

and the challenges they pose for the West and particularly the United States. Written with a good deal of passion and a sense of urgency, Akbar Ahmad makes a powerful case for initiating a dialogue between Islam and the West to usher in a just and humane world. This is a compelling reason to read and admire the book.

By portraying the three-dimensional picture of the Muslim world, Akbar Ahmad achieves three objectives. One, he conveys the message that the Muslim world is not monolithic. Two, he advises the West to engage with Muslims and acknowledge “their common humanity.” Three, he advises Muslims to be eclectic: open as in Ajmir, committed as in Deoband and skilled in negotiation with governments and organisations as taught in Aligarh.

Journey into Islam reveals that Muslim understanding of Islam is undergoing reform. Muslims are seeking their religious roots for answers, but they are not stuck in the past. The West can influence this crucial process for a better world by showing more interest and respect to Islam and the Muslims. The book recommends that the West and the government of the United States in particular should reach out sincerely and seriously to the Muslim world and engage in serious dialogue. They should find ways to overcome stereotypes, respect Islam, and adopt a programme for sharing economic, educational and other resources. Finally, the U.S. should shun its reliance upon instruments of war and live up to its own ideals of democracy through promoting international dialogue between Muslims and non-Muslims.

Insurgency and Counter-Insurgency in Iraq. By Ahmed S. Hashim. London: Hurst & Company, 2006, pp. 482. ISBN: 1-85065-795-5.

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In this sobering account of the ongoing violence in Iraq, Ahmed Hashim, a specialist on Middle Eastern strategic issues and irregular

warfare, reveals the insurgents behind the widespread revolt, their motives and their tactics. The insurgency, he shows, is not a united movement directed by a leadership with a single ideological vision. Instead, it involves former regime loyalists, Iraqis resentful of foreign occupation, foreign and domestic Islamist extremists, and elements of organised crime. These groups have cooperated with one another in the past and coordinated their attacks; but the alliance between nationalist Iraqi insurgents on the one hand and religious extremists has frayed considerably. The U.S.-led offensive to retake Fallujah in November 2004 and the success of the elections for the Iraqi National Assembly in January 2005 have led more “mainstream” insurgent groups to begin thinking of reinforcing the political arm of their opposition movement and to seek political guarantees for the Sunni Arab Community in the new Iraq.

The study starts with a chronological narrative of the conventional war during Operation Iraqi Freedom and of the insurgency from its outbreak in late April 2003 to the end of October 2005. It then seeks answers to a number of fundamental questions: Who are the insurgents? What are the origins, motivations and causes of the insurgency? What do the insurgents want? And do they all want the same thing?

Second, the study addresses the issue of how “men rebel.” This refers to the organisational and institutional infrastructure of rebellion. Insurgencies cannot occur without some form of organisation. Hashim argues that the outside world was baffled by the capacity of the insurgency to function as well as by the prevalence of dozens of groups with different, and at times conflicting, political agendas. According to the author, despite the fact that the organisational structure of the Iraqi insurgency was not very transparent to the observers, enough existed to build an over-all picture of its leadership and structures and of its cadres, however incomplete.

Third, with what means do men rebel? What are the operational goals and tactical concepts associated with this specific insurgency? The Iraqi insurgents knew that they could not meet the U.S. forces head-on in a combat situation due to the imbalance in firepower, training and equipment. The only way to fight the Americans was through guerilla warfare.

Fourth, it has been argued ad nauseam that insurgencies need popular support. However, in the Iraqi case, insurgency took place in a country that is divided by deep class, regional or ethno-sectarian fissures. Ahmad Hashim explores the impact of ethno-sectarian divisions in Iraq on the insurgency. In this context, he addresses the respective positions and roles of the Kurds and Shī'ah - two communities which have not supported the Sunni insurgency in post-Saddam Iraq.

Fifth, how did the U.S. deal with the insurgency during the two years of the study (2003-2005)? Hashim admits that the U.S. went into Iraq with goals and assumptions that ultimately contributed to the deterioration of the situation in Iraq. Thirty years after Vietnam, the U.S. has proved yet again that it has neither the organisational nor the cultured flexibility to deal with foreign insurgencies. The U.S. made several policy blunders in the aftermath of the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's regime. It compounded these strategic mistakes by operational and tactical ones and failures once the insurgency had broken out. It has been hampered in devising a successful counter-insurgency by its pre-invasion goals/assumptions and post-conventional war mistakes plus ad hoc operational and tactical solutions that have plagued the U.S. effort in Iraq.

Sixth, how do insurgencies end? From the vantage point of end of 2005 when Hashim's study was completed, there was considerable debate on the future course of the insurgency in Iraq. Hashim admits that the Iraqi conflict continues and hard data are difficult to come by because this is not an ordinary research setting. Access into Iraq is not easy and it is extremely difficult to conduct "field research" on a dangerous issue such as the insurgency. It will be years before the U.S. allows access to hand operational data on the insurgency and on its counter-measures. Not surprisingly, there have been few analytical studies of the Iraqi insurgency and fewer still that rely on "field data" derived from close-up observation on the ground and discussions with individuals, soldiers and officials present in Iraq. In this context, Hashim argues, there will not be a definitive study of the Iraqi insurgency and the U.S. response to it for years to come.

In this persuasive study, Hashim brings a clear, dispassionate analysis to bear on the insurgency's component parts, the forces

that keep it going and the strategies that have provoked it. In place of sensational headlines, official triumphalism, and hand-wringing, this book offers a clear-eyed analysis of the increasingly complex violence that threatens the very future of Iraq.

The Muslims of Thailand. By Michel Gilquin, Translated by Michael Smithies. Chiang Mai: IRASEC and Silkworm Books, 2005, pp. 164. ISBN: 974-9575-85-7.

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Thailand, known as a Theravada Buddhist country, has a Muslim minority of up to 8 percent of the population. Muslims form the majority in three southern provinces. Michel Gilquin, a researcher at the Center for Social Science and Humanities in Rabat, Morocco, in *The Muslims of Thailand* examines the origins of Islam in Thailand and the manifestation of Muslims in the land of the Buddha. The author has revised and expanded the 2002 French publication which was translated by Michael Smithies, resident in Thailand, for the benefit of the English speaking readers.

The book is divided into three parts. Part one deals with diversity of forms in Thailand. It contains three chapters. The first chapter deals with the origins of Islam in Thailand, a country where Buddhism is the official religion. However, back then, Siam was under the reign of King Narasuan who established bilateral relationship with two brothers from Persia, Sheikh Ahmad and Mohamad Said. Consequently, the King had bestowed them with a status of Phra Khlang which is equivalent to the Minister of Trade. Many converted to Islam through marriage and formed a powerful and influential colony in Authya. King Narasuan was said to have a Bengali Minister of Finance and Indian Muslims as personal guards. These claims provide a reasonable ground to believe that Muslims had close connections with the royal family and they played an important role in Siam administration. Muslims were given royal subsidies to build mosques.