully comprehend the authors views and conclusions about what is transpiring there.

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