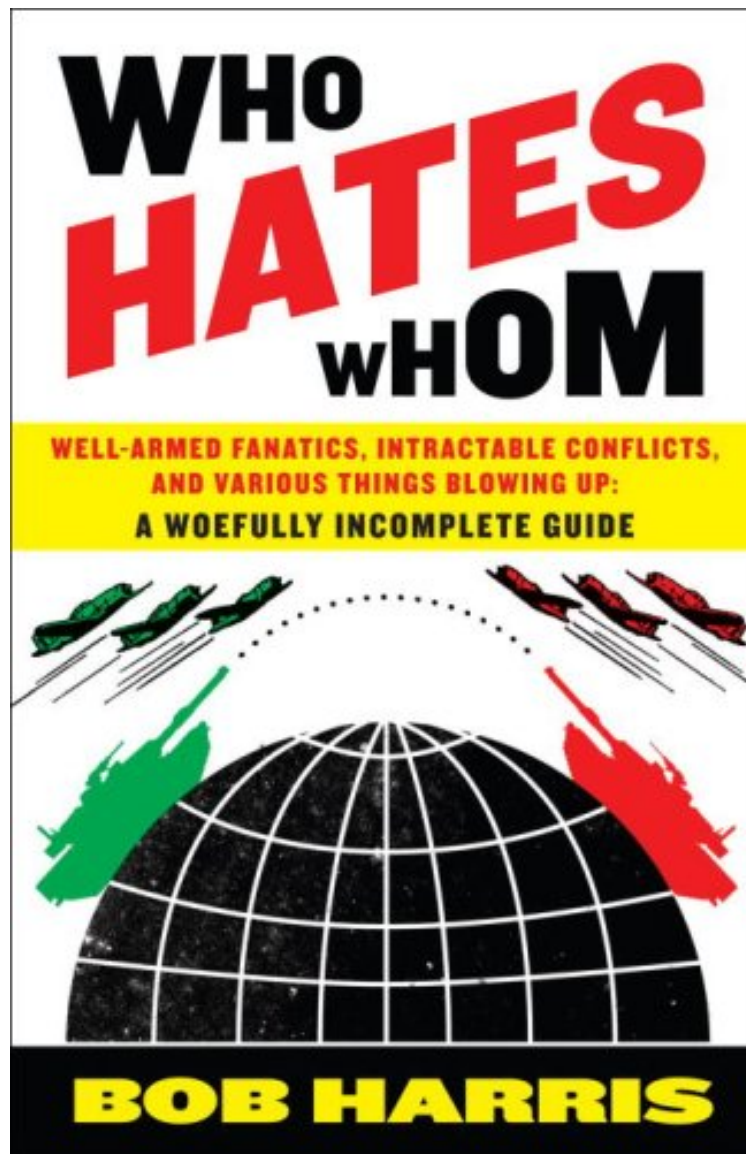


(Download) Who Hates Whom: Well-Armed Fanatics, Intractable Conflicts, and Various Things Blowing Up A Woefully Incomplete Guide

Who Hates Whom: Well-Armed Fanatics, Intractable Conflicts, and Various Things Blowing Up A Woefully Incomplete Guide

Bob Harris

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#858778 in Books 2007-09-25 2007-09-25Ingredients: Example IngredientsOriginal language:EnglishPDF #1 7.98 x .59 x 5.21l, .52 #File Name: 0307394360224 pagesBOOK ABOUT GLOBAL CONFLICTS - FATAH, HAMAS, AND HEZBOLLAH AND MORE. | File size: 72.Mb

Bob Harris : Who Hates Whom: Well-Armed Fanatics, Intractable Conflicts, and Various Things Blowing Up A Woefully Incomplete Guide before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Who Hates Whom: Well-Armed Fanatics, Intractable Conflicts, and Various Things Blowing Up A

Woefully Incomplete Guide:

35 of 36 people found the following review helpful. A Joking Guide to Murderous Folly By Rob Hardy "You can't tell the players without a program!" Thus shout the program sellers to the crowd entering the baseball stadium. If your eye is not on the small-stadium game, but rather on the biggest stadium of all, the globe and its international power plays, you can't tell the players without *Who Hates Whom: Well-Armed Fanatics, Intractable Conflicts, and Various Things Blowing Up: A Woefully Incomplete Guide* (Three Rivers Press) by Bob Harris. This is an exceedingly useful book, consisting of many three or four page chapters devoted to hot spots around the world, each chapter with a map, a summary of who the players are on both sides (if the conflict is limited to two sides, but many are far messier), the history of how they got into the current mess (a history going back millennia at times), and prospects for the future. The topic is vital, but it is bloody and can provoke a disgust with one's fellow humans. Harris, however, won't let the violence get in the way of getting his points across in a jaunty, humorous vein. He has, after all, been a comic, and he reminds us that his degree is in electrical engineering, and also he has been "... a TV writer, a memoirist, a TV debunker of urban legends, and the voice of a cartoon penguin, all of which qualifies me for squat." He is a big time winner at *Jeopardy!* (chronicled in his entertaining *Prisoner of Trebekistan*), so he has a broad realm of knowledge, and he is also a world traveler. You won't get a comprehensive picture of any of these conflicts here, but that's not the book's purpose. "This book is meant to be handy when you see something explode on CNN but they switch to Anna Nicole Smith still being dead before you're sure what went kaboom." (Her death was on a big news day; more than once Harris refers to some important international event of that day being buried in bulletins about our tragic loss.) Throughout a book of outrageous, murderous behavior on one side and another (he warns us not to look for good guys), Harris remains a genial and witty guide. The humor is a way of detachment, of course, but also there just isn't any better outlet for outrage. In examining the philosophy of the Taliban, he writes that their ideas come from an Egyptian, Sayyid Qutb, "whose writings from prison in the 1950s and 1960s are like a bizarro *Letters from a Birmingham Jail*, replacing Dr. King's nonviolence and compassion with a violent contempt for most of humanity." He refers to the 2006 Festival of Holocaust Denial, in which the president of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad "invited the world's leading crackpots for a shindig of wrongitude." In Thailand, the former Siam, *The King and I* is banned "as false and insulting to the royal family. Even discussing the subject is frowned upon. While visiting, whenever you feel afraid, do *not* whistle a happy tune." But the current Thai king is much beloved because, for one thing, "the guy's a jazz musician who puts his mp3s online." Kalimantan, the Indonesian state, "is the opposite of Java - so densely forested that some chunks remain completely unexplored, although international timber and mining companies are doing their best to give us a view." When a dictator in Turkmenistan dropped dead, "he was replaced in a rigged election by his former dentist, whose name in English contains more than half of our alphabet, including every vowel. (Really.)" Reflecting on the ephemerality of his own book, and the horrid conditions in Somalia, Harris writes, "Sadly, I cannot imagine things will have quieted much when you read this. Even if you've just found a dog-eared copy that your dad used to own." Harris has not included a chapter on the United States "since this edition is mostly for U.S. readers, and you already know whom you've recently hated and feared." American influence is all over, though, often baleful leftovers from the era when any oppressive dictator could count on our financial aid if he just assured us he was anticommunist. In many current conflicts, our interest in making money is making humanitarian goals less achievable. There may be implicit and explicit criticism of U.S. policy here, but Harris knows there is much to admire: "... for all its faults, the U.S. is history's best example of a country where people from literally the entire planet manage to live in peace, all at once." He says that researching this book has given him more hope for humanity, reminding us that 150 years ago the U.S. practiced slavery, colonialism was the standard way of doing things, and women could not vote anywhere on the planet. He asks us to remember that there are a few places on the globe you'd never consider visiting because it is just too dangerous, but they are relatively few. "Every city has its bad neighborhoods; that doesn't mean you can't love living there. Same with Earth: except for some specific dicey bits, most of our planet is still full of wonderful surprises." Despite all the madness, this is a hopeful book, and also a useful one, and also an entertaining one.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Couldn't finish it By Melanie D. Typaldos I couldn't finish it. I'm really interested in this sort of thing. I've read several books on conflicts around the world, both non-fiction and fiction. I had hoped that this would be once place where the basis of these conflicts would be clearly and succinctly stated. Or, you know, close to that. And it might be, but I cannot stand the author's flippant attitude and glossing over of the motives of different factions. The information in this book is all stuff that can easily be gleaned by normal news channels (as long as it's not Fox News). Actually, foreign news sources are better because US news tends to be stupid and not at all focused on events that are actually important. So read something else, this book is a waste of time.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A Great Read By Jay What started out as a casual read ended up enlightening me a whole lot. Its hugely informative, despairing and entertaining at the same time. While I learned how much the western world has raped Africa for its resources (and is still doing it, never mind the slavery part), the chapter on UK threw me into fits of laughter. Highly recommended. I do agree with the author's conclusion. But even though there is greater good, everybody thinks slightly different and probably violence and abuse of some nature will

always be a part of human society. They will find something or the other to disagree on - if not religion, then the color of your underwear. Ignorance which plays a huge part in this, can possibly be diminished by persuading as many people to visit and learn about other places/countries. But then as the author says, fanatics tend to stick with their idiocy even in the presence of overwhelming evidence that screams the opposite. Still, traveling could be an opportunity to grow up.

The daily news gives you events but rarely context. So what do al-Qaeda, North Korea, and Iran really want? Which faction is which in Iraq and who's arming whom? What's the deal with Somalia, Darfur, and Kashmir? Fatah, Hamas, and Hezbollah? Finally, here's Who Hates Whom—a handy, often stunning guide to the world's recent conflicts, from the large and important to the completely absurd. • Which countries are fighting over an uninhabitable glacier with no real strategic value—at an annual cost of half a billion dollars? • Which underreported war has been the deadliest since World War II—worse even than Vietnam—with a continuing aftermath worse than most current conflicts combined? • Which royal family members were respected as gods—until the crown prince machine-gunned the king and queen? • Which country's high school students think the Nazis had a “good side”? Which nation's readers recently put Mein Kampf on the bestseller list? And which other country watches itself with four million security cameras? (Hint: All three are U.S. allies.) Detailed with more than fifty original maps, photographs, and illustrations, Who Hates Whom summarizes more than thirty global hotspots with concise essays, eye-catching diagrams, and (where possible) glimmers of kindness and hope. In which bodies of water can you find most of the world's active pirates? Which dictatorship is bulldozing its own villages? Where exactly are Waziristan, Bangsamoro, Kurdistan, Ituri, Baluchistan, and Jubaland—and how will they affect your life and security? Find out in Who Hates Whom, a seriously amusing look at global humanity—and the lack thereof.

“The geopolitical equivalent of scorecards that get hawked at ball games. Only Bob could make a user's guide to our increasingly hostile world this absorbing, this breezy, and—ultimately—this hopeful.” —Ken Jennings, author of Brainiac “It takes deft touch to combine this much-needed research with a razor-sharp wit... You'll laugh 'til you cry, but at least you'll be one step ahead of CNN.” —Gus Russo, author of Supermob and The Outfit “If you read one book this year, be like me and choose this one.” —Emo Philips “Bob Harris, perpetual Jeopardy underdog, now turns his polymathic curiosity to the subject of GLOBAL CONFLICT—the result: this handy history of violence that is at once surprising, fascinating, enlightening, and surprisingly: NOT TOTALLY DEPRESSING. A gimlet-eyed look at the world we endure that's also suitable for enjoying with a gimlet.” —John Hodgman, author of The Areas of My Expertise and correspondent for The Daily Show with Jon Stewart About the Author BOB HARRIS is the author of Prisoner of Trebekistan: A Decade in Jeopardy!, and has written for media ranging from National Lampoon to the television show CSI: Crime Scene Investigation. He lives in Los Angeles. Excerpt. © Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. Chapter 1 AFGHANISTAN/PAKISTAN • Mujahedin (Pashtuns, other local factions and foreign fighters) v. Soviets (defunct) • Taliban (Pashtuns) v. other local factions (pre-9-11) • Waziris v. Pakistan (treaty, 2006) • Taliban (Pashtuns), Al-Qaeda (foreign fighters), and some Waziris v. U.S., NATO, and some Waziris, ongoing To make sense here at all, let's walk through this one step at a time. THE PASHTUNS Borders drawn along ethnic or cultural lines don't necessarily equate with peace—compare the homogenous Korean peninsula to multilingual Canada, for example—but cultural loyalties trump colonial boundaries every time. So here's how the British drew the 1893 Durand Line through the Pashtuns, the dominant people of the border area: Why all the divide and conquer? The British had a vast empire to the southeast, including modern Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Myanmar, and Sri Lanka.* Worried about Russia to the north, the British spent the 19th century trying to set up Afghanistan as a buffer zone, yet without empowering the Pashtuns enough to create yet another threat. Thus the Durand Line. However, the Pashtuns had once ruled much of this whole region themselves, and they've been here for centuries. Alexander the Great (for whom Kandahar is named), Persians, Arabs, Mongols, Mughals, Brits, and Soviets have each rolled through, but Peshawar and Kandahar have nonetheless remained firmly Pashtun. (Pashtun survival stems in part from Pashtunwali, a complex two-thousand-year-old code of honor. Grossly oversimplified: befriend a Pashtun and he will die for you. Piss off a Pashtun, and his neighbor's great-grandchildren may hate yours.) Not surprisingly, in 1949, a Pashtun loya jirga (a tribal council, like the end of Survivor with longer beards) denounced the Durand Line, which has been ignored in some areas all along. Point being: in some areas, the border is porous to nonexistent. So you can't really discuss Afghanistan and Pakistan as separate deals. They aren't. THE MUJAHEDIN, AL-QAEDA, AND THE TALIBAN “The enemy of my enemy is my friend” may work on playgrounds, but the enemy of your enemy can be your enemy, too. This will be good to keep in mind. In 1979, the Soviets invaded Afghanistan to support their puppet government, which tortured and killed thousands. Seizing a chance to weaken their enemy, the U.S. armed Islamist mujahedin (“holy warriors”; notice the word jihad in the middle), Pakistan provided training, and Saudi Arabia financed religious schools (madrasahs) to use extreme Islamist ideology as a recruiting tool against communism. (Pursuit of Islamic governance—whether by violent or nonviolent means—is described as “Islamist” as opposed to garden-variety “Islamic,” which just refers to the religion in general. Two letters, big difference.) This worked too

well, creating a generation of radicals who saw enemies of their freshly brewed puritanical Islam not just among communists, but everywhere—including the U.S., Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia. Whoops. In the 1980s, a Saudi trust-fund kid moved to Peshawar, using family money to bring fighters worldwide into the madrasahs and Afghanistan. This was Osama Bin Laden; Al-Qaeda (“the base”) refers either to a specific camp or a database of foreign fighters (sources disagree). Bin Laden eventually split from his mujahedin allies, focused his hatred on the Saudi government for allowing U.S. bases on Saudi soil, and wound up exiled to Sudan for a while (see “Sudan,” page 000). After the Soviet defeat in Afghanistan, various factions (several funded by opium) fought over the pieces. Pakistan still had an unstable neighbor, and the mujahedin still didn’t have their Islamist state. Making common cause, Pakistani intelligence organized a Pashtun faction of madrasah-trained Taliban (“students” in Pashto) to stabilize Afghanistan. (Stabilize here means “invade and oppress.”) Pakistan hoped that by holding the purse strings of extremists like Mullah Mohammad Omar, they could keep a lid on things. However, while not all Pashtun are Taliban, virtually all Taliban are Pashtun. And Pashtunwali means that many non-Taliban Pashtuns—plus Waziris and other related Pashto speakers—will favor the Taliban over non-Pashtuns. So this was a recipe for spreading extremism. In 1996, the Taliban captured Kabul, hunted down the last Soviet ruler, ripped off his testicles, shot him, and hung his body from a streetlamp. Then they got nasty. For obvious reasons, the Taliban were recognized as a government only by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and the Saudi-influenced United Arab Emirates. But soon Osama bin Laden returned from Sudan, settled into Kandahar, married one of his sons to Mullah Omar’s daughter, and started funding and providing personnel to the Taliban. In turn the Taliban let Osama and his motley foreign Islamists hang out. **EXTREMIST BELIEFS** Taliban consider themselves pure traditional Muslims, but their ideology is influenced by the relatively recent works of an Egyptian named Sayyid Qutb, whose writings from prison in the 1950s and 1960s are like a bizarre Letters from a Birmingham Jail, replacing Dr. King’s nonviolence and compassion with violent contempt for most of humanity. Qutb’s world was utterly simplistic: to him, Islam was already dead, having wandered far from its pure, narrow path. A few remnants fit into Qutb’s harsh version of Islamic law, but everything else was inherently evil and corrupt. Therefore, for Qutb, the non-Islamic world—including not just the West, but the vast majority of mainstream Muslims and all secular governments, especially in Muslim countries—was the enemy. “You’re either with us or against us,” in other words. Egypt hanged Qutb in 1966, but his works continue to provide deceptively simple, emotionally satisfying answers to complex social questions. Followers, including Osama’s pal Ayman al-Zawahiri, have amplified his ideas, building the case to abolish all democracies and even nationalities. Instead: a worldwide Taliban-plus, forever. But be reassured: Qutb is considered a heretic by most mainstream Muslims. The notion that the Koran can be so radically interpreted is usually seen as a serious insult to 1,300 years of tradition. And despite wide disdain for U.S. policies amplified during the Bush years, only a small bit of the Islamic world identifies with this stuff, and only a teeny percentage of those would engage in any violence. Even the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, Qutb’s home team, has moved away from his rhetoric in recent years. In short, most of the world’s hundreds of millions of Muslims are not part of a extremist offshoot that seeks its own destruction. The West can either earnestly pursue relationships with moderate Muslims in difficult countries, or simply slur them all together as enemies, a move as sloppy and hostile as it is self-fulfilling. **THE TERROR AND DRUG WARS AT CROSS-PURPOSES** When not attacking civilization, harboring Bin Laden, and oppressing women, the Taliban also eradicated opium. (Supposedly this was out of Islamist fervor, but they’re dealing in it now, so this looks more like it was a consolidation of power: opium was a possible source of financing for rivals.) As part of the U.S. drug war, the Bush administration rewarded the Taliban with \$43 million in May 2001. This looked amazingly bad at the time, but went off the charts four months later. After 9-11, the West aggressively allied with the Taliban’s opposition, the mostly non-Pashtun Northern Alliance, who were in opium to their eyeballs. Whatever, said the Pentagon, and by December 2001, the Taliban were in the hills, where the guerrilla war continues. Meanwhile, Afghanistan now produces about 90 percent of the world’s opium, financing both sides. Some big drug players in NATO-controlled areas are also potential military leaders, so arresting them hurts the alliance. Outside NATO control, the opium money often winds up in Taliban hands, which are currently making AK-47s the most popular fashion accessories in Waziristan. **WAZIRISTAN** Don’t expect to thumb through Lonely Planet Waziristan anytime soon. While the region is ostensibly under Pakistan’s rule, Waziris, kin to the Pashtuns, have lived in these mountains, unconquered, for at least six centuries. After 9-11, Pakistan’s military tried to limit Taliban movements in Waziristan. This failed; instead, Pakistan just pissed off the Waziris (remember Pashtunwali), who started killing Pakistani informants and even their own tribal leaders suspected of pro-Pakistan sympathies. Seven hundred dead Pakistanis later, in September 2006, Pakistan backed off, agreeing to let North and South Waziristan run their own affairs. In simple terms: on the Pakistan side of the 1893 Durand Line, the Taliban now have a quiet place to clean their guns and eat soup, returning to the Afghanistan side to fight as they choose. In response to NATO complaints, Pakistan recently began building—what else?—a fence on the border. Almost no one expects this to help (c.f. “Mexico,” p. 000). The West has few choices here. Indiscriminate bombing or suicidal ground operations would create even more enemies, even if they had Pakistan’s permission. So for now the West plays defense, watches from satellites, and lobbs the occasional Hellfire missile, while Al-Qaeda and the Taliban expand their influence, install Sharia law, sing the praises of suicide bombing, and generally legalize fun. It’s still possible

that Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and the Waziris will fuss with one another; after all, Al-Qaeda and the muj once split, and fanatics do tend to piss one another off. Waziris are reportedly fighting their guests-cum-oppressors already. But this region could dearly use much of the support and focus currently diverted into Iraq, and ongoing civilian casualties have led to growing local resentment of NATO operations. If history is any guide—and it has that rude habit—the Western alliance may not leave soon with democracy in their wake. **OTHER CONFLICTS, FUTURE PROSPECTS**

There's enough here for another book. In resource-rich Baluchistan, nationalists are blowing up gas pipelines, demanding a share of the profits. While relations with India are calm for now, Pakistani intelligence is frequently accused of supporting numerous anti-Indian separatist groups. Kashmir is a frequent stress, which gets its own section, later. In 1999, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, head of Pakistan's armed forces, seized power in a widely condemned coup. Musharraf initially supported the Taliban, but after 9-11, caught between a regional power and a superpower, Musharraf rolled with the big boys. However, Pakistan's people range from Westernized technocrats of the 21st century and rural tribesmen still living in the 14th, and Musharraf's dictatorial tendencies tend to alienate the former. To retain power, he is often forced to appeal to Pashtuns and other conservatives to retain power. After two assassination attempts traced to Waziristan, Musharraf insists there's a clear split between the Taliban ("good guys" to many Pashtuns) and Al-Qaeda's assortment of Uzbeks, Tajiks, Arabs, Chechens, and other foreign fighters. As Taliban attacks and influence spread, the stability of Pakistan's government may depend on that wish becoming true.