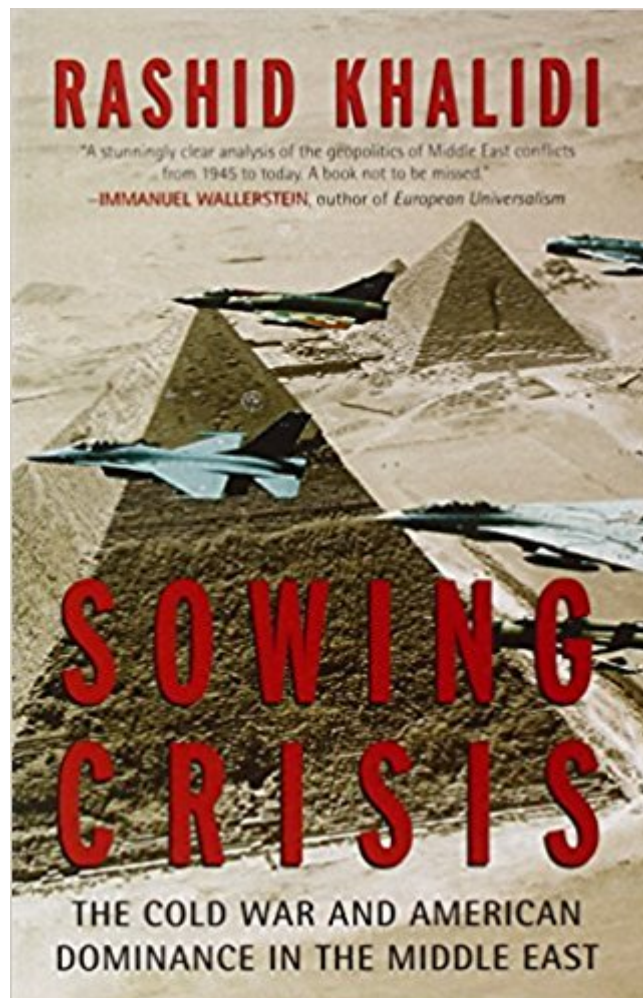




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# Sowing Crisis: The Cold War And American Dominance In The Middle East



## Synopsis

Acclaimed historian and political commentator Rashid Khalidi presents the compelling case that U.S. and Soviet intervention in the Middle East not only exacerbated civil wars and provoked the breakdown of fragile democracies, but continues to this day to shape global conflict in the region. Examining the strategic interplay of cold war superpowers, Khalidi explains how the momentous events that have occurred over the last two decades—including two Gulf wars, the occupation of Iraq, and the rise of terrorism—can only be understood in light of this chilling legacy.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Starred Review. Khalidi (Resurrecting Empire) provides a compelling history of modern conflict in the Middle East, arguing that current conflicts are by-products of the cold war and the policies, strategies and priorities of the United States and the Soviet Union. The author illustrates how the cold war rivals saw the Middle East—with its vital location and vast oil and gas reserves—as a tool to further their parallel agendas: the Soviets and Americans both subordinated the goal of Arab-Israeli peace and supplied weapons at a profit to both Iraq and Iran during their eight-year war, while the U.S. sought to further its dominance of the region by backing a coup to overthrow democracy in Iran. Khalidi concludes by charting how George W. Bush's Global War on Terror has allowed for a massive military expansion in the Middle East and resulted in futile

and feckless policies that may have increased the actual risk to American citizens and wreaked havoc on the region. Khalidi has written an important book, essential for anyone concerned about the stability of the Middle East. (Mar.) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Khalidi provides a compelling history of modern conflict in the Middle East . . . [he] has written an important book, essential for anyone concerned about the stability of the Middle East. "Publishers Weekly, starred review, Pick of the Week "[G]ets the reader up to speed on many of the disputes that have made the Middle East a flashpoint in today's U.S. foreign policy. Khalidi places it all in context, and infuses it with sharp analysis. He writes engagingly and knowledgeably about U.S. and Soviet maneuvers that exacerbated the already severe tensions between Arab states and Israel." "Kirkus Reviews "A stunningly clear analysis of the geopolitics of Middle East conflicts from 1945 to today. A book not to be missed." "Immanuel Wallerstein, author of *European Universalism*" Khalidi is arguably the foremost U.S. historian of the modern Middle East." "Warren I. Cohen, *Los Angeles Times Book Review*" "[T]he president . . . should read [this book], not so much to chasten his sunny view of our recent past in the Middle East as to be reminded how very hard it is to make progress in a region where memories are long." "James Traub, *New York Times Book Review*

Well-written history of the Middle East during the Cold War. Khalidi finds in the struggle between the U.S. and U.S.S.R., many of the causes of present troubles in the Middle East. Cold War, and post-World War II (he highlights that war as an important event itself), concerns over strategic territory, resources and ideological competition, drove the actions of the superpowers. The results of foreign interventions, Khalidi argues, supporting insurrections, fixing elections, supplying weapons and building military bases, to name a few examples, resulted in increased interstate warfare, as well as the "undermining of democracy," and the growth of authoritarian regimes.

This scholarly work by Prof. Khalidi offers a highly readable history of the Middle East by delving into the numerous historical events that shaped the current situation, presenting these events from the perspectives of the different protagonists and analysing their motives. The imperial aspirations of the big powers from the 19th century, their Cold War and post-Cold War rivalry, provide the background to their continuing influence in this region through their support for venal elites who run some of their client states. The imperial embrace of weak nations under various pretexts such as

stability and democracy is often a kiss of death in the longer term. While countries in many other regions have been able to partially extricate themselves from big power politics, the Middle East remains an area big powers still control through client states governed mostly by the undemocratic rulers who rely on external support for their continuation in power. Western readers whose knowledge of the region is based on sanitised versions of world events by "TV experts" and political spin doctors will find this book disturbing.

Khalidi takes a historical perspective on the Middle East and its crisis yet uses the lens of foreign involvement as the independent variable throughout. As a result he will leave some details in, others out, add a few interweaving points in order to claim that the U.S., Russia, France and Britain among others have 'sown' the seeds of crisis. The argument holds water, especially in regards to the Cold War. However, this is not to ignore the fact that internal Arab disputes and their own 'cold war' and realism's hold on dictatorships have given them a few problems all their own. While the U.S. in the last decade has meddled greatly in Iraq and Afghanistan it cannot be said that all of the middle east is still a product of foreign meddling. The middle east is in the international economy and so is its oil. It was rudely introduced to realpolitik in the post WWI era and is becoming quite proficient in the skill today. It is possible to 'help' too much. Khalidi's description of Lebanon's over-dependence on foreign sources is thought-provoking at best. I don't think world powers are the only pieces of leverage that could extract a tight fisted dictator... then again on this day in summer 2011 my words our hindsight, Khalidi didn't see this coming.

I enjoyed this book immensely. I found it to be logical in explaining the cold war era, as it also incorporated the effect it had on the Middle East. It was a great eye-opener showing the US and Soviet Unions struggle to gain dominance and power over the Middle East. I was actually thinking after I had read it 'what would have been different if the US had not won the cold war with the Soviet Unions demise'? A very good read! Left me thinking!

Book was exactly as described "like new". And Khalidi is a powerful writer dealing with today's (and yesterday's) events in the Middle East. Read him!

THE ONE STAR IS FOR THE PRESENTATION, NOT THE CONTENT. The numbered footnotes in the Kindle version are not active - very inconvenient, particularly for a FULL-PRICED KINDLE BOOK.

To all of those who want to understand why people of Middle East don't trust the US politics and government, you should read this book.

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