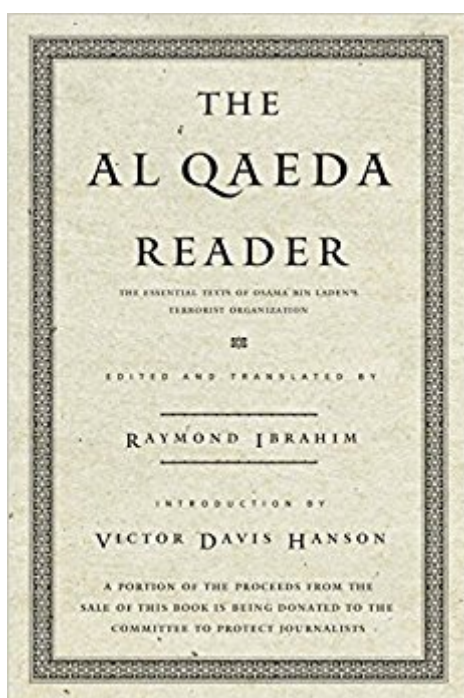


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The Al Qaeda Reader: The Essential Texts Of Osama Bin Laden's Terrorist Organization



Synopsis

What do our enemies believe? What motivates their war against the West? What is their vision of the ideal Islamic society? Surprisingly, more than five years after 9/11, there is very little understanding of these questions. Despite our tendency to dismiss Islamic extremism as profoundly irrational, al-Qaeda is not without a coherent body of beliefs. Like other totalitarian movements, the movement's leaders have rationalized their brutality in a number of published treatises. Now, for the first time, *The Al Qaeda Reader* gathers together the essential texts and documents that trace the origin, history, and evolution of the ideas of al-Qaeda founders Ayman al-Zawahiri and Osama bin Laden. This extraordinary collection of the key texts of the al-Qaeda movement—including incendiary materials never before translated into English—lays bare the minds, motives, messages, and ultimate goals of an enemy bent on total victory. Al-Qaeda's chilling ideology calls for a relentless jihad against non-Muslims, repudiates democracy in favor of Islamic law, stresses the importance of martyrdom, and mocks the notion of moderate Islam. Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of these works is how grounded they are in the traditional sources of Islamic theology: the Koran and the teachings of the Prophet. The founders of al-Qaeda use these sources as powerful weapons of persuasion, reminding followers (and would-be recruits) that Muhammad and his warriors spread Islam through the power of the sword and that the Koran is not merely allegory or history but literal truth that commands all Muslims to action. In addition to laying bare al-Qaeda's ultimate motives, *The Al Qaeda Reader* includes the organization's propagandist speeches, which are directed primarily at Americans, Europeans, and Iraqis. Here, al-Qaeda's many "official" accusations against the West are meticulously delineated, from standard complaints such as the Palestinian issue and Iraq to wholly unexpected ones concerning the U.S.'s exploitation of women and the environment. Taken together, the Theology and Propaganda sections of this volume reveal the most comprehensive picture of al-Qaeda to date. They also highlight the double-speak of bin Laden and Zawahiri, who often say one thing to Muslims in their religious treatises ("We must hate and fight the West because Islam commands it") and another in their propaganda directed at the West ("The West is the aggressor and we are fighting back merely in self-defense"). Westerners from across the political spectrum will be fascinated and enlightened by *The Al Qaeda Reader's* insights into the nature of Islamic texts and the ways in which al-Qaeda has used these texts to manufacture hatred against our civilization and our way of life.

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Customer Reviews

Raymond Ibrahim is a historian of the Middle East and Islam. He works for the Near East section of the African and Middle Eastern division of the Library of Congress, where he discovered many of the never-before-translated Arabic texts that make up the bulk of The Al-Qaeda Reader.

Al-Qaeda's Declaration of War Against Americans Praise be to Allah, who revealed the Book [Koran], controls the clouds, defeats factionalism, and says in His Book: "Then, when the sacred months have passed, slay the idolaters wherever you find them" "seize them, besiege them, and be ready to ambush them" • [9:5]. And prayers and peace be upon our Prophet, Muhammad bin Abdullah, who said: "I have been sent with the sword between my hands to ensure that no one but Allah is worshipped" "Allah who put my livelihood under the shadow of my spear and who inflicts humiliation and scorn on those who disobey my commandments." • Never since Allah made the Arabian Peninsula flat, created its desert, and encircled it with seas has it been stormed by any force like the Crusader hordes that have spread in it like locusts, consuming its wealth and polluting its fertility. All this is happening at a time in which nations are attacking Muslims in unison "as if fighting over a plate of food! In face of this critical situation and lack of support, we are all obliged to discuss current events, as well as reach an agreement on how [best] to settle the matter. No one argues today about three well-established facts, known to everyone; we enumerate them as a reminder, so that the one remembering may remember. 1. For over seven years America has been occupying the lands of Islam in its holiest of places, the Arabian Peninsula "plundering its riches, dictating to its rulers, humiliating its people, terrorizing its neighbors, and turning its bases in the

Peninsula into a spearhead with which it fights the neighboring Muslim peoples. While some people may have argued in the past over the realities of the occupation, all the people of the Peninsula now acknowledge it. There is no clearer evidence than America's ceaseless aggression against the Iraqi people—all launched right from the Peninsula, though its rulers collectively refuse having their land used for this end. But they have been subdued. 2. Despite the awful devastation inflicted on the Iraqi people at the hands of the Crusader-Jewish alliance, and despite the astronomical number of deaths—which has exceeded 1 million—despite all this, the Americans attempt once again to repeat the horrific massacres, as if the protracted sanctions imposed after the brutal war, or the fragmentation and devastation, was not enough for them. So now here they come [again] to annihilate what is left of this people and humiliate their Muslim neighbors. [6]3. Now if the Americans' purposes behind these wars are religious and economic, so too are they also to serve the Jews' petty state [Israel], diverting attention from its occupation of Jerusalem and the murder of Muslims there. There is no better evidence of this than their eagerness to destroy Iraq, the strongest neighboring Arab state, and their endeavor to fragment all the states of the region—such as Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Sudan—into mini-paper states, whose disunion and weakness will guarantee Israel's survival and the continuation of the brutal Crusader occupation of the Peninsula. All these crimes and sins committed by the Americans are a clear declaration of war on Allah, His Messenger, and the Muslims. Ulema throughout Islamic history are unanimously agreed that the jihad is an individual duty whenever the enemy tears into the lands of the Muslims. This was related by Imam bin Qudama in al-Mughni; Imam al-Kisa'i in al-Bada'i; al-Qurtubi in his commentary; and the Sheikh of Islam [Ibn Taymiyya] in his chronicles, where he states: "As for defensive warfare, this is the greatest way to defend sanctity and religion. This is an obligation consensually agreed to [by the ulema]. After faith, there is nothing more sacred than repulsing the enemy who attacks religion and life." On that basis, and in compliance with Allah's order, we hereby issue the following decree to all Muslims: The ruling to kill the Americans and their allies—civilians and military—is an individual obligation incumbent upon every Muslim who can do it and in any country—this until the Aqsa Mosque [Jerusalem] and the Holy Mosque [Mecca] are liberated from their grip, and until their armies withdraw from all the lands of Islam, defeated, shattered, and unable to threaten any Muslim. This is in accordance with the Word of the Most High—"[F]ight the pagans all together as they fight you all together" [9:36] and the Word of the Most High, "Fight them until there is no more tumult or oppression, and [all] religion belongs to Allah" [8:39]. And the Most High said: "And why should you not fight in the cause of Allah and on behalf of those oppressed men, women, and children who cry out, Lord! Rescue us

from this town and its oppressors. Give us from Your Presence some protecting friend! Give us from Your Presence some defender!â • [4:75].By Allahâ ™s leave we call upon every Muslim who believes in Allah and wishes to be rewarded to comply with Allahâ ™s order to kill the Americans and seize their money wherever and whenever they find them. We also call on Muslim ulema, leaders, youths, and soldiers to launch the raid on the Devilâ ™s armyâ “the Americansâ “and whoever allies with them from the supporters of Satan, and to rout those behind them so that they may learn [a lesson].Allah Most High said: â œO you who have believed! Respond to Allah and the Messenger whenever He calls you to that which gives you life. And know that Allah comes between a man and his heart, and that it is He to whom you shall [all] be gatheredâ • [8:24].Allah Most High said: â œO you who have believed! What is the matter with you? When you are asked to go forth in the cause of Allah, you cling so heavily to the earth! Do you prefer the life of this world to the Hereafter? But little is the comfort of this life, in comparison to the Hereafter. Unless you go forth [and fight], He will punish you with a grievous torment, and put others in your place. But He you cannot harm in the least; for Allah has power over all thingsâ • [9:38â ”39].Allah Most High said: â œSo do not lose heart, nor fall into despair. Have faith and you shall triumphâ • [3:139].Sheikh Osama bin Muhammad bin LadenAyman al-Zawahiri, Commander of the Jihad Group in EgyptAbu Yasir Rifaâ ™i Ahmad Taha, Egyptian Islamic Group [7]Sheikh Mir Hamza, Secretary of the Organization of Islamic ulema in PakistanFazlur Rahman, Commander of the Jihad Movement in BangladeshThis statement is more commonly known as The World Islamic Frontâ ™s Declaration to wage Jihad Against the Jews and Crusaders, issued February 23, 1998, in the Arabic newspaper Al-Quds Al-Arabi.

When I started researching the ideology of the people who were involved in the World Trade Center attacks, it was easy to find statements in support and against it, then I noticed as I was furthering my research the decent reviews this book got and it influenced me to buy it. This is important because the author here has translated statements that may not otherwise have ever been translated. Most of the subject matter and content deals with the reasoning behind why certain groups of people think the way they do and shows how they always politicize their own beliefs in order to have a following from the public. Because most of the statements come from one or two people it probably isn't as detailed as it could have been but I have had the chance to check out other books along the same lines like The Eleventh Day for example and both provide insight by being descriptive and helping me see things from the other side's perspective as a behind the scenes type look at what the terrorists say and think. Most revealing and perhaps most importantly is

the fact that what they tell the West and what they tell their own people and audience are two very different things as they purposely try to be cunning and deceptive. I highly recommend. Aryan Somers

This book is great for anyone in the government or military. It paints the intentions behind the actions of Al-Qaeda using the very transcripts used to garner support among their followers. I enjoyed this book because you realize that Al-Qaeda does not commit terrorism purely because of some blood lust. The group is very calculated with simply a view of over-reaching American Imperialism disrupting their homeland. I highly recommend this book.

One of the basic texts to better understand Al Qaeda. Scary stuff. Am sure there are others with dissenting opinions, but an important aspect of the dialogue is having the rights to have the dialogue in the first place.

This is a must read for anyone who wants to understand the war on terror, or the mindset of Al Qaeda. While I've seen some of these writings in English before, some of these are completely new, and all of them are translated in a way that makes it easier for an English language reader to understand better.

Interesting read.

I liked this book a lot. It can be a tough read because it is a series of direct translations and the grammar and vocabulary are difficult. But it is a fascinating insight into the minds of the leaders of Al Qaeda. Their arguments for what they are doing and why are very precise and well presented. I was surprised to realize that their justification for everything is entirely based on their reading of the Koran and supporting islamic doctrine and that their treatises as translated here are filled with supporting quotes and references to these materials.

very good background for westerners who get their facts from the main stream media.

Raymond Ibrahim knows his stuff. Most people here have already done longer and better reviews, and to be honest I can't be bothered doing a long one. What really shone out for me was how knowledgeable Osama Bin Laden is about Islam. From my teens to only a few years ago, I was

under the impression from the media, public academics etc., that he was just a idiot thug who knew nothing about Islam. It turns out that he was quite the scholar of Islam and knew the life of Mohammad intimately. For an example:" 'Moderation'is demonstrated by our Prophet who did not remain more than three months in Medina without a raiding or sending a raiding party into the lands of the infidels to beat down their strongholds and seize they're possessions,their lives, and their women."Not exactly a Jesus, Gandhi or Buddha this Muhammad was he? However it just irks so many people Muslims and non-Muslims alike that the example of Muhammad isn't one of peace and love but of conquest and subjugation. Well worth the buy this book. Great Translations not only of Osama but of Ayman al-Zawahiri (second in charge of Al-Qaeda and who is leading it today). If anyone ever tells you Al-Qaeda, Boko Haram, ISIS etc., has nothing to do with Islam all they are affirming is that they themselves don't know anything about Islam.

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