



America's War for the Greater Middle East: A Military History

Andrew J. Bacevich

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Retired army colonel and *New York Times* bestselling author Andrew J. Bacevich provides a searing reassessment of U.S. military policy in the Middle East over the past four decades.

From the end of World War II until 1980, virtually no American soldiers were killed in action while serving in the Greater Middle East. Since 1990, virtually no American soldiers have been killed in action anywhere else. What caused this shift? Andrew J. Bacevich, one of the country's most respected voices on foreign affairs, offers an incisive critical history of this ongoing military enterprise—now more than thirty years old and with no end in sight.

During the 1980s, Bacevich argues, a great transition occurred. As the Cold War wound down, the United States initiated a new conflict—a War for the Greater Middle East—that continues to the present day. The long twilight struggle with the Soviet Union had involved only occasional and sporadic fighting. But as this new war unfolded, hostilities became persistent. From the Balkans and East Africa to the Persian Gulf and Central Asia, U.S. forces embarked upon a seemingly endless series of campaigns across the Islamic world. Few achieved anything remotely like conclusive success. Instead, actions undertaken with expectations of promoting peace and stability produced just the opposite. As a consequence, phrases like “permanent war” and “open-ended war” have become part of everyday discourse.

Connecting the dots in a way no other historian has done before, Bacevich weaves a compelling narrative out of episodes as varied as the Beirut bombing of 1983, the Mogadishu firefight of 1993, the invasion of Iraq in 2003, and the rise of ISIS in the present decade. Understanding what America's costly military exertions have wrought requires seeing these seemingly discrete events as parts of a single war. It also requires identifying the errors of judgment made by political leaders in both parties and by senior military officers who share responsibility for what has become a monumental march to folly. This Bacevich unflinchingly does.

A twenty-year army veteran who served in Vietnam, Andrew J. Bacevich brings the full weight of his expertise to this vitally important subject. *America's War for the Greater Middle East* is a bracing after-action report from the front lines of history. It will fundamentally change the way we view America's engagement in the world's most volatile region.

Advance praise for *America's War for the Greater Middle East*

“In one arresting book after another, Bacevich has relentlessly laid bare the failings of American foreign policy since the Cold War. This one is his sad crowning achievement: the story of our long and growing military entanglement in the region of the most tragic, bitter, and intractable of conflicts.”—**Richard K. Betts, director, Saltzman Institute of War and Peace Studies, Columbia University**

“An unparalleled historical tour de force certain to affect the formation of future U.S. foreign policy . . . Anyone aspiring to high office needs not only to read but to study and learn from this important book. This is one of the most serious and essential books I have read in more than half a century of public service.”—**Lieutenant General Paul K. Van Riper, U.S. Marine Corps (Ret.)**

“Bacevich asks and answers a provocative, inconvenient question: In a multigenerational war in the Middle East, ‘Why has the world’s mightiest military achieved so little?’ ”—**Graham Allison, director, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, and Douglas Dillon Professor of Government at Harvard’s John F. Kennedy School of Government**

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