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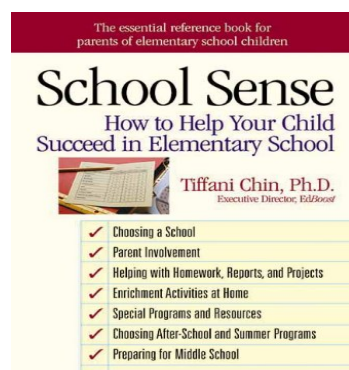
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The New Arab Wars: Uprisings and Anarchy in the Middle East

Less than twenty-four months after the hope-filled Arab uprising, the popular movement had morphed into a dystopia of resurgent dictators, failed states, and civil wars. Egypt's epochal transition to democracy ended in a violent military coup. Yemen and Libya collapsed into civil war, while Bahrain erupted in smothering sectarian repression. Syria proved the greatest victim of all, ripped apart by internationally fueled insurgencies and an externally supported, bloody-minded regime. Amidst the chaos, a virulently militant group declared an Islamic State, seizing vast territories and inspiring terrorism across the globe. What happened? The New Arab Wars is a profound illuminatio

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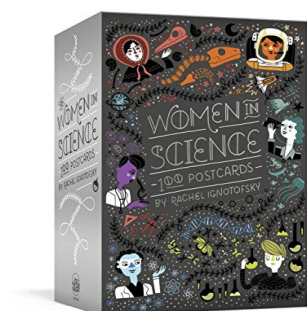
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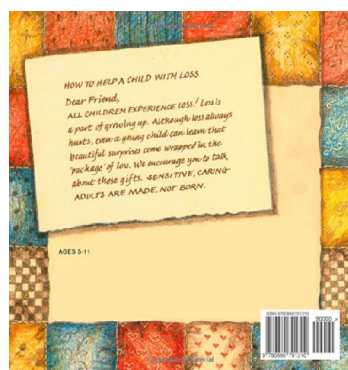
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What others say about this ebook:

Review 1:

An excellent report on conditions in The Middle East, where it ace from and where it's going.

Review 2:

Ah! This is how books were meant to be written.

Professor Lynch's book deftly combines a sophisticated yet extremely timely review of Arab Spring with a political scientist's appreciation for history, statistics, and theory. The strength of the writing, the incorporation of Arab sources, and the appropriate timeliness of the topic was definitely the "gateway" to my enjoyment of the book.

But, MORE than simply a book about The New Arab Wars, this book is ultimately a detailed set of case studies about nonviolent resistance. Any person who believes in making a positive difference, and who also realizes the extent to which effective implementation will make or break the success of an effort, would appreciate Professor Lynch's thoughtful review of the Arab Spring to-date.

While I was attracted to this book because I wanted a guide to the modern Middle East, I would recommended it to anyone who wants to take a serious role in a cross-sector organization, as a strategist, as a practitioner, or as a political leader. You probably need at least some basic context of the Middle East to fully appreciate the book ? but you don't need too much at all!

Thank you Professor Lynch for such an incredible contribution, and for making those of us who are practitioners more effective at what we do.

PS. As a follow up, I can't help but wonder whether "we" (the U.S., U.S. universities, and ideally others ? my "we" is loosely defined) could offer free modules on governance and government institutions to anyone with a refugee status. Probably shorter than a masters degree but longer than a summer. And probably residential programs. High-quality programming in this area ? obviously with the right people in place to ensure access to the program ? could begin to build the leadership skillsets of those who have been impacted by the suffering that Professor Lynch's book details so vividly.

Review 3:

Marc Lynch (aka blogger "Abu Aardvark") wrote the best account of the Arab Spring uprisings in his 2012 The Arab Uprising: The Unfinished Revolutions of the New Middle East. This follow-up account does a masterful job of placing those uprisings in context. It is well-written, easily accessible, and compact account of the unraveling of the regional order in the Arab World by one of today's top experts on the region. Lynch's greatest strength is in succinctly detailing the multiple forces driving events, illustrating the complexity of the problem without getting bogged down in tangents or excess detail.

Lynch draws a direct line from the crushing Arab autocracies of the 1990s and early 2000s to today's terror and civil war. Lynch's account balances local conditions and regional order, detailing how the U.S. "War on Terror" increased local despots' freedom to crush their own populations. He draws on his own deep knowledge of Arab-language media sources to support his claim that the erosion of U.S. leverage in the region is the product of the invasion of Iraq and close ties to dictators, rather than policy missteps by President Obama. Not all readers will agree

with Lynch's argument, but his book makes a powerful contribution to the policy discussion.

Review 4:

Professor Lynch is a professional political scientist with a chair at Georgetown University and the author of several books on the Middle East. He is the kind of writer whose expertise is unquestioned, and it is only in his interpretation of events that one might find controversy.

I didn't find any, myself. I would only say that Lynch failed to fault Islam, the religion itself, for the horrors taking place in the Middle East today. This is understandable since there is little to be gained by blaming an entire religion and much to lose through distraction and ineffectual focus. True, it is in part Islam's inability to separate mosque from state that underlies the failure of democracy to take hold in the Middle East. Lynch seems to intimate as much when he writes, 'The Arab uprisings of 2011 were only one episode in a generational challenge to a failed political order.' (p. 254)

What Lynch focuses on is the autocratic regimes themselves and their inability to awaken to the new reality brought about by rapid and nearly universal communication among the populace. (They can see clearly how much better things are in other places in the world.) No longer can the regimes manage public opinion and knowledge through nearly absolute control of media. Instead with Facebook, Twitter and other venues anyone with a smart phone and/or an Internet connection can learn via YouTube videos, outside news sources and messages from friends, comrades, family and even enemies the truth about what is happening almost anywhere in the Middle East.

Lynch of course points with muted voice to the colonialism of the past since this book is about today and now, and the past is well known and nothing can be done about it. (The word 'colonialism' does not even appear in the excellent Index.) As for the more recent past beginning with the stupidities and gross ignorance of the Bush administration, Lynch spells them out unsparingly. He finds less fault with Obama than he does with Bush, and that is understandable since George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld and the neocons are the ones who destabilized the Middle East with their invasion of Iraq. As Lynch points out one of the effects of the overthrow of Saddam Hussein was to increase the influence of Iran. Iraq with Hussein's Sunni government in charge was a buffer against Iranian ambitions.

Whereas Bush didn't care how many people his actions caused to die, Obama's policies are obviously directed toward killing as few people as possible. However any decision that Obama made or will make will result in the death of people. Such is the nature of military and political power, which is why sociopaths (such as some of the autocrats in the Middle East and elsewhere) are often found in power today and historically. Personally, writing as a political scientist (I have an undergraduate degree in Political Science from UCLA) I believe that Obama should have gone after Asad following the gassing of his people. For complicated reasons including Russian support of Asad and the possibility of a negotiated settlement Obama was persuaded not to attack the regime. In the last chapter of the book Lynch, disagreeing with me, states that the 'Intervention would not have saved Syria.' He writes:

'The conventional wisdom now holds that the Obama administration's failure to act in Syria has been as devastating as the Bush administration's invasion of Iraq. But American non-intervention was not the problem, and if it does ultimately intervene directly this will only create new problems.' (p. 248) He adds (p. 249) that intervention by the Obama administration was exactly what jihadists wanted since it would ultimately fail. 'Obama was right to avoid this

intervention. Perhaps his greatest sin in the eyes of the Washington consensus was to have learned the lessons of Iraq.?

As for the prognosis, Lynch (writing in January, 2016) contends forcefully that the uprising that began in 2011 is not over, that the autocratic powers will continue to be under pressure from people who want a greater say in how their lives play out.

Further he believes (p. 246) that ??America has no real allies in the Middle East.? (Interesting. Does that include or exclude Israel?)

Finally, Lynch expects Islamic extremism to get worse.

The book is eminently readable and exquisitely edited but with this reservation: if you don?t have some familiarity with the politics of the Middle East you might want to take notes. It?s hard to know the players without a score card, and separating Sunni from Shi?a can take some getting used to.

--Dennis Littrell

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The New Arab Wars: Uprisings and Anarchy in the Middle East. Marc Lynch. The upheavals in the Middle East and North Africa have only just begun, and the hopes of Arab regimes and Western policymakers to retreat to old habits of authoritarian stability are doomed to fail. Published April 26, 2016; by PublicAffairs.

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The problem with the Arab Spring was Washington's traditional allies in the region: Egypt, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the Gulf states.

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