



My Brother, My Enemy: America and the Battle of Ideas Across the Islamic World

Philip Smucker

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This kaleidoscopic tour behind the frontlines of the war of ideas assesses US efforts to persuade Muslims that Americans respect their rights and interests, while we fight wars and promote our interests. The author draws on his extensive travels in the Muslim world and interviews with a cross-section of the population including students, intellectuals, insurgents and politicians. For an American perspective, the author conducted candid interviews with US military officers, diplomats, and regional experts.

Smucker describes turmoil within the Islamic realm and our efforts to project "soft power" into a world that remains misunderstood. He assesses both our failures and successes in Israel and Palestine, Egypt, Indonesia, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Saharan Africa.

Several themes resonate through these interviews. One is that the Muslim world is looking for consistent engagement from the US, particularly in regard to Israeli-Palestinian peace. After decades of paying lip service to the ideal of peace in the Middle East, the author shows why it is crucial for the Obama Administration to push forcefully for a two-state solution. Another is that the US must discontinue its policy of backing authoritarian regimes that oppress their people. In the eyes of everyday Muslims, such tactics make a mockery of our claim to be the champion of individual liberty. Muslims, many of whom already support democratic change, will only be convinced of America's good will, says the author if our actions speak louder than our words.

This revealing, vividly told narrative by a daring and experienced journalist with firsthand knowledge of the events and people in conflict areas offers unforgettable insights into the Muslim world's hopes and fears as well as our own crucial diplomatic overtures and military campaigns across the Islamic world.

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