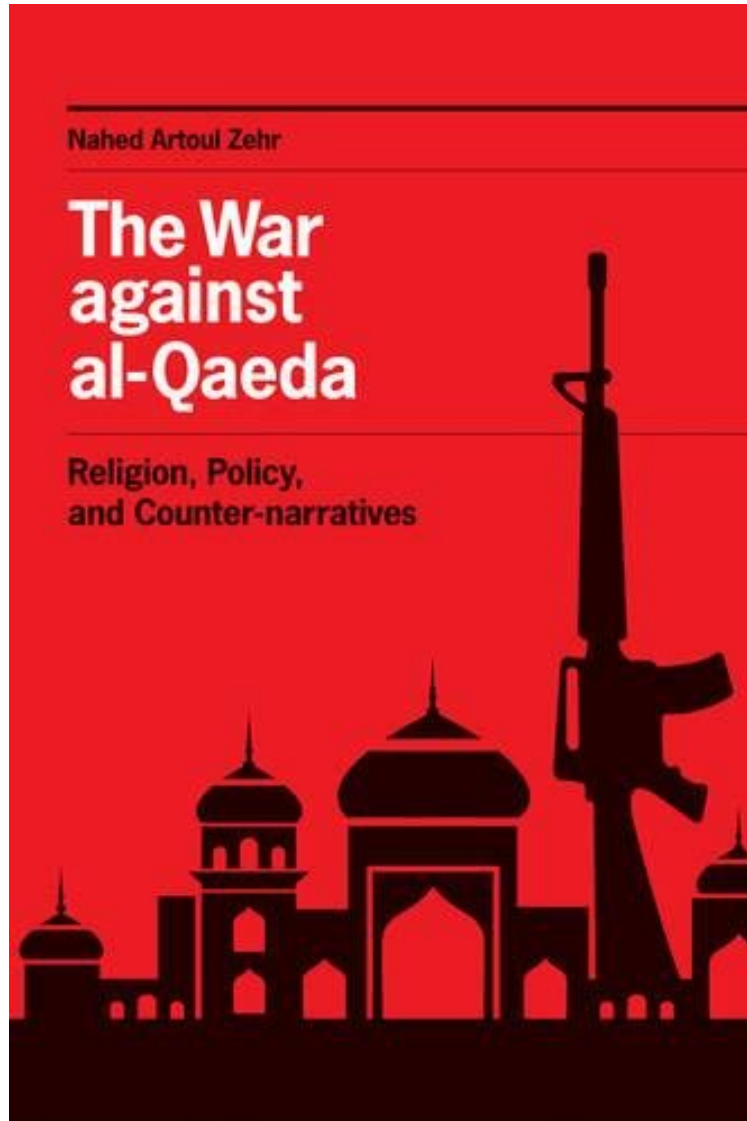


[Download ebook] The War against al-Qaeda: Religion, Policy, and Counter-narratives

The War against al-Qaeda: Religion, Policy, and Counter-narratives

Nahed Artoul Zehr

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In this original and provocative book, Nahed Artoul Zehr explores the theological underpinnings of al-Qaeda and related Islamic movements such as ISIS. She demonstrates how this marginal narrative transformed al-Qaeda from a relatively hierarchical and regional organization to a globalized, decentralized, and diffuse system of networks. She draws connections between religious ideas and strategy in her translation and analysis of leading theoretical and tactical jihad text, *The Global Islamic Resistance Call*, by Mustafa abu Mus' ab al-Suri. Just as importantly, she questions al-Qaeda's understanding of the Islamic tradition on the use of force, arguing that it reflects a weak understanding of this tradition. More specifically, it is al-Qaeda's (and related groups') break with this tradition that is key to an al-Qaeda defeat. Simultaneously, Zehr critiques the US military and policy establishment as it attempts to offer counter-narratives to the al-Qaeda phenomenon that emphasizes "good Muslims" versus "bad Muslims" in order to embrace a "moderate" form of Islam. According to Zehr, this approach is misguided: it is beyond the US government's purview and expertise to make such theological claims about Islam. Better, she argues, to note the counter-narratives that are coming from within the Muslim community and other nongovernment institutions interested in moving this work forward. By refocusing our attention on al-Qaeda's narrative and the various ways that it is being contested, the book provides an alternate lens from which to view al-Qaeda and the al-Qaeda phenomenon for Islamic and US foreign policy scholars and students.

"Everyone interested in radical Islamic jihadism should welcome this book, which stands out for its coverage of figures, perspectives, and topics not treated elsewhere. Zehr follows the al-Qaeda phenomenon from its foundations to the birth of its offspring ISIS/ISIL, concluding with a chapter on "counter-narratives" to the Islamic State movement's jihadist propaganda." James Turner Johnson, Distinguished Professor Emeritus, Rutgers University "Nahed Zehr's *The War against al-Qaeda* brings the story of our conflict with "the al-Qaeda movement" up to the minute. It is a dazzling work of synthesis that illuminates the complexities of the rhetoric on all sides." Scott Davis, Lewis T. Booker Professor of Religion and Ethics, University of Richmond

From the Back Cover This original and provocative book is the first to explore the theological underpinnings of al-Qaeda, ISIS, and related Islamic movements. Nahed Artoul Zehr demonstrates how al-Qaeda was transformed from a relatively hierarchical and regional organization to a globalized, decentralized, and diffuse system of networks. She draws connections between religious ideas and strategy in her translation and analysis of the leading theoretical and tactical jihad text, *The Global Islamic Resistance Call*, by Mustafa abu Mus' ab al-Suri. Just as important, Zehr questions al-Qaeda's interpretation of the Islamic tradition on the use of force. Zehr argues that it is al-Qaeda's (and related groups') break with this tradition that is key to an al-Qaeda defeat. Zehr critiques the counter-narratives to the al-Qaeda phenomenon that emphasizes "good Muslims" versus "bad Muslims" in order to embrace a "moderate" form of Islam. Better, she argues, to note the counter-narratives that are coming from within the Muslim community and other nongovernment institutions interested in moving this work forward.

About the Author Nahed Artoul Zehr is the executive director of the Faith Culture Center in Nashville, TN. In 2011-2012 she was Minerva Research Chair at the United States Naval War College.