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Unholy war : terror in the name of Islam

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Abstrak

The devastating September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon left us stunned, angry, and uncomprehending. As it became clear that these horrifying acts had been committed in the name of Islam, we struggled to understand how religion could be used to justify the slaughter of innocents. The media, the government, and ordinary citizens alike sought answers to questions about Islam and its adherents. Who are the Muslim extremists who perpetrate such deeds? Why do theyhate us? What do they hope to achieve? Does Islam really teach that such terrorists are holy warriors who will be rewarded with everlasting bliss? In this level-headed and authoritative book, John L. Esposito, one of the world's most respected scholars of political Islam, provides answers to these and many other questions that have arisen in the wake of the attacks. He clearly and carefully explains the teachings of Islam--the Quran, the example of the Prophet, Islamic law--about jihad or holy war, the use of violence, and terrorism. He chronicles the rise of extremist groups and examines their frightening worldview and tactics.Anti-Americanism (and anti-Europeanism), he shows, is a broad-based phenomenon that cuts across Arab and Muslim societies. It is not just driven by religious zealotry, but by frustration and anger at U.S. policy. Moreover, many Muslims are repelled by aspects of Western culture, and alarmed at its impactaround the world. It is vital to understand, however, that the vast majority of Muslims are appalled by the acts of violence committed in the name of their faith. It is essential that we distinguish between the religion of Islam and the actions of extremists like Osama bin Laden who hijack Islamic discourse and belief to justify their acts of terrorism. How can we continue the fight against terrorism without precipitating a global clash of cultures? This is perhaps the most important question we face in this time of crisis. The terrorists behind the September 11 attacks must be brought to justice, their cells eradicated, and their bases destroyed. But this war against terror must not be used to justify erosion of important values at home, or become a green light to authoritarian regimes in the Muslim world to repress non-violent opposition.Only by understanding and addressing the issues that breed hatred and radicalism, argues Esposito, can we defuse the conflicts that will otherwise continue to confront future generations. This brief, clear-sighted and accessibly written book reflects twenty years of study, reflection, and experience on the part of a scholar who is equally respected in the West and in the Muslim world. It will prove to be the best single guide to these urgent questions that have suddenly forced themselves on the attention of the entire world.