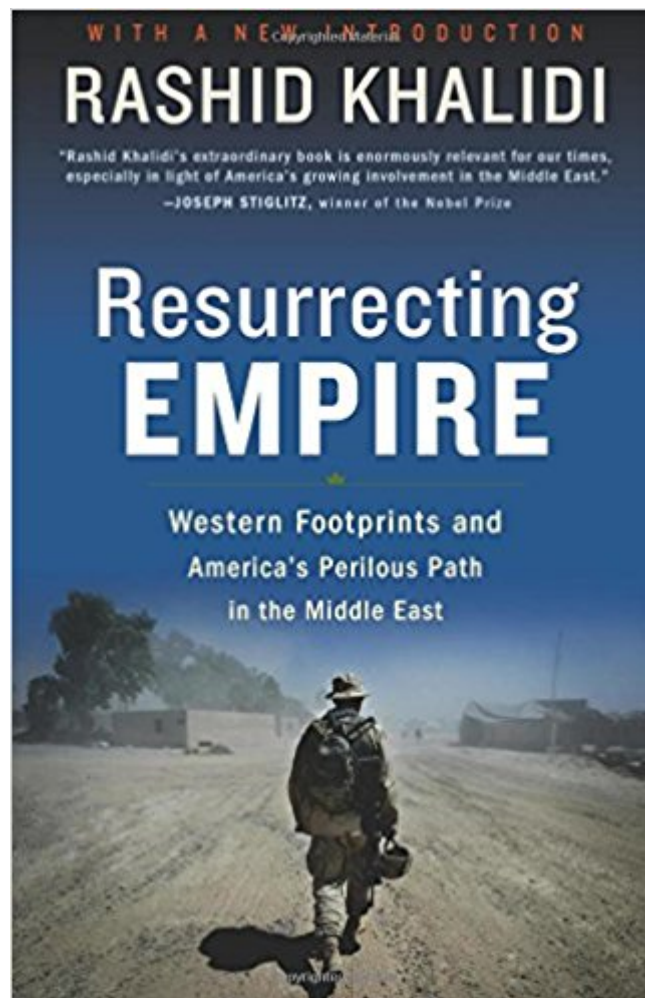




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# Resurrecting Empire: Western Footprints And America's Perilous Path In The Middle East



## Synopsis

Begun as the United States moved its armed forces into Iraq, Rashid Khalidi's powerful and thoughtful new book examines the record of Western involvement in the region and analyzes the likely outcome of our most recent Middle East incursions. Drawing on his encyclopedic knowledge of the political and cultural history of the entire region as well as interviews and documents, Khalidi paints a chilling scenario of our present situation and yet offers a tangible alternative that can help us find the path to peace rather than Empire. We all know that those who refuse to learn from history are doomed to repeat it. Sadly, as Khalidi reveals with clarity and surety, America's leaders seem blindly committed to an ahistorical path of conflict, occupation, and colonial rule. Our current policies ignore rather than incorporate the lessons of experience. American troops in Iraq have seen first hand the consequences of U.S. led "democratization" in the region. The Israeli/Palestinian conflict seems intractable, and U.S. efforts in recent years have only inflamed the situation. The footprints America follows have led us into the same quagmire that swallowed our European forerunners. Peace and prosperity for the region are nowhere in sight. This cogent and highly accessible book provides the historical and cultural perspective so vital to understanding our present situation and to finding and pursuing a more effective and just foreign policy. From the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Khalidi has produced an extremely valuable analysis of how and why the PLO made the decisions it did during that fateful summer of 1982. . His generally objective, lucid and incisive account of PLO

decision-making fills a critical void in the literature about the Israeli invasion.--Thomas Friedman, author of *From Beirut to Jerusalem* and *Longitudes and Latitudes* Praise for *Palestinian Identity*: Winner of the 1997 Albert Hourani Book Award "A pathbreaking work of major importance. . . [Khalidi demonstrates] a complete mastery of the relevant literature in Arabic, Hebrew and Western sources."--Edward Said, author of *Orientalism* Praise for *Resurrecting Empire*: "Rashid Khalidi's extraordinary book is enormously relevant for our times, especially in light of America's growing involvement in the Middle East. Khalidi brings first hand knowledge and an extensive historical background to a topic where such insight is needed more than ever."--Joseph Stiglitz, winner of the Nobel Prize, author of *The Roaring Nineties* "If you are wondering why the United States is up to its ears in alligators in Iraq and is widely hated in the Arab world, read this impressive book. Unlike most so-called Middle East experts, Khalidi actually knows a great deal about the that region, which allows him to make a sophisticated and persuasive case that the Bush Administration's plan to re-make the Middle East at the end of a rifle barrel is delusional."--John J. Mearsheimer, R. Wendell Harrison Distinguished Service Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago

Rashid Khalidi is the author of seven books about the Middle East, including *Palestinian Identity*, *Brokers of Deceit*, *Resurrecting Empire*, *The Iron Cage*, and *Sowing Crisis*. His writing on Middle Eastern history and politics has appeared in the *New York Times*, *Boston Globe*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, and many journals. For his work on the Middle East, Professor Khalidi has received fellowships and grants from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, the Ford Foundation, the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, the American Research Center in Egypt, and the Rockefeller Foundation, among others. He is the Edward Said Professor of Modern Arab Studies at Columbia University in New York and is editor of the *Journal of Palestine Studies*. From the Hardcover edition.

For my friend, good and very incredible

Rashid Khalidi warned in his latest book of the transformation of the United States into an empire, following in the footsteps of former Western empires whose fate was colonial failure after a bitter and failing confrontation with the colonies' natives. Published in 2004 slightly after the American liberation of Baghdad, Khalidi's book, *Empire*, can be divided into five main parts. The first part criticizes the American war on Iraq saying that it was uncalled for and waged by people driven by their personal interests more than their claims of defending America against the danger of terrorism.

In the second part, Khalidi highlighted the failure of British and France to colonize most of the Arab world saying that behind this failure, there was popular determination to win independence. In this part, historian Khalidi committed a lot of anachronisms. He failed to put what he termed the national struggle in its greater regional and international context. Was the Palestinian revolution against the British out of national motives or was it instigated by the growing power of the axis countries that were trying to win back colonies they had lost to Britain and France in WWI? Khalidi's emotional description of what he sees as struggle for national sovereignty is perhaps the only drawback in his book. Khalidi then moves to describe the growth of relations between the United States and the Arab world ever since the 1919 post WWI Versailles Conference delegated what came to be known as the King-Crane Commission to learn about the Arab peoples' wishes. The committee astoundingly found that Arabs thought, if mandate was their only option, they would go for American mandate. The Arab perspective of America changed drastically, however, especially with the growing interest of American oil firms in the region. The anti-American Arab sentiment grew even further with America heavily interfering in favor of the Israelis in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. According to Khalidi, the United States failed to deliver all the promises that it would pressure Israel to stop its aggressive policy of settlement of Palestinian land during Palestinian-Israeli peace negotiations. Khalidi also fell heavily on late Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat accusing him of sabotaging the peace process in favor of his personal interests and the interests of his corrupt entourage.

Good Read, informative and pretty accurate. must be read with an open mind to fully comprehend.

this book is very informative about the history of the western interferences in the middle east since WWI and the continuous struggle of M.easterns to gain sovereignty over their countries and health. This book will help any person understand why M.easterns are so sensitive and always doubtful regarding this issue. Probably their own history was bitter and taught them a harsh lesson, and they believe it is currently repeating itself.

You can read this book in a single evening. You will then know more about the Middle East and the Iraq War than anybody in a position of authority in the Bush Administration, with the possible exception of Secretary of State Colin Powell, who does not seem to have much influence on what happens. At the end of the book, Professor Khalidi has this to say about the "exorbitant price" of imperial adventures in the Middle East, such as those of Britain, France and now the United States

of America: "This is a price -- in lives, in treasure, and in reputation -- that we as Americans should think very carefully about, before submitting to the siren song of those who tell us that empire is easy and cheap, and that in any case the price is worth paying."

Rashid Khalidi begins *Resurrecting Empire* with a brief discussion about why he wrote the book. He describes the public speeches he gave during the process and found, believe it or not, that everyone who came to hear him agreed with what he had to say. He wonders if these people are just a marginalized group of malcontents, but he quickly brushes that notion aside. Surely he, and his audience, must be right. This type of arrogant approach sums up the rest of the book. The supreme irony here is that Khalidi is guilty of nearly everything he blames others for. At the end of his introduction, he has faith that his book will "initiate a more informed and more rational debate," but he has unfortunately produced little more than a rant that preaches to the choir. According to Khalidi, *Resurrecting Empire's* purpose is to shed light on how America is viewed in the Middle East. This is a worthy goal, certainly deserving of much analysis and debate. Instead of actually doing this, Khalidi presents a hodgepodge of watered-down chapters that do not do the subjects justice. The 2003 war against Iraq is primarily what inspired the book, but there is not much discussion of the war itself. Khalidi does not completely butcher the analysis of foreign policy under the Bush administration, but there is a serious misreading of the motives behind the invasion. He puts way too much emphasis on the neocon conspiracy theories without bothering to go beyond what was an oversimplified and lazy set of arguments so many others were making. Khalidi uses language like "the war party" when referring to people like Rumsfeld and Wolfowitz, not the type of language that inspires "informed and rational" debate. Also included in this discussion is the hypocrisy of the U.S. when it comes to democracy promotion. He accurately points out that the U.S. still gives support to the governments of Egypt and Saudi Arabia, but demonstrates a double standard when dealing with countries like Iraq and Syria. He acts as though democracy promotion for the U.S. only includes overthrowing people like Hussein, when in fact there is much more to this policy than Khalidi admits. An excellent overview of these policies can be found in a book edited by Thomas Carothers and Marina Ottaway called *Uncharted Journey: Promoting Democracy in the Middle East*. Khalidi presents a very selective and misleading set of arguments. Others are certainly guilty of the same thing, but Khalidi acts as if he's setting the record straight here. To take one example, he grossly misrepresents America's role in Iraq during the 60s. He makes it seem as if the U.S. were allied with Hussein and the Baath party all along. He even states that the U.S. was involved with the Baath takeover in 1968, but the footnote he provides mentions nothing about that

particular coup. On top of that, no other Iraqi scholar implicates the U.S. in this coup. Khalidi is presenting what he wants his audience to believe, not what actually happened. These types of problems of selectivity run rampant through the book. The other main chapters deal with Oil and the Arab/Israeli dispute. While he makes a convincing argument in some respects, Khalidi does nothing more than tell a partisan and one-sided story. What is most disappointing here is that Khalidi should be capable of producing rational and thoughtful debate. *Resurrecting Empire* does not even begin to reach that threshold. He teaches at Columbia University and has impressive academic credentials, this is not the type of person that should be in the business of producing rants. The book only makes sense if one takes the view that the real goal was to merely produce a book that Khalidi knew would sell, not something that really contributed to the debate over current Middle Eastern events.

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